Title
Continuity or Change? Contextualizing the Role of Polarization and Racial Attitudes in the Trump Era

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Publication Date
2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Continuity or Change?

Contextualizing the Role of Polarization and Racial Attitudes in the Trump Era

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Psychology

by

Lauren Goldstein

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Continuity or Change? Contextualizing the Role of
Polarization and Racial Attitudes in the Trump Era

by

Lauren Goldstein
University of California, Los Angeles, 2020
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Donald Trump is commonly believed to deviate from traditional Republican norms and ideals, both in terms of his policy platform as well as his boorish, often explicitly racist personal conduct. These claims have come from media and from Republican Party elites, both past and present. But was his outsider status, in terms of lack of prior political experience, unorthodox policy positions, as well as personal style, reflected by marked shifts in public opinion? Were Trump voters motivated by a new set of predispositions compared to prior Republican voters? In this dissertation, I argue that Trump is better interpreted as a continuation of preexisting Republican trends than as a rogue outsider who capitalized on a wholly distinct electorate motivated by a unique profile of attitudes and preferences. Rather, I argue, Trump is best interpreted as a continuation of Obama era trends. In Chapter One, I trace the legacy of polarization and racial attitudes in modern American politics. In Chapter Two, I trace the waning of the New Deal coalitions from 1980 to 2016, examining the demographic profiles of support

for Trump and contextualizing them as trends that predated his campaign. Chapter Three, I assess whether Trump benefited from a different set of predispositions among the mass public relative to his predecessors in the prior four elections—specifically, those related to racial attitudes and political polarization. In Chapter Four, I assess how two difference indices of racial attitudes, one that emphasizes outgroup animosity (racial resentment) and one that incorporates ingroup solidarity (ethnocentrism) impact presidential approval, in order to assess whether both exert equal and similar influence on white voters' presidential approval over the last 5 cycles. In Chapter Five, I assess the extent to which, should we see shifts over time in the nature and influence of racial attitudes among white voters over this period of time, these shifts can be traced to white Republicans becoming increasingly racially conservative during the dawning of the Trump era, or whether it is white racial liberals who are driving the divergence of public opinion. Ultimately, I argue, Trump inherited a highly racialized landscape; he did not introduce racial attitudes into an otherwise racially harmonious and civil landscape and disrupt the status quo, nor did he capitalize on a wholly new set of racist predispositions among the white electorate.

The dissertation of Lauren Goldstein is approved.

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2020

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, to David Sears, my advisor: I am so grateful that you took a chance on me. Thank you for your steady guidance, for spending so many afternoons chatting about the state of our politics with me, for your humor, your perspective, your wisdom, and your advice.

Thanks as well to the rest of my committee, Efren Perez, Kerri Johnson, and Matt Barreto, for all of your generous feedback and insights along the way. To Kerri, in particular: thank you for your mentorship, generosity, and encouragement; for welcoming me into your fold, nurturing my passions, and helping me reach my goals.

To the Intergroup Relations Lab, the Political Psychology Lab, and the Social Vision Lab, and in particular, to Gerald Higginbotham, Jessica Shropshire, and Tyler Reny: thank you for giving such valuable input on my ideas, for teaching me how to study them, and for helping me more times than I can count.

Lastly, to my friends and family: had it not been for your support, I can say with confidence that none of this would have happened. Thank you, especially to Mom, Dad, Mark, and Nana. For absolutely everything.

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Chapter One

"A new breed of Republicans has taken over the GOP. It is a new breed which is seeking to sell to Americans a doctrine which is as old as mankind—the doctrine of racial division, the doctrine of racial prejudice, the doctrine of white supremacy. If I could couch in one single sentence the way I felt, watching this controlled stream-roller operation roll into high gear, I would put it this way, I would say that I now believe I know how it felt to be a Jew in Hitler's Germany."

–Jackie Robinson, 1964[1]

Donald Trump's political ascendency, from total outsider to the Republican nominee to President of the United States, has been described as a shocking and unprecedented upset (Tumulty, Rucker, and Gearan 2016; Goldmacher and Schreckinger 2016; Flegenheimer and Barbaro 2016; Graham 2016). Indeed, a political neophyte with absolutely no prior experience in government or military winning the presidency *was* unprecedented in modern American politics until 2016.

Throughout this period, his unexpected rise has been punctuated by claims from some elite party insiders that he is not a true Republican, and that he has bastardized the party and its platform, reshaping and recharacterizing it into something unrecognizable to fellow partisans. These judgments were based both on Trump's issue-position platform that departed from Republican orthodoxy—he called for isolationist foreign policies and increased infrastructure spending, for example—as well as his brash and vulgar way of speaking about racial minorities, immigrants, women, and myriad other groups. In 2017, former Republican Senator John Danforth published an opinion piece in the Washington Post in which he argued that the Republican Party is predicated on norms of inclusion and unity, and that for this reason, Trump

[1] Written shortly after the nomination of Barry Goldwater as the Republican candidate for President.

is "exactly what Republicans are not." Republicans, he insisted, are the party of Lincoln, "the party of the Union, and [Trump] is the most divisive president in our history…His message is, 'You are not one of us'" (Danforth 2017). Thus, to many party insiders, Trump's divisive and racist rhetoric constituted a radical departure from traditional Republican norms and ideals.

But was his outsider status, in terms of lack of prior political experience, unorthodox policy positions, as well as personal conduct, reflected by marked shifts in public opinion? Were Trump voters motivated by a new set of predispositions compared to prior Republican voters? In this dissertation, I argue that Trump is better interpreted as a continuation of preexisting Republican trends than as a rogue outsider who capitalized on a wholly distinct electorate motivated by a unique profile of attitudes and preferences. Rather, I argue, Trump's base of support is motivated by longstanding predispositions that were first newly invigorated not in 2016, under the most openly racist candidate in modern times, but in 2008, upon the election of the first black president.

Racial Realignment

An enormous body of work on American politics suggests that issues pertaining to race and racism have evolved into a partisan fault line in American politics. How did we get here? Some scholars trace this development—a realignment of party stances and coalitions that revolved around race— to mass public-level shifts beginning in the 1930s, culminating in a reorganization of political elites corresponding to their constituencies (Schickler 2016). Since the late 1980s, the conventional interpretation has been that the organization of politics around racial identities and racial attitudes stems from shifts among political elites in response to landmark civil rights legislation of the 1950s and 1960s (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Edsall and Edsall 1992; Frymer 1999; Lopez 2014).

Most famous perhaps is the 1964 Civil Rights Act, enacted by the Democratic Johnson Administration and bitterly opposed by the Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. The Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Similarly, the Voting Rights Act prohibited discriminatory voting policies that were designed to keep black Americans from exercising their rights. These acts were enormously impactful and the crowning legislative achievements of the Civil Rights movement. The Voting Rights Act is considered perhaps the most effective federal civil rights legislation in the history of the country, securing the right to vote for black Americans in the South. Scholars argue that these pieces of legislation and their sources of support and opposition among political elites ushered in a new political schism rooted firmly in racial identities and attitudes.

Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the American polity began to shift its partisan allegiances on the basis of both racial identity and racial attitudes. Older Americans, whose entry to politics preceded racial realignment, became replaced in the electorate with younger Americans whose partisan attachments developed in an era where the parties were taking increasingly different stances on racial issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman and Carsey 2002; Stimson 2004; Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2002; Valentino and Sears 2005).

When asked, in the 1962 ANES, which party was "more likely to see to it that Negros get fair treatment in jobs and housing," almost 23 percent of respondents answered Democrats, 21 percent answered Republicans, and 56 percent saw no difference between the parties on the matter of racial discrimination. By late 1964, the emergent difference between the parties had come into focus for the American electorate. In response to a question about which party was more likely to treat black Americans fairly when they applied for jobs, a full 60 percent of

respondents chose the Democratic Party, and 33 percent saw no difference between the parties; just 7 percent chose the Republican Party (Edsall and Edsall, 1992). Similarly, when asked which party was more likely to support integrated schools, 56 percent chose the Democratic Party, 37 percent saw no difference between the parties, and 7 percent chose the Republican Party. Demonstrably, by 1964, the mass public had begun to recognize that the parties were distinguishable based on racial attitudes and positions.

At this time, black Americans, who had previously maintained loyalty to the Republican Party from the Lincoln Administration through the Great Depression (Sitkoff 1978; Weiss 1983), began to realign with the Democratic Party in the mid 1960s (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994). Since then, the Democratic Party has enjoyed a substantial increase of the black vote (Kinder and Sanders 1996) which would become one of the bedrocks of support for the party. As black Americans and racially liberal whites increasingly aligned with the Democratic Party, so too did disaffected, racially resentful whites become increasingly alienated by the Democratic Party and seek out a new political home. In 1968, former Democrat and Governor of Alabama George Wallace mounted a presidential bid as a third-party candidate on a platform to reverse racial integration. He won five of the former Confederate States in the deep South by appealing plainly to disaffected white voters, who would ultimately find a home in the Republican Party.

Ultimately, racial realignment produced profound electoral consequences that intersected with shifting norms around racism in American public life. First, it largely secured the former Confederate States for the Republican Party, beginning in the 1964 and solidifying by the 1990s (Valentino and Sears 2005; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2014; Kuziemko and Washington 2018). Scammon and Wattenberg (1970) argued that the Democratic Party had an advantage on economic issues, the Republican Party on social issues,

and because the "real majority" of voters were economically liberal and socially conservative, elections would be won by whichever party played to its strengths and exploited the opposition's weakness. Consequently, they argued, Republicans would aim to garner votes on the basis of "the Social Issue" by branding Democrats as excessively liberal on myriad issues, including (though not limited to) the issue of race. Kevin Phillips (1969), a young Nixon staffer, published a book entitled *The Emerging Republican Majority*, arguing that the Republican Party's path of viability was to embrace its new base—white voters in the South, Southwest, and suburbs—rather than trying to maintain its hold on the Northeast, and to tack right in its approach to social issues, most importantly race. "Knowing who hates who," he declared in a 1968 interview with journalist Garry Wills, is "the whole secret of politics" (Wills, 1969).

Second, racial realignment forced the two parties into an ongoing tension to compete for racially conservative white voters outside the Deep South and produced what Kinder and Sanders (1996) termed the "electoral temptation of race." This concept describes the need, shared by both parties, to appeal to conservative whites without incurring political costs. For Republicans, the challenge was to court these voters with messages that subtly appealed to their racial biases without being so overtly racist as to violate new social norms, post-Civil Rights movement. and backfire. For Democrats, the challenge was to balance a core component of their voting base—black voters—against the need for a broader coalition that includes white voters who would be alienated by outright racial liberalism. For Republicans, then, the electoral temptation was to trade out explicit racism for more implicit, coded racial appeals; for Democrats, the electoral temptation amounted to "benign neglect" (Kinder and Sanders, 1996, p. 228).

While explicit, segregationist language fell out of favor, and more implicit racial appeals and dog whistle politics became the more palatable approach, Republican strategist Lee Atwater outlined the new design for Republican politics compatible with these new norms: *"By 1968 you can't say 'n-----' —that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states' rights and all that stuff"* (Lewis, 2005, p. 230). Per Atwater's strategy, Richard Nixon's 1972 presidential campaign utilized the "Southern Strategy," an effort to appeal to white Southern Democrats who were disaffected by the party's new position on civil rights with muted appeals to antiblack attitudes (Mendelberg 2001; O'Reilly 1995; McGinnis 1969; Lopez 2014). Ronald Reagan echoed this approach, launching his 1980 campaign for president outside of Philadelphia, Mississippi, the site where the Ku Klux Klan murdered three civil rights workers in 1964. Here, Reagan proceeded to give a speech praising "states' rights," language that was popular among white Southerners in defense of Jim Crow laws and racial segregation, in a move to court "George Wallace-inclined voters" (Crespino 2009). Reagan's vice president, George H.W. Bush, campaigned for president in 1988 and made waves with his Willie Horton ad depicting a violent black criminal in a thinly veiled attempt to win over racial conservatives (Jamieson 1992; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 1997, 2001; Lopez 2014).

The impact of racial attitudes on partisan realignment reverberated throughout the twentieth century: by 1990, Congressional roll call votes on racial issues were almost completely split along party and ideological lines (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006). Importantly, this racial polarization is a core aspect of the growing divide between the parties and between the partisans who belong to them.

Polarization: Ideology, Affect, and the Role of Race

Today, we are bombarded with information declaring that the parties have polarized so thoroughly and dramatically that Democrats and Republicans can't agree on any policy issues and indeed, can't even be civil to one another. Here, I review the literature that discusses how the social identity of partisanship—that is, deriving self-esteem from attaching oneself to a political identity—and social sorting have helped produce a polarized landscape. Further, I review evidence to support the argument that racial attitudes constitute the primary driver of social sorting, and therefore can be interpreted as a main explanatory force behind the polarization of the parties.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) argues that group membership is a fundamental component of people's identities. Individuals derive self-esteem by belonging to a group that they perceive as preferable or favorable relative to other groups. Under this theory, people identify and interact as group members, rather than as individuals whose behavior and identity is determined by personality traits or interpersonal relationships. Individuals "strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity," which is based largely on "favorable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups," and this differentiation is intended to "maintain or achieve superiority over an out-group" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 41). What follows, as a result, is a tendency both to favor or elevate the ingroup and denigrate the outgroup. Importantly, mere group membership is not sufficient to motivate outgroup antipathy; individuals must develop a strong identification with the ingroup (Huddy 2001).

The political science literature has a long tradition of treating partisan identity as a social and psychological attachment (Campbell et al 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002;

Green 1999, 2002, 2004; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2013, 2015, 2018). In 1960, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes published *The American Voter*, a seminal book in political science that was the first to treat partisanship as a psychological and affective attachment. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) argued that partisan identity functioned much like a religious identity: a membership to a social group that is developed early in life and provides an organizing framework for decision-making.

Not only is partisanship viewed as a social and affective attachment, rather than a detached and objective collection of policy preferences, researchers have also found that partisan identity strength does not necessarily tether to issue position extremity. In other words, becoming more highly identified as a partisan does not necessarily translate into, or derive from, developing more extreme issue positions. Campbell et al (1960) argue that the strength of one's party identity can stem from social group membership, and more modern scholarship supports this assertion (Mutz 2002). Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe (2015) find that partisan identity, independent of instrumental policy preference or consideration, drives political activism.

In real-world contexts, however, people rarely possess one social identity in isolation, but rather, they hold multiple identities that they view as self-defining, a fact that most social identity researchers do not dispute (e.g., Stryker & Statham, 1985; Tajfel, 1978; see Deaux, 1996, for a review). Often, these social identities align and contain considerable overlap. Roccas and Brewer (2002) offer the example of Mormons and Utahns: if most Mormons live in Utah and most Utahns are Mormons, those two identities align and enable both identities to count as ingroup classification. Just as often, however, social identities are cross-cutting and sometimes difficult to reconcile or integrate. For political purposes, multiple social identities that lend themselves easily to ingroup overlap might be Evangelical, southern, and gun owner, whereas someone

whose social identities include being Evangelical, southern, and gay might produce conflicting ingroup and outgroup identities and memberships.

In the context of American politics, cross-cutting identities have long mitigated the effects of partisanship and partisan bias on voting behavior and political decision-making, whereas multiple aligned social identities that fit neatly under a partisan banner can increase the effects of bias and polarization. Decades of scholarship in political behavior attest to this phenomenon. Scholars have argued that partisans who have identities or group memberships in common with outgroup partisans are less likely to vote (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944; Campbell et al 1960; Lipset 1960), are less partisan (Powell 1976), are more responsive to new information but also less likely to participate in elections (Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen, 2012), and are a buffer against widespread social conflict on the basis of partisan disagreement (Nordlinger 1972; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954).

What, then, are the effects and dynamics of people whose multiple social identities align neatly under a partisan banner? Lilliana Mason (2015; 2018) refers to this process as social sorting, whereby the parties become increasingly socially homogeneous, and religious, racial, and ideological identities become increasingly divided along partisan lines. Early scholarship on sorting by Fiorina and colleagues (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; 2009; Fiorina and Abrams 2008) argued that mass polarization and ominous claims of a "culture war" were vastly overstated, and that rather than polarizing on issue positions, partisans were simply ideologically sorting themselves more accurately into their corresponding parties: liberals with Democrats, conservatives with Republicans. However, a plethora of scholarship also documents that, as a consequence of *social,* not ideological, sorting, partisans have grown more angry, more biased, and more inclined towards activism (Abramowitz 2007, 2010; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998,

2005, 2008; Abramowitz and Stone 2006; Brewer 2005; Hetherington 2001; Jacobson 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007; Levendusky 2009; Mason 2013, Mason 2015). In brief, social sorting is a process that drives the phenomenon that has captured national attention: polarization.

A large segment of polarization research has focused on policy preferences; that is, whether Democrats and Republicans are taking increasingly polarized positions on the issues. There is strong evidence that political elites have been increasingly polarizing in terms of policy issues and ideological stances (Hetherington 2001; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). However, evidence of ideological polarization among the mass public is far less conclusive. Some argue that perhaps elite polarization is a reaction to mass polarization, though this finding is restricted to strong partisans and believed to be overestimated (Westfall, Van Boven, Chambers, and Judd 2015; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016). Abramowitz (2010) found that when ideological beliefs were evaluated as a whole, rather than as specific issue positions evaluated in isolation, the electorate has, in fact, grown more ideologically polarized. Other scholars argue that this phenomenon is better treated as partisans sorting their beliefs to correspond with their partisan identities with increasing accuracy (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Levendusky 2009).

However, while evidence for ideological polarization at the mass public level is mixed, the fact that Democrats and Republicans are increasingly antagonistic towards one another is a well-supported phenomenon. Affective polarization is defined as the tendency to evaluate ingroup partisans positively and outgroup partisans negatively (Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Using this treatment of polarization—an affective preference for the ingroup over the outgroup—evidence suggests that polarization is unmistakably increasing among the mass public (Iyengar,

Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Mason 2015; Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Abramowitz 2018ab).

Moreover, affective polarization is manifested quite broadly, in both political and nonpolitical attitudes and behaviors. Policy opinions among partisans are highly malleable based on partisan cues, partly due to the fact that partisans tend to rely on motivated reasoning more frequently when their social worlds are less politically diverse (Klar 2014; Mutz 2002). Within the realm of interpersonal and social behavior, affective polarization results in social distancing from outgroup partisans, meaning that partisans feel increasingly uncomfortable interacting with outgroup partisans across social contexts. Studies have shown that affective polarization has spilled over into a variety of apolitical contexts, including employer hiring practices (Gift and Gift 2015) and dating behavior (Huber and Malhotra 2017). One study compared attitudes about ingroup and outgroup members based on race, religion, and partisanship from the 1960s through 2008. It showed that respondents' difference scores in affective ratings for same-race versus different-race individuals, and those towards individuals of the same religious faith or different religious faith, have shrunk dramatically throughout that time period. However, those difference scores on the basis of partisanship grew enormously during the same period of time (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, 2012). A similar study found that the degree to which partisans overtly discriminate against outgroup partisans now exceeds overt discrimination on the basis of race (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015)[2].

Furthermore, dislike for individuals on the basis of their political allegiance is not tethered to social norms governing expression of overt hostility, such as attitudes based on religion or race (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, 2012). One explanation for why affective

[2] Notably, however, these findings may conflate animosity towards outgroup partisans with animosity towards politics in general (Klar, Krupnikov, and Ryan, 2018).

polarization produces such explicitly hostile behavior, while attitudes about members of other races or religious groups are frequently more concealed, is that Americans view political affiliation as a reflection of their morality. According to a 2016 Pew study, sixty five percent of Americans view politics as a window into a person's character (Pew 2016b).

One identity that is particularly influential in the process of social sorting and, by extension, affective polarization, concerns the matter of race. Importantly, however, it appears that this role of race in furthering social sorting and polarization has less to do with policy preferences, and more to do with subjective attachments and social distance. Mangum (2013) finds that as of 2013, racial *identity*, and not necessarily racial policy positions, are the stronger predictor of party identity. Mason (2018) argues that the parties have grown so divided on the matter of race that the type of policy-centric divide of the Civil Rights movement, which triggered racial realignment and long-term social sorting of the parties, is no longer necessary for the two parties to diverge around race. Partisan identity, she argues, has become firmly entwined and aligned with racial identity, and decoupled from racial policy preferences. Further, Mason (2018) finds that between the years 1972 and 2000, the percentage of people in the Democratic and Republican parties who reportedly felt close to black people widened from an 8-point gap to a 12-point gap; similarly, the percentage who reportedly felt close to white people widened from an 8-point gap to a 13-point gap over this period of time. In other words, Democratic partisans report increasing closeness to black Americans relative to Republican partisans, and vice versa with respect to white Americans.

The Role of the First Black President

Race, then, is demonstrably a major source of sociopolitical cleavage today. How much of this trend has to do with the election of Barack Obama? In order to answer this question, we

must first consider how whiteness has historically operated in the American polity, in order to recognize shifts in these dynamics that took place during the Obama era and tether them to broader context.

Throughout American history up to the birth of the Civil Rights movement, discrimination on the basis of race was, simply put, socially acceptable (Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman, 2000; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan1997). Following the Civil Rights movement, however, Americans began to subscribe to what Tali Mendelberg (2001) terms the "norm of equality," wherein Americans buy into the tenets of racial equality and thus want to be viewed by others as people who respect and uphold this value. During the second half of the twentieth century, Americans increasingly viewed explicit racism as bad behavior and racial discrimination as unfair.

Consistent with this paradigmatic shift, the federal government took pains to codify prohibition of race-based discrimination. Here, two important clarifications are needed. First, the fact that old fashioned racism—support for racial segregation, or open endorsement of derogatory statements or beliefs, for example— came to be viewed as inappropriate did not extinguish racism among the American public (Dawson 2011; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012). Rather, more modern or symbolic forms of racism began to play a greater role among white Americans where overt and explicit racism became less socially acceptable and therefore less commonly or openly expressed. Kinder and Sears (1981) define symbolic racism as "resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline" (p. 416). By endorsing these beliefs that black Americans violate traditional and revered "American" values, white Americans' racial resentment of black Americans could now live on in

a socially palatable form, under the banner of defending American morality, culture, and values from groups who systematically violate them.

Second, the fact that racial discrimination became punishable by law does not mean that the U.S. government ceased to implement policies that designated certain groups as deserving of national belonging and others as undeserving. Nor, I argue, did any major shift take place that meaningfully impacted white Americans' position atop what many scholars describe as a racial hierarchy—a systemic stratification of social, economic, and political power by race. This is an important clarification, because while overt racial discrimination may have fallen out of favor, to interpret racial inequality as a function of individual acts, or even a governing racial ideology, is to miss the forest for the trees. Bonilla-Silva (1997) argues that racism ought not to be considered as an ideological position, but rather, as a systemic, institutional force. He uses the term "racialized social systems" to refer to societies where "economic, political, social and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races" (p. 469). Lawrence Bobo (1999) writes that racial prejudice "is not just a story of bad ideas and a biased reading of relevant social information," but perhaps more importantly, it is a story of group positions: the "fusing of identity, interests, sense of proper place, and entitlement" (Bobo, 1999, p. 468). Sidanius and Pratto (1999) posit a theory of social dominance, arguing that group-based inequality is maintained through legitimizing myths that give moral and intellectual justification for certain groups' low position in a social hierarchy. In short, widespread racial inequality ought not to be interpreted as an amalgam of individual acts, beliefs, biases, or behaviors, but rather, as the result of a racialized social hierarchy.

Indeed, by enormous margins, historically, whites have constituted an unquestionable hegemonic majority in the United States. Jardina (2019) points out that white Americans, as

defined by the US Census, constitute more than 80 percent of the American population in each decade from 1790 through 1990, have held the vast majority of elected offices at the federal level and most localities, have led America's most powerful companies at far greater rates than people of color, and possess a disproportionate amount of the national wealth. Thus, throughout America's history, Jardina argues, white Americans "have been, for all intents and purposes, securely positioned atop the country's racial hierarchy, maintaining their status as the dominant group in American society" (p. 12). While the Civil Rights movement certainly won some hard-earned freedoms and rights for black Americans, nonetheless white Americans' dominance in the racial hierarchy throughout America's history has been maintained.

As a consequence of this dominance, white Americans have never had to reconcile their racial identity with their national identity, as have black Americans who suffered what W.E.B Dubois termed "double consciousness", an internal conflict between one's marginalized racial identity and one's American identity (Dubois 1903). Rather, for white Americans, there has been a longstanding implication that an American identity is best exemplified by white people, and consequently, whiteness and national belonging have been conflated.

Race and racial attitudes have long been intertwined with perceptions and designations of certain groups as more or less desirable/eligible for citizenship (King and Smith 2011; Smith 1997; Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2010). From its original founding, the United States has been envisioned as white, and as a consequence, whiteness has implied belonging and therefore full citizenship. Whiteness, then, confers all the benefits of national belonging, but for members of other racial groups, an inherent tension has long existed between

their racial identity and the degree to which they are treated as full members of the American polity.[3]

As a consequence of this social, cultural, economic, and political dominance, many scholars have theorized that whiteness is a force invisible to those who possess it (Mills 1997; Sears and Savalei 2006; DiAngelo, 2018; Lipsitz 1998; Delgado and Stefanic 1997; Flagg 1993; Frankenberg 1993; Perry 2001; Doane 1997). Charles Mills (1997) argues,

> "in a racially structured polity, the only people who can find it psychologically possible to deny the centrality of race are those who are racially privileged, for whom race is invisible precisely because the world is structured around them….the fish does not see the water, and whites do not see the racial nature of a white polity because it is natural to them, the element in which they move" (p. 76).

Sociologist Robin DiAngelo (2018) similarly points out that white supremacy treats white people, culture, and institutions as

> "the norm or standard for human, and people of color as a deviation from that norm. Whiteness is not acknowledged by white people, and the white reference point is assumed to be universal and is imposed on everyone. White people find it very difficult to think about whiteness as a specific state of being that could have an impact on one's life and perceptions " (p. 25).

Sears and Savalei (2006) have argued that whiteness is not a conscious identity for whites unless circumstances converge to make it salient, such as the busing controversy in Boston in the

[3] Importantly, which groups are counted as white and which ones aren't has shifted throughout the last century. In its original form, whiteness encompassed only Anglo-Saxon Protestants; throughout the 20th century, the definition evolved to include groups such as Irish, Italian, Catholic, and Jewish Americans (Haney Lopez 2006; Ignatiev 1995; M Jacobson 1999). Nonetheless, while the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups in the "white" category has shifted throughout the last century, what has remained permanent is the placement of white at the top of the racial hierarchy, and by extension, whites' designation as prototypical citizens who reap the full benefits of national belonging (Haney Lopez 2006; Hattam 2007; M Jacobson 1999; Masuoka and Junn 2013).

1970s. But by and large, given their dominant status in American society, in terms of numeric advantage as well as their social, economic, and political power, the authors argue that

> "whites' whiteness is usually likely to be no more noteworthy to them than is breathing the air around them. White group consciousness is therefore not likely to be a major force in whites' political attitudes" (p. 901).

However, a large and growing body of research suggests that the nation's first black president posed a profound symbolic threat to white hegemony (Jardina 2019) and indeed, his tenure was marked by a rise of insidious racial animus (Kam and Kinder 2012; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler 2012abc; Tesler and Sears 2010). Michael Tesler (2016) argues that since Barack Obama's first election in 2008, the American public has become increasingly polarized based on racial attitudes, creating what he terms a "most-racial" era of politics in which racially liberal and racially conservative voters have grown increasingly divided across myriad political issues, even those ostensibly unrelated to racial issues.

Many studies have shown that a variety of racial attitudes—racial resentment, antiblack stereotypes, and old fashioned racism, to name a few—were all more predictive of 2008 voting behavior than voting behavior in prior election contests, suggesting a unique influence of racial attitudes when a black man was on the ballot (Tesler and Sears 2010; Weisberg and Devine 2010; Piston 2010; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Jackman and Vavreck 2012; Tesler 2012a). Furthermore, these racial attitudes were also more predictive of voter preferences in the 2008 general election than they were in hypothetical matchups between John McCain and Hillary Clinton, or John McCain and John Edwards, two white candidates who also competed in the Democratic primary (Tesler and Sears 2010; Jackman and Vavreck 2012; Kinder and Ryan 2012; Tesler 2012a). Based on these findings, many scholars have concluded that Obama's

living embodiment of a nonwhite racial identity created a context in which Obama's race was chronically accessible and therefore top-of-mind for voters in a way that was both unprecedented and "difficult to deactivate" (Tesler 2016 p. 17; see also Tesler and Sears 2010; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012).

Importantly, these effects did not take hold solely among racially resentful whites. Rather, the outsized influence of racial attitudes in the Obama era occurred both for racially conservative and racially liberal whites, a phenomenon that Tesler and Sears (2010) term the "two sides of racialization," whereby Obama both underperformed among racially resentful whites but also overperformed among racially liberal whites (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler 2016).

Obama's presence on the ticket, and subsequent occupation of the presidency, racialized more than just voting behavior. Rather, he produced a "spillover of racialization," where public opinion towards anything associated with Obama became racialized as a consequence. Thus, racial attitudes produced considerably polarized responses to any policies that were associated with Obama (Tesler and Sears 2010; Tesler 2012b, 2016) such as healthcare and tax policy. In perhaps the most telling and creative example yet shown, Tesler (2016) conducted an online study assessing white respondents' favorability ratings of politicians' dogs. All respondents were shown the Clinton's chocolate lab, Buddy. Half the respondents were also shown Bo, the Obama's Portuguese water dog, and the other half were told that this dog actually was Splash, a Portuguese water dog that belonged to the late Senator Ted Kennedy. Results indicate that racially resentful whites strongly preferred Buddy Clinton to Bo Obama, while racially resentful whites in the Splash Kennedy condition showed minimal differences in approval of the two pets.

"We can confidently conclude," Tesler summarizes, "that the spillover of racialization even extended into evaluations of Portuguese water dogs" (p. 89).

Demonstrably, the belief that Obama's election represented the dawning of a post-racial era in which racial attitudes would cease to exert great influence over sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors proved to be a myth. To the contrary, in a prescient excerpt from their 2010 book, Tesler and Sears aptly predicted that "if anything, American partisan politics could easily become increasingly organized by racial attitudes during the Obama presidency" (p. 9).

Importantly, the election of a black President is not the only source of profound racial threat that white Americans experienced during the Obama era. Per the 2012 US Census, by 2050, non-Hispanic white Americans are projected to comprise a numerical minority in the United States for the first time in the country's history (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2012). Thus, on two important fronts, white Americans, for the first time, were confronted with a looming threat of declining dominance. Research has shown that perceived threats to a group's dominance can trigger greater emphasis on conformity to the ingroup's norms, greater antipathy for outgroup members (Feldman and Stenner 1997; Stenner 2005), and a preference for status quo social hierarchies (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway 2003).

Under these conditions, scholars began to unearth evidence that whiteness, for white Americans, started to become visible. Research by Danbold and Huo (2015) shows that because white Americans now constitute a declining proportion of the U.S. population, many perceive a threat to their status as prototypical Americans, prompting them to be more supportive of cultural assimilation and less supportive of diversity initiatives. Norton and Sommers (2011) have shown that white Americans tend to hold zero-sum perceptions of racial discrimination: whites' perceptions that racial discrimination against black Americans has decreased in the last half-

century is associated with perceived *increase* in racial discrimination against white Americans over the same period of time. Moreover, the study indicates that white Americans now perceive "anti-white bias" to be a larger problem in society than anti-black bias. Importantly, this development links with partisan attachments: Craig and Richeson (2014) have shown that making these shifting racial demographics salient to white survey respondents leads them to be more supportive of the Republican Party, political conservatism, and conservative policy positions. A recent study found that voters' preferences on issues that related to group dominance—namely, America's global reputation as a superpower and demographic change that undermines white hegemony domestically—impacted candidate preference in 2016 (Mutz 2018).

Ashley Jardina (2019) examines whites' reactions to changing demographics through the lens of *white identity*, a sense of commonality, solidarity, and attachment with one's racial group. Against the backdrop of a changing nation, Jardina writes,

> "many whites have described themselves as outnumbered, disadvantaged, and even oppressed. They have voiced their anxiety over America's waning numerical majority and have questioned what this means for the future of the nation. They have worried that they soon may face discrimination based on their own race, if they do not already" (p. 3).

