What factors drove voter support for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential election?

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The Social and Political Factors that Drive Voter Support for President Trump

Honors Research Project

Department of Political Science

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Introduction

The sheer amount of voter support for President Trump during the 2016 Presidential Election is one of much discussion. Many experts did not believe he had the support to keep the race close, let alone win the election. However, we saw one of the closest races in history and saw Donald Trump win the presidency over his opponent, Hillary Clinton. President Trump was seen as an unfit candidate by many citizens because of his vernacular and the way he presented himself during the campaign, but if the majority of the country felt this way as the media portrayed it, then how was he able to win the election and who was voting for him? Many political and social experts have tried to determine what the Trump voter base values and what made Trump such a viable candidate to them as well. Public opinion of President Trump has also shifted quite often during his presidency as well, but his “following” of loyal citizens seem to stick by his side no matter what he may say or do. In this paper, I will examine a number of social and political variables that may explain/influence support for President Trump. I have used the results of a Pew Research Center polling data set from 2018, and the variables I examined include nativism, socioeconomic status (education and income), age, sex, partisanship, race, and religion.

This research will aim to help future political scientists and other experts better understand the Trump voter base and how the 2016 presidential election unfolded. Another motive for this research is to determine why the experts were mistaken before the election on the amount of support Donald Trump possessed. What factors or ideals did Donald Trump use to attract his voter base and continue to keep their unwavering support as well? I attempt to understand the variables that many Trump supporters carry and why they support him in the way
that many citizens do. The motivation for this research is also to help future politicians understand their voter base and how to attract their planned demographic.

Public Opinion and Donald Trump

When dealing with public opinion, most of the polling is done through companies such as Gallop or Pew research centers. These organizations provide data from surveys done quite often in order to understand the ever-changing opinion of the public. These academic sources are used by the media when speaking about political topics such as immigration, voter support, or the state of the economy.

While it may be difficult to narrow down what Trump supporters value the most, many of the polls done by Pew and Gallup tend to ask questions that we can use to determine what the President’s supporters have in common. Another main point that is important in understanding support for the President is how his overall support has changed over the years. Pew Research Center conducted a poll asking of Trump’s job approval and found that it was at 40% at the end of 2018 (Doherty 2018). President Trump’s approval rating has never risen much above that number since he was in office, no matter the decisions he makes, with the lowest being 35% (Gallup 2019). This makes me believe that citizens do not view their approval as coming from his actions, but instead the general person he portrays. An approval rating below 50% is not good, showing that the majority of the country does not approve of his presidency at that current time. However, this does not help our understanding of what that percentage of Americans value and what Trump’s voter base main demographic may be. Yet, this poll from Doherty does show that the followers of the President do not represent most of America.
With all of that in mind, breaking down what the Trump voter base has in common is a much more complicated process that cannot simply be explained by a simple opinion poll. People make their opinions based on a multitude of variables that we can study such as political affiliation or religious beliefs. For example, many people tend to just vote for their party’s candidate in an election, but we must measure the approval rating for those citizens as well as their party affiliation to determine if they simply voted by party or actually support Trump. Another variable that we see cause a strict divide is that of the sex of the citizen. Women tend to have a harsher view of Trump. They have only an approval rating of 34% of the President compared to the much higher approval rate from men (46%) (Doherty 2018). This may come from a multitude of reasons such as Trump’s vocabulary or how he presents himself on a daily basis, but one thing is for sure, there is a vast difference in approval from men to women.

One thing that we must acknowledge in order to understand what approval for a president means is how other presidents have been viewed over the history of the United States and how their approval rate has changed as well.

While approval rates may be important for the overall impact of a President, it may be important to see how some of the most important ones were viewed during their presidency. Gallup has been conducting a poll yearly of Presidential approval ratings from the public. While many people will have varying opinions on every president, looking at the approval ratings for the past presidents, especially those that many see as “popular” presidents, can help us understand if approval matters in deciding whether a president will be viewed positively or negatively in the future. For example, in the Gallup poll from 2019 mentioned earlier that was used to see the job approval ratings for past presidents, they show that the average approval rating for John Kennedy, who many citizens have a positive view, was at 70%. Yet, Ronald
Reagan who many Republicans have a very positive outlook for only has an average rating of 52.8% (Gallup 2019). Even though both have been viewed positively long after their presidency, there is a large gap between the two. Another example from that same poll is that of Nixon, who is viewed as negatively because of the Watergate Scandal, has an average rating of 49%. He and Reagan have very similar ratings but are viewed very differently long after their presidencies. So, while citizens and the media like to look at approval ratings as important indicators of how a president will be viewed after their presidency, we can see that this is not always true. In accordance with this paper, this is important because Trump’s low approval rating may not be an accurate indicator of how the overall public may view him, whether it be now or in the future after his presidency. This may help us acknowledge that approval rating is not the most important thing when viewing why people voted for a president or why they support him currently.