As whites Americans become aware of a threat to their dominance, this threat—both the real and the imagined or perceived—has led a considerable proportion to view their racial group status as endangered and in need of defense. Consequently, Jardina argues, white group consciousness and racial solidarity "now plays a central role in the way many whites orient themselves to the political and social world" (p. 4). White Americans who have high white identity tend to hold more exclusionary views of what constitutes an American identity, perceive

higher rates of competition between racial groups, and believe that white Americans are being treated unfairly.

Thus, the landscape that Trump joined when he first announced his presidential candidacy in 2015 was far from racially harmonious. Rather, racial animus and anxieties among white voters had approached a fever pitch, partially instigated by the first black president, compounded by projections of demographic change, and nurtured by right wing media. In short, white voters who were threatened by recent trends could clearly distinguish which party would give them safe haven and advance their goals in the next election.

Ultimately, I argue that to view Trump as an instigator of sociopolitical division, rather than the electoral beneficiary of it, is a mistake. Rather, I contend that the outsized role of race and racial attitudes in the 2016 election of Donald Trump, the most openly racist white candidate in the modern era, ought to be contextualized as a continuation of Obama era trends, fed by a long legacy of racial attitudes reorganizing party coalitions and stances and culminating in what many term the "Two Americas"—party coalitions that have grown increasingly divided, with race as a primary agent of stratification.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. In Chapter Two, I trace the waning of the New Deal coalitions from 1980 to 2016, examining the demographic profiles of support for Trump and contextualizing them as trends that predated his campaign. In Chapter Three, I assess how attitudes that revolve around an "us versus them" mentality, both pertaining to racial identities as well as to political identities, predict general election vote choice, primary vote choice, and issue positions over the past five presidential cycles. I aim to demonstrate that these "us versus them" beliefs predict support for the Republican candidate consistently prior to Trump's rise, and that while these relationships strengthen considerably during the Obama era, they become only

slightly stronger in 2016, contradicting the narrative that these attitudes became newly influential in 2016. In Chapter Four, I assess how different racial attitudes, namely ethnocentrism and racial resentment, predict presidential job approval over the past four presidential administrations, in order to show that the racialization of these appraisals first took hold not when Trump was the target of evaluation, but began in 2012, when Obama was the target. In Chapter Five, I test for shifts over time in the prevalence of racial attitudes among white voters in order to assess whether white Republicans show evidence of rising racial conservatism in the Trump era, or whether white Democrats show a surge of liberalization on ethnocentrism and racial resentment. Chapter Six concludes by weaving these narratives together and discusses the implications of this research.

Chapter Two

Over the past half century, the demographics of partisan coalitions have shifted meaningfully, along several fault lines including, but not limited to, race, region, religion, and socioeconomic status (Manza and Brooks 2011). Furthermore, not only have the coalitions shifted, but the gap between the parties has intensified: per a Brookings Institution report, the demographic composition of the Democratic and Republican parties in 2016 was more distinct than at any time in the preceding 36 years, or, put differently, the past nine presidential election cycles (Griffin, Frey, and Teixeira, 2019). In this chapter, I trace several factors related to these demographic shifts—race, region, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status—from a historical perspective. I aim to demonstrate that many of these demographic groups, lauded as newfound sources of support for Trump in 2016 relative to prior cycles, have been trending towards the Republican Party for several election cycles.

The Waning of the New Deal Coalitions, 1980-2016

Race

Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the black American polity began to shift its partisan allegiances, realigning from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party beginning in the mid 1960s (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994). From that time onwards, black voters have become a core component of the base of the Democratic Party and represent a highly consolidated voting bloc. Per the ANES, in 1980, 93% of black voters who cast a vote for one of the two major candidates for President voted for the Democrat, Jimmy Carter; in 2016, 95% voted for the Democrat, Hillary Clinton. Consequently, the remainder of this chapter focuses on the white electorate, among whom the reorganization of party coalitions between 1980 and 2016 took hold.

Region

In addition to securing black voters for the Democratic Party, racial realignment also largely secured the former Confederate States for the Republican Party, beginning in the 1964 and solidifying by the 1990s (Valentino and Sears 2005; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2014; Kuziemko and Washington 2018). Once solidly Democratic, Southern states have grown increasingly red in the last half century, culminating in an almost impenetrable stronghold for the GOP, at least at the state level (Black and Black 2002; 2007; Bullock and Rozell 2014). Per the ANES, by 1980, The Republican Party enjoyed 64% of the two-party vote share among white southerners; this figure grew only marginally, to 68%, by 2016. In addition to region of the country, regionality—the urban rural divide—has become another demarcating factor of the political landscape. Throughout the last half-century, partisanship has grown increasingly correlated with population density (Badger and Bui 2016), with urban areas growing increasingly Democratic and rural areas increasingly Republican.

Religion

The parties have also drifted apart on the matter of religion, and in recent cycles, have become more noticeably distinct in their constituencies. New Deal era coalitions featured strong support for the Democratic Party among Catholics and Jews, while non-Southern white Protestants were loyal to the Republican Party (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1948). In the intervening years, these denominational differences have become less significant, and the degree of religious observance constitutes a new fault line, with highly religious people of all backgrounds tending to support the Republican Party.

A particularly strong Republican constituency in the 21st century are white Evangelical Protestants, who constitute 25% of the US population as of 2014 (Pew 2015). In the late 1980s,

white Evangelical Protestants were split relatively evenly in their partisanship (31% Republican, 31% Democratic). By 2003, they preferred the Republican party by a considerable margin, 43% to 22% (Pew 2003). Figure 2.1 depicts the two-party vote share among white Evangelicals in 1980 compared to 2016 as reported by the ANES.

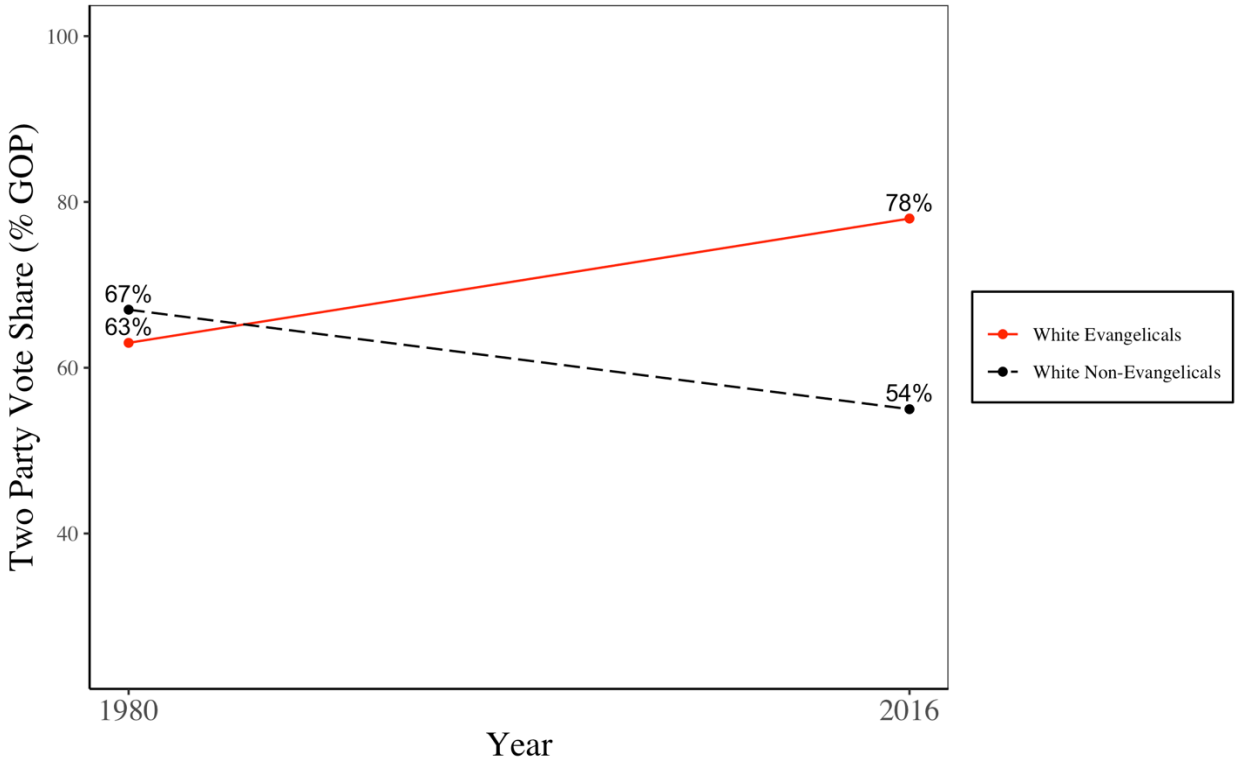

Figure 2.1
White Evangelicals and Two-Party Vote Share, 1980-2016

While white Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals only differed by about 4 points in their support for Reagan in the 1980 election, by 2016, they had separated by a 24-point margin. Indeed, politics and religion have grown so intertwined that the mass public is now able to accurately decipher differences between the two parties on matters of religion and morality. As a consequence, where religious attachment has long been interpreted as a driver of partisanship, Michelle Margolis (2018) has shown that highly partisan environments can now drive religious attachment.

Socioeconomic Status

Another demographic consideration is socioeconomic status, defined for the purposes of this dissertation as income, education, and their interaction. In their seminal book, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*, Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) wrote: "In our discussion of social differentiation in politics, the place to start is the "obvious" place": the effect of differing socioeconomic status on political attitudes. If there is one social characteristic that is generally admitted to affect opinion on public affairs, at least since 1932, this is it" (p. 55). They defined socioeconomic status as an interaction between occupation, education level, and interviewer rating, but their argument about the influence of income was straightforward: wealthier people voted Republican at higher rates than non-wealthy people.

Kitschelt and Rehm (2019) specifically address the intersection of income and education, noting that New Deal constituencies featured a bedrock of Democratic support among the low education/low income voters, while high education/high income were loyal to the Republican Party. They argue that as America transitions from an industrial to a knowledge society, the parties are realigning by socioeconomic group, and the swing voters and core constituencies have flipped. Low income/low education voters, once reliably Democratic, and high income/high education voters, once reliably Republican, have now become swing voters. Conversely, the New Deal era swing voters—low income/high education voters, and high income/low education voters—have now become important components of each party's base. Specifically, low income/high education voters have become solidly Democratic, and high income/low education voters solidly Republican.

Figure 2.2 depicts the two-party vote share from 1980 to 2016 among these four groups as reported by the ANES (white respondents only).[4] High education voters are shown in blue, low education in red, with solid lines representing high income voters.

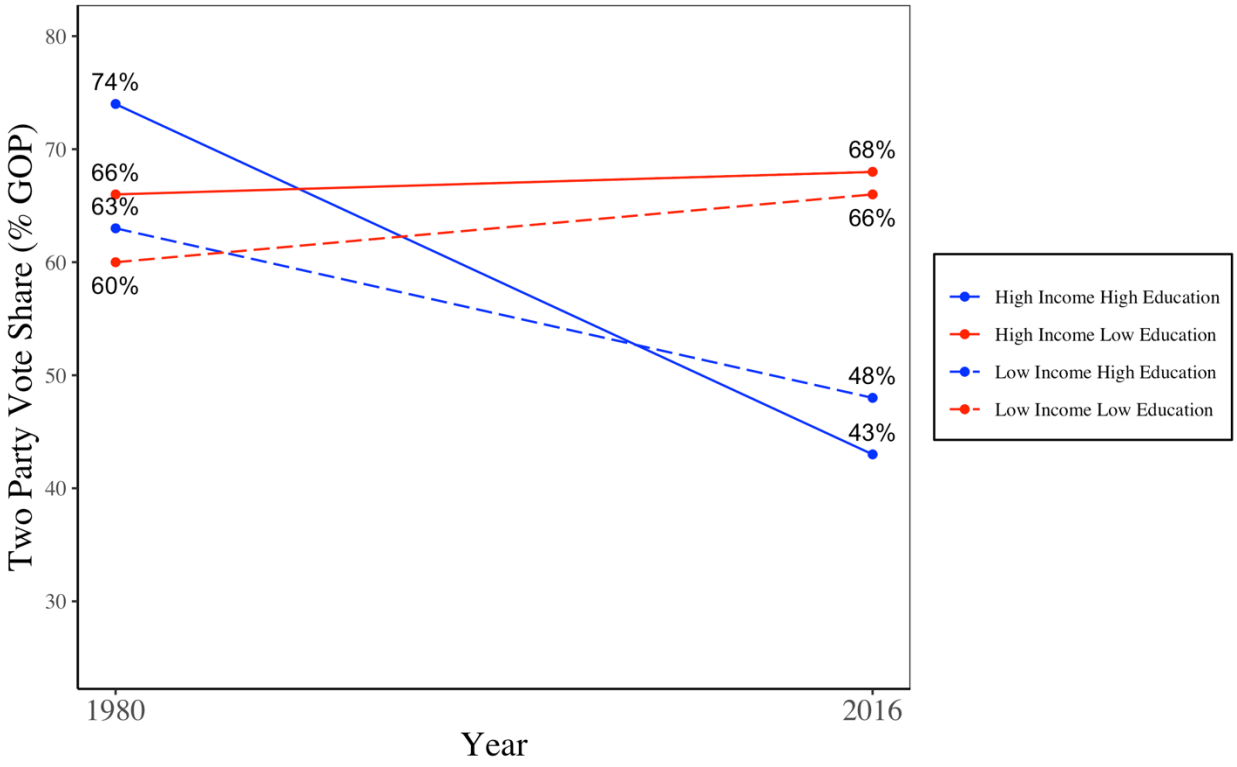

Figure 2.2
Income, Education, and Two-Party Vote Share, 1980-2016

Demonstrably, the greatest shifts took place among high income high education voters, who shifted towards the Democratic Party by a 31-point margin. However, the takeaway here is that education is the primary stratifying variable in this analysis. High education voters, net of income, have shifted towards the Democratic Party: whereas in 1980, there was an 11-point gap among the college educated based on income, by 2016, the gap narrowed to 5 points. Even more well-consolidated by 2016 are the non-college educated voters. Whereas in 1980, income level

[4] Education separated into *high* and *low* based on whether or not respondents attained a college degree. Income separated into *high* and *low* based on income percentile: 0 through 67th percentile as *low*, 68th through 100th percentile as *high.*

produced a 6-point gap among non-college educated voters, by 2016, the gap closed to a mere 2 points. As of the most recent election, in terms of two-party vote share, non-college educated white voters with high versus low incomes are virtually indistinguishable.

Gender

Another factor that impacts the makeup of party coalitions is gender. Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999) note that the gender gap—defined as the difference between men and women in both partisan affiliation and two-party vote choice—emerged as a meaningful feature of the electoral landscape by the mid-1980s. They argue that while many interpret the gender gap as a function of women's shifting preferences towards the Democratic Party, the gender gap is actually a function of shifting politics among men, towards the Republican Party, with women's political preferences holding steady. Per the ANES, in the 1980 election, women and men differed in their two-party vote choice by a six-point margin; in 2016, that gap persisted, at seven percentage points.

Gender and Education

While the gender divide has held relatively steady from 1980 through the most recent presidential cycle, the interactive effect of gender and education level adds an important layer. Figure 2.3 summarizes the 2x2 typology of gender and education level (defined by whether respondents attained a college degree) and two-party vote share from 1980 through 2016 among white voters.

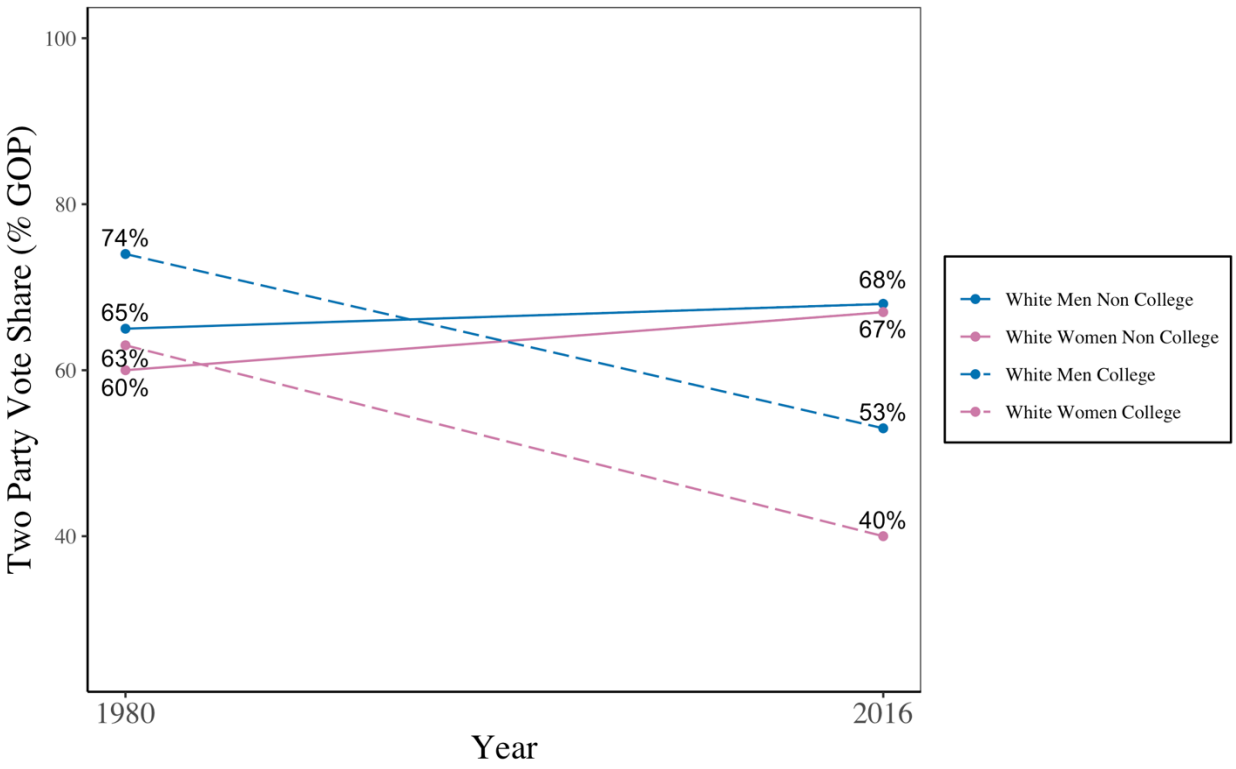

Figure 2.3
Gender, Education, and Two-Party Vote, 1980-2016

Demonstrably, gender gap between men and women becomes less of a clear delineation once educational attainment is taken into account. While white women with college degrees have pivoted away from the Republican Party since 1980, white women *without* college degrees have migrated *towards* it. White non-college educated men and women look virtually indistinguishable by 2016, and while a gender gap persists between college educated men and women, both have shifted more Democratic at even rates.

Obama to Trump: 2008-2016

Thus, while certain demographic groups, such as white Evangelicals and southerners, had crystallized their realignment well before the latest election, the 2016 election cast certain other aspects of the waning New Deal coalitions into particularly stark relief. One such example is region. Clinton lost many of the counties with the lowest population density

, which Obama had won in 2012, and counties with Republican majorities showed less support for Clinton in 2016 than 2012. Further, the counties that showed the greatest swings from 2012 Obama support to 2016 Trump support were primarily in the Midwest and in non-urban counties (Badger, Quoctrung, and Pearce 2016).

Another aspect of the waning New Deal coalition that accelerated in recent years is the emergence of the "diploma divide." Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck (2018) consider these shifts in partisanship on the basis of educational attainment to be a post-2008 phenomenon. During the period 1992 and 2008, they find that white Americans without a college degree did not show any systematic preference for the Democratic or Republican Party, but by 2015, a chasm had emerged. White voters who had completed some or all of high school were 24 percentage points more Republican than Democratic, and those who had completed high school but did not have a four-year college degree were 19 points more Republican.

In examining these shifts specifically in the most recent elections, it is also pertinent to assess the "diploma divide" by gender. In the wake of Trump's victory, media narratives abounded that pointed to Trump's success with non-college educated voters, particularly men, as both a lynchpin to his electoral success and a source of support that distinguished him from his predecessors. In examination of that narrative, Table 2.1 summarizes the proportion of Obama '08-Romney '12 white voters, and Obama '12-Trump '16 white voters, by gender and education, as reported in the CCES.

Table 2.1
Proportion of Vote Switchers by Gender and Education, 2008-2016

		Obama '08—Romney '12 Voters	Obama '12—Trump '16 Voters
Non-College	Men	28%	30%
	Women	37%	41%
College	Men	21%	16%
	Women	15%	13%
	Total	=100% (N=1243)	=100% (N=1741)

What is notable here is that the demographic composition of who makes this switch from Democrat to Republican looks very comparable in 2016 to the composition in 2012. 28% of Obama-Romney voters in '12 were non-college educated men; this number only increased by 2% for the Obama-Trump voter group in '16. Similarly, 37% of Obama-Romney voters in '12 were non-college educated women, and this number increased by 4% among the Obama-Trump voters in '16. Thus, despite the media narrative heralding Trump's enormous success with non-college educated voters, the demographic composition of people who voted Democratic in 2012 and Republican in 2016 looks very similar to the composition of people who voted Democratic in 2008 and turned Republican in 2012.

Interestingly, when we examine Obama-Romney voters and Obama-Trump voters by this 2x2 typology, it is evident that the group making up the largest proportion of Obama-Romney *and* Obama-Trump white switchers is not the much-touted white men without college degrees, but white *women* without college degrees. This finding reinforces the findings reported earlier in this chapter: the gender gap becomes much more nuanced once educational attainment gets

factored in. While women average more Democratic than men, this distinction disappears when concentrating specifically on voters without college degrees.

Furthermore, while the "diploma divide" has certainly widened since 2012, it is important to contextualize this widening gap by looking further back in time than the last presidential cycle. Per the CCES, Romney won 3.8% fewer white college-educated men in 2012 than McCain won in 2008, and Trump won 2.4% fewer in 2016 than Romney in 2012. Similarly, Romney won 2.4% fewer white college-educated women in 2012 than McCain won in 2008, and Trump lost another 3.6% in 2016 under Romney's margin. In other words, college-educated voters, both men and women, have continuously shifted towards the Democratic Party over the most recent election cycles, but at fairly continuous rates from 2008 to 2012 as from 2012 to 2016. We do not see a more abrupt decline in GOP vote-share among college educated voters from 2012 to 2016, compared to 2008 to 2012.

Furthermore, among non-college educated white voters, a group widely credited for helping tip the scales for Trump in particularly high numbers, the pattern of change is not necessarily straightforward. Per the CCES, while Trump won 5.9% more of the white male non-college-educated vote than Romney in 2012, he only improved on McCain's 2008 margin by 2.5%, as Obama improved slightly among this group in 2012 relative to his margin in 2008. Similarly, Trump won 5.4% more of the white female non-college-educated vote than Romney in 2012, but that constitutes only a 2.6% improvement over McCain's margin in 2008. Thus Trump's widely touted gains among white non-college-educated voters relative to 2012 margins look more overstated when 2008 numbers are taken into account.

From Demographics to Predispositions

Importantly, these categories of demographic change contain meaningful overlap. For example: on average, white Evangelical Protestants have lower educational attainment, and a full half live in the south. What thread, if any, binds all of these demographic correlates of change together into a decipherable pattern? What may link the migration—both long term and short term— towards the Republican Party among Evangelicals, Southerners, rural voters, and the non-college educated? I argue that the primary answer is racial attitudes.

Literature shows that demographic factors including, but not limited, to region, religion, and education level are all related to racial prejudice among whites (Sears and Valentino 2005; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Glaser 1994; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Jackman 1994). For instance, racial animus is higher, in the aggregate, in formerly Confederate states than outside the American south (Sears and Valentino 2005), and Oliver and Mendelberg (2000) find that one's broad social and environmental context, including the average education level of one's community, is associated with the prevalence and nature of racial attitudes.

Thus, not only must Trump's success among particular demographic groups be contextualized as a continuation of demographic shifts in party coalitions that preceded 2016, but symbolic racial predispositions must also be taken into account, over and above the influence of demographic factors. Were racial attitudes more impactful on white Americans' voting behavior, issue positions, and evaluations of presidential job performance when Trump was on the ballot, compared to prior cycles? Or, again, is he better interpreted as a continuation of preexisting trends?

Chapter Three

Donald Trump's political ascendency, from total outsider to the Republican nominee to President of the United States, has been described as a shocking and unprecedented upset ("Trump pulls off biggest upset in U.S. history," *Politico*; "Donald Trump's stunning upset", *The Atlantic*; "Donald Trump wins the presidency in stunning upset over Clinton," *The Washington Post*; "Donald Trump is elected president in stunning repudiation of the establishment," *The New York Times*). Indeed, a political neophyte with absolutely no prior experience in government or military winning the presidency *was* unprecedented in modern American politics until 2016.

Throughout this period, his unexpected rise has been punctuated by claims from some elite party insiders that he is not a true Republican, and that he has bastardized the party and its platform, reshaping and recharacterizing it into something unrecognizable to fellow partisans. These judgments were based both on Trump's issue-position platform that departed from Republican orthodoxy—he called for isolationist foreign policies and increased infrastructure spending, for example—as well as his brash and vulgar way of speaking about racial minorities, immigrants, women, and myriad other groups. In 2017, former Republican Senator John Danforth published an opinion piece in the Washington Post in which he argued that the Republican Party is predicated on norms of inclusion and unity, and that for this reason, Trump is "exactly what Republicans are not." Republicans, he insisted, are the party of Lincoln, "the party of the Union, and [Trump] is the most divisive president in our history…His message is, 'You are not one of us'" ("The real reason Trump is not a Republican," *The Washington Post*). Thus, to many party insiders, Trump's divisive and racist rhetoric constituted a radical departure from traditional Republican norms and ideals. But was his outsider status, in terms of lack of prior political experience, unorthodox policy positions, as well as personal conduct, reflected by

marked shifts in public opinion? Were Trump voters motivated by a new set of predispositions compared to prior Republican voters?

In this chapter, I argue that while Trump may represent a stylistic departure from prior Republican norms, his supporters were motivated by similar predispositions as were Republican voters in prior election cycles. I examine Trump's divisiveness through two lenses, both of which emphasize partitioning Americans along sociopolitical fault lines that are pertinent to today's landscape: ethnocentrism and political polarization.

Ethnocentrism

Scientific inquiry into the concept of ethnocentrism can be traced to evolutionary theorists of the nineteenth century. Charles Darwin (1879) argued that competition with groups other than one's own inclines individuals towards cooperation with members of their own group, which in turn promotes the wellbeing of their ingroup. William Graham Sumner, a prominent Social Darwinist, is credited with coining the term "ethnocentrism" in his seminal work, *Folkways (A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals)*, published in 1906. Sumner argued that members of groups view their own folkways as superior to those of other groups, and termed this phenomenon ethnocentrism: "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (Sumner, 1906 [2002], p. 13). Thus, Sumner's definition of ethnocentrism is composed of two elements: a liking and preference for one's ingroup, and a dislike or even hostility for outgroups (Sumner, 1911).

The body of literature on ethnocentrism that has grown out of Sumner's work features considerable disagreement exists as to whether ethnocentrism necessarily involves both ingroup preference and outgroup denigration, a debate stimulated by different traditions in social

psychology and political science. Authoritarian personality theorists, for example, have treated ethnocentrism as generalized hostility towards an amalgam of ethnic groups, and have argued that the authoritarian personality underlies the ethnocentric worldview (e.g. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1998; Beswick & Hills, 1969). Many of these theorists emphasize hostility towards the outgroup explicitly in constructing their measurements (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1998; Beswick & Hills, 1969). Social identity theorists, however, have disagreed with the authoritarian personality theorists who emphasize outgroup hostility, and have argued that ingroup favoritism is the hallmark of ethnocentrism. Tajfel and Turner (1986), for example, consider ingroup bias to be "the laboratory analogue of real-world ethnocentrism" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13). Still others have cautioned against viewing outgroup bias as invariably linked to ingroup bias, arguing that one can exist in the absence of the other (e.g. Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Campbell, 1976; de Figuieredo & Elkins, 2003).

In their seminal 2009 book *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*, Kinder and Kam argue that ingroup preference *and* outgroup hostility are elements of ethnocentrism. Consequently, they define the concept as a predisposition to partition society into ingroups and outgroups. Moreover, they argue that because ingroup members are presumed to be virtuous, while outgroup members are viewed as less desirable, ethnocentrism constitutes an inclination to promote the interests of the ingroup and oppose those of the outgroup. They further emphasize that ethnocentrism should be treated as a spectrum of attitudes, rather than a binary categorization (ethnocentric or non-ethnocentric). Certain individuals will perhaps exhibit higher or lower levels of ethnocentrism, but on average, most people demonstrate some degree of ingroup preference over other groups.

As demonstrated by extensive prior scholarship, ethnocentrism has long exerted influence over political attitudes, particularly when it comes to candidates and issues tinged with racial attitudes, including, for example, support for the war on terror (Kam & Kinder, 2007). More broadly, racial hostility broadly influenced how the mass public reacted to Obama throughout his campaign and two-term Administration (Tesler and Sears 2010; Tesler 2016; Kinder & Kam, 2012).

I argue for examining Trump's profile of support among the American public through the lens of ethnocentrism because it provides a measure of both ingroup love and outgroup hate, where other approaches to examining how whites' racial attitudes impact political preferences have historically emphasized outgroup animosity. Scholars of racial prejudice and racial resentment, for example, argue that whites' racial attitudes remain fixed on their dislike for minority groups, primarily African Americans (Kinder and Sears, 1981; Kinder and Sanders, 1996). They have posited that whites do not possess strong racial identities and racially-based solidarity with fellow whites, and that white identity has not had much political impact in the modern era (Sears and Savalei, 2006; Sears and Henry, 2005). Newer scholarship on white identity, however, has emphasized that ingroup favoritism is an integral component to whites' racial attitudes; indeed, Jardina (2019) cautions against overlooking the influence of white ingroup favoritism in interpreting how racial attitudes among whites shape their political preferences, noting that "the future of white racial attitudes in American politics may be defined by both racial prejudice and racial solidarity" (p. 17).

Trump's messaging and rhetoric has revolved around both ingroup pride *and* outgroup dislike and is often explicitly oriented towards an "us versus them" worldview. He launched his campaign in June of 2015 by informing the gathering of supporters that "when Mexico sends its

people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you," and his signature policy proposal of the 2016 campaign, a border wall with Mexico, conjured a physical manifestation of this stance. When NFL players, led by Colin Kaepernick, began kneeling during the National Anthem to protest police brutality, Trump criticized the behavior by arguing it showed "a lack of respect for our country" and suggested that Kaepernick "should find a country that works better for him" ("Donald Trump on Kaepernick," *NFL.com*). Across many racially tinged controversies, Trump employed language that emphasized "us versus them," casting racial minorities somewhere along a spectrum from outsider to enemy, and emphasizing pride in the racial majority ingroup, namely whites, which was often couched in the language of patriotism. Further, Trump's anti-minority rhetoric has targeted myriad groups, including but not limited to the Latinx community, Muslims, Black Americans, and Black immigrants, and thus measures of prejudice towards specific groups may fail to capture the broad range of his targets.

Thus, I examine Trump's base of support through the lens of ethnocentrism in order to capture both elements of his appeal—his solidarity with white voters, and his wide-ranging animus towards nonwhites. Given that Trump seems to have utilized ethnocentric language with such remarkable explicitness and transparency, were his supporters more galvanized by ethnocentric beliefs than white voters in recent prior election cycles? Did his relatively unprecedented bluntness manifest in a markedly different profile of public support, relative to his Republican predecessors?

Polarization

Political polarization constitutes a second major source of sociopolitical cleavage in contemporary American politics (for a review, see Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, and Westwood, 2019). A large segment of polarization research has focused on policy preferences;

that is, whether Democrats and Republicans are taking increasingly polarized positions on the issues. There is strong evidence that political elites have been increasingly polarizing in terms of policy issues and ideological stances (Hetherington, 2001; McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006).

However, evidence of ideological polarization among the mass public is far less conclusive. Some argue that perhaps elite polarization is a reaction to mass polarization, though this finding is restricted to strong partisans and believed to be overestimated (Westfall, Van Boven, Chambers, & Judd, 2015; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016). Abramowitz (2010) found that when ideological beliefs were evaluated as a whole, rather than as specific issue positions evaluated in isolation, the electorate has, in fact, grown more ideologically polarized. However, other scholars argue that this phenomenon is better treated as partisans sorting their beliefs to correspond with their partisan identities with increasing accuracy (Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2005; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008; Levendusky, 2009).

However, while evidence for ideological polarization at the mass public level is mixed, the fact that Democrats and Republicans are increasingly antagonistic towards one another is a well-supported phenomenon. Affective polarization is defined as the tendency to evaluate ingroup partisans positively and outgroup partisans negatively (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). With this treatment of polarization as an affective preference for the ingroup over the outgroup, the evidence suggests that polarization is unmistakably increasing even considering the public as a whole (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Mason, 2015; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Abramowitz, 2018ab).

Moreover, polarization is manifested quite broadly, in both political and nonpolitical attitudes and behaviors. With respect to political behaviors, affective polarization predicts stronger political biases, greater engagement with activism, and greater partisan anger (Mason,

2015). Within the realm of interpersonal and social behavior, affective polarization results in social distancing from outgroup partisans, meaning that partisans feel increasingly uncomfortable interacting with outgroup partisans across social contexts. Studies have shown that affective polarization has spilled over into a variety of apolitical contexts, including employer hiring practices (Gift and Gift, 2015) and dating behavior (Huber and Malhotra, 2017). One study by Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes (2012) compared attitudes about ingroup and outgroup members based on race, religion, and partisanship from the 1960s through 2008. They found that respondents' difference scores in affective ratings for same-race versus different-race individuals, and those towards individuals of the same religious faith or different religious faith, have shrunk dramatically throughout that time period. However, those difference scores on the basis of partisanship grew enormously during the same period of time. A similar study found that the degree to which partisans overtly discriminate against outgroup partisans now exceeds overt discrimination on the basis of race (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). Notably, however, these findings may conflate animosity towards outgroup partisans with animosity towards politics in general (Klar, Krupnikov, and Ryan, 2018).

Furthermore, dislike for individuals on the basis of their political allegiance is not tethered to social norms governing expression of overt hostility, such as attitudes based on religion or race (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012). One explanation for why affective polarization produces such explicitly hostile behavior, while attitudes about members of other races or religious groups are frequently more concealed, is that Americans view political affiliation as a reflection of their morality. According to a 2016 Pew study, sixty five percent of Americans view politics as a window into a person's character (Pew, 2016).

Ultimately, polarization, when defined on the basis of affective ratings of ingroup and outgroup partisans, has proved a deeply divisive force in our social and political world. Nonetheless, this trend predates Trump's improbable political rise. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell famously declared on the eve of the 2010 midterms that the "single most important thing [Republicans] want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president." Thereafter he and others held Republican senators and congressmen to the standard of unflinching opposition to everything Obama sought to accomplish ("The GOP's no-compromise pledge", *Politico*). Furthermore, much of the existing scholarship on affective polarization cited here relies on data collected during the Obama presidency. Demonstrably, this elite-level affective polarization was already reflected in mass opinion during the Obama era.

Did Trump weaponize this pre-existing source of division to an unprecedented degree, capitalizing on Republican voters' affective loathing and distrust of Democrats and liberals more effectively than his Republican predecessors? His opponent in the general election, Hillary Rodham Clinton, was certainly the target of highly polarized judgments. She has long been a lightning rod for Republican animosity: as First Lady in the 1990s, the mass public tended to evaluate her with either strong approval or disapproval, an intensity that was unusual for First Ladies (Goodwin 1993) and driven by divergent attitudes stemming both from partisan beliefs and sociocultural values (Prysby and Scavo, 2008). As of the spring of 2016, a mere 9% of Republicans held favorable views of Clinton, relative to 76% of Democrats (Gallup, 2018).

In addition to longstanding distaste for Ms. Clinton that many Republicans shared, she was also viewed as the presumptive heir to President Obama, who, from his first presidential campaign in 2007-8, was painted by Republicans as a leftist radical (Jacobson 2012; Bradberry and Jacobson 2013) and target of myriad racist antipathies (Tesler and Sears 2010; Tesler 2013,

2016; Kam and Kinder 2012). Throughout his campaign, Trump spoke about Clinton with unvarnished derision; perhaps this prompted white Republicans to flock to him during the primaries as their most ardent anti-Democratic Party ally. Thus, Trump may have capitalized on an almost uniquely polarizing opponent, one who was hated in her own right and whose unpopularity was compounded by her association to a deeply polarizing President. Perhaps he galvanized voters who despised the Democratic nominee and weaponized this affective polarization to an extent as yet unseen in modern general elections.

In order to test whether ethnocentrism and polarization exerted unique influence in the 2016 election, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I assess correlations between my key predictors—ethnocentrism and polarization, and ethnocentrism and partisanship. Should these correlations demonstrate that a relationship between these variables first emerged in 2016, this would suggest that Trump brought the party into uncharted waters, tethering Republican politics to ingroup favoritism and outgroup animosity based on political and racial identities in unprecedented fashion. Should he merely have mobilized pre-existing animosities, however, I should see growing associations between these variables over time. That would suggest that Trump is better viewed as a logical extension of trends in Republican politics than as a novel, primary instigator.

Second, I evaluate how ethnocentrism has predicted vote choice in general election contests from the prior four cycles. If Trump is truly an anomaly in modern Republican politics, I should see little or no relationship between ethnocentrism and vote choice until 2016. If, however, he reflects a continuation of previous trends, I ought to find evidence that ethnocentrism was associated with voting for Republicans in the four prior general elections.

Third, I evaluate how ethnocentrism and polarization predict attitudes in the past four election cycle on the issues arguably most pivotal to Trump supporters in 2016. The two most central were the economy (which is consistently ranked as a top concern for voters) and immigration. If Trump is an unprecedented anomaly, I ought to see little to no relationship between ethnocentrism or polarization on attitudes about the economy and immigration until 2016. If he represents an extension of previous trends, I ought to find evidence of a preexisting relationship between ethnocentrism and polarization and those two issue positions predating the 2016 election.

Finally, I evaluate the predicted probability of voting for the eventual Republican nominee over the other Republican primary candidates across the last four election cycles. If Trump is an anomaly, I should find no relationship between ethnocentrism or polarization and support for the nominee over alternative primary candidates until 2016. If he represents an extension of previous trends, I should find that ethnocentrism and polarization also predict support for the eventual nominee in prior election matchups.

Method

Data. The data are drawn from the American National Election Study (ANES) Time Series which uses a nationally representative sampling frame. The data were collected at two time points: interviews were conducted during the two months preceding the election, and then respondents were re-interviewed during the two months following the election. Prior to 2012, all interviews were face to face. Beginning in 2012, ANES adopted a dual-mode design with face-to-face interviews and Internet surveys. Given that much of the analyses to follow concentrate on how racial attitudes predict support for Republican candidates, all reported data reported in this paper are restricted to white respondents.

Ethnocentrism. Consistent with Kinder and Kam's (2009) approach, ethnocentrism is measured with affective feeling thermometer ratings. Respondents were asked to rate all four major racial groups (whites, blacks, Asians, Hispanics) from 0-100 on the feeling thermometers. The ethnocentrism variable is measured by subtracting each white individual's mean outgroup ratings (towards Asians, Hispanics, and blacks) from the ingroup rating (toward whites). The variable is keyed from -1 to +1, where values closest to +1 indicate highest levels of ethnocentrism; i.e., rating whites more highly than all three outgroups, while the most negative ratings correspond to the lowest levels of ethnocentrism (expressed through a greater affinity for outgroups over the white ingroup), and 0 represents no affective preference for ingroup or outgroup.

Polarization. Consistent with prior methodology (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015), polarization is measured with affective feeling thermometer ratings toward the parties. Respondents were asked to rate the Democratic and Republican parties separately, from 0-100 on feeling thermometers. The polarization variable is constructed by subtracting each individual's Democratic rating from the Republican rating. The variable is keyed from -1 to +1, where values closest to +1 indicate highest levels of polarization (rating the Republican party more highly than the Democratic party) while the most negative ratings correspond to greater affinity for Democrats over Republicans, and 0 represents no affective preference between Republicans and Democrats.

Partisanship[5]. Party identification was measured with the question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" Those who

[5] In order to address the potential confound of multicollinearity between partisanship and polarization, I replicate all analyses in this chapter without partisanship in the model, and the results pattern does not change; when partisanship is included, polarization suppresses the coefficient; when it is removed from the model, the effects of polarization are unchanged. These tables can be found in the Appendix.

selected either Republican or Democrat were prompted, "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)? Those who selected Independent were prompted, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" These three questions provide a 1-7 scale of party identification that incorporates "leaners," i.e. respondents who initially self-identified as Independent but on closer examination revealed a party preference. Scores closer to 1 indicate stronger Republicanism.

Ideology. Political ideology was assessed using one question: "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?" Responses were scaled from 0-1 where values closest to 1 represent the most politically conservative responses.

Primary Vote. Respondents' primary vote choice was measured with one question: "In the Presidential primary or caucus, who did you vote for?" This variable was measured in 2008, 2012, and 2016.[6] Respondents select from a list of possible candidates. The variable is dummy coded where 1=voting for the eventual Republican nominee (in 2008, John McCain, in 2012, Mitt Romney, and in 2016, Donald Trump) and 0=voting for any of the alternative Republican candidates in the survey. In 2008, the alternative candidates were Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, and Fred Thompson; in 2012, Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann, Jon Huntsman, Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, and Rick Santorum; and in 2016, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich.

[6]There was no Republican primary held in 2004. In 2000, the ANES did not survey primary voting preferences, so data from that year are unavailable.

General Election Vote. Presidential vote was dummy coded for respondents who cast a vote in the general election in the year they were surveyed (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, or 2016) and voted for either the Republican or Democratic candidate. Voting for the Republican=1, and for the Democrat=0.

The Economy. Appraisals of the strength of the national economy were measured with one question: "Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" Respondents who select either *gotten better* or *gotten worse* were prompted: "Much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?" These produce a five-point scale ranging from *much better* to *much worse*. The variable was rescaled from 0-1 where scores closer to 1 indicate more negative appraisals of the national economy.

Immigration. Attitudes towards immigration were assessed with one question, repeated in each iteration of the ANES Time Series Survey: "Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United states should be increased (a lot or a little), decreased (a lot or a little), or left the same as it is now?" Responses range on a five-point scale, from *increased a lot* to *decreased a lot*. The variable was rescaled from 0-1 where scores closer to 1 indicate more opposition to immigration.

Control variables include sex, education level, income, and whether or not respondents live in the South[7].

Results

Ethnocentrism and Polarization

[7] Dummy coded, where Southern (1) =Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Washington DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Table 3.1 summarizes the correlations between ethnocentrism and partisanship and polarization among whites in each of the years surveyed.

Table 3.1
Correlations of Ethnocentrism with Polarization and Partisanship

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
	Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism
Polarization	.05	.045	.05	.13**	.27**
Partisanship	.06	.001	.06	.09**	.20**

Note: **p<.01

Demonstrably, there were only trivial correlations between ethnocentrism and polarization in 2000 (r=.05), 2004 (r=.05) and 2008 (r=.05). A significant positive correlation between ethnocentrism and polarization emerged as of 2012[8] (r=.13), and it strengthened considerably by 2016 (r=.27). Similarly, the correlations between ethnocentrism and partisanship were trivial in 2000 (r=.06), 2004 (r=.001), and 2008 (r=.06). Ethnocentrism and partisanship correlate slightly more strongly at r=.09 in 2012 and even more highly at r=.20 in 2016. Thus, while the relationships are not enormously strong, even in 2016, it is evident that significant associations between these variables first emerged in 2012, during the Romney vs. Obama election, and not in 2016.

General Election Vote Choice

I next assessed whether Trump's appeal on the basis of these divisions is an entirely new phenomenon. Did prior Republicans who won the nomination and competed in the general election appeal to the same voter predispositions that Trump did, or can we interpret his victory as fundamentally unprecedented in terms of what predispositions were most strongly associated

[8] Importantly, I do not argue that the correlation necessarily *first* emerged in 2012; rather, 2012 is the first year in this election season Time Series where the correlation first appears. It is possible, and I would argue likely, that the correlation first emerged earlier in Obama's first term, but my inferences here are limited simply by the years that data are available.

with his support? To answer this question, I turn next to a comparison of general election outcomes through the period 2000-2016. All predicted probabilities reported below are rounded to the nearest whole number, and models control for all covariates.

Figure 3.1 shows that the relationship between ethnocentrism and Republican presidential voting, while significant throughout this period, grew especially strong beginning in 2008.

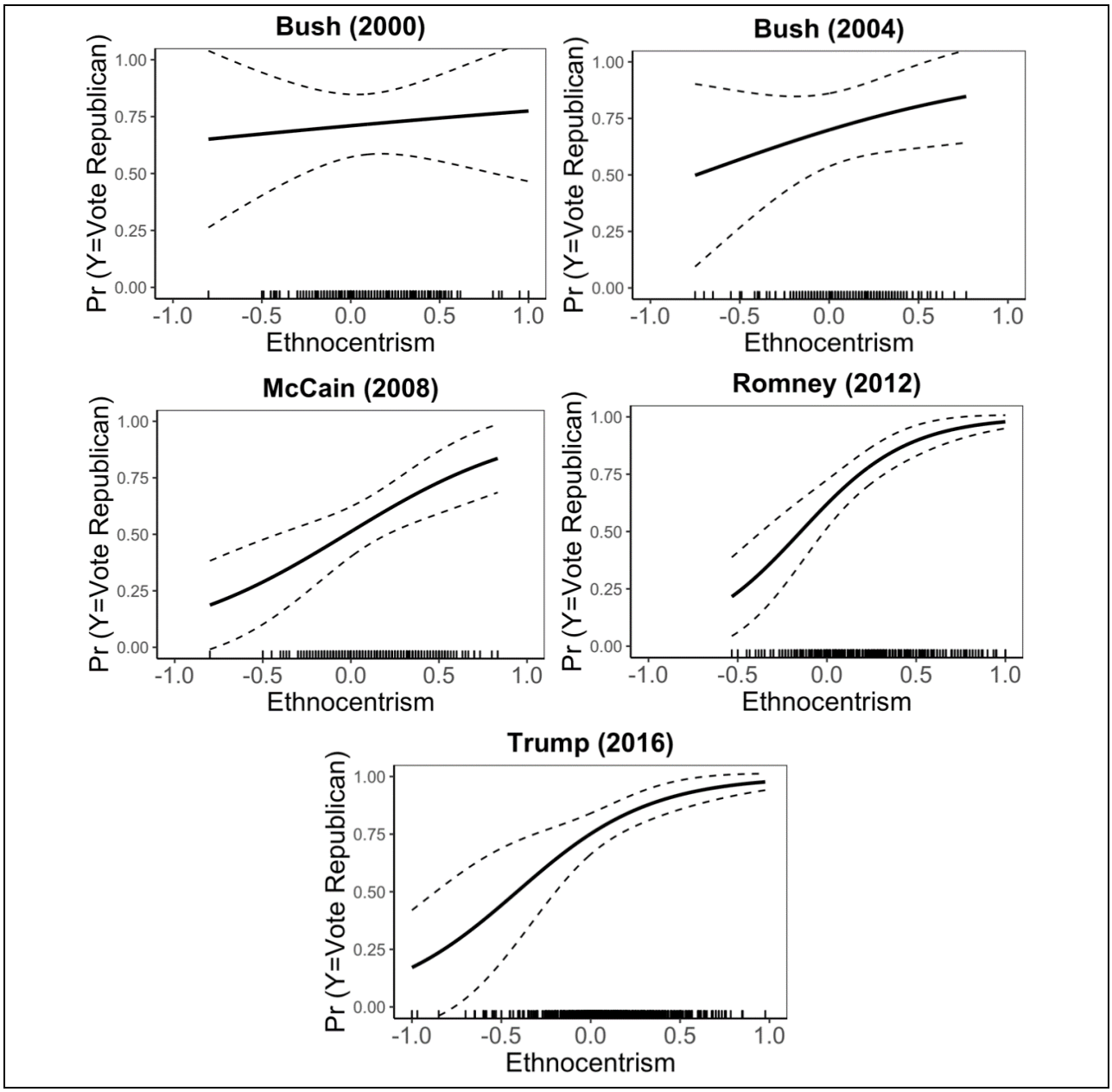

Figure 3.1
Ethnocentrism by Republican Presidential Voting Across Years

In 2000, the predicted probability of voting for Bush in the general election ranged from 65% for those at the lowest end of the ethnocentrism scale (-0.8) to 78% for respondents at the highest end of the ethnocentrism scale (1.0). In 2004, the predicted probability of voting for Bush in the general election ranged from 57% for those at the lowest end of the ethnocentrism scale (-.75) to 80% for respondents at the highest end of the ethnocentrism scale (0.77), holding all other predictors at their means. The biggest leap in the association of ethnocentrism with the vote began in 2008: the predicted probability of voting for McCain shot up, ranging from 22% for those at the lowest end of the ethnocentrism scale (-.80) to 81% for respondents at the highest end of the ethnocentrism scale (0.83), holding all other predictors at their means. In 2012, the predicted probability of voting for Romney in the general election ranged from 25% for those at the lowest end of the ethnocentrism scale (-.53) to 95% for respondents at the highest end of the ethnocentrism scale (1.0), holding all other predictors at their means. In 2016, the predicted probability of voting for Trump in the general election ranged from 19% for those at the lowest end of the ethnocentrism scale (-1.0) to 97% for respondents at the highest end of the ethnocentrism scale (1.0), holding all other predictors at their means.

Notably, the predicted probability of voting for the Republican over the Democrat for those at the lowest points on the ethnocentrism scale has decreased considerably throughout this time period, from 57% in 2004 to 19% in 2004; similarly, the probability of voting for the Republican over the Democrat for those at the highest points on the ethnocentrism scale in their respective years rose from 80% in 2004 to 97%. These data patterns suggest that while ethnocentrism has generally predicted Republican voting in recent general election contests, the association may have markedly strengthened throughout this time period for respondents at both poles of the scale, with the greatest gains happening from 2008 onwards.

Importantly, these findings may be driven by outliers at both extremes. For this reason, I also examine the marginal effects of moving ethnocentrism from two standard deviations below the mean to two standard deviations above on the predicted probability of voting for the Republican in the general election across all five years. These marginal effects are depicted in Figure 3.2, with simulated 95% confidence intervals.

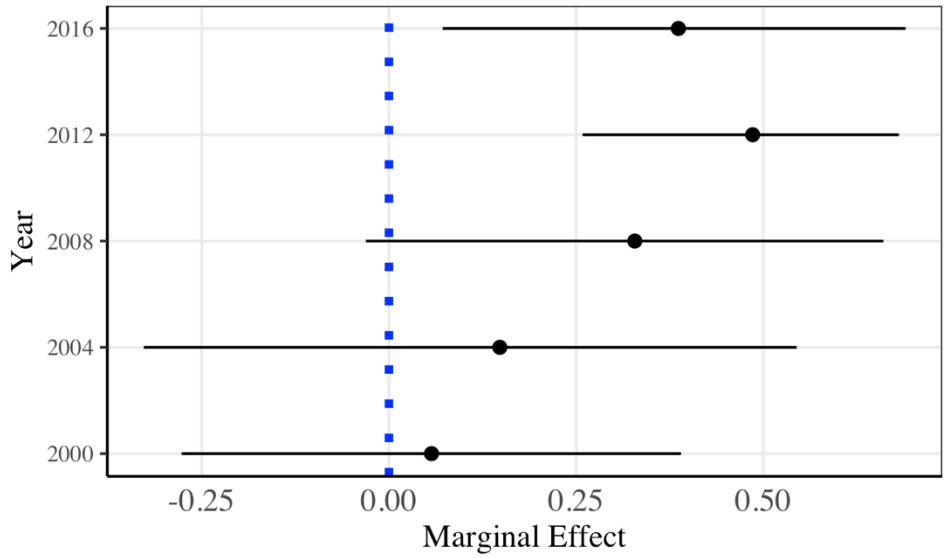

Figure 3.2
Marginal Effects of Ethnocentrism on Predicted Probability of Voting Republican

There is no significant marginal effect of moving ethnocentrism -2SD to +2SD around its mean in 2000, 2004, or 2008. A significant marginal effect emerges in 2012, when moving ethnocentrism from -2SD to +2SD is associated with a .49-point increase in the predicted probability of voting for the Republican. In 2016, the marginal effect shrinks somewhat, to an approximately .38-point increase.[9]

Issue Positions

I next assessed whether attitudes on two key issues that were reportedly top priorities for Trump voters in 2016 were newly influenced by ethnocentrism and polarization in 2016, or

[9] I tested for statistically significant differences in these marginal effects across years, and none are significant at the $p<.05$ level.

whether the trends predated Trump's campaign. Figure 3.3 depicts the impact of ethnocentrism and polarization on perceptions of the health of the national economy. Point estimates are OLS regression coefficients, and the model controls for all covariates.

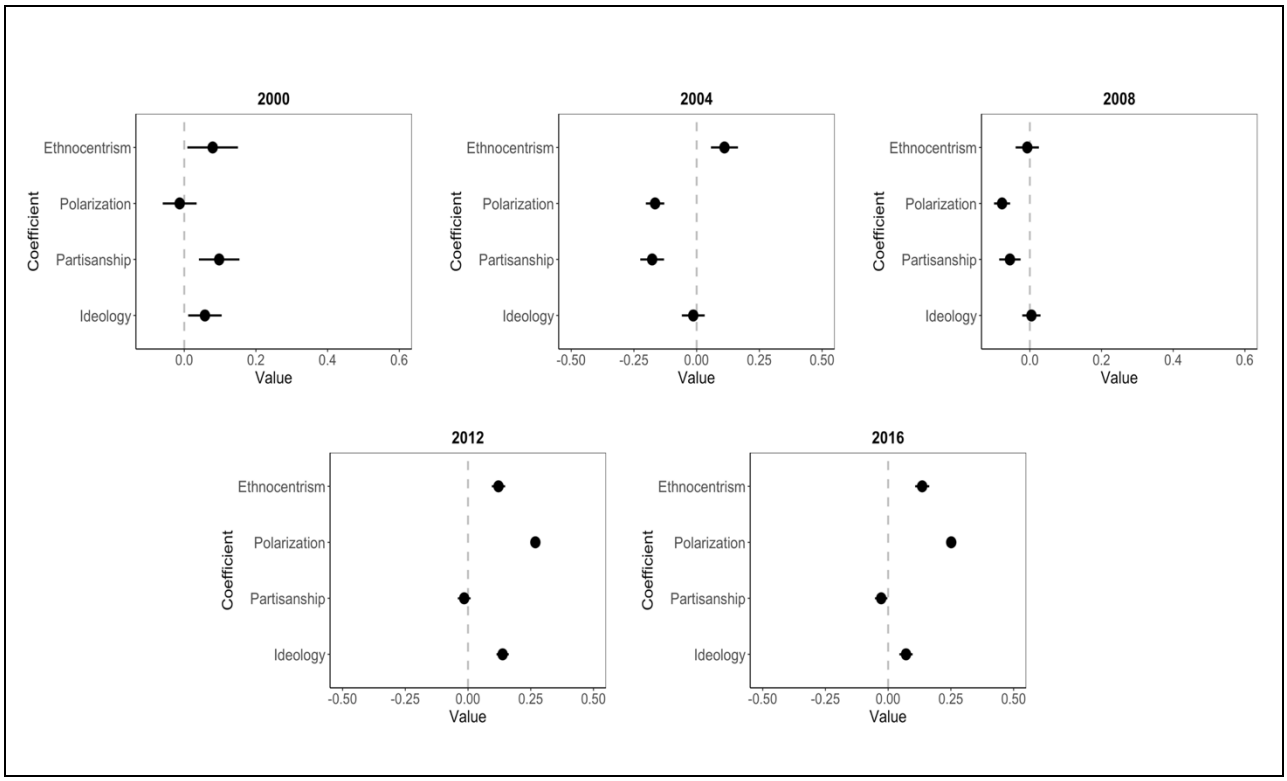

Figure 3.3
Divisions over Issue Positions Across Years: The Economy

Ethnocentrism consistently predicts negativity about the health of the national economy in 2004, 2012, and 2016. In 2008, I find no effect of ethnocentrism on appraisals of the economy. Importantly, in that year, the economy was so objectively dismal that reality probably drove out the usual individual differences in perceptions of its strength. Importantly, however, the magnitude of the regression coefficient was relatively stable in the other three years, suggesting that ethnocentrism did not factor more heavily into white voters' appraisals of the economy when Trump was on the ballot, relative to prior cycles, again suggesting continuity with the past in responses to Trump rather than a sudden change.

Similarly, polarization consistently predicts attitudes about the economy, with more negative appraisals among polarized Republicans during Democratic administrations and less negativity during Republican administrations. However, the notable finding here is that polarization becomes significantly more strongly associated with economic appraisals, not during the Trump-Clinton 2016 matchup, but during the Romney-Obama election, and remained consistent in 2016. Finally, polarization and ethnocentrism consistently exert greater influence over appraisals of the national economy in 2012 and 2016 than do either partisanship or ideology. Thus, the argument that Trump uniquely harnessed divisive tactics in a way that made him distinct, relative to his Republican predecessors, receives little support from these data; if anything, the true shift occurred in 2012.

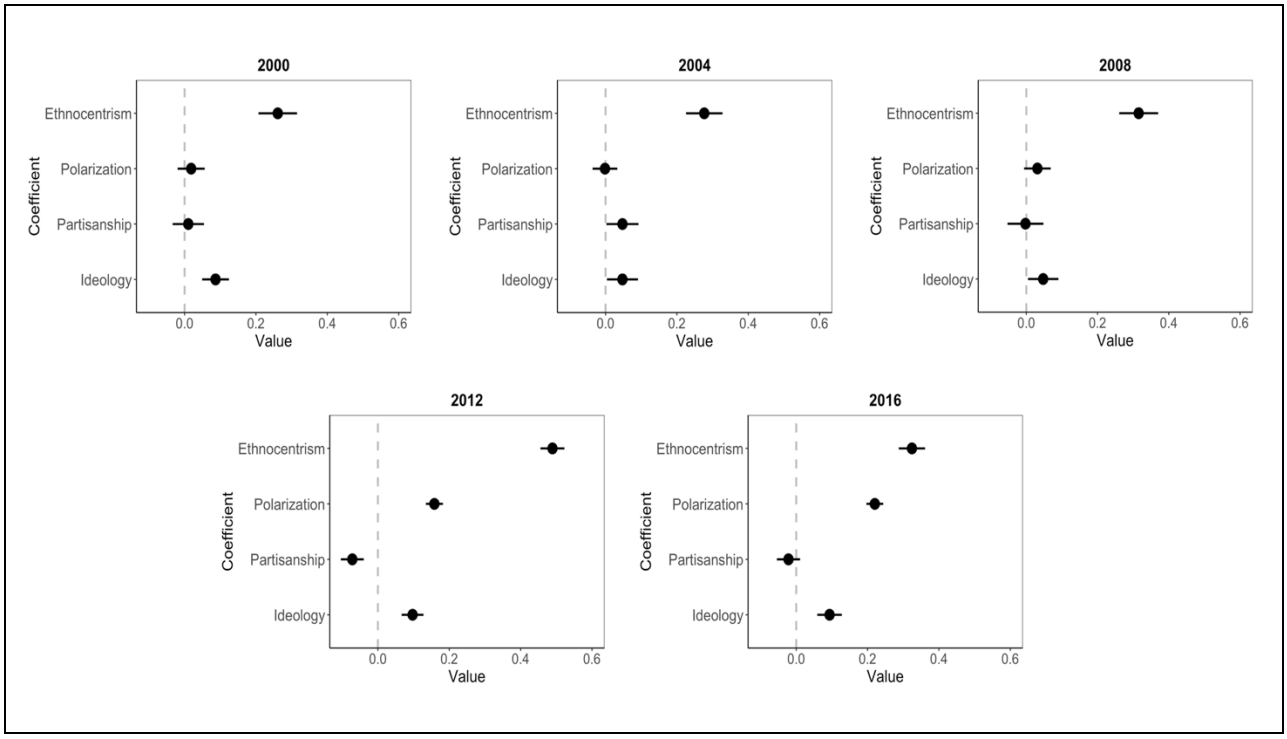

Figure 3.4
Divisions over Issue Positions Across Years: Immigration

Figure 3.4 focuses on immigration as the second key issue for Trump voters in 2016. Ethnocentrism consistently predicts negativity about immigration across all five recent election cycles. Further, the coefficient exerts the greatest effect in 2012, and not in 2016. While polarization shows little or no relationship to assessments about the impact of immigration on American jobs in 2000, 2004, or 2008, it does emerge as a significant predictor in 2012 and 2016. Further, affective views of the political parties appear to be newly influential over immigration attitudes, a domain that previously was predicted mainly by affective views of racial groups. Importantly, however, this relationship between polarization and immigration attitudes did not emerge under Trump, but rather, in 2012. Finally, partisanship and ideology demonstrate comparably weaker effects relative to ethnocentrism and polarization.

Thus, Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show that ethnocentrism and polarization both relate strongly to attitudes about the economy and immigration during Trump's election cycle. However, those relationships did not first emerge in 2016. In fact, the relationships were strongest not in 2016, but in 2012, during the Romney-Obama election cycle. These data offer little support for the theory that Trump uniquely capitalized on divisive forces among the white American electorate. If anything, Romney benefited most from white voters' racial ingroup solidarity and affective warmth for Republicans and distaste for Democrats, and Trump simply followed suit in 2016.

Primary Election Vote Choice

Finally, I turn to an examination of how ethnocentrism and polarization have linked to Republican primary candidate support over the past several election cycles. Perhaps Trump's profile of support in the primaries differentiates him from his Republican predecessors, whose support from the white electorate did not hinge on such divisive forces as ethnocentrism and polarization. All predicted probabilities reported are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 3.5 depicts the predicted probability of supporting the eventual Republican nominee in 2008, 2012, and 2016, relative to the Republican alternatives (there was no Republican primary in 2004).

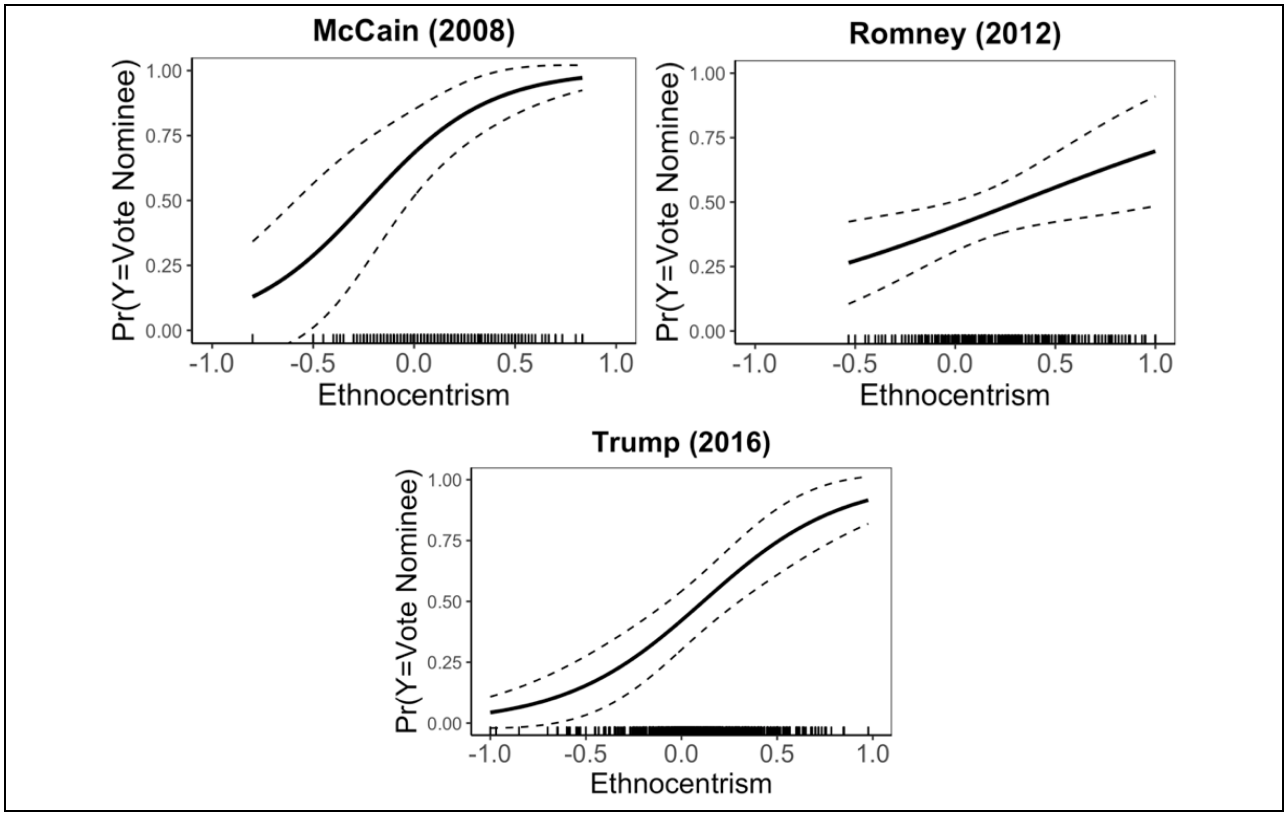

Figure 3.5
Ethnocentrism by Voting for Eventual GOP Nominees in Primaries, 2008-2016

Demonstrably, in all three prior election cycles, ethnocentrism consistently predicts supporting the nominee over the Republican alternative candidates during the primaries. In 2008, the predicted probability of supporting McCain over the alternative candidates ranged from approximately 13% to 97% as a function of ethnocentrism. In 2012, the predicted probability of supporting Romney over the other candidates ranged from 26% to 65%, and in 2016, the predicted probability of supporting Trump over the other candidates ranged from 4% to 92% as a function of ethnocentrism. Thus, Trump does not appear to have achieved a unique profile of

support from the white electorate in 2016, relative to that of recent prior Republican nominees. Rather, he appears to have simply continued a preexisting trend.

Again, to avoid extrapolation of these trends based on outliers, I examine the marginal effects of moving ethnocentrism from two standard deviations below the mean to two standard deviations above on the predicted probability of voting for the Republican in the primary. These marginal effects are depicted in Figure 3.6, with simulated 95% confidence intervals.

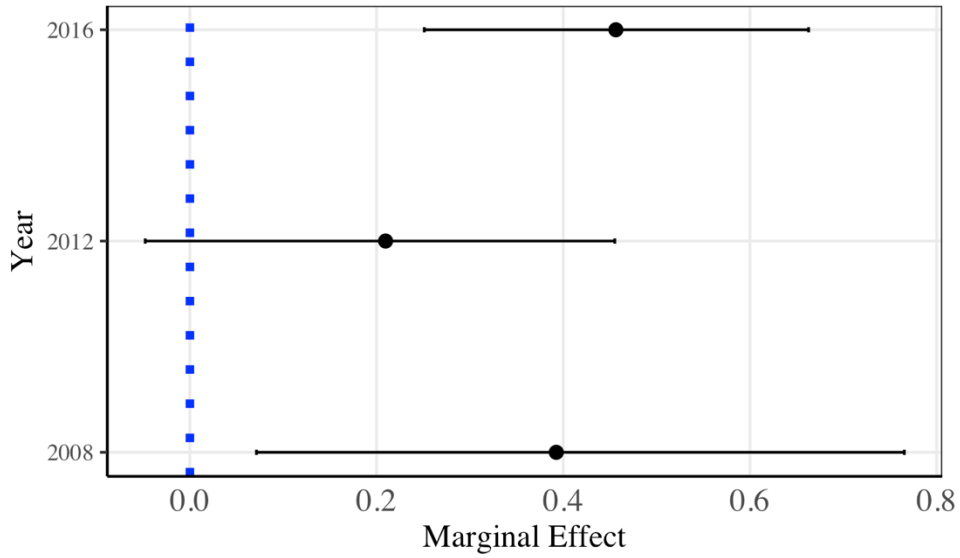

Figure 3.6
Marginal Effect of Ethnocentrism on Primary Voting

The marginal effect of moving ethnocentrism -2SD to +2SD around its mean in 2004 is associated with a .39-point increase in predicted probability of voting for McCain over his Republican competitors in the primary election. In 2012, that marginal effect is not significant; in 2016, it jumps to a .46-point increase. Thus, while the relationship between ethnocentrism and primary vote choice strengthens in 2016 relative to the two prior years, it is important to contextualize this rise with the pre-existing relationship between these variables. The marginal effect of ethnocentrism in 2016 only amounts to a .07-point increase in magnitude over the marginal effect in 2008.

Figure 3.7 depicts the probability of supporting the eventual nominee over the Republican alternative candidates by polarization.

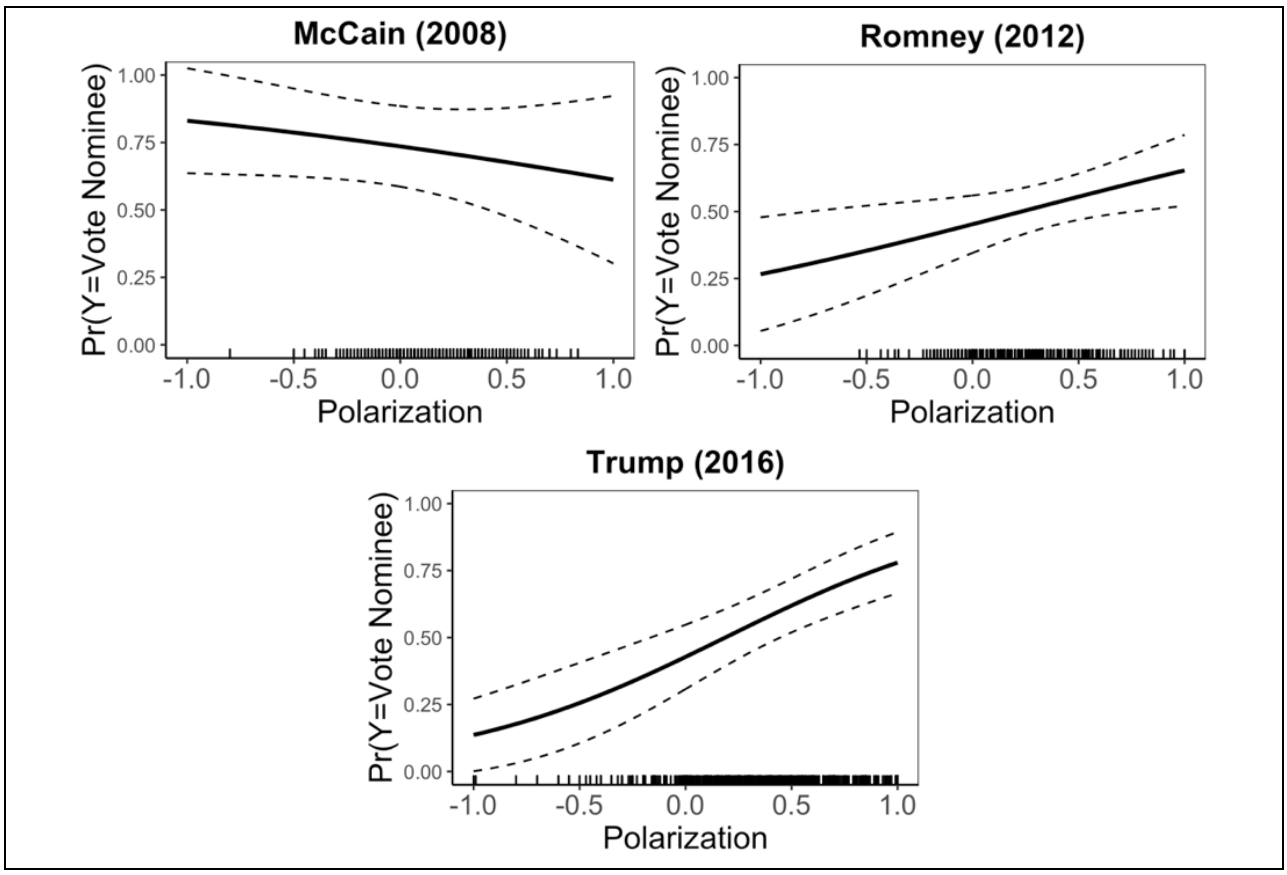

Figure 3.7
Polarization by Voting for Eventual GOP Nominees in Primaries, 2008-2016

In 2008, there was no significant relationship between polarization and support for John McCain over his Republican competitors. In 2012 and 2016, however, polarization predicted support for the eventual nominee (Mitt Romney and Donald Trump, respectively) over their fellow Republican candidates for the nomination. In 2012, the predicted probability of supporting Romney over the other candidates ranged from 27% to 62% as a function of polarization, and in 2016, the predicted probability of supporting Trump over the other candidates ranged from 14% to 80% as a function of polarization. Thus, in both 2012 and 2016, the candidate who attracts the most affectively polarized white voters appears to perform the best

among Republican candidates in the field during the primaries. Again, the magnitude of the slope is greater in 2016 than it is in 2012. Nevertheless, Trump again does not appear particularly unique by this metric; rather, he appears to have intensified a nascent trend that began in the prior election. Here again, I examine the marginal effects (Figure 3.8), with simulated 95% confidence intervals. Restricting polarization to a truncated range produces the only data throughout this chapter that suggests Trump is anomalous. The marginal effect of moving polarization -2SD to +2SD around its mean in 2008 is not significant, nor in 2012 (though it is approaching significance), but by 2016, it produces a .64-point shift in likelihood of supporting Trump in the primary over other Republican candidates.

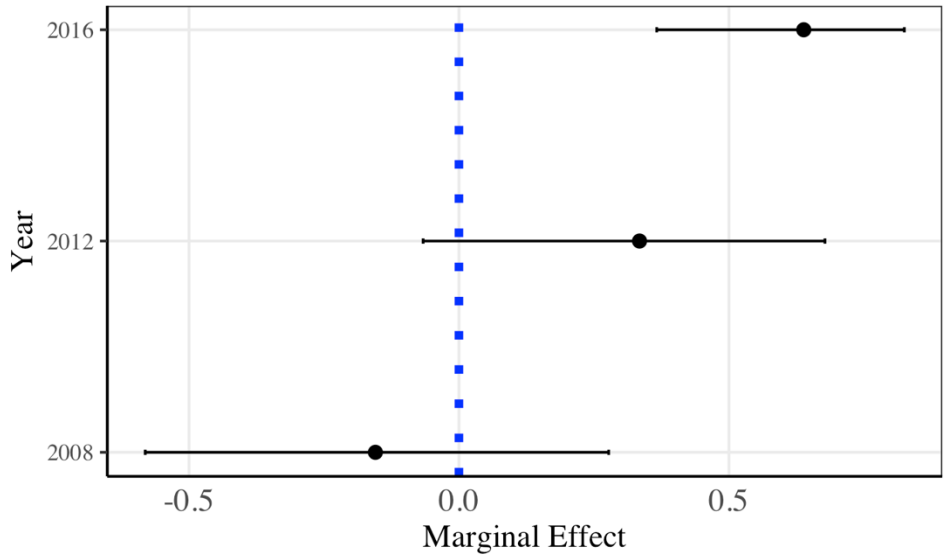

Figure 3.8
Marginal Effects of Polarization on Primary Voting

Discussion

The main aim of this chapter was to assess the argument that Donald Trump constitutes an outlier in modern Republican politics, drawing on predispositions in the electorate that have not previously been associated with support for Republicans. Instead I find that his support is better interpreted as a continuation of recent trends within the party. Specifically, I sought to

examine the allegation that he was a uniquely divisive figure who successfully exploited sociopolitical cleavages in the nation to win in unprecedented fashion. My results demonstrate that, rather, this trend predated his political rise, was successfully utilized by his Republican predecessors, and that Trump is therefore better conceptualized as an extension of pre-existing trends within the party than a new instigator of disunity.

Ultimately, given the cross-sectional nature of the data, my ability to draw causal inferences between ethnocentric attitudes and political preferences is limited. Ethnocentrism might color whites' perceptions of the health of the economy and their attitudes about the influence of immigration on the nation's wellbeing. It could also be that, for example, negative perceptions of the economy prompt whites to scapegoat nonwhites, and that they become increasingly ethnocentric in response to bad economic trends. Nonetheless, I have shown evidence that these two predispositions have become positively associated in recent years, and predict (1) support for Republicans in general election contests prior to 2016, (2) attitudes on issue positions that were important to Trump supporters prior to 2016, and (3) support for the Republican nominee over primary candidate alternatives in at least one election cycle prior to 2016. Demonstrably, the associations between ethnocentrism and polarization and support for Republican candidates and issue positions exist, and they predate the 2016 election.

Chapter Four

The prior chapter focused on ethnocentrism, a general partitioning of the world into us versus them, ally versus adversary, as a racial attitude that is particularly relevant to Trump, given that his racial attacks encompass multiple groups and boil down to a general distaste for perceived outsiders. Ethnocentrism, according to Kinder and Kam, ought to be conceived of as a cause, or driver, of specific race prejudice, as this general willingness to view the world from an ally versus adversary perspective encourages the adoption of specific racial biases (Kinder and Kam 2009). In this chapter, I introduce a specific racial bias that was particularly relevant during the Obama era—racial resentment—as further evidence that both specific outgroup prejudice as well as general preference for ingroup members over myriad outgroup members were Obama-era developments that remained salient in the Trump era.

Racial Resentment

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the expression of racial prejudice in politics underwent significant changes in the second half of the twentieth century, as explicitly segregationist appeals became disreputable and came to be replaced with more coded language. Overt expressions of antiblack racial animus go by several names, including Old Fashioned Racism (OFR), Jim Crow racism, biological racism, and others. This ideology is rooted in three themes: (1) the desire for social distance between the races, (2) subscribing to the notion of biological inferiority of black people relative to white people, and (3) support for policies that fortify racial segregation and sustain legal discrimination (McConahay and Hough 1976; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981; Kinder 2013). As explicit expressions of white supremacy fell out of favor following the Civil Rights movement, antiblack sentiment did not disappear, but instead found new forms of expression that were compatible with changing social norms.

Rather than expressing white superiority on the basis of biological factors, modern racism—referred to from here onwards as racial resentment—is characterized by four key themes: (1) the belief that black Americans no longer face much discrimination, (2) that the disadvantages they face in society are due to their poor work ethic, (3) that they are demanding too much social change too fast, and (4) that they have gotten more than they deserve (Henry and Sears 2002; Sears and Henry 2005). Racial resentment, then, effectively repackages antiblack sentiment as respect for American values by contextualizing the difficulties black Americans face as a function of their failure to live up to American ideals of hard work, self-reliance, and rugged individualism (Kinder and Sears, 1981).

The impact of racial resentment on American politics has been well documented, wide-reaching, and consistent, and is often on par or holds greater explanatory power than other stable predispositions such as party identification and ideology (Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Sears and Henry 2005). One domain where racial resentment has a well-documented influence is vote choice; more specifically, it predicts support for white racially conservative candidates (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981; Mendelberg 2001) and was more influential over the 2008 election featuring the first black Presidential candidate, than any prior cycle (Tesler and Sears 2010; Tesler 2012; Weisberg and Devine 2010; Jackman and Vavreck 2012; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012;).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the relationships between two racial attitude indices, ethnocentrism and racial resentment, and presidential job approval across the past four presidential administrations. I aim to assess whether these racial attitudes exerted newfound influence on presidential approval in the Trump era, or whether the true shift occurred under Obama and remained consistent under Trump.

Method

Data. The data are drawn from the American National Election Study (ANES) Time Series, as well as their 2018 pilot, all of which use a nationally representative sampling frame. The data from the Time Series were collected at two time points: interviews were conducted during the two months preceding the election, and then respondents were re-interviewed during the two months following the election. Prior to 2012, all interviews were face to face. Beginning in 2012, ANES adopted a dual-mode design with face-to-face interviews and Internet surveys. The 2018 Pilot Study was conducted among 2,500 adults using an opt-in online panel conducted between December 6 and 19, 2018 in order to test new questions being considered for inclusion in the 2020 Time Series Study, and to provide data on the 2018 midterm election. All reported data reported in this paper are restricted to white respondents.

Ethnocentrism. Consistent with Kinder and Kam's approach, ethnocentrism is measured with affective feeling thermometer ratings. Respondents were asked to rate all four major racial groups (whites, blacks, Asians, Hispanics) from 0-100 on the feeling thermometers. The ethnocentrism variable is measured by subtracting each white individual's mean outgroup ratings (towards Asians, Hispanics, and blacks) from the ingroup rating (toward whites). The variable is keyed from -1 to +1, where values closest to +1 indicate highest levels of ethnocentrism; i.e., rating whites more highly than all three outgroups, while the most negative ratings correspond to the lowest levels of ethnocentrism (expressed through a greater affinity for outgroups over the white ingroup), and 0 represents no affective preference for ingroup or outgroup.

Racial resentment. While several survey items have been used to measure racial resentment, the most standardized form is the Kinder and Sanders (1996) four-question battery that has

appeared in every ANES survey since 1986. Respondents view four assertive statements and rate their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale with a neutral midpoint:

(1) "Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors."

(2) "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class."

(3) "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve."

(4) "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough, if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites."

Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point scale, where 1=agree strongly and 5=disagree strongly. Items 1 and 4 were reverse-coded, and responses were rescaled to range from 0-1, where 0=least racially resentful and 1=most racially resentful.

Partisanship. Party identification was measured with the question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" Those who selected either Republican or Democrat were prompted, "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)? Those who selected Independent were prompted, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" These three questions provide a 1-7 scale of party identification that incorporates "leaners," i.e. respondents who initially self-identified as Independent but on closer examination revealed a party preference. Scores closer to 1 indicate stronger Republicanism.

Ideology. Political ideology was assessed using one question: "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to

extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?" Responses were scaled from 0-1 where values closest to 1 represent the most politically conservative responses.

General approval. This variable is assessed with the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [*Bill Clinton/George W. Bush/Barack Obama/Donald Trump]* is handling his job as President?" where disapprove=0 and approve=1. In 2018, presidential approval is measured on a 7-point scale; all "approve" answer punches are coded as 1, all "disapprove" answer punches are coded as 0, and "neither approve nor disapprove" is also coded as 0.

Economy approval. This variable is constructed and scaled identically to *General Approval,* and the question wording reads, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [*Bill Clinton/George W. Bush/Barack Obama/Donald Trump]* is handling the economy?"

Foreign relations approval. This variable is constructed and scaled identically to *General Approval,* and the question reads, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [*Bill Clinton/George W. Bush/Barack Obama/Donald Trump]* is handling relations with foreign countries?"

Models also control for age, sex, education level, income, and whether or not respondents live in the south.

I examine three primary hypotheses in this chapter. First, I predict that both ethnocentrism and racial resentment ought to operate the same way in terms of directionality—higher scores associating with greater likelihood to approve of Republican presidents and lower likelihood to approve of Democratic presidents. If this prediction is correct, the direction should be negative in 2000, 2012, and 2016, when the target of evaluation is a Democratic president, and positive in 2004, 2008, and 2018, for Bush and Trump, respectively. Importantly, these

directional shifts necessitate comparing the marginal effect in terms of distance from zero, in order to compare absolute value of the shift in predicted probability.

Second, I expect that the strength of the relationship between each racial attitude and presidential approval to be comparatively weaker in 2000, 2004, and 2008, relative to 2012, 2016, and 2018. Should this prediction be supported, it would indicate an intensification of the marginal effect of racial attitudes on presidential job approval beginning with the Obama era, rather than the Trump era.

Furthermore, if my second prediction is correct, the fact that the marginal effects are greatest in 2018 should be contextualized by comparing the magnitude of the increase in marginal effect from Bush to Obama to the increase in marginal effect from Obama to Trump. Thus, in cases where there are significant marginal effects in the pre-Obama era, I predict that the magnitude of increase in the marginal effect from the Bush to Obama era will be comparable to the magnitude of increase in the marginal effect from the Obama to Trump era.

Results

Ethnocentrism and Job Approval

First, I examine the marginal effect of ethnocentrism on job performance approval (general, economic, and foreign relations, respectively). For ease of interpretation and comparison between years, the results are discussed in terms of the magnitude of change in predicted probability, and probabilities are rounded to the nearest whole number. Further, given the distribution of ethnocentrism in the white electorate— the vast majority cluster at zero, and extreme scores are relative outliers—examining the full range of ethnocentrism scores may misrepresent the influence of ethnocentrism on predicted probability of presidential approval by relying too heavily on outlier scores. For this reason, I assess the shift in predicted probability for

respondents ranging from two standard deviations below the mean level of ethnocentrism in each year to two standard deviation above (Figures depicting the predicted probability across the full range of ethnocentrism scores available in the Appendix).

The marginal effect of ethnocentrism on predicted probability of approving of general presidential job performance, economic job performance, and foreign relations job performance is depicted in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 respectively, with simulated 95% confidence intervals. Should my predictions be correct, the marginal effects should be positive for Democratic presidents and negative for Republican presidents. Further, the marginal effects should increase noticeably beginning in 2012; finally, while I predict that the marginal effects will be strongest in 2018, the magnitude of increase in marginal effect from 2016 to 2018 should be comparable with the increase in marginal effect from 2008 to 2012.

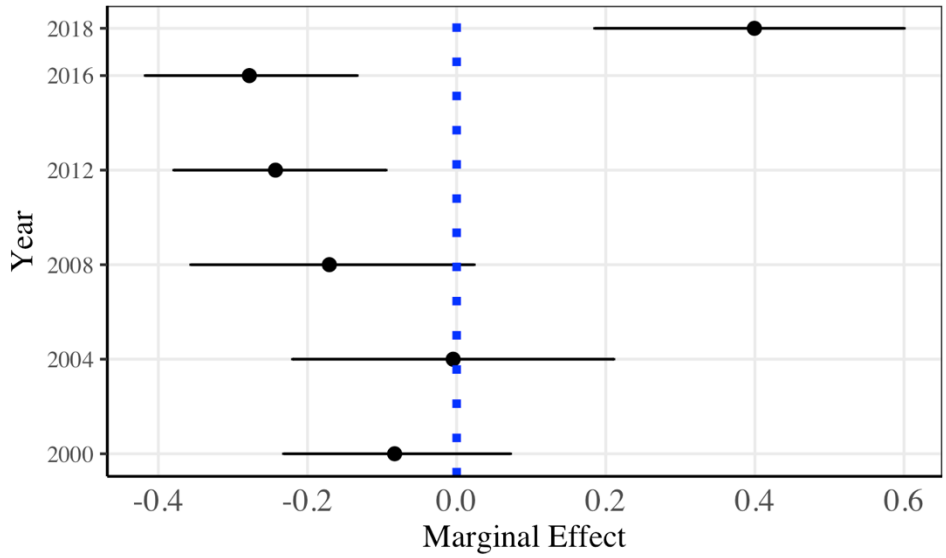

Figure 4.1
Marginal Effect of Ethnocentrism on General Presidential Approval

In 2000, 2004, and 2008, the marginal effect of moving ethnocentrism -2SD to +2SD on general presidential job approval is not significant. In 2012, the first year that Obama was the target of job approval, the predicted probability ranges significantly, by .24 points, as a function

of ethnocentrism. In 2016, the marginal effect increases to a .28-point shift, and in 2018, when Trump is the target of judgment, it peaks at a .40-point shift. Thus, true to prediction, the emergence of a significant marginal effect of ethnocentrism on general presidential approval occurred under Obama in 2012, and not under Trump in 2018.

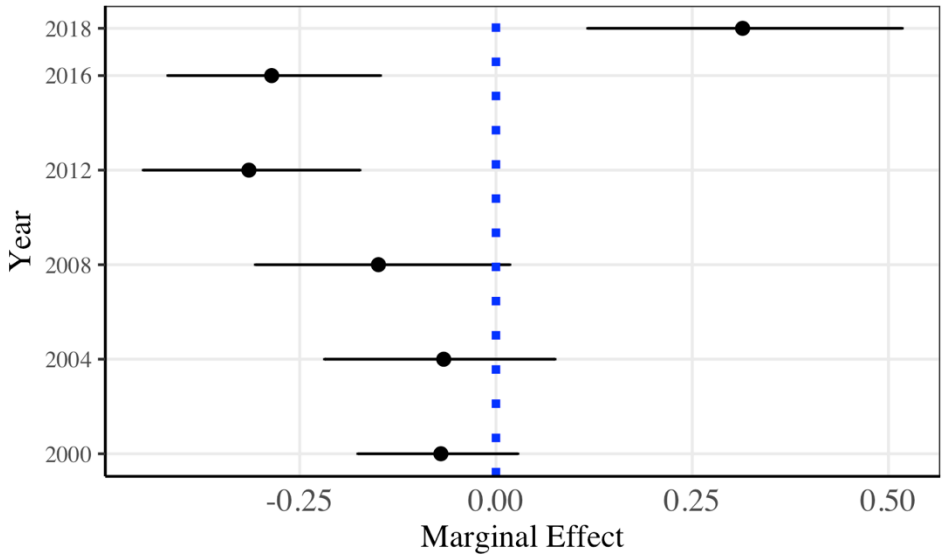

Figure 4.2
Marginal Effect of Ethnocentrism on Economic Presidential Approval

Economic job approval as a function of ethnocentrism tells the same story: the marginal effect of ethnocentrism on economic job approval is, again, non-significant in 2000, 2004, and 2008. In 2012, the first year of Obama evaluations, a significant marginal effect of ethnocentrism emerges: the predicted probability of approval of economic job performance shifts by .31 points as a function of ethnocentrism. In 2016, the marginal effect dips slightly, to a .29-point shift, and then returns to 2012 levels in 2018, when Trump is first the target of judgment, at a .31-point shift. Thus, consistent with my prediction, ethnocentrism does not become newly influential in the Trump era, but rather, becomes newly influential in the Obama era and intensifies under Trump. Further, in comparing the magnitude of increase in the marginal effect of ethnocentrism, it is evident that no increase takes place from Obama to Trump with respect to economic job

approval. Rather, when it comes to approval of how Presidents handle management of the economy, ethnocentrism exerts strong, and identical, effects in 2012 and 2016 as it does 2018.

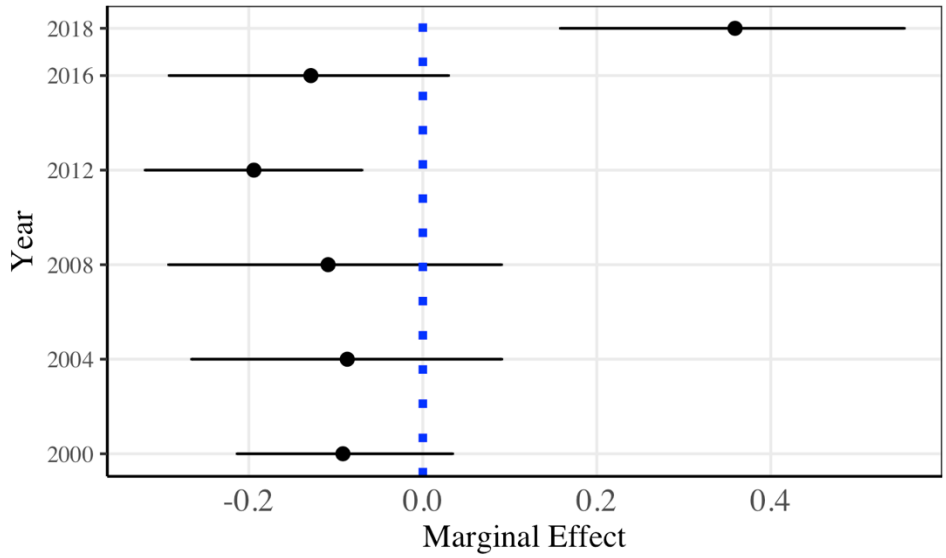

Figure 4.3
Marginal Effect of Ethnocentrism on Foreign Relations Presidential Approval

Turning lastly to foreign relations, once again, no significant marginal effect of ethnocentrism exists in the years 2000, 2004, or 2008. In 2012, the first year that Obama is the target of judgments, moving ethnocentrism from -2SD to +2SD is associated with a statistically significant .19-point shift in the predicted probability of approval of presidential performance with respect to foreign relations. The marginal effect does not meet the threshold for statistical significance in 2016; it then peaks in 2018, the first year Trump is the target of evaluation, at a .36-point shift.

Thus, true to my prediction, across all three domains of presidential approval, ethnocentrism became newly influential over respondents' evaluations of presidential job performance not under Trump, but under Obama. Indeed, these analyses indicate that ethnocentrism did not exert a statistically significant marginal effect on respondents' judgments *until* Obama became the target of evaluation in 2012. Moreover, while the marginal effect of

ethnocentrism increases in the Trump era over Obama-era levels for general job approval and for foreign relations, in the domain of economic job approval, the magnitude of the effect in the Trump era does not increase at all beyond Obama-era levels.

Racial Resentment and Job Approval

Turning next to racial resentment, the marginal effect on predicted probability of approving of general presidential job performance, economic job performance, and foreign relations job performance is depicted in Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 respectively, with simulated 95% confidence intervals. Here I incorporate the full range of scores on racial resentment, as this variable is not as prone to outlier-based extrapolation as the ethnocentrism variable, and scores more evenly distribute across the full range, from 0 to 1. Should my predictions be correct, the marginal effects should again be positive for Democratic presidents and negative for Republican presidents, and they should increase noticeably beginning in 2012, rather than first emerging in 2018.

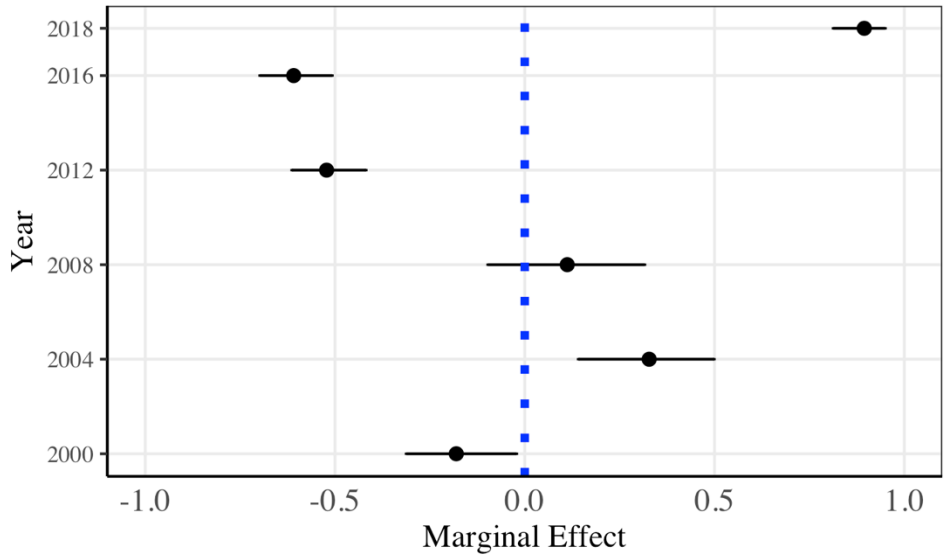

Figure 4.4
Marginal Effect of RR on General Presidential Approval

In 2000, the marginal effect of moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum is .18 points. This marginal effect grows to .32-points in 2004, then disappears in 2008. Where the effect becomes considerably stronger is in 2012, the first year that Obama was the target of evaluative judgments. In 2012, moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum is associated with a .52-point shift in the predicted probability of approving of general Presidential job performance. The marginal effect grows to .61 points in 2016, and then peaks in 2018, at .89 points.

While Trump's general job approval is most heavily impacted by racial resentment, of all presidents and years tested, the magnitude of increase in the marginal effect for Trump relative to Obama is comparable to the magnitude of increase for Obama relative to Bush. The marginal effect in 2012—the first year that Obama was the target of evaluation— is .20 points greater than it was for Bush in 2004. The marginal effect in 2018—the first year Trump was the target of evaluation—is .27 points greater than it was for Obama in 2016. Consequently, racial resentment exerts greatest effects on presidential approval for Trump of all presidents in this analysis, the first year that marked a sudden increase was not 2018, but 2012; moreover, the magnitude of increase from Bush to Obama is comparable to the magnitude of increase from Obama to Trump. In other words, Trump appears to be a continuation of a trend, not an instigator.

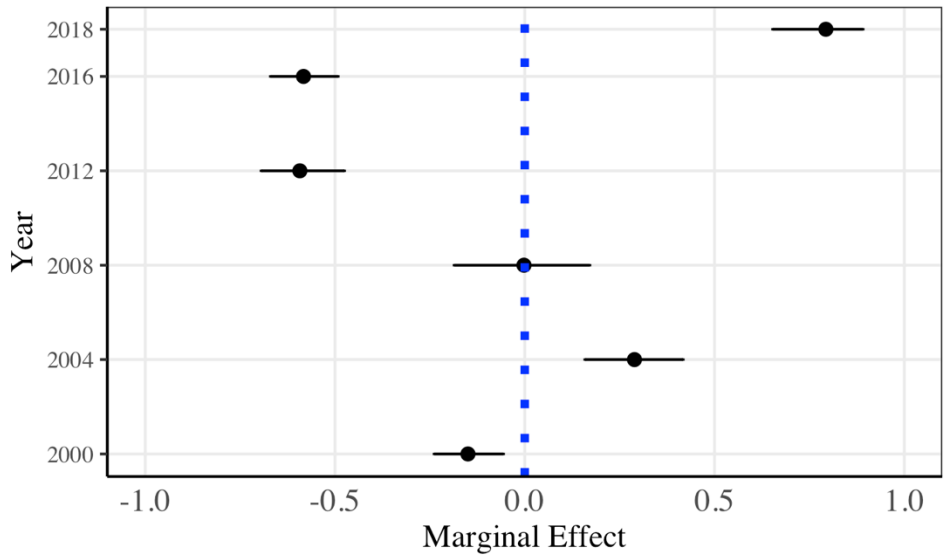

Figure 4.5
Marginal Effect of RR on Economic Presidential Approval

Turning next to economic job approval, beginning with 2000, moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum produces a .15-point shift in predicted probability of job approval. This marginal effect climbs to .29 points in 2004, then disappears in 2008, when there was no marginal effect of racial resentment on evaluations of economic job performance. Beginning in 2012, the marginal effect grows enormously: moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum is associated with a .59-point shift in predicted probability once Obama became the target of evaluation. This marginal effect stayed level at .58 points in 2016, before peaking at .79 points in 2018.

Here again, while 2018 has the greatest marginal effect of racial resentment on economic job approval of all years tested, the magnitude of increase in the marginal effect for Trump relative to Obama is actually *smaller* than the magnitude of increase for Obama relative to Bush. The marginal effect in 2012—the first year that Obama was the target of evaluation— is .30 points greater than it was for Bush in 2004, while the marginal effect in 2018 is only .20 points

greater than it was for Obama in 2016. Thus, again, Trump appears to be the continuation of a trend, rather than the start of one.

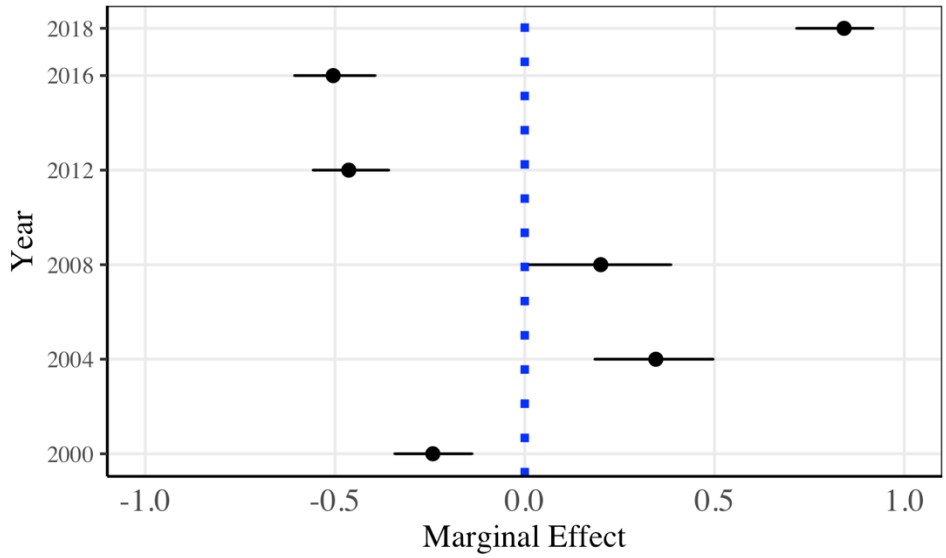

Figure 4.6
Marginal Effect of RR on Foreign Relations Presidential Approval

Finally, I evaluate the marginal effect of racial resentment on Presidential approval with respect to foreign relations. In 2000, the marginal effect of moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum produces a .24-point shift in predicted probability of job approval. This marginal effect climbs to .35 points in 2004, then shrinks to .20 points in 2008. The marginal effect of racial resentment climbs to .46 points in 2012, the first Obama year in this dataset, and increases slightly in 2016 to .50 points. In 2018, the marginal effect peaks at .84 points. Demonstrably, foreign relations is the domain of job approval where Trump appears to be most anomalous with respect to his predecessors. While the marginal effect of racial resentment strengthened under Obama relative to Bush by .11 points, the greatest increase takes place from 2016 to 2018, increasing by .34 points.

Discussion

Consistently, then, across all three domains of presidential approval, moving ethnocentrism -2SD to +2SD around the mean, and moving racial resentment from minimum to maximum, is associated with much greater range in predicted probability of job approval for Obama and Trump than for Clinton and Bush. Furthermore, while the magnitude increases under Trump, the trend began under Obama in 2012, and strengthened under Trump. Thus, the evidence suggests ethnocentrism and racial resentment did not first become influential over job approval when Trump was the target of the evaluations, but rather, that shift took place when Obama was the target, and maintained or increased in salience for Trump. While these data prevent causal interpretation, owing to the cross-sectional nature of the data, nonetheless they demonstrate a consistent pattern of newfound relevance of racial attitudes over presidential job approval that began under Obama and strengthened under Trump. Furthermore, the stability of the Trump-era trends remains unknown, given that there is only one year of data available thus far and he is not in the same stage of his term as the other presidents were at the time these evaluations were made. More data is needed to interrogate whether and how the Trump-era trends hold over time and at a comparable stage in his presidency.

Chapter Five

As shown Chapter Three, racial attitudes have predicted party voting preferences and stances on at least two major issues consistently for the past five cycles and have grown more influential since the Obama era. Further, as shown in Chapter Four, assessments of presidential job performance have been racialized since Obama took office, and while these trends intensified under Trump in certain domains, nonetheless the trends began before he became President. Together, these findings beg the question: has nothing about the nature and prevalence of whites' racial attitudes changed during the Trump era? Given all of his race-baiting and xenophobic rhetoric, this would be an odd claim. In this chapter, I investigate whether looking to the Republican-leaning white electorate for evidence of aggregate level increase in racial animus post-2016 is a mistake. I theorize that if shifts in racial attitudes take place during the end of the Obama era and the beginning of the Trump era, it is equally plausible that we will find them among white voters who have grown increasingly *racially liberal* as a backlash to this president.

Trump as a Catalyst of Racial Attitude Change

While dog whistle politics featuring subtle, coded appeals to racial animus have been a longstanding feature of presidential politics, Trump is, infamously, routinely, and often shockingly, explicit. He opened his campaign by calling Mexicans drug lords and rapists, has referred to immigrants from Haiti and Africa as originating from "shithole countries" and vocalized a preference for more immigrants from Norway, called the white supremacists responsible for the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia "very fine people," and created a travel ban targeting Muslims, to name only a few instances of explicit racial bias. In the ten days following the 2016 presidential election, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported nearly 900 hate incidents and found that in nearly 40 percent of those acts, the people who

committed them explicitly invoked Trump's name or campaign slogan (O'Connor and Marans 2017).

Justifiably, Trump is widely perceived in a negative light on matters pertaining to race: per a Quinnipiac poll conducted in July 2019, the majority of American voters say Trump is a racist (Stevens, 2019). Interestingly, however, Trump's rhetoric and approach to racial issues may be generating more momentum for white racial liberals, rather than white racial conservatives. An August 2019 Reuters poll found that voters who believe black and white Americans are equal express a stronger interest in voting in 2020 than people who feel strongly that white Americans are superior to black Americans, which constitutes a reversal of 2016 patterns (Graham 2019). That same poll found that white Americans today are 19 percent more supportive of creating a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants than they were in the last election cycle, and the number who believe that America must preserve its "white European heritage" decreased nine points from the year prior.

Thus, Trump's rise to power, marked by boorish and offensive language on matters pertaining to race, could just as plausibly have sparked a decrease in ethnocentrism and racial resentment in the aggregate, driven primarily by precipitous decreases among white Democrats, as a response to his racism. Thus, I argue that if any major shifts in the pattern and prevalence of certain racial attitudes among the white electorate have taken place since Trump's entry into politics, we ought not to assume that these shifts are taking place among Trump's avid supporters. Rather, if we uncover evidence of shifts, they may reflect *less* self-reported ethnocentrism and racial resentment, not more.

Method

Data. The data are drawn from the American National Election Study (ANES) Time Series, as well as their 2018 pilot, all of which use a nationally representative sampling frame. The data from the Time Series were collected at two time points: interviews were conducted during the two months preceding the election, and then respondents were re-interviewed during the two months following the election. Prior to 2012, all interviews were face to face. Beginning in 2012, ANES adopted a dual-mode design with face-to-face interviews and Internet surveys. The 2018 Pilot Study was conducted among 2,500 adults using an opt-in online panel conducted between December 6 and 19, 2018 in order to test new questions being considered for inclusion in the 2020 Time Series Study, and to provide data on the 2018 midterm election. Again, given that much of the analyses to follow concentrate on how racial attitudes predict support for Republican positions and candidates, all reported data reported in this paper are restricted to white respondents.

Ethnocentrism. This variable is measured with affective feeling thermometer ratings. Respondents were asked to rate all four major racial groups (whites, blacks, Asians, Hispanics) from 0-100 on the feeling thermometers. The ethnocentrism variable is measured by subtracting each white individual's mean outgroup ratings (towards Asians, Hispanics, and blacks) from the ingroup rating (toward whites). The variable is keyed from -1 to +1, where values closest to +1 indicate highest levels of ethnocentrism; i.e., rating whites more highly than all three outgroups, while the most negative ratings correspond to the lowest levels of ethnocentrism (expressed through a greater affinity for outgroups over the white ingroup), and 0 represents no affective preference for ingroup or outgroup.

Racial resentment. While several survey items have been used to measure racial resentment, the most standardized form is the Kinder and Sanders (1996) four-question battery that has appeared in every ANES survey since 1986. Respondents view four assertive statements and rate their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale with a neutral midpoint:

(5) "Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors."

(6) "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class."

(7) "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve."

(8) "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough, if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites."

Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point scale, where 1=agree strongly and 5=disagree strongly. Items 1 and 4 were reverse-coded, and responses were rescaled to range from 0-1, where 0=least racially resentful and 1=most racially resentful.[10]

Partisanship. Party identification was measured with the question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" Those who selected either Republican or Democrat were prompted, "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (Republican/Democrat)? Those who selected

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[10] Of potential relevance in this chapter is the timing of the racial attitude measures—namely, whether they are part of the pre-election or post-election wave—as well as mode of questioning. Both are assessed post-election. For the non-Internet sample, feeling thermometer ratings are CASI variables (computer-aided self-interview), meaning the respondent answered certain sensitive questions on the laptop computer directly, without the interviewer's participation. Racial resentment items were not treated as CASI variables and were assessed normally.

Independent were prompted, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" These three questions provide a 1-7 scale of party identification that incorporates "leaners," i.e. respondents who initially self-identified as Independent but on closer examination revealed a party preference. Scores closer to 1 indicate stronger Republicanism.

Vote choice. This variable represents two-party vote choice, where 0=voted for the Democrat and 1=voted for the Republican.

The first set of analyses examine whether mean levels of ethnocentrism and racial resentment have increased, decreased, or remained the same from 2000 to 2018 using six timepoints: 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2018. I assess these shifts in the aggregate, by party identification, and by vote choice. I test whether ethnocentrism and racial resentment show a significant increase or decrease coinciding with Trump's rise to power. Further, I test whether these shifts are driven by asymmetric patterns of change depending on party identification: do white Republicans show marked increases, while white Democrats show marked decreases? Third, I evaluate these shifts among party loyalists vs. non-party switchers, in order to test whether any mean differences I uncover are attributable to social sorting alone. If this is the case, shifts should only take place among party switchers, but *not* among party loyalists. If, however, we see similar or stronger patterns among party loyalists as well as switchers, this would suggest attitude change among white Democrats on racial attitudes, and not just a reorganization of partisanship on the basis of those attitudes.

Results

I begin first with kernel density plots for ethnocentrism distributions among white Americans during the last two decades, depicted in Figure 5.1, in order to first assess whether any shifts took place, and if so, at what timepoint. If we see no shifts in these distributions from

2000 to 2018 and they remain persistently negatively skewed, it would indicate no meaningful decrease in ethnocentrism across the white electorate over this period of time. While no huge shifts appear to have taken place, the aggregate distribution does appear more normally distributed in 2018 than in all prior years, which look very stable year to year through 2016. Nonetheless, the distribution shows an overwhelming clustering of scores at the midpoint (no affective preference reported for whites or nonwhites).

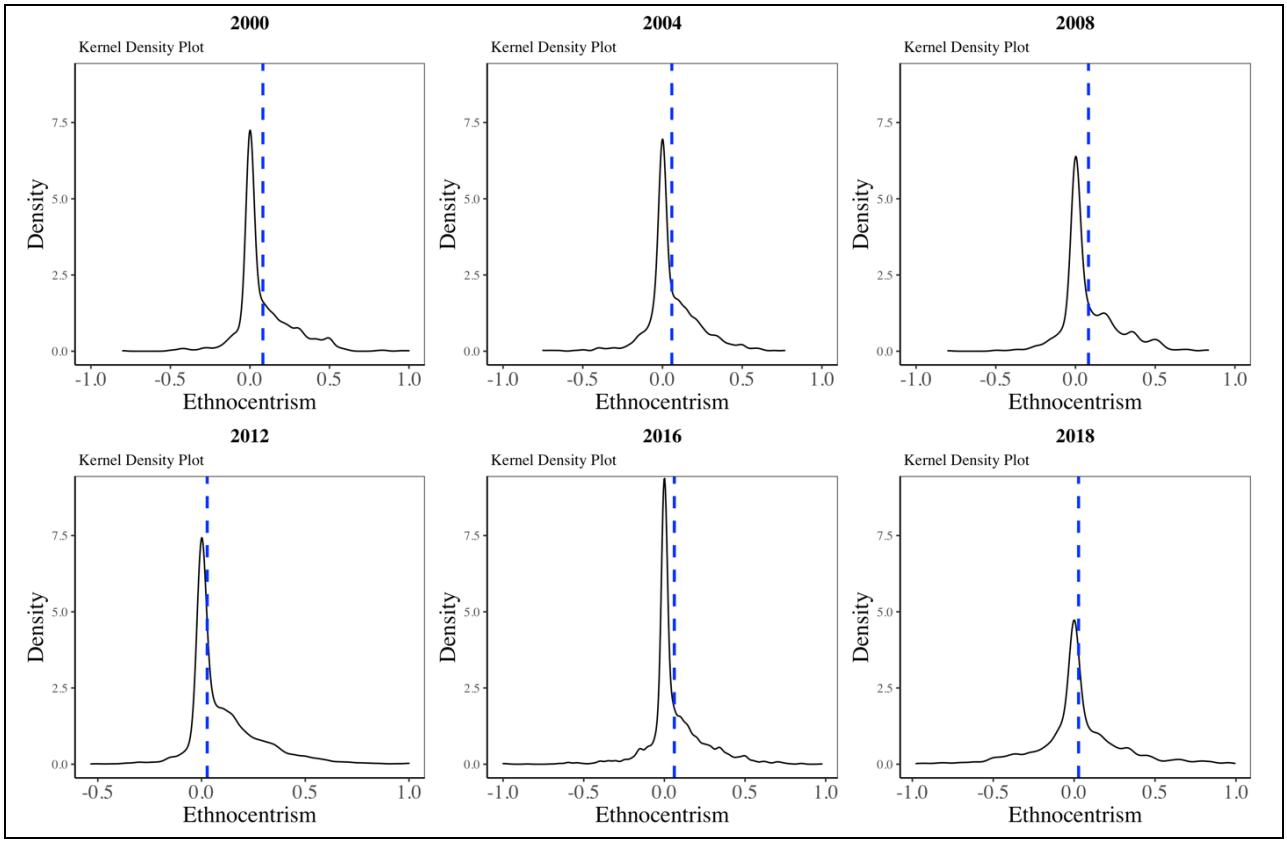


Figure 5.1
Ethnocentrism Distributions Among White Americans, 2000-2018

By comparison, Figure 5.2, depicting the distribution of racial resentment in the white electorate over the same period of time, demonstrates more obvious movement. While racial resentment distributions remained quite stable in the aggregate for most of this period of time, the distribution becomes markedly less negatively skewed beginning in 2016, and in 2018, it

depicts a trimodal distribution, with a much higher proportion of white Americans falling on the low end of the spectrum than at any prior time during this 18-year period.

Is some of this shift in the 2016 and 2018 data attributable to a mode difference in how the ANES is administered? There are a few reasons that this explanation is unsatisfactory. For one, the dual mode design was first adopted in 2012, not 2016, so the timing of this mode shift does not coincide with shifts in the data patterns. Nonetheless, 2018 is the first year where the entire survey was administered via web, so in order to rule out mode effects as the sole explanation for my findings, I analyzed the data separately for the two modes of survey participation: face-to-face (FTF) and web in 2016. A total of 1,181 respondents took the survey via FTF, and another 3,090 took the survey via web. The mean level of racial resentment across the two survey modes was identical in 2016, at 0.58; in other words, there are no observed effects of survey mode on this metric.

I next assessed whether respondents were more likely to have extreme scores depending on how they took the survey; ostensibly, people who took the survey via web might be more comfortable voicing strongly racially resentful beliefs than people who have to interact with an interviewer. Similarly, perhaps people are more inclined to give very racially liberal answers when interviewed in person, as opposed to online. If this were true, we might see a higher proportion of scores equal to 1 in the web sample, and a higher proportion of scores equal to 0 in the FTF sample.

To test this, I isolated 2016 respondents who scored either a 0 or a 1 on racial resentment and compared what proportion of 0's and 1's respectively came from FTF or web. Of respondents who scored a 1 on racial resentment, 72% took the survey online. However, just as importantly, 71% of respondents who scored a 0 also took the survey online. Both of these

proportions match the overall proportion of respondents who took the survey online. So, it appears that we cannot attribute these shifts in the distribution to a mode effect: both the FTF and web samples had identical mean levels of racial resentment in 2016, and while a majority of respondents who scored a 1 took the survey online, the same is true of respondents who scored 0.

An interesting question that follows from these shifts in the distribution is whether there is asymmetric change happening on individual question items that is producing the overall shift. Are there particular items in the 4-question battery that are eliciting different answer patterns? In summary, there is not one question whose answer patterns shifted dramatically while others stayed the same. For each item, a meaningfully greater proportion of respondents choose the minimally racially resentful response (either *agree strongly* or *disagree strongly* depending on the relevant item), accounting for the distribution shifts, beginning in 2018. Histograms of the individual items in all six years are reported in the Appendix.

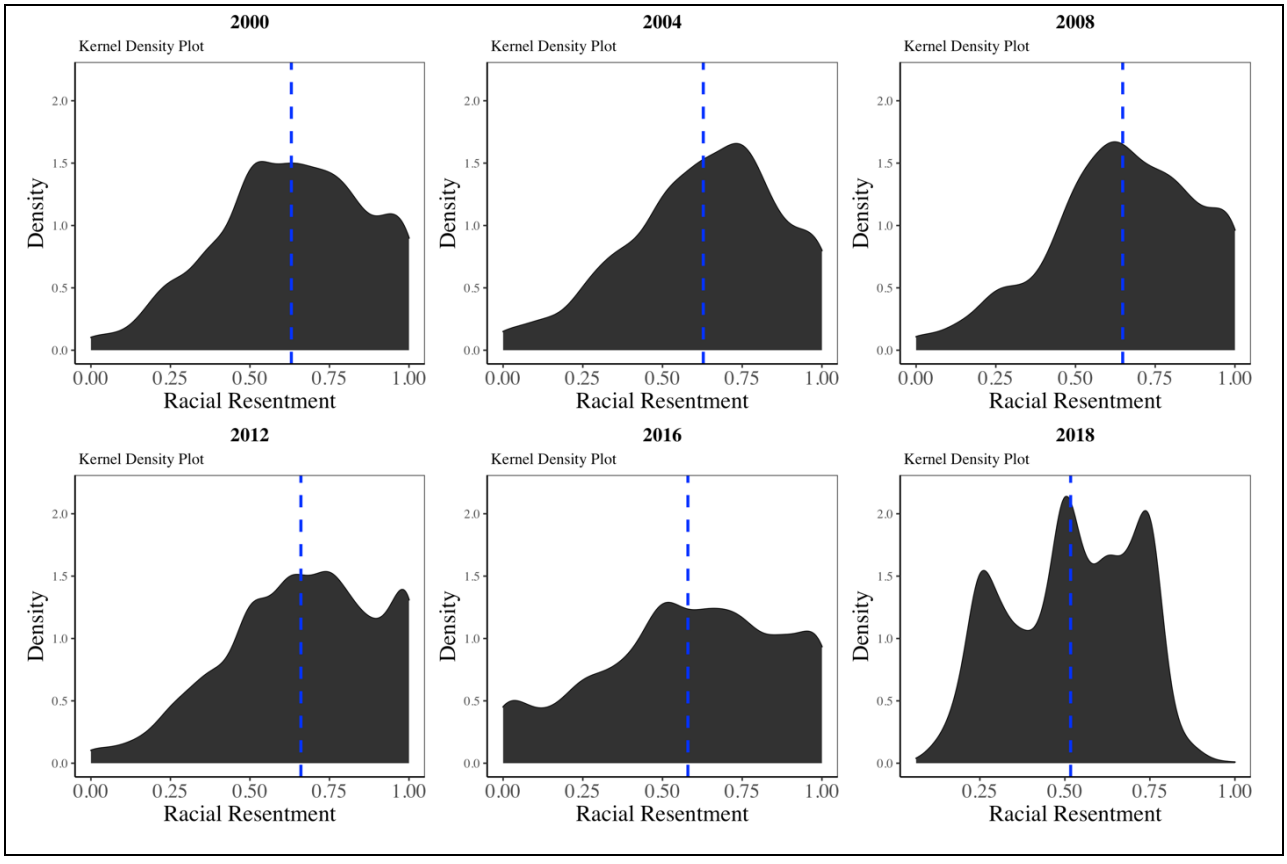


Figure 5.2
Racial Resentment Distributions Among White Americans, 2000-2018

In order to examine whether these trends are universal across party identification, or whether the bulk of this movement in overall distribution patterns is driven by a particular political group, I turn next to an examination of mean ethnocentrism and racial resentment levels by party identification—Democrat, Independent, and Republican (leaners included). Figure 5.3 depicts mean levels of ethnocentrism among whites for self-identified Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, and Table 5.1 provides descriptive statistics and t-test results for each time increment.

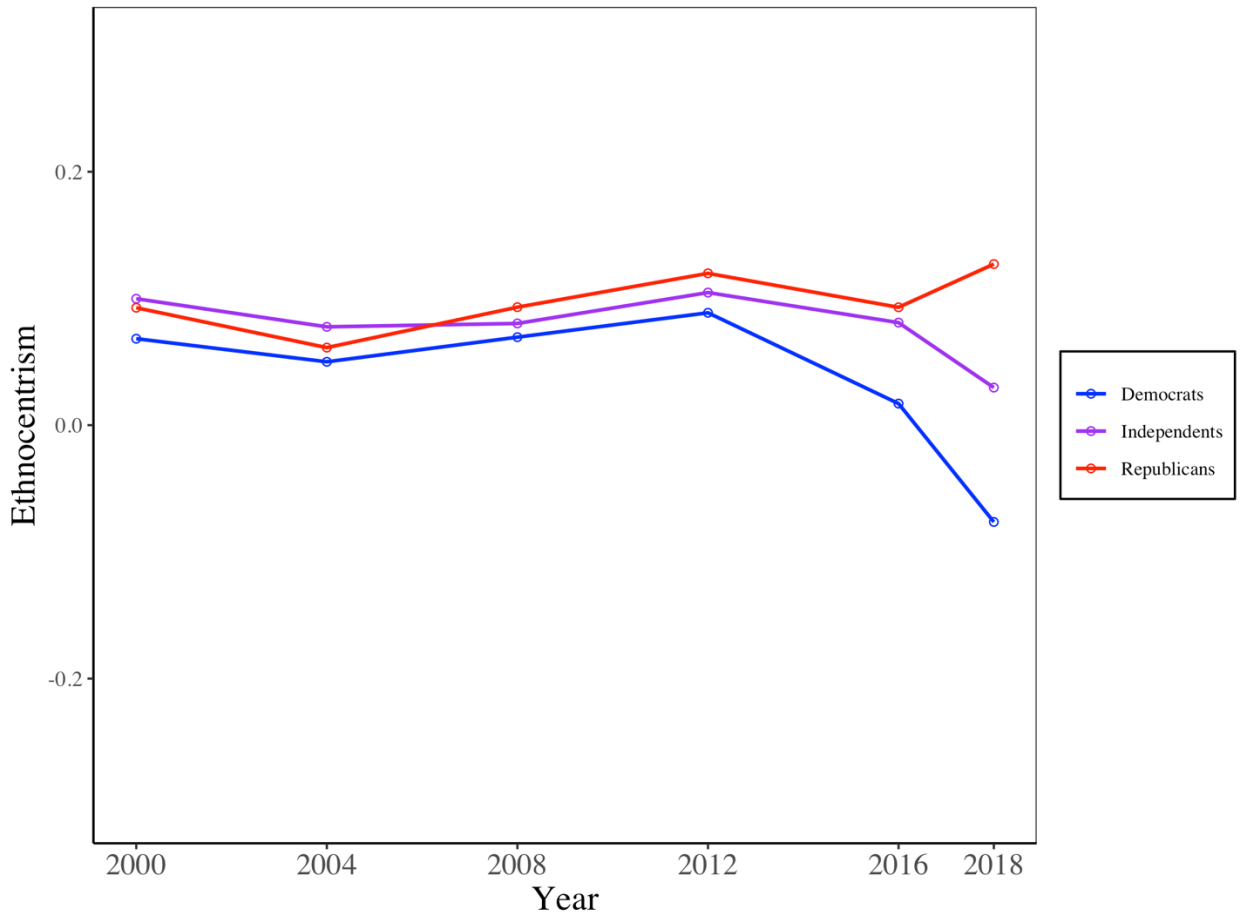


Figure 5.3
Mean Ethnocentrism Among White Americans, 2000-2018

Among white Democrats, no statistically significant change in mean level of ethnocentrism occurred from 2000 to 2004, or from 2004 to 2008. From 2008 (M=.069, SD=.18) to 2012 (M =.089, SD =.17), the mean level increased significantly (t(1710)=2.0904, p=.0367)). The primary movement occurs from 2012 to 2016, when ethnocentrism decreased significantly (M_{2012} =.089, SD_{2012} =.17, M_{2016} =.017, SD_{2016} =.18, t(2294)= -9.8237, p<.001)), and again from 2016 to 2018 (M_{2016} =.017, SD_{2016} =.18, M_{2018} =-.076, SD_{2018} =.25, t(1802)=-9.1819, p<.0001). This is a remarkable shift: in the aggregate, white Democrats in 2018 are reporting an affective preference for nonwhites *over* whites, which is without obvious precedent.

Among white Independents, no significant change in mean level of ethnocentrism occurred from 2000 to 2004, 2004 to 2008, 2008 to 2012, or 2012 to 2016. From 2016 (M =.081, SD =.20) to 2018 (M =.030, SD =.25), the mean level also decreased significantly (t(575)=-2.7185, p=.0068).

Lastly, among white Republicans, we see statistically significant shifts in the mean in every time increment, but these shifts represent fluctuations in both directions and are considerably smaller effects than those among white Democrats (see Cohen's d, Table 5.1). From 2000 (M =.092, SD =.061) to 2004 (M =.061, SD =.16), the mean decreased significantly (t(860)=-2.3778, p=.0176). From 2004 to 2008 (M =.093, SD =.17), the mean increased significantly (t(833)=2.7785, p=.0056), and this trend repeated from 2008 to 2012 (M =.120, SD =.18, t(1732)=2.7959, p=.0052). From 2012 to 2016, (M =.093, SD =.16), the mean level of ethnocentrism decreased significantly (t(2524)=-3.9819, p<.0001). Finally, from 2016 to 2018 (M =.127, SD =.23), the mean increased significantly again (t(2000)=3.8907, p=.0001). The magnitude of the effects in each time interval are comparable as measured by Cohen's d (d ranging from .15 to .19 across each tested interval).

Table 5.1

Mean Differences in Ethnocentrism Across Years By Partisanship

	White Democrats						*White independents*						*White Republicans*					
	n	M	SD	t	p	*d*	*n*	M	SD	t	*p*	*d*	*n*	M	SD	t	*p*	*d*
Bush Term 1				1.397	0.16					-0.708	.47					-2.377	.02	.17
2000	466	.068	.17				115	.099	.20				486	.092	.21			
2004	300	.050	.18				61	.078	.16				376	.061	.16			
Bush Term 2				1.407	0.16					.0650	.95					2.778	.01	.19
2004	300	.050	.18				61	.078	.16				376	.061	.16			
2008	437	.069	.18				115	.080	.21				459	.093	.17			
Obama Term 1				2.090	0.04					1.279	.20					2.795	.01	.15
2008	437	.069	.18				115	.080	.21				459	.093	.17			
2012	1275	.089	.17				441	.105	.18				1275	.120	.18			
Obama Term 2				-9.823	<.001	.41				-1.710	.09					-3.981	<.001	.16
2012	1275	.089	.17				441	.105	.18				1275	.120	.18			
2016	1021	.017	.18				305	.081	.20				1251	.093	.16			
Trump Term 1				-9.181	<.001	.43				-2.718	.01	.23				3.891	<.001	.17
2016	1021	.017	.18				305	.081	.20				1251	.093	.16			
2018	783	-.076	.25				272	.030	.25				751	.127	.23			

Thus, for all three partisan groups, the mean level of ethnocentrism increased marginally between 2004 and 2012, and then decreased across all three groups from 2012 to 2016, coinciding with the end of the Obama presidency and the rise of Trump on the national political stage. In the first half of the Trump era, we see the start of asymmetric patterns of change: white Democrats and white Independents continue to see aggregate decrease in mean ethnocentrism levels, while white Republicans begin to rebound to 2012 levels.[11]

I turn next to racial resentment, to compare whether the reported trends for ethnocentrism are mirrored for this variable. Figure 5.4 depicts mean levels of racial resentment among whites for self-identified Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, and Table 5.2 provides descriptive statistics and t-test results for each time increment.

[11] This last finding has no one obvious interpretation. One plausible explanation is a method effect; namely, that exclusively online sampling in the 2018 Pilot Study emboldened Trump sympathizers and supporters to express themselves without social desirability constraints. To assess this possibility, I assessed mean ethnocentrism levels by partisanship in 2016 by sampling method and compared the respondents who took the survey via web and FTF. Among Democrats and Independents, ethnocentrism means were slightly *lower* among the web participants than the respondents who were questioned by interviewers. Among Republicans, the levels were identical. Obviously, I am unable to compare by method in 2018 to assess for potential effects, but the lack of evidence for this explanation in the 2016 dataset is encouraging. It is also important to note that this upward shift among white Republicans is a comparably weak effect compared to the downward shift among white Democrats, as indicated by Cohen's *d*. Thus, this uptick in 2018 may be a short-term fluctuation, similar to the significant increases and decreases reported for this group over the 2000-2018 period. The more obvious and continuous pattern, supported by much greater effect sizes, occurs in the white Democrat group.

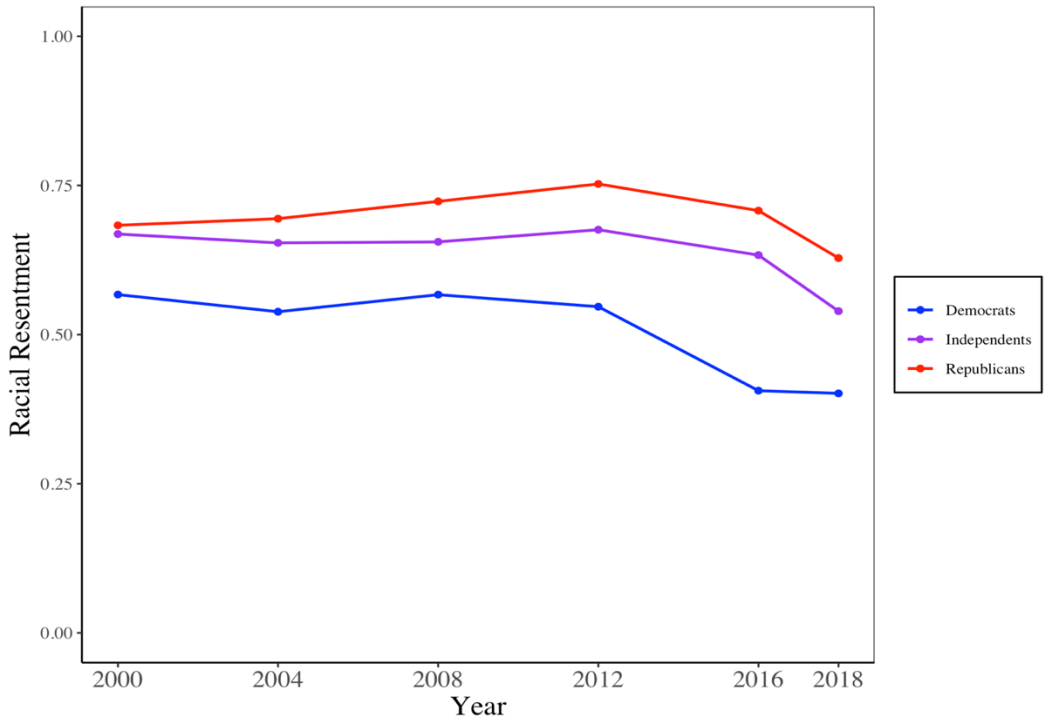


Figure 5.4
Mean Racial Resentment Among White Americans, 2000-2018

Among white Democrats, no statistically significant change in mean level of racial resentment occurred from 2000 to 2004, from 2004 to 2008, or from 2008 to 2012. From 2012 (M=.55, SD =.25) to 2016 (M =.41, SD =.28), the mean level decreased significantly (t(2034)=-11.997, p=.04)), then held steady in 2018.

Among white Independents, no significant change in mean level of racial resentment occurred from 2000 to 2004, 2004 to 2008, or 2008 to 2012. From 2012 (M =.68, SD=.21) to 2016 (M =.63, SD=.24), racial resentment decreased significantly (t(643)=2.420, p=.02), and decreased significantly again from 2016 to 2018 (M =.54, SD=.16, t(507)=-5.092, p=). Importantly, the magnitude of the change from 2012 to 2016 (d=.19) is considerably smaller than the magnitude of change that took place from 2016 to 2018 (d=.46).

Lastly, among white Republicans, no significant change occurred in mean level of racial resentment between 2000 and 2004, but from there, scores *increased* significantly from 2004 (M =.69, SD =.20) to 2008 (M =.72, SD =.19, $t(726)=2.000$, $p=.05$), and again from 2008 to 2012 (M =.75, SD =.19, $t(1717)=2.771$, $p=.01$). Importantly, however, the effect sizes for these statistically significant changes are fairly small ($d=.15$ and $d=.16$ respectively). From 2012 to 2016 (M =.71, SD =.21), scores then decreased significantly ($t(2370)= -5.469$, $p<.001$), and decreased again from 2016 to 2018 (M =.63, SD =.13, ($t(1643)=8.396$, $p<.001$). This last decrease, from 2016 to 2018, is the greatest in magnitude of all the time intervals tested ($d=.46$).

Table 5.2

Mean Differences in Racial Resentment Across Years By Partisanship

	White Democrats						*White Independents*						*White Republicans*					
	n	M	SD	t	p	*d*	*n*	M	SD	t	*p*	*d*	*n*	M	SD	t	*p*	*d*
Bush Term 1				-1.487	.14					.382	.70					.738	.46	
2000	455	.57	.25				112	.67	.24				463	.68	.21			
2004	270	.54	.26				54	.65	.23				326	.69	.20			
Bush Term 2				1.463	.14					-.052	.95					2.000	.05	.15
2004	270	.54	.26				54	.65	.23				326	.69	.20			
2008	377	.57	.24				104	.66	.23				402	.72	.19			
Obama Term 1				-1.355	.17					.881	.38					2.771	.01	.16
2008	377	.57	.24				104	.66	.23				402	.72	.19			
2012	1110	.55	.25				368	.68	.21				1317	.75	.19			
Obama Term 2				-11.997	<.001					2.420	.02	.19				-5.469	<.001	.22
2012	1110	.55	.25				368	.68	.21				1317	.75	.19			
2016	926	.41	.28				277	.63	.24				1055	.71	.21			
Trump Term 1				-0.413	.68					-5.092	<.001	.46				-8.396	<.001	.46
2016	926	.41	.28				277	.63	.24				1055	.71	.21			
2018	681	.40	.17				232	.54	.16				590	.63	.13			

These analyses yield three takeaway points, and one unanswered question. First, I tested whether ethnocentrism and racial resentment, in the aggregate, remained unchanged throughout the time period in question, or whether mean levels increased or decreased significantly during this period of time. I found an aggregate *decrease* in mean levels of ethnocentrism and racial resentment among white voters beginning in 2016, suggesting that the Trump era did not produce an increase in ethnocentrism or racial resentment among the white electorate on the whole. Second, I assessed whether these shifts took place only among one partisan group, or if different directional trends occurred depending on party identification. Importantly, I find that all three groups showed a decline in ethnocentrism and racial resentment during the time interval 2012 to 2016, corresponding with the end of the Obama presidency and Trump's rise to prominence, though ethnocentrism does rebound to 2012 levels among white Republicans as of 2018. Overall, these data do not suggest that aggregate shifts in ethnocentrism and racial resentment simply decreased among Trump opponents and increased among Trump supporters. Lastly, I sought to assess whether this decrease in aggregate ethnocentrism and racial resentment among white voters reflects a shift that took place during the beginning of the Trump era, or whether these, too, are Obama-era trends. These analyses suggest that ethnocentrism and racial resentment were subtly trending upward during Obama's first term, and then decreased between 2012 and 2016, a time period that coincided with Trump's increasing prominence, and largely continued to decline in the early years of Trump's first term.

Attitude Changes vs. Social Sorting

However, an important question remains that these analyses cannot account for: do these mean-level decreases in ethnocentrism and racial resentment reflect attitude change among the white electorate, or is this a function of social sorting, where racial attitudes helped white voters

to realign their party identities? To be sure, sorting certainly plays an important role in the changing coalitions of the two parties. Racial attitudes were the strongest predictor of shifting partisanship among whites during Obama's presidency (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, 2018), and a new paper by Reny, Collingwood, and Valenzuela (2019) reports that among whites, switching to vote for the opposite-party candidate in 2016 than they supported in 2012 is associated more strongly with racial and immigration attitudes than with economic factors.

However, there is reason to believe that the reported aggregate decrease in ethnocentrism and racial resentment is not solely the result of sorting but may instead reflect true attitude and norm change. For one thing, party switchers are typically a very small proportion of the electorate, and therefore unlikely to account for very large shifts in racial attitudes absent other factors. For another, the Black Lives Matter movement, created in the summer of 2013 in response to systematic police brutality against black and brown civilians, was a prominent antiracist movement during the period of time in question and there is some emerging literature suggesting its success in shifting racial attitudes. A recent paper by Sawyer and Gampa (2018) assessed the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM) on explicit and implicit racial attitudes, and their study found significant decreases in implicit and explicit antiblack biases following the rise of the BLM movement. For a third, Trump himself may have been a contributing factor, not just in reorganizing racial attitudes by party, but in shaping the attitudes themselves. Given the pervasive narrative that Trump has reinvigorated racism in the American public, giving it newfound relevance, it is possible that white liberals are now responding to the racial resentment questions in new ways, in order to differentiate their views from what they perceive as negative Trump-initiated trends.

Thus, while it appears unlikely that sorting could be the sole cause of these decreases, given that every group's mean decreased during the same period of time, this question merits further investigation. To account for this alternative explanation for my findings, I re-conducted the same analyses but this time split the data into four groups for the years 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016[12], as follows:

D-D: Respondents who voted for the Democrat in the year they were surveyed and reported voting for the Democrat in the prior election cycle.

R-R: Respondents who voted for the Republican in the year they were surveyed and reported voting for the Republican in the prior election cycle.

D-R: Respondents who voted for the Democrat in the year they were surveyed but reported voting for the Republican in the prior election cycle.

R-D: Respondents who voted for the Republican in the year they were surveyed but reported voting for the Republican in the prior election cycle.

The proportion of each sample that falls into each category is summarized below in Table 5. Demonstrably, the number and proportion of party switchers among white respondents in this dataset is small, and importantly, the proportion who report voting for Obama in 2012 and Trump in 2016 (*D-R* in 2016*)* is not markedly higher than the proportion who made the same switch the cycle prior. Thus, the effect of sorting is likely a factor in 2016, but no more so than it was in 2012.

[12] Here I exclude the 2018 pilot since I can't make the comparison of current vote to prior vote, given that it is a midterm election year, and legislative office vote is an inaccurate proxy for presidential vote. Here I also transition from using party identification to vote choice. The ANES does not survey respondents about whether their party identification has changed, so the only way to assess change from the prior election cycle is to evaluate crossing party lines in presidential vote choice. To ensure that this comparison does not result in different data, I tested to ensure that the pattern of mean ethnocentrism and racial resentment by vote choice is consistent with the pattern by party identification. This graph can be found in the Appendix. Thus, from here onwards, I use vote choice rather than party identification.

Table 5.3
Proportion of White Vote Switchers vs. Party Loyalists By Year

	D-D	*R-R*	*R-D*	*D-R*	Total
2000	46% (n=323)	44% (n=306)	3% (n=19)	8% (n=53)	N=701
2004	34% (n=178)	56% (n=287)	5% (n=28)	4% (n=23)	N=516
2008	33% (n=221)	53% (n=353)	8% (n=56)	5% (n=30)	N=660
2012	41% (n=942)	50% (n=1154)	3% (n=71)	6% (n=130)	N=2,297
2016	50% (n=1030)	40% (n=814)	3% (n=55)	7% (n=147)	N=2,046

Figure 5.5 depicts mean ethnocentrism among white voters in each of these four groups across the period 2000-2016, and Tables 5.3 and 5.4 summarize the descriptive statistics and significance tests.

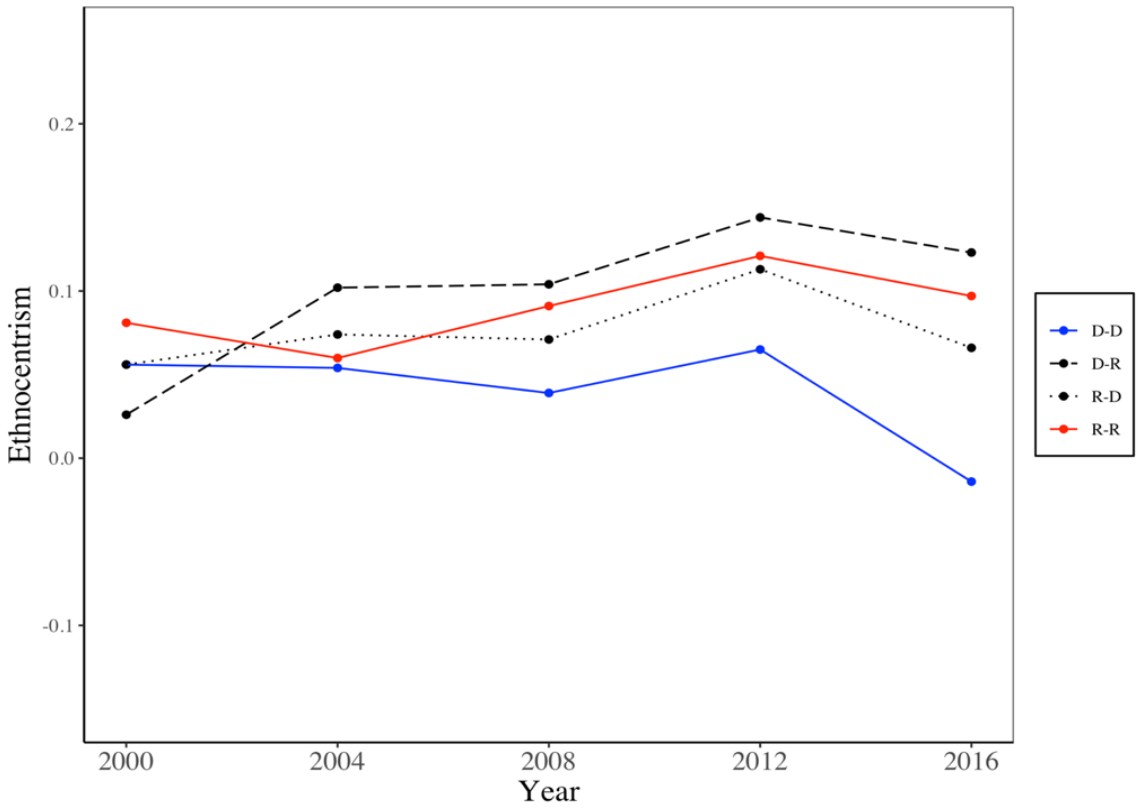


Figure 5.5
Mean Ethnocentrism Among White Vote Switchers vs. Party Loyalists

First, in consideration of the sorting hypothesis, we can look to the movement over time among the two party-switching groups, *D-R* and *R-D*, and it is evident that every group shows a decrease over the 2012 to 2016 time-interval. Thus, sorting cannot account for these shifts. Next, concentrating on the party loyalists (*D-D* and *R-R* voters), if sorting were the only explanation for my findings, I should see no major shift in mean ethnocentrism from 2012 to 2016 among either of these groups. Rather, I find that mean ethnocentrism for white Democratic loyalists decreases significantly from 2012 (M=.07, SD=.16) to 2016 (M=-.01, SD=.17, $t(1560)=9.349$, $p<.001$), *and* among white Republican loyalists ($M_{2012}=.12$, $SD_{2016}=.17$, $M_{2016}=.09$, $SD_{2016}=.16$, $t(1878)=3.055$, $p=.002$).

Table 5.4
Mean Differences in Ethnocentrism Across Years by Party Line Voting

	D=D Voters					*R-R Voters*				
Variable	*n*	M	SD	*t*	*p*	*n*	M	SD	*t*	*p*
Bush Term 1				0.122	.90				1.476	0.14
2000	278	.06	.16			268	.08	.18		
2004	169	.05	.18			274	.06	.15		
Bush Term 2				0.888	.38				2.366	0.02
2004	169	.05	.18			274	.06	.15		
2008	213	.04	.15			340	.09	.17		
Obama Term 1				2.162	.031				2.857	0.004
2008	213	.04	.15			340	.09	.17		
2012	924	.07	.16			1145	.12	.17		
Obama Term 2				9.349	<0.001				3.055	0.002
2012	924	.07	.16			1145	.12	.17		
2016	638	-.01	.17			735	.09	.16		

Turning again to racial resentment and beginning with the switchers, depicted in Figure 19, it is evident that respondents who report voting for Romney in 2012 and Clinton in 2016 show a marked decrease in mean racial resentment from 2012 to 2016, but in comparison, those

who report voting for Obama in 2012 and Trump in 2016 show a slight increase. However, I concentrate here on the party loyalists (*D-D* and *R-R* voters), because if sorting were the primary driver of these findings, I should see no major shift in mean racial resentment from 2012 to 2016 among either of these groups.

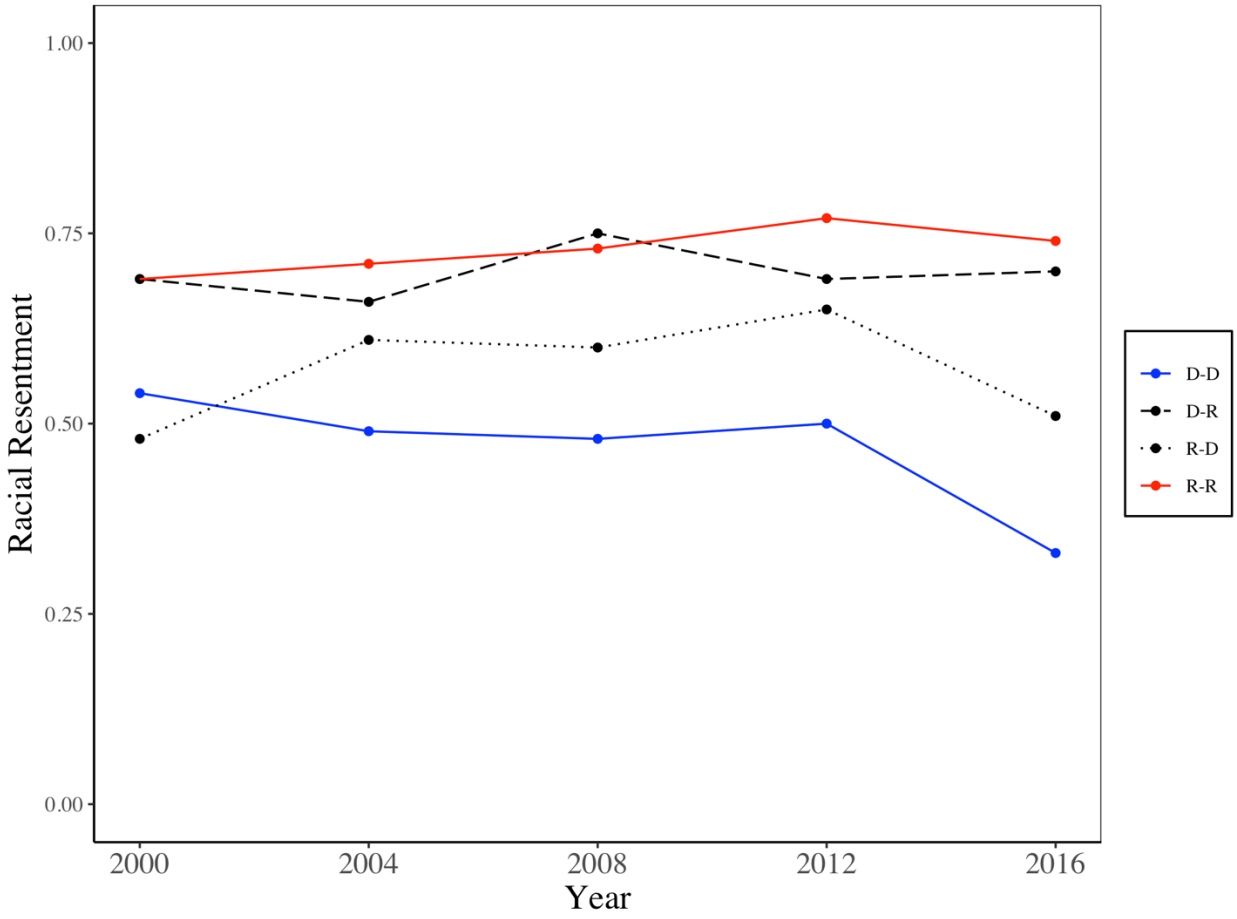


Figure 5.6
Mean Racial Resentment Among Party Vote Switchers vs. Party Loyalists

Instead, I find that mean racial resentment for white Democratic loyalists decreases significantly from 2012 (M=.5, SD=.25) to 2016 (M=.33, SD=.26, $t(1392)$=12.322, p<.001), *and* among white Republican loyalists (M_{2012}=.77, SD_{2016}=.18, M_{2016}=.74, SD_{2016}=.20, $t(1626)$=3.133, p=.003).

Table 5.5
Mean Differences in Racial Resentment Across Years by Party Line Voting

	D=D Voters					*R-R Voters*				
Variable	*n*	M	SD	*t*	*p*	*n*	M	SD	*t*	*p*
Bush				1.990	.05				1.109	.27
Term 1										
2000	271	.54	.24			257	.69	.21		
2004	151	.49	.26			239	.71	.19		
Bush				0.359	.72				1.219	. 22
Term 2										
2004	151	.49	.26			239	.71	.19		
2008	188	.48	.25			306	.73	.19		
Obama				0.323	.90				3.357	.01
Term 1										
2008	188	0.48	.25			306	.73	.19		
2012	808	0.5	.25			1002	.77	.18		
Obama				12.322	<0.001				3.133	.003
Term 2										
2012	808	0.5	.25			1002	.77	.18		
2016	586	0.33	.26			626	.74	.20		

Thus, while sorting certainly plays a role in reorganizing partisan identities around racial attitudes, sorting alone cannot account for this aggregate level shifts in ethnocentrism or racial resentment from 2012 to 2016. Rather, it appears that white Democrats have undergone some substantial change in their racial attitudes, and not just in the composition of their party.

Discussion

A popular mainstream dialogue in political circles and news media regards Trump as an anomaly in more ways than one. An important piece of this narrative paints Trump as uniquely prone to stirring up racial animosities, suggesting that Trump has somehow reinvigorated racism in the white American electorate. In this chapter, I interrogated whether, and how, mean levels of ethnocentrism and racial resentment have changed over 20 years in the aggregate and by partisanship. I find a significance decrease in ethnocentrism and racial resentment among white Democrats, coinciding with the Obama to Trump transition phase of 2016, and holding steady or

intensifying in 2018, and no accompanying significant increase among white Republicans in 2016.

Importantly, there are limitations to the data analyses presented in this chapter. Again, these data are all cross-sectional, which prevents causal interpretations. Further, given that I only have data on the first two years of Trump's presidency, my ability to create symmetrical comparisons between the Trump era and prior eras is limited by lack of available data. It is also possible that cooperation with major social surveys such as the ANES has grown politicized, so that Americans who hold errant views on race that they know to be out of step with rapidly changing norms are reluctant to participate at all. Despite these limitations, these data lend support to my theory that if we are looking for evidence of change in how racial attitudes operate among the white electorate in the Trump era, we ought to look more closely at racial liberals.

Chapter Six

In this dissertation, I have argued that while Trump has been widely characterized as an outsider who is out of step with Republican norms and ideals, when viewed through the lens of white voters' symbolic predispositions such as polarization, ethnocentrism, and racial resentment, he looks more like a continuation of prior trends than the instigator of them.

Demographic Correlates of Change

Chapter Two investigated some of the aspects of the New Deal coalitions that have shifted in recent cycles, in order to tease apart long-term shifts since the 1980s from short-term shifts that were thought to constitute newfound sources of support for Trump in 2016. I found that the "diploma divide" is arguably the main agent of stratification of two-party vote share: both the gender gap and the income divide become much less pronounced when I interact them with college attendance. Importantly, however, my data do not suggest that this divide around college education was disproportionately greater in 2016 than in 2012 or 2008, suggesting that Trump benefited from an ongoing migration of non-college educated white voters towards the Republican Party that also benefited his predecessors. Moreover, while education is a major delineator of two-party vote share in 2016, the much-touted white non-college educated men purported to have propelled Trump to the presidency do not make up the largest share of Republican-to-Democrat vote switchers in 2016 or in 2012. Rather, I find that non-college educated white women make up the plurality of those switchers, in both years that I tested.

Ethnocentrism, Polarization, and Electoral Outcomes

Chapter Three focused on two indices of sociopolitical division, ethnocentrism and polarization, and how their predictive power over voting behavior has shifted over the past five election cycles, in order to gauge whether these were newly influential in the Trump era or

predated his campaign. I found that ethnocentrism and polarization were orthogonal constructs in 2000, 2004, and 2008, but that they emerged as positively correlated in 2012 (r=.13) and grew further by 2016 (r=.27). Ethnocentrism and partisanship followed the same trend in 2000, 2004, and 2008, but began to grow in 2012 (r=.09) and in 2016 (r=.20). This finding suggests two takeaway points. First, these two indices of ingroup affection and outgroup denigration began to blend and align with explicit political party preferences. In other words, where a preference for whites over nonwhites once was unrelated to a preference for Republicans over Democrats, these two predispositions are now positively associated, suggesting that attitudes towards the parties are newly related to attitudes about white voters' affective preference for fellow whites over nonwhites.

These results lend support to prior literature on the relationship between polarization and racial attitudes. Mason (2015, 2018) has argued that polarization can be largely attributed to the fact that partisan identities and sociocultural identities—such as race or religion—have become more closely aligned. Similarly, Abramowitz (2018, p. 123; also see Abramowitz and Webster 2018) argues that "the single most important factor underlying the rise of negative partisanship has been the growing racial divide between supporters of the two parties." My data lend support to this growing body of work, as I find that ethnocentrism and partisan attitudes, which were statistically unrelated among white respondents as recently as 2008, now appear to be positively and significantly associated.

The second important thing to note is that while these associations are highest in 2016, they emerged by 2012, suggesting that Trump did not instigate this trend but instead inherited and profited from it. Similarly, while the relationship between ethnocentrism and general election vote choice has strengthened over the period 2000-2016, the marginal effect of

ethnocentrism on probability of supporting Republican presidential candidates first emerged in 2012, not 2016.

Interestingly, the results I report on ethnocentrism and the Republican primary don't suggest one simple explanation. Ostensibly, other candidates may have activated or benefited from racial animus among the white electorate more than John McCain did, and this result should not be taken to imply that McCain *himself* was the most ethnocentric candidate on the Republican primary ballot. One alternative explanation for these findings is that the timing of the data collection, months after the primary concluded, permitted greater error in reporting primary vote choices respectively.

To follow up on this possibility, I compare these results to data collected during the 2008-2009 ANES panel from the earliest wave of the study with the relevant data, February 2008. I create a binary variable where 1=voted for McCain in the primary and 0=voted for another Republican candidate, and among whites, the correlation between ethnocentrism[13] and voting for McCain is r=0.17. By comparison, in the ANES Time Series data collected in the fall of 2008, this correlation is r=0.23. These correlations suggest, then, that this relationship between ethnocentrism and preferring McCain to Republican alternatives existed before McCain was the confirmed nominee and Obama his confirmed opponent.

A second alternative explanation for this finding is the possibility that whites who are higher in ethnocentrism had a stronger vested interest in winning the general election and were therefore more inclined to bet on a winning horse and vote for the candidate they perceived had the best chance. While McCain did not secure the nomination until May 4th, he emerged from Super Tuesday on January 31st well ahead of the competition, and his status as the frontrunner

[13] In the ANES 2008-9 panel, ethnocentrism is not measured on the full 0-100 thermometer, but a truncated 7-point scale, from *extremely cold* to *extremely warm*. The variable is otherwise constructed identically to the ANES Time Series variable.

may have already been crystallized in voters' minds by the time of the February ANES panel wave. Indeed, in the January 2008 wave, when asked which Republican candidate was most likely to win the nomination, 62% of whites chose McCain, and this figure rose to 91% by the February wave. Thus, a plausible explanation for these findings is not necessarily that the candidate with the most identifiably ethnocentric views held the most appeal for the majority of the white Republican electorate. Rather, it may be that those who held more ethnocentric views were inclined to back the candidate with the best chance at securing the nomination. Ultimately, more data and analysis is needed in order to test this possibility.

Ethnocentrism, Polarization, and Issue Positions

My examination of how ethnocentrism and polarization link up with issue positions that Trump supporters reported as their two top concerns in 2016 yield similar conclusions. Unsurprisingly, with respect to attitudes about the health of the economy, polarization is associated with optimistic appraisals among Republicans during Republican presidencies and pessimistic appraisals during Democratic presidencies, consistent with prior literature on the partisan nature of subjective perceptions of economic performance (Bartels 2002). However, the magnitude of these effects remains quite stable over this period. Again, 2008 is an exception, when the state of the economy was objectively quite bleak, and partisan predispositions did not provoke divisions of opinion in voters' perceptions of that reality. I find no evidence that polarization among the white electorate functioned any differently in 2016 than in prior years in predicting attitudes about the health of the national economy. Ethnocentrism first emerged as a strong predictor of negative appraisals of the economy in 2012, during the Obama-Romney contest, and remained high in 2016, suggesting the relationship between ethnocentrism and

attitudes about the economy did not first arise during Trump's campaign and did not increase during his run for the presidency.

Similarly, when asked to whether immigration levels should increase, decrease, or remain unchanged, ethnocentrism has consistently predicted negative attitudes about immigration the 2000-2016 period. Moreover, the magnitude of the coefficient is highest in 2012, not in 2016, suggesting that it was during the Romney-Obama matchup and not the Trump-Clinton campaign that ethnocentrism was most heavily related to attitudes towards immigrants. Further, polarization first emerged as a predictor of anti-immigrant sentiment not in 2016, but in 2012, suggesting that while affective sentiments about Republicans and Democrats now relates strongly with their attitudes towards immigrants, this relationship predated Trump's political ascendency by at least one presidential election cycle.

Ethnocentrism, or Authoritarianism?

An alternative explanation to ethnocentrism as a guiding force is authoritarianism, characterized as an inclination to submit to figures of authority and to endorse aggression against outgroups if those authority figures sanction it (Stenner 2005). Further, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism are correlated concepts: Kinder and Kam (2012) note that "by valuing uniformity and authority over autonomy and diversity, authoritarians come 'naturally' to ethnocentrism" (p. 331; see also Stenner 2005). However, consistent with the findings reported in Kinder and Kam (2012), when I added authoritarianism to my models, the effects of ethnocentrism persisted (see Appendix). For this reason, there is no evidence to suggest that ethnocentrism, an index of preference for the racial ingroup over outgroups, is simply a proxy for race-neutral preferences for authority and willingness to take action against outgroups that those authority figures deem dangerous or subversive.

Ethnocentrism, Racial Resentment, and Presidential Approval

Next, in Chapter Four, I investigated the relationships between two racial attitude indices, ethnocentrism and racial resentment, and presidential job approval for Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump, to test whether racial attitudes exerted newfound influence on presidential approval for Trump in 2018, or whether the true shift occurred under Obama beginning in 2012.

It is important to pause here and reiterate the distinctions between ethnocentrism from prejudice; in this case, the specific prejudice being racial resentment. Kinder and Kam argue that while prejudice involves training one's dislike towards a particular outgroup—in this case, black Americans—ethnocentrism is a broad reaction to outsiders generally, and they propose a causal relationship between the two. They argue that ethnocentrism "paves the way to prejudice"; put differently, "the appeal of any particular prejudice will be greater if a person is already ethnocentrically predisposed" (Kinder and Kam, 2009, p. 208).

In this chapter, I found that the marginal effect of ethnocentrism on the probability of approving of the president's job performance, across all three domains tested – general, economic, and foreign relations—was non-significant in 2000, 2004, or 2008, for Clinton and Bush, respectively. In simpler terms, ethnocentrism appears to have had little to no bearing on presidential approval prior to Obama.

Beginning in 2012, this story changed dramatically. The marginal effect of moving ethnocentrism from -2SD to +2SD resulted in a .24-point decrease in the likelihood of approving of Obama's general job performance. That figure is even higher, at .31 points, with respect to approval of his handling of the economy. In the foreign relations domain, the marginal effect of ethnocentrism produced a .19-point decrease in the likelihood of approving of how Obama managed the foreign policy of the United States. Thus, when looking for evidence that

ethnocentrism influenced perceptions of presidents' job performance, it would be a mistake to interpret Trump as the initiator of that trend.

Racial resentment tells a slightly different story. The marginal effect of moving racial resentment from its minimum to its maximum is associated with significant shifts in job approval in *every* year except 2008, when the marginal effect of racial resentment disappears for general and economic job approval. In the foreign relations domain, the significant marginal effect persists, but shrinks from .35 points to .20. The context for this finding is that Bush's approval was quite low by election season of 2008 to begin with, owing largely to the unpopularity of the Iraq War. Thus it is possible that there was less room for symbolic predispositions to move perceptions of Bush's performance in 2008, particularly with respect to economic management, as the economy was objectively dismal by this time. Even in the foreign relations domain, the only domain where racial resentment shows a significant marginal effect, those at the highest end of the racial resentment spectrum of scores are only a little over 50% likelihood to approve of his handling of this aspect of his job (see Appendix).

In 2012, the first year that Obama was the target of evaluation, the magnitude of the effects grew tremendously, exerting much greater influence on presidential approval in 2012 and 2016 than in 2000 or 2004. The effects grow even further under Trump: racial resentment scores and likelihood of approval come very close to a 1:1 ratio. While the effects are extremely large, and larger than the effects for Obama in 2012 and 2016, the increase in magnitude from Obama to Trump needs to be put into context. The transition from Bush to Obama produced a comparably large magnitude of increase in marginal effects as the transition from Obama to Trump. In the general domain, the magnitude of the effect of racial resentment grew by .20 points in the transition from Bush in 2004 to Obama in 2012; by comparison, in the transition

from Obama in 2016 to Trump in 2018, the magnitude of the effect increased by .27. In the economic domain, the magnitude of the effect of racial resentment grew most substantially in the Bush to Obama shift, growing from .29 in 2004 to .59 in 2012, a .30-point increase. Comparatively, the increase in magnitude of the marginal effect from Obama to Trump was a .20-points. Thus, while Trump has certainly exacerbated the trend, it is important to put him in broader context. He did not initiate this relationship between racial attitudes and presidential approval ratings, he simply inflamed it.

The one domain where the theory of Trump as anomalous gains some traction is in job approval regarding foreign relations. While the marginal effect of racial resentment became .11 points larger under Obama relative to Bush, the greatest increase takes place from Obama (2016) to Trump (2018), at a .34-point increase. Much of Trump's foreign policy thus far has been marked by a common theme of racial exclusion and animosity for predominantly nonwhite countries. He called for a ban on immigration from predominantly Muslim countries, proclaimed Haiti and African nations to be inferior to the United States and expressed desire for fewer immigrants from those countries, and his signature campaign promise was to erect a wall on the southern border with Mexico. For this reason, I interpret the fact that Trump appears anomalous in this domain of presidential approval, relative to both his Republican predecessors and relative to Obama, as evidence of how explicitly racialized his foreign policy is, which is without obvious precedent. In other words, this is the domain in which Trump most frequently speaks the quiet part loud; to be frank, he shouts it, and it appears the public heard him.

Ethnocentrism versus Racial Resentment

Why does racial resentment show significant marginal effects since 2000 in every year and for every domain, except in 2008, while ethnocentrism shows no effects until Obama in

2012? Two possible interpretations come to mind, one statistical and one substantive. Firstly, ethnocentrism was restricted in its range, from -2SD to +2SD. This was done purposefully, to prevent outliers from over-influencing the trend. Despite this, the simulated confidence intervals around each point estimate are very wide. Thus, estimating marginal effects, even with a truncated range, is difficult to do with precision on this variable. As shown in Chapter Five, the vast majority of scores cluster at zero, whereas scores on racial resentment are much more evenly distributed across its full range.

Substantively, it is possible that the conceptual distinction between ethnocentrism and racial resentment, one a measure of both ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility, the other a measure of prejudice towards a specific group, produces different patterns of effects. As I have argued in Chapter One, the threat to white hegemony did not take hold until Obama assumed office, when a black man occupying the White House went from being a specter to being a reality. Accompanying his rise to power were two other sources of threat: mass immigration and projections of accompanying demographic change. Thus, perhaps the consciousness not only of outgroup hostility but of an affective preference for the racial ingroup simply was not activated until 2012. Kinder and Kam (2012) argue that ethnocentrism "is more likely to be activated insofar as there is a close correspondence—a 'good fit'—between ethnocentrism, on one hand, and what is taking place in politics that commands attention, on the other," namely, "when politics is portrayed as conflict between ingroups and outgroups—between the virtuous and alien" (p. 335). Arguably, this explicit partitioning of "us" and "them" did not take hold until the 2008 campaign. Obama was portrayed by the right as *other* in unprecedented fashion—alternatively branded a Muslim, a socialist, a non-citizen, a man with social ties to terrorists, all

identities that reinforced the underlying belief that he was not different in a way that was not benign, but acutely threatening.

In contrast, racial resentment is a measure of specific outgroup prejudice, one with a long and ugly history in the United States that may have a lower threshold for activation that is less context-dependent than ethnocentrism. Further, as reported in Chapter Three, ethnocentrism and partisanship are only newly correlated as of 2012: in 2000, the Pearson's *r* was a trivial 0.05. By contrast, in 2000, racial resentment and partisanship correlate significantly at r=0.23. Thus when it comes to retrospective judgments of how presidents perform, a domain where partisanship should be expected to influence scores, Republicanism was already associated with higher racial resentment.

Ethnocentrism, Racial Resentment, and White Liberals

Finally, in Chapter Five, I took on the question of whether the aggregate levels of each of these racial attitudes, ethnocentrism and racial resentment, had changed in the Trump era. Rather than uncovering evidence that white Republicans were growing more racially conservative, I trained the microscope on white Democrats and found evidence that they were liberalizing on matters of race, at least in terms of self-reported beliefs. Among white Democrats, ethnocentrism and racial resentment declined meaningfully in 2016, timing which coincided with the upcoming presidential election featuring the most openly racist candidate in the modern era. I further investigated whether this effect was attributable purely to social sorting, where white voters simply reorganized their party identification in 2016 on the basis of their racial attitudes and found declines in mean levels of both variables among voters who did not change parties from 2012 to 2016.

Nonetheless, it is very important to note that there are multiple interpretations for these findings; in particular, the notion of attitude change in this context may have more than one meaning. It is possible that white liberals have truly liberalized in their views on racial matters in the United States, genuinely coming to attribute racial disparities to systemic and institutional racism rather than to a cultural failing of African Americans. However, it is also possible that white liberals have internalized what we might term a new norm of equality. Perhaps Democratic party orthodoxy now calls for an interpretation of racism as systemic, not individual or cultural, and gesturing to these views is more commonplace and even expected, whether or not they are not entirely sincere.

Last year, NPR reported that white Democrats were even more likely than non-white Democrats to say diversity improves the United States (NPR). But to conclude from this finding that white Democrats are more racially tolerant than nonwhite Democrats lacks important nuance and context. Are these statements more performative than substantive? Would white Democrats with liberal views on race support reparations for slavery in large numbers? Future studies ought to tease apart this question of internalizing a new social norm and virtue signaling support for it from genuine belief in structural racism and support for actions that mitigate it, in order to better understand these shifts among white Democrats, and to test how well they endure over time.

Rising Tide of Liberalism

These net decreases in racial animus may also reflect a rise in liberalism more broadly. James Stimson's index of policy mood (1991), a composite of American public opinion across a broad range of issues which measures public perception of the best overall approach to policy on a liberal to conservative scale, shows that 2018 is the most liberal year on record in the 68-year period of data on this subject, narrowly outstripping 1961, the prior apex (Vox, 2019). Further,

while policy mood grew less liberal during Obama's tenure (2009-2015), the liberalization on policy mood appears to have begun again in earnest *after* 2015. Thus, while a rising tide of conservatism in general public mood may have helped usher Trump into office, his assumption of the presidency may have activated a rising tide of liberalism in response.

Importantly, policy mood has been shown to swing regularly and widely since 1952. Should the liberalizing of white Democrats on racial attitudes be a reflection of general shifts in policy mood, we ought not to assume that these trends of decreased ethnocentrism and racial resentment will necessarily endure. My argument is that assessing this Obama to Trump era trend, however short-lived it may or may not be, shows there is not a universal rise in racial animus in conjunction with Trump's presidency; just the opposite.

Thus, it is conceivable that rather than engendering increased ethnocentrism and racial resentment among the white electorate, Trump may have primarily invigorated the antiracist movement. I do not dispute that Trump has emboldened racists. Rather, I argue that these data do not suggest a short-term increase in ethnocentrism and racial resentment in the aggregate, or a rising level of comfort expressing those beliefs because Trump has sanctioned them. Rather, I argue that we are either witnessing a genuine decrease or growing at least a growing hesitation in expressing it.

What if Donald Trump had not won the Republican nomination; that is, had a less explicitly racist Republican competed in the general election, would the impact of ethnocentrism and racial resentment have shrunk to pre-2008 levels? Unfortunately, it is not possible to directly test this argument, as history affords no control groups. Still, my argument partly rests on the notion that Trump's candidacy was successful precisely because the stage was set for these racial predispositions to be powerfully motivating to white voters whose racial grievances had reached

fever pitch. My argument is that these racial attitudes were too inflamed to simply dissipate with the natural conclusion of the Obama presidency.

It is also important to consider that, despite the fact that Obama was not on the ballot in 2016, Republicans framed Hillary Clinton's candidacy as a third term for Obama. As early as 2014, Republicans began branding Clinton as "Barack Obama Part Deux" (CNN). In response to Obama's speech endorsing Clinton at the 2016 Democratic Convention, Senator John Cornyn stated, "POTUS making no bones about it: Hillary running for Obama's third term" (*The Intelligencer*). Thus, while Trump did not run against Obama directly, he cast his opponent as the inheritor of Obama's legacy, helping him to more explicitly frame himself as the anti-Obama candidate.

Further, while it is possible that the next president will not necessarily keep these predispositions salient, either by virtue of identity or through rhetoric and policy, leading to a decline in their impact going forward, it is just as likely that the opposite will happen, not just with respect to racial attitudes but myriad other forms of bias. While the 2020 Democratic primary cycle did not produce a nominee who was a woman, a person of color, LGBT, or a candidate who holds any other historically marginalized identity, the party has nonetheless vocalized a commitment to expanding the diversity of its leaders. Barack Obama, as the first black president, triggered a cascade of racialization that outlived his presidency; we might see a similar pattern take hold for sex and gender biases in the event a woman wins the presidency.

Conclusion

Ultimately, in this dissertation, I have shown data suggesting that the predispositions associated with supporting Trump are the same factors that predicted support for Republicans in prior election cycles and administrations. Thus, the influence of these attitudes—affective

polarization, ethnocentrism, and racial resentment, precede Trump, suggesting that he garnered support among the white electorate on much the same basis as his Republican predecessors did. More specifically, these trends emerged during either during Obama years or well before, suggesting that the blending of partisan with racial affect and the influence of these racial predispositions on political attitudes was not a uniquely Trumpian development, but rather, set the stage for his rise.

However, I do *not* wish to suggest that Trump is entirely business as usual in American politics. Rather, I suggest that where Trump is most unprecedented is in his violation of the rules of civility and the explicitness with which he attacks groups on the basis of their political leanings and racial or ethnic identities. He appeals to the same set of predispositions—polarization, ethnocentrism, and racial resentment—that have motivated Republican voters in prior cycles, but he delivers the message with unprecedented bluntness. With respect to ethnocentrism and racial resentment, this bluntness is a contrast to the subtler dog-whistles that have been the standard for decades (Mendelberg 2001; Haney Lopez 2014).

Where Obama and Trump differed in their activation of racial attitudes has been how each one makes racial attitudes salient. As noted in the first chapter, Obama's race, by virtue of his biracial identity, was chronically accessible and its salience virtually impossible to deactivate. Obama almost studiously avoided discussing race whenever possible during his 2008 campaign. Conversely, Trump's racist remarks made headlines with alarming regularity. Thus while many of the links between racial attitudes and political attitudes, behaviors, and preferences that I have shown in this dissertation first gained traction when Obama was president, the reason for those growing associations is the chronic accessibility of race and subsequent racialization of

everything he touched. By contrast, Trump kept race salient not by virtue of his identity, but his remarks, actions, and proposed policies, many of which invoked race and racism explicitly.

I suggest that Trump is best characterized as capitalizing on preexisting trends within the party to his electoral advantage, rather than paving a new way that relied on voters who were motivated by fundamentally distinct or unique predispositions. Where he departs from Republican norms is in his proclivity to voice explicitly the messages that were previously conveyed with greater subtlety so as to avoid detection by the general public. Trump's brazen and vulgar rhetoric make him an easy target of blame for our highly divided political landscape, but that he ought to be interpreted more as the heir to preexisting trends in the Republican party than as the mastermind and instigator of partisan and racial division. In order to understand and accurately attribute the racial underpinnings of Trump's electoral success, it is imperative to situate him appropriately in history.

APPENDIX

Chapter Three

ANES white respondents, weighted.
Exponentiated logistic coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Voting GOP by Ethnocentrism

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	1.405	3.105***	6.661***	28.093***	14.622***
	(0.915)	(0.942)	(0.696)	(0.743)	(0.819)
Polarization	75.287***	70.196***	118.764***	2,624.350***	518.706***
	(0.768)	(0.799)	(0.591)	(0.699)	(0.563)
Partisanship	21.353***	23.938***	13.085***	12.637***	3.933***
	(0.617)	(0.758)	(0.469)	(0.503)	(0.491)
Ideology	2.829***	8.058***	5.202***	3.600***	7.496***
	(0.304)	(0.837)	(0.464)	(0.540)	(0.593)
Male	1.144***	0.868**	0.763***	0.946***	1.133***
	(0.299)	(0.340)	(0.219)	(0.209)	(0.218)
South	2.155***	1.907***	1.486***	1.308***	1.709***
	(0.313)	(0.407)	(0.221)	(0.221)	(0.234)
Income	0.676	0.996	1.938***	2.599***	0.306
	(1.069)	(0.769)	(0.529)	(0.505)	(0.422)
Education	0.340	1.208*	2.240***	0.832*	0.221
	(0.606)	(0.692)	(0.555)	(0.431)	(0.840)
Constant	0.225	0.065	0.050	0.088	1.085*
	(0.462)	(0.772)	(0.515)	(0.520)	(0.629)
Log Likelihood	-174.679	-128.771	-302.471	-290.474	-298.141
AIC	367.358	275.542	622.942	598.947	614.283
N	669	513	718	1741	1,648

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Voting GOP by Ethnocentrism, Authoritarianism Included

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	-0.665	3.035***	20.579***	29.449***	7.440***
	(1.018)	(1.031)	(0.815)	(0.749)	(0.833)
Polarization	3.427***	39.061***	99.054***	2738.890***	438.259***
	(0.859)	(0.809)	(0.647)	(0.706)	(0.571)
Partisanship	3.473***	32.305***	12.049***	12.625***	4.345***
	(0.730)	(0.859)	(0.521)	(0.503)	(0.509)
Ideology	0.930***	6.855***	6.049***	3.659***	5.081***
	(0.352)	(0.937)	(0.517)	(0.540)	(0.609)
Authoritarianism	2.044***	4.776***	1.886***	0.822**	3.738***
	(0.602)	(0.642)	(0.425)	(0.380)	(0.397)
Male	-0.208	0.825**	0.819***	0.948***	1.130***
	(0.353)	(0.372)	(0.248)	(0.209)	(0.223)
South	0.787**	3.200***	1.118***	1.318***	1.858***
	(0.355)	(0.472)	(0.254)	(0.222)	(0.243)
Income	0.759	1.181	2.081***	2.582***	0.333
	(1.238)	(0.811)	(0.603)	(0.505)	(0.432)
Education	-0.247	1.416*	4.492***	0.786*	0.286
	(0.731)	(0.757)	(0.673)	(0.445)	(0.872)
Constant	-3.260***	0.021	0.019	0.100	0.519
	(0.722)	(0.957)	(0.661)	(0.575)	(0.719)
N	470	409	553	1738	1578
Log Likelihood	-129.709	-107.808	-240.996	-290.439	-287.241
AIC	279.418	235.616	501.992	600.878	594.483

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Voting GOP by Ethnocentrism (partisanship excluded)

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	2.412***	2.101**	6.655***	19.538***	12.792***
	(0.899)	(0.885)	(0.667)	(0.708)	(0.798)
Polarization	1,082.537***	524.353***	712.846***	17,258.020***	1,124.616***
	(0.641)	(0.722)	(0.543)	(0.660)	(0.512)
Ideology	3.473***	21.318***	10.476***	5.665***	14.325***
	(0.286)	(0.769)	(0.438)	(0.505)	(0.546)
Male	1.353***	0.977***	0.729***	0.987***	1.174***
	(0.282)	(0.321)	(0.210)	(0.203)	(0.216)
South	2.159***	1.672***	1.441***	1.259***	1.721***
	(0.298)	(0.386)	(0.211)	(0.216)	(0.232)
Income	0.683	1.318*	1.995***	3.205***	0.343
	(0.995)	(0.744)	(0.522)	(0.489)	(0.413)
Education	0.546	1.343**	2.245***	0.931**	0.318
	(0.567)	(0.658)	(0.531)	(0.421)	(0.817)
Constant	0.618	0.159	0.130	0.208	1.088*
	(0.394)	(0.703)	(0.464)	(0.471)	(0.619)
Log Likelihood	-190.898	-140.939	-320.919	-303.937	-300.998
AIC	397.797	297.878	657.839	623.874	617.996
N	673	516	720	1,742	1,648

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Negative Appraisals of National Economy

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.021	0.111**	-0.007	0.121***	0.136***
	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.032)	(0.027)	(0.028)
Polarization	0.122***	-0.166***	-0.078***	0.268***	0.251***
	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Partisanship	0.098**	-0.177***	-0.056*	-0.015	-0.028
	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.030)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Ideology	-0.006	-0.013	0.004	0.138***	0.071***
	(0.022)	(0.046)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Male	-0.011	-0.030*	-0.027**	-0.019**	-0.037***
	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.010)
South	0.012	-0.015	-0.013	0.024**	0.0004
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Income	0.129*	-0.168***	0.047*	-0.097***	-0.054***
	(0.076)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Education	-0.022	-0.094**	0.071**	-0.104***	-0.142***
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.029)	(0.018)	(0.034)
Constant	0.403***	0.837***	0.861***	0.604***	0.647***
	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.028)
R^2	0.078	0.318	0.094	0.369	0.323
N	878	621	934	2,363	2,098

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Negative Appraisals of National Economy (partisanship excluded)

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.037	0.120**	-0.008	0.122***	0.138***
	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.032)	(0.027)	(0.028)
Polarization	0.183***	-0.264***	-0.107***	0.261***	0.239***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Ideology	0.004	-0.058	-0.010	0.134***	0.059**
	(0.021)	(0.044)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Male	-0.007	-0.035*	-0.027**	-0.019**	-0.037***
	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.010)
South	0.019	-0.019	-0.014	0.023**	-0.0003
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Income	0.124	-0.172***	0.043	-0.098***	-0.057***
	(0.076)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Education	-0.006	-0.097**	0.070**	-0.104***	-0.142***
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.029)	(0.018)	(0.034)
Constant	0.436***	0.776***	0.843***	0.598***	0.641***
	(0.029)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.028)
R^2	0.074	0.301	0.091	0.368	0.322
N	887	627	938	2,364	2,099

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Negative Appraisals of National Economy, including Authoritarianism

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.034	0.134**	0.009	0.103***	0.119***
	(0.065)	(0.062)	(0.033)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Polarization	0.153***	-0.148***	-0.096***	0.264***	0.240***
	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Partisanship	0.053	-0.209***	-0.034	-0.013	-0.020
	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.030)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Ideology	-0.008	0.007	0.007	0.118***	0.049*
	(0.026)	(0.052)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.027)
Authoritarianism	-0.016	-0.003	-0.030**	0.080***	0.074***
	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Male	-0.002	-0.024	-0.0004	-0.018**	-0.039***
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.010)
South	0.022	-0.016	0.080***	0.020**	-0.005
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Income	0.123	-0.168***	0.045	-0.094***	-0.040**
	(0.087)	(0.046)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Education	-0.014	-0.061	0.837***	-0.079***	-0.112***
	(0.050)	(0.043)	(0.027)	(0.019)	(0.036)
Constant	0.435***	0.824***	0.837***	0.556***	0.592***
	(0.047)	(0.052)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.032)
N	622	498	934	2,358	2,013
R^2	0.075	0.305	0.093	0.375	0.330

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Opposition to Immigration

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.251***	0.277***	0.439***	0.121***	0.411***
	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.046)	(0.027)	(0.031)
Polarization	0.057	-0.002	0.031	0.268***	0.135***
	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Partisanship	-0.022	0.047	-0.012	-0.015	0.007
	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.025)	(0.028)
Ideology	0.044**	0.047	0.021	0.138***	0.178***
	(0.020)	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.029)
Male	-0.019	-0.031*	-0.005	-0.019**	-0.029***
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.009)	(0.011)
South	-0.022	-0.003	0.008	0.024**	-0.007
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Income	0.031	-0.045	0.089**	-0.097***	-0.023
	(0.071)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Education	-0.249***	-0.238***	-0.257***	-0.104***	-0.265***
	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.018)	(0.038)
Constant	0.787***	0.757***	0.692***	0.604***	0.724***
	(0.031)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.023)	(0.031)
R^2	0.119	0.163	0.156	0.170	0.323
N	853	617	919	2,363	2,099

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Opposition to Immigration (partisanship excluded)

	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.250***	0.281***	0.439***	0.121***	0.411***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.046)	(0.027)	(0.031)
Polarization	0.043*	0.025	0.026	0.268***	0.138***
	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.016)
Ideology	0.044**	0.059	0.017	0.138***	0.181***
	(0.020)	(0.041)	(0.035)	(0.024)	(0.027)
Male	-0.021	-0.029*	-0.006	-0.019**	-0.029***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.009)	(0.011)
South	-0.022	-0.002	0.008	0.024**	-0.007
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Income	0.034	-0.040	0.089**	-0.097***	-0.023
	(0.071)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Education	-0.254***	-0.238***	-0.256***	-0.104***	-0.265***
	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.018)	(0.038)
Constant	0.779***	0.771***	0.687***	0.604***	0.726***
	(0.027)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.023)	(0.031)
R^2	0.122	0.163	0.156	0.169	0.323
N	862	623	923	2,363	2,100

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Opposition to Immigration, authoritarianism included

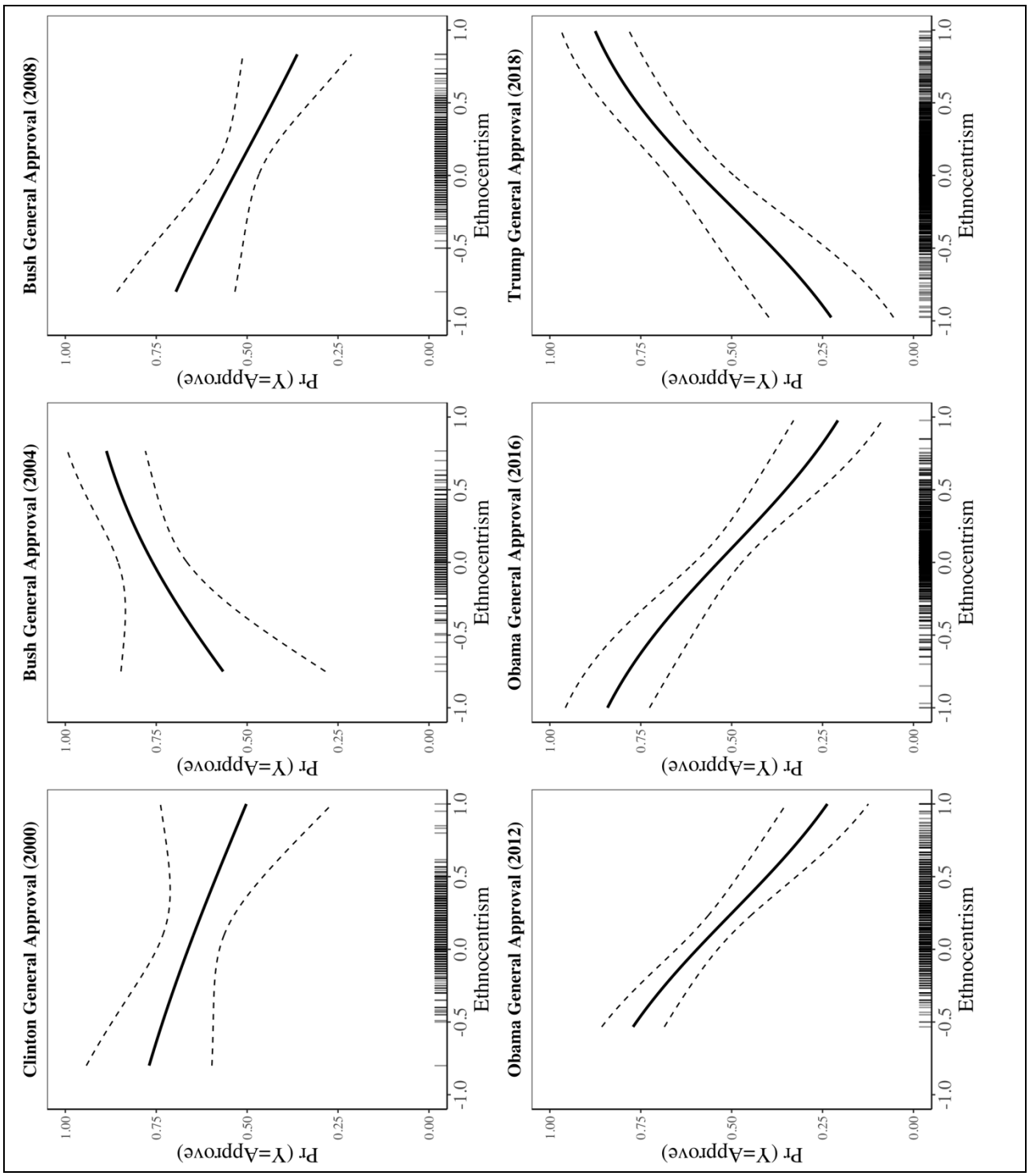
	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	0.207***	0.236***	0.419***	0.357***	0.355***
	(0.060)	(0.058)	(0.054)	(0.030)	(0.032)
Polarization	0.059	-0.026	0.016	0.080***	0.109***
	(0.045)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Partisanship	-0.009	0.068	-0.009	-0.062**	0.025
	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Ideology	0.006	0.024	-0.025	0.099***	0.129***
	(0.025)	(0.049)	(0.041)	(0.027)	(0.030)
Authoritarianism	0.068*	0.102***	0.174***	0.132***	0.185***
	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Male	-0.030	-0.050**	-0.013	-0.016	-0.030***
	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.010)	(0.011)
South	-0.030	0.015	0.012	0.013	-0.012
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Income	0.091	-0.012	0.073*	-0.047**	-0.006
	(0.084)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.024)	(0.020)
Education	-0.240***	-0.221***	-0.193***	-0.081***	-0.188***
	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.050)	(0.021)	(0.039)
Constant	0.751***	0.686***	0.587***	0.596***	0.591***
	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.028)	(0.035)
N	610	497	696	2353	2015
R^2	0.115	0.183	0.198	0.188	0.356

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

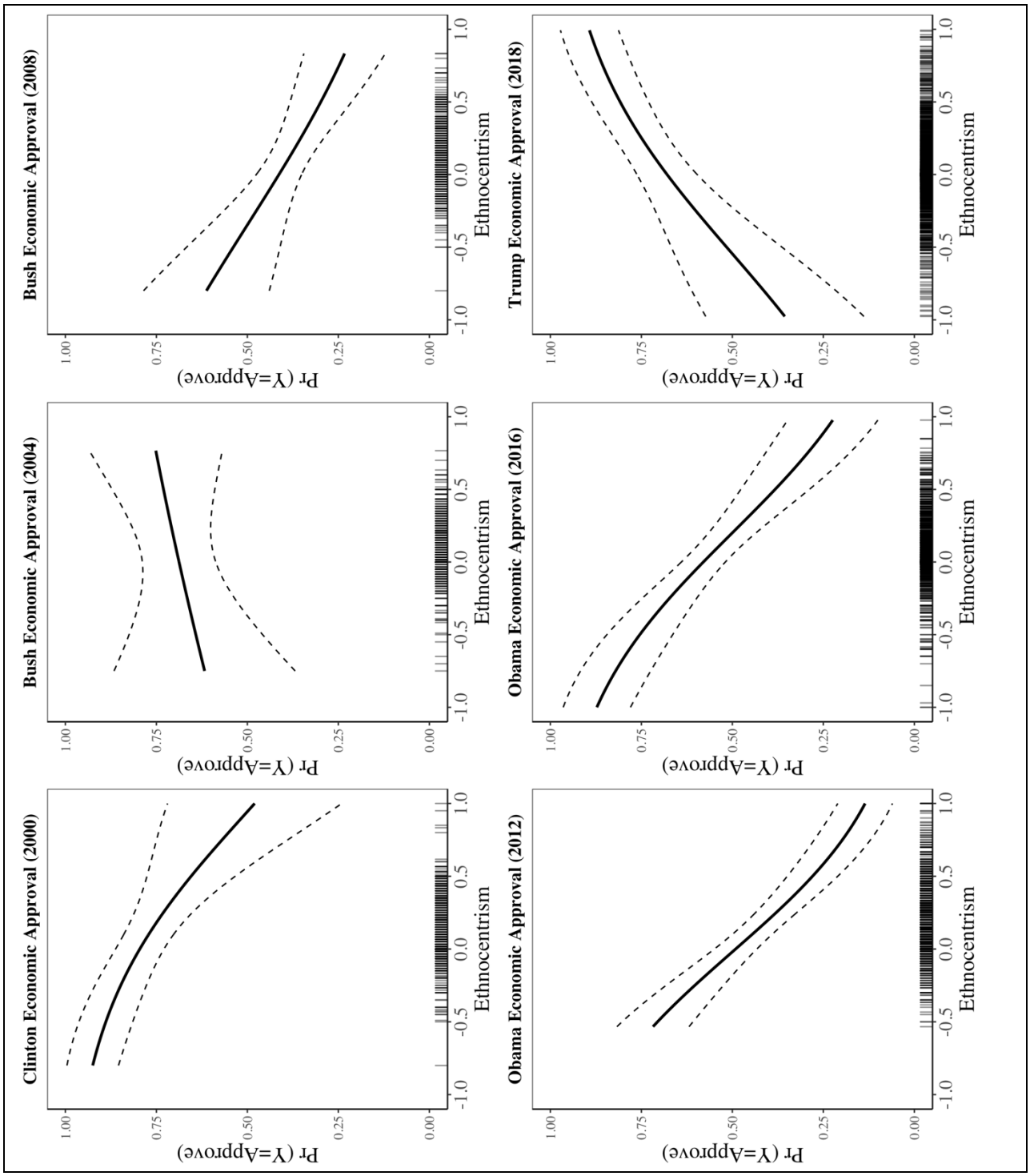
Voting for GOP Nominee

	Model 1			Model 2		
	2008	2012	2016	2008	2012	2016
Ethnocentrism	28.443***	3.360***	15.959***	31.485***	2.939***	16.518***
	(1.044)	(0.554)	(0.678)	(1.033)	(0.540)	(0.675)
Polarization	0.567	2.129***	5.024***	0.846*	3.688***	4.504***
	(0.564)	(0.353)	(0.398)	(0.497)	(0.302)	(0.341)
Partisanship	4.031***	4.546***	0.696	--	--	--
	(0.913)	(0.510)	(0.622)			
Ideology	0.038	0.403	0.298	0.069	0.601	0.253
	(1.085)	(0.533)	(0.644)	(0.983)	(0.497)	(0.593)
Male	0.745***	0.861***	1.807***	0.750***	0.852***	1.823***
	(0.283)	(0.176)	(0.196)	(0.282)	(0.174)	(0.196)
South	0.794***	0.709***	0.628***	0.784***	0.670***	0.633***
	(0.288)	(0.182)	(0.198)	(0.286)	(0.179)	(0.198)
Income	0.399	1.312***	0.602	0.477	1.262***	0.584
	(0.770)	(0.426)	(0.375)	(0.757)	(0.422)	(0.373)
Education	0.175	0.659*	0.073	0.145	0.704**	0.073
	(0.770)	(0.343)	(0.698)	(0.756)	(0.340)	(0.698)
Constant	51.848***	0.887*	11.691***	91.715***	1.824***	10.243***
	(1.077)	(0.531)	(0.684)	(0.992)	(0.472)	(0.645)
Log Likelihood	-156.560	371.696	-333.839	-157.515	-377.200	-334.345
AIC	331.120	761.392	685.679	331.029	770.400	684.689
N	171	681	571	171	682	572

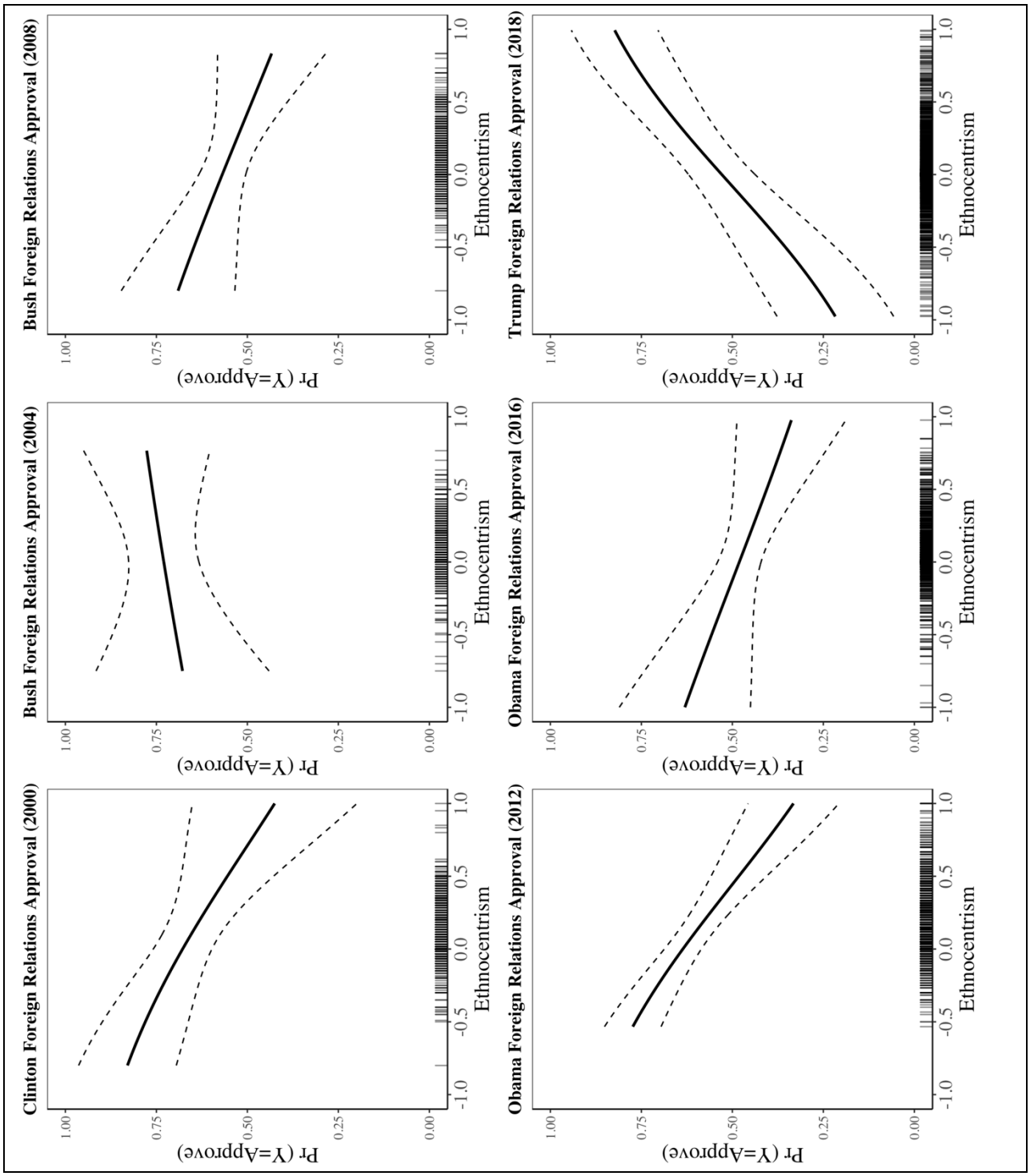
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01



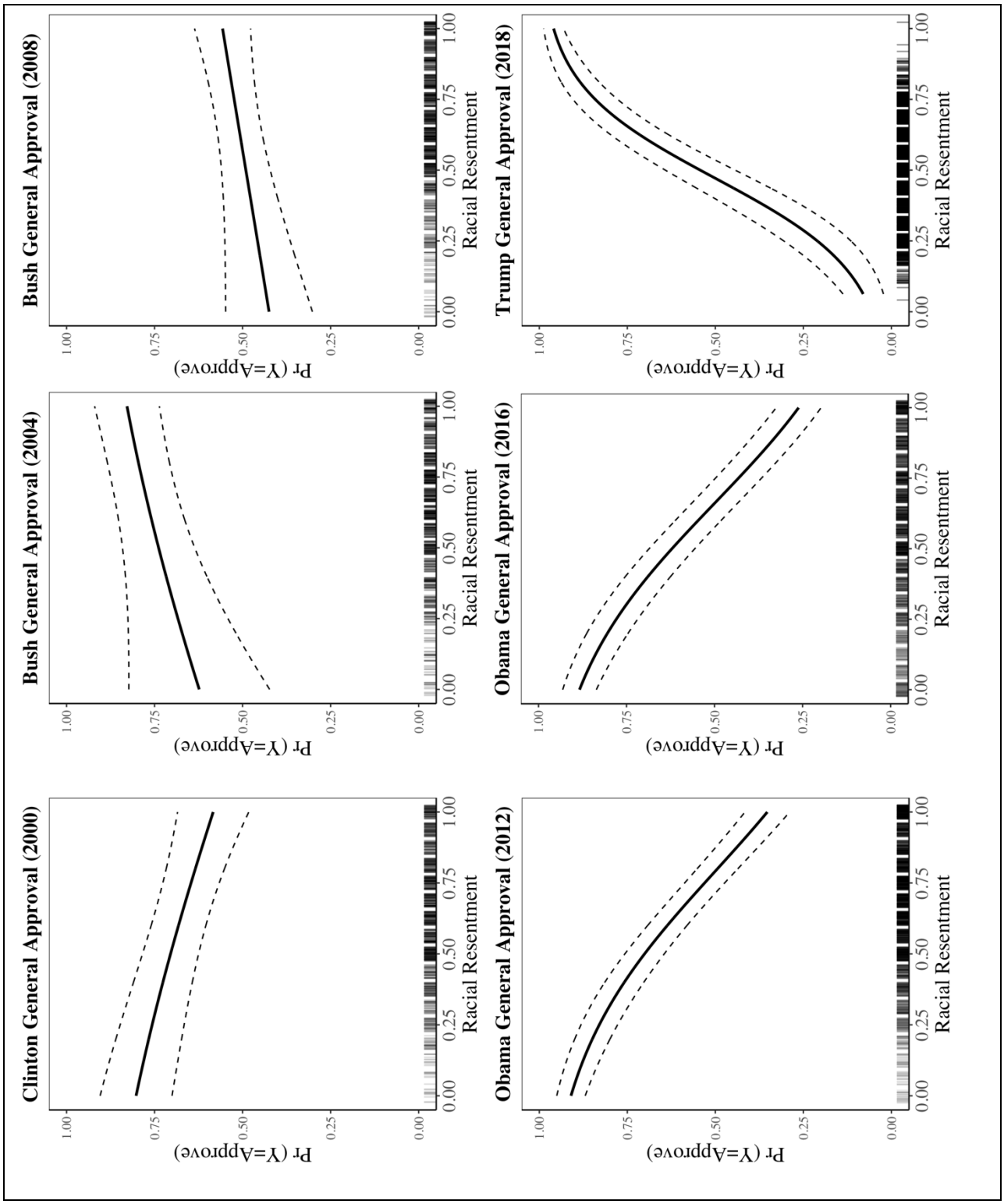
Ethnocentrism and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (General)



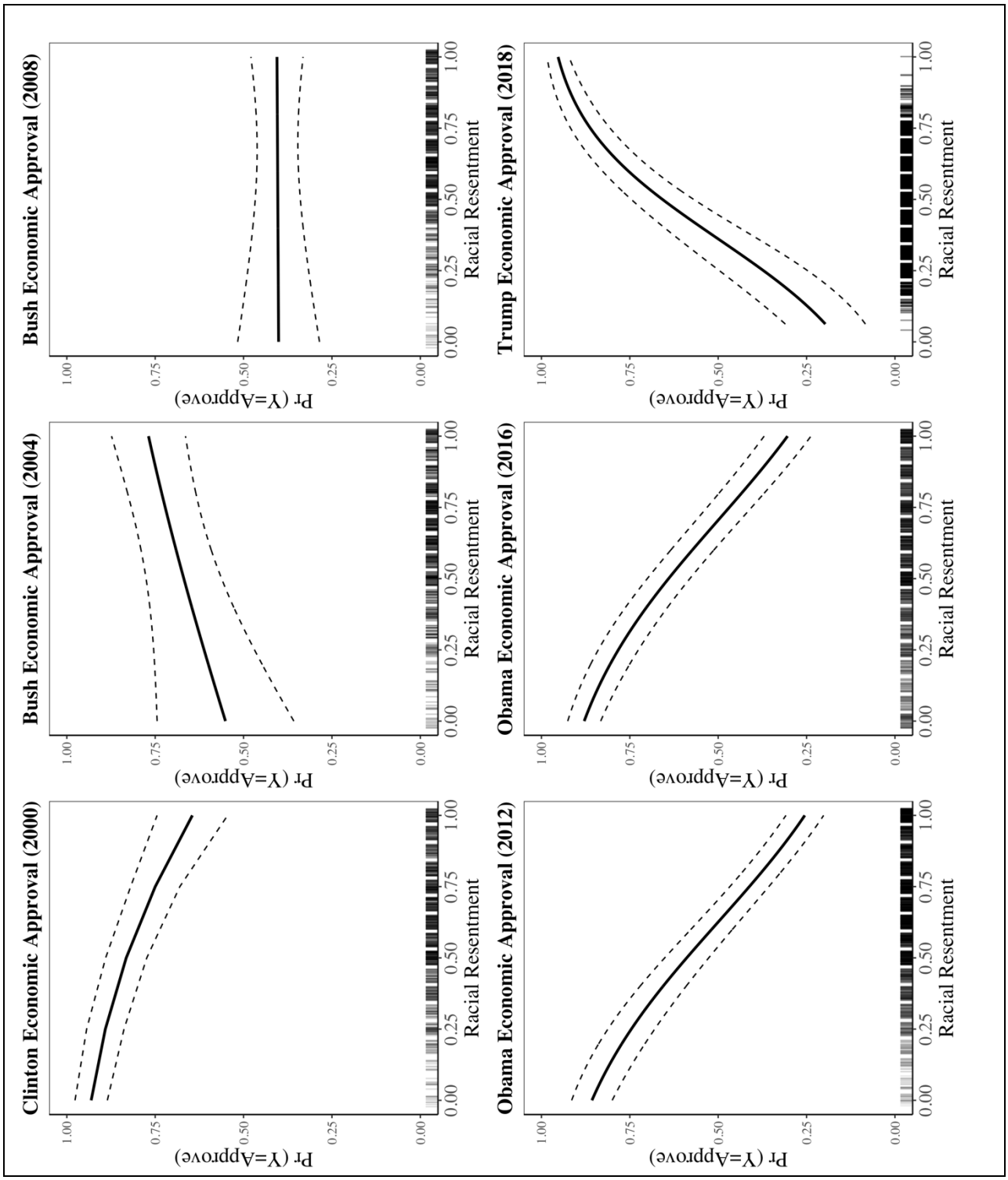
Ethnocentrism and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (Economic)



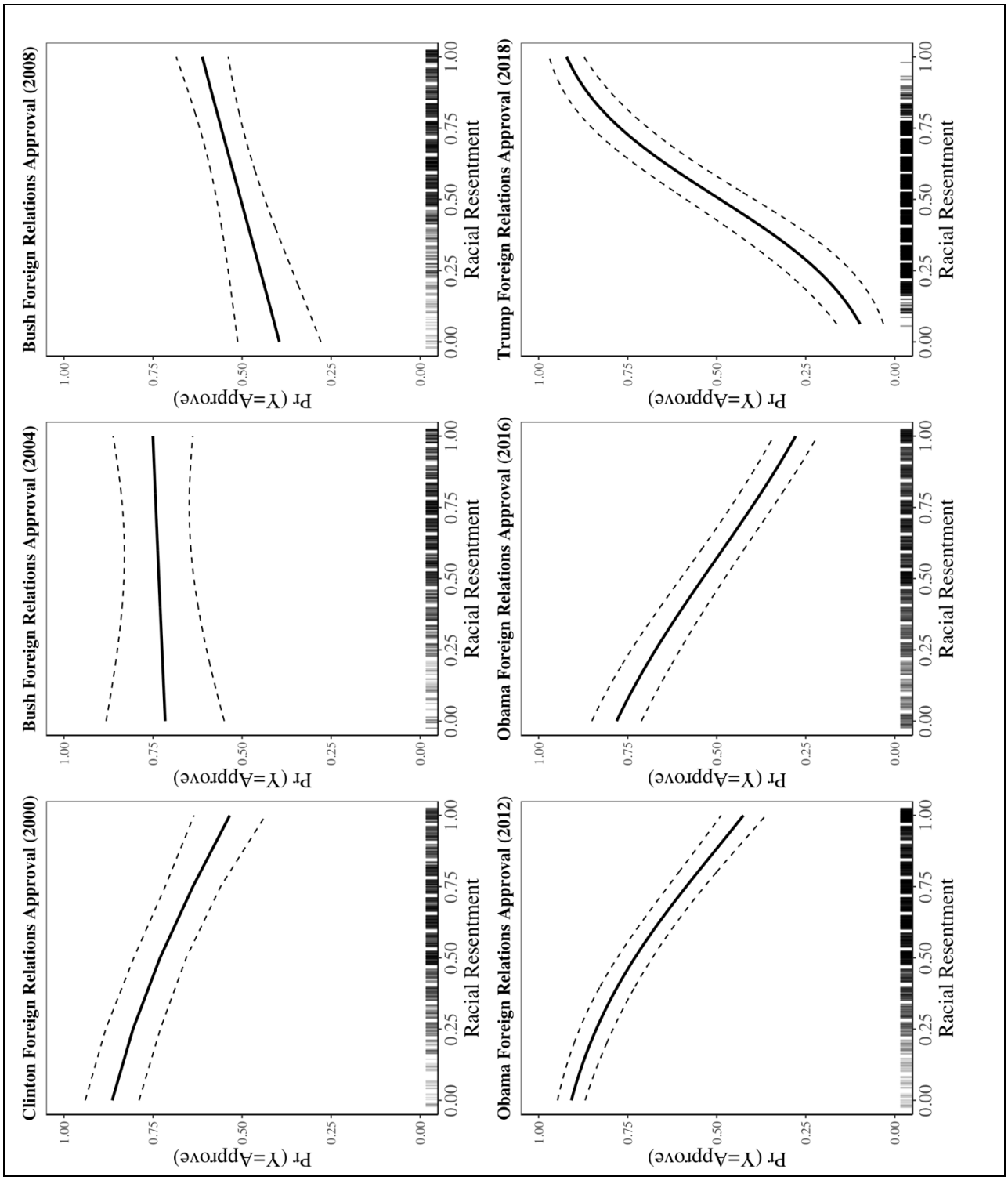
Ethnocentrism and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (Foreign Relations)



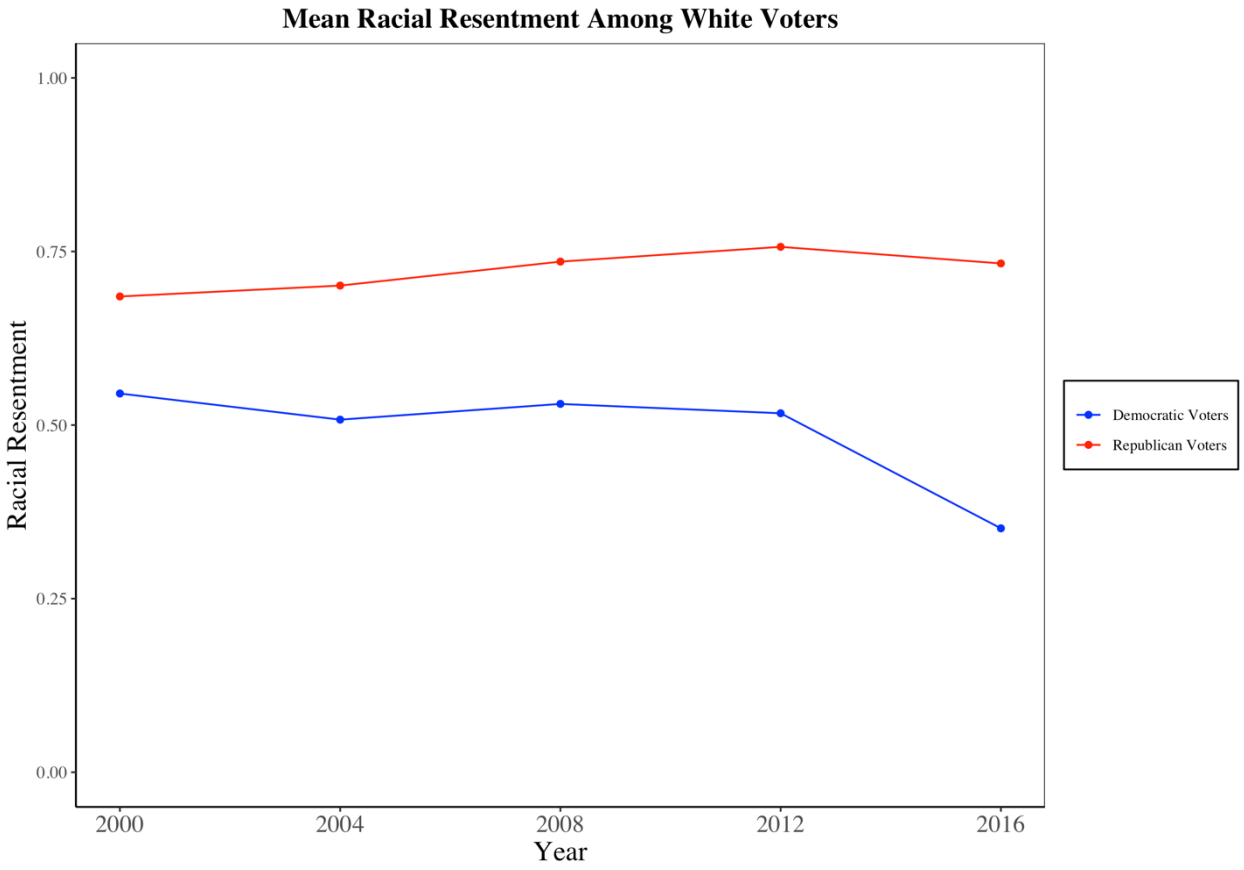
Racial Resentment and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (General)



Racial Resentment and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (Economic)

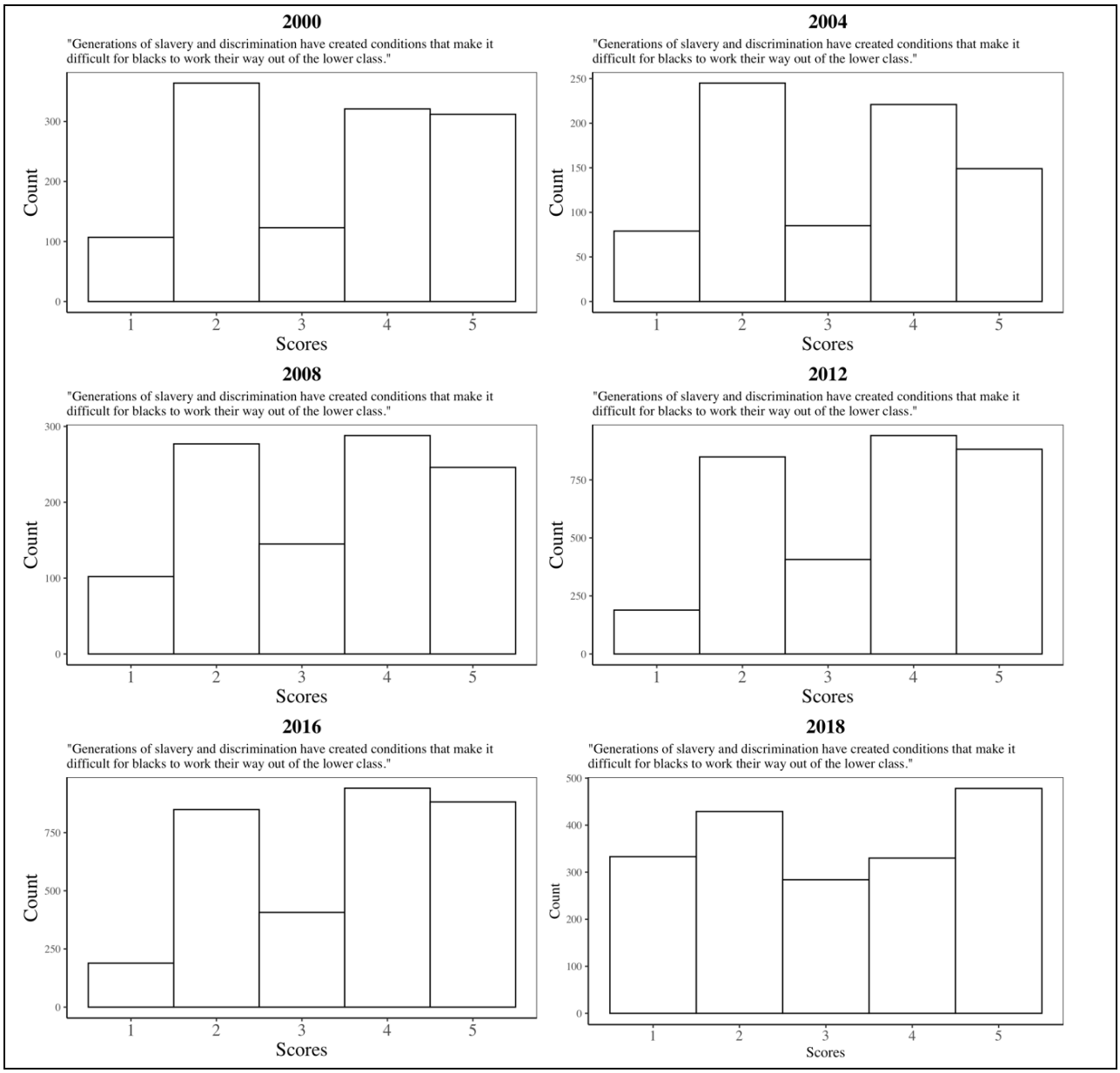


Racial Resentment and Predicted Probability of Job Approval (Foreign Relations)

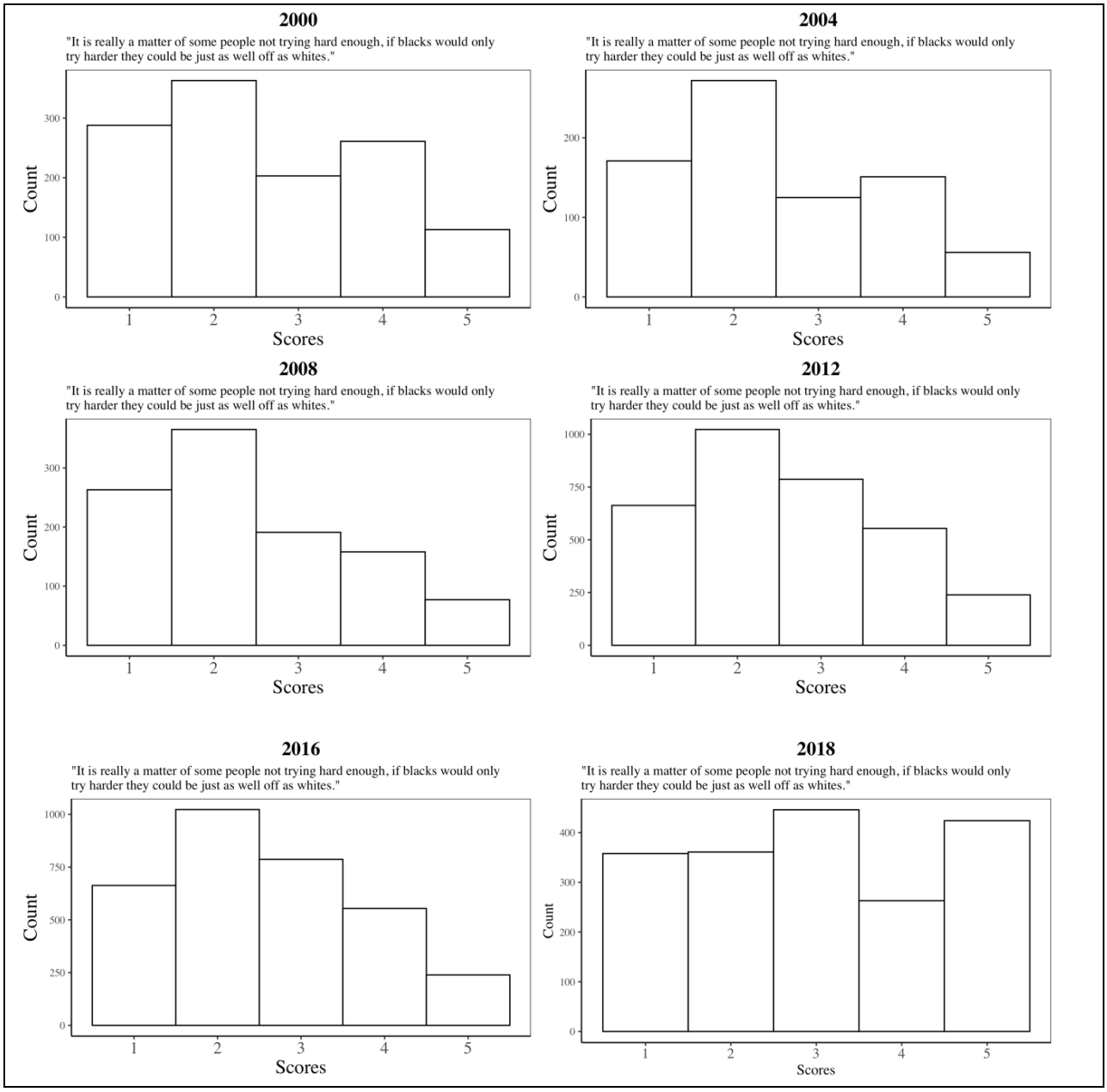

Mean Racial Resentment Among White Voters
Racial Resentment
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.00
2000
2004
2008
2012
2016
Year
Democratic Voters
Republican Voters

All items scaled so that 1=agree strongly and 5=disagree strongly.

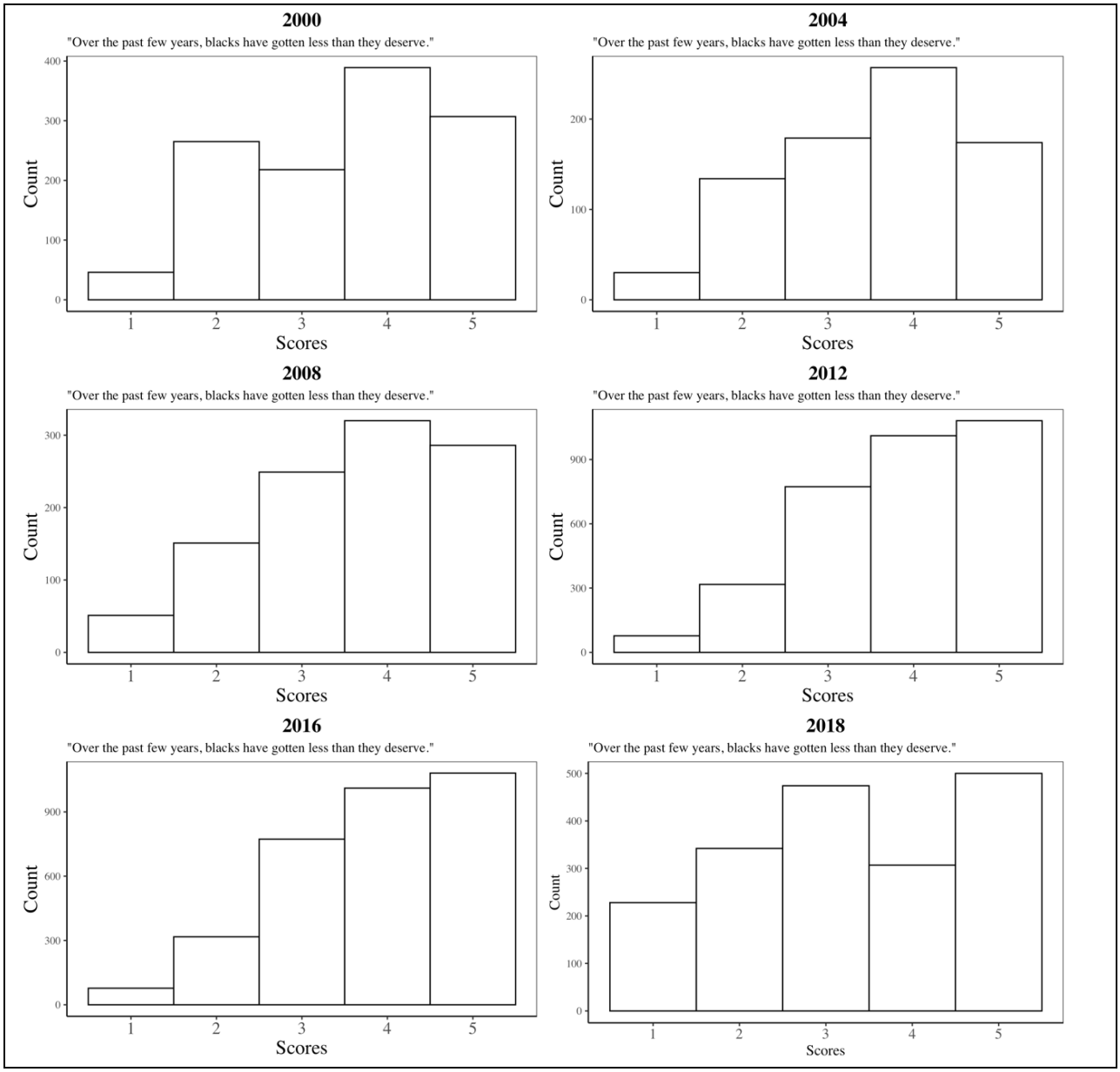
Racial Resentment Item 1: SLAVERY



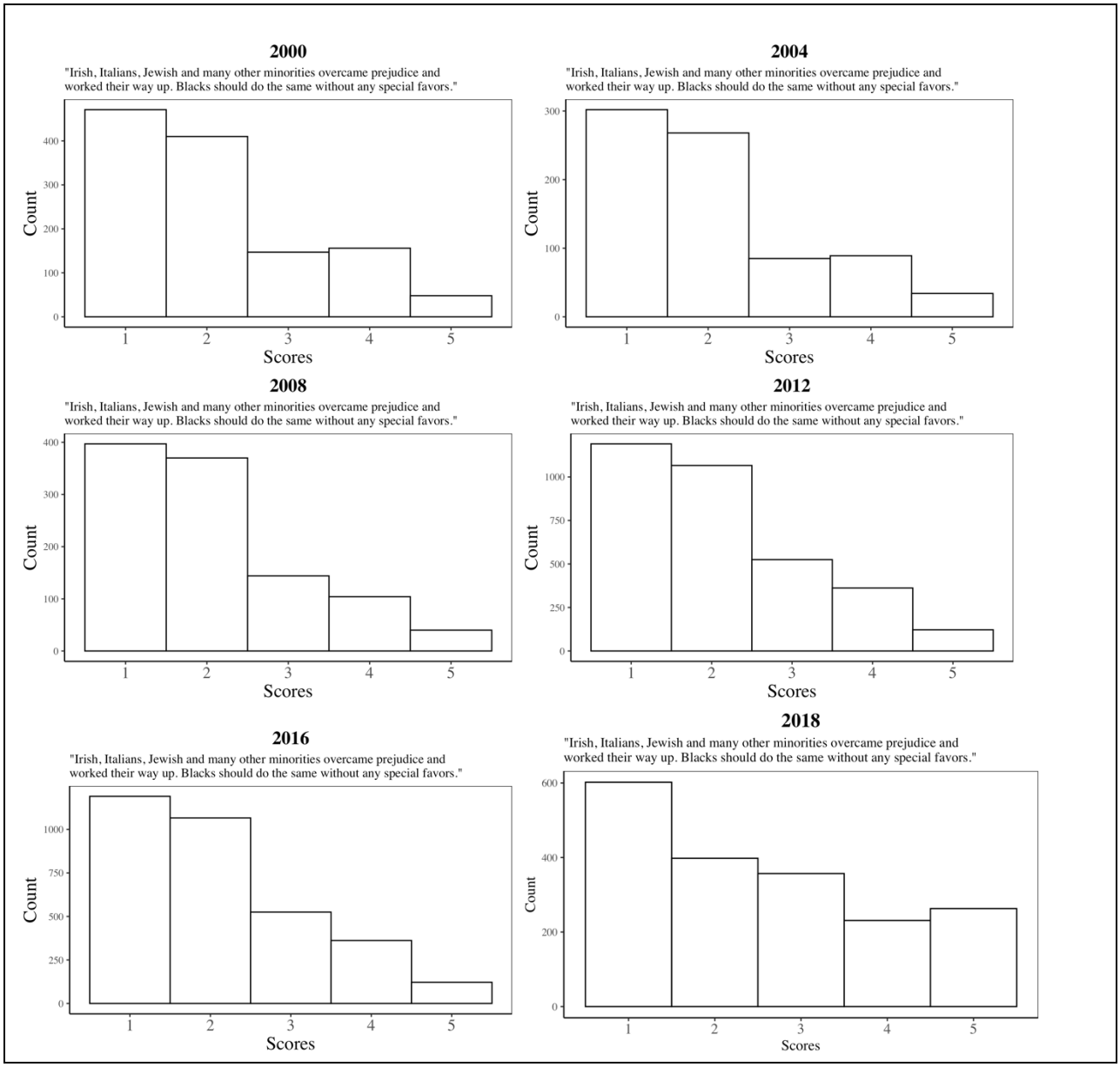
Racial Resentment Item 2: TRY_HARDER



Racial Resentment Item 3: LESS_THAN_DESERVE



Racial Resentment Item 4: NO_SPECIAL_FAVORS



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