Understanding Public Values and Individual Variables

While there are many variables that could possibly attribute to support for a candidate, President Trump is a special case because of the polarity and divisions that he has caused between the country. People like John Sides stress that the 2016 election caused “…increasing racial and ethnic polarization in the Democratic and Republican party coalitions” (Sides 2017). Also, what Sides calls “angry voters” were enraged and felt as if they were not taken care of by previous administrations. These voters come from all backgrounds and it is important to understand who they are and why they feel this way, and this is how I came to choose my variables below.
Nativism

The first variable that is included in this paper is that of nativism, or the thought process of protecting people born in the country against those of immigrants. In most of my research into this topic, nativism is difficult to measure because most people would not be willing to admit that they do not like immigration into their country. However, the Trump administration has preached to “Make America Great Again” and the voters have rallied behind this saying. While many might believe that this is simply saying the administration wants to increase the overall welfare of the United States, Dr. Julia Young believes that President Trump believes immigration is the idea holding the country back in a negative way. She believes that, “...the Trump administration has made it very clear that its vision for American greatness is a nativist one” (Young 2017). While many citizens may call Trump supporters “racist” or “anti-immigrant”, it would be difficult to measure this because only a small population would admit to being racist, so the best way to measure this is to ask how citizens feel about the current immigration amount. While this does not mean someone is racist by answering one way or another, we can get a sense whether someone has nativist thoughts by simply asking how they feel about immigration in the country. Clifford Young believes “...that Trump's strong "America first" nativist narrative resonated with the Republican base that holds strong race-based identification and feels a strong sense of persecution from a multicultural, "politically correct" establishment...” (Young 2019). Trump voters seem to feel very strongly that their country is being taken from them. This nativist view of much of the population may have been enough for Trump to win the election, and the support of voters across the country. According to Young, Trump voters believe that immigrants take away jobs and take away important aspects of the American way. So, citizens who think this way can be seen as having a nativist view and more
support for Trump is inevitable. This may not be a perfect question when it comes to a citizen’s belief about nativism, I believe that the poll question I use that will be explained later in this paper is proper enough.

**Socioeconomic Status**

The next variable that is in consideration is socioeconomic status. This variable involves a citizen’s education and income. These two usually rise and fall in association with each other. That is, the higher education a citizen has tends to lead to a higher income and vice versa. The reasoning for using socioeconomic status is that people tend to view themselves as lower to upper class based on the level of income and education they have.

With regards to the Trump voter base, it is expected that middle class voters would resonate with Trump’s message because the middle class has been shrinking for quite some time. This class seems to get under looked because many other politicians focus on either the lower or upper class exclusively. Also, the upper class would also be expected to like Trump’s policies because of his tax plan that calls for the lowering of upper-class tax. However, the upper class is less important in this study because they tend to be higher educated, which is also associated with democratic policies in general. Jeff Manza and Ned Crowley’s research has shown that citizens that made between 50k and 110k (middle class bracket), had a 33% approval rating for Trump, compared to only 11% from people that made over 110k (Manza 2017). This article’s literature review shows that the voter base for President Trump is mostly in the middle class as I anticipated. However, the article does say that the “…median Trump voter makes over $17k more than that of the median American” (Manza 2017). So, while the middle class may be the main
source of Trump’s voters, it does show that the middle and upper class have a higher approval for Trump than that of the lower class. Yet, Clifford Young’s paper suggests that middle to lower class Americans will show the most support for Trump. He suggests that “…particularly those without a college education—demographics with a strong presence in key swing states…” (Young 2019), will have more support for President Trump. The important thing here is that this is another example of an expert saying that Trump targeted the middle class. According to Young, this class has felt betrayed by the Obama administration and is dwindling every day, and Trump’s call to arms for this middle class resonated and provided much support to President Trump. The middle class has been overlooked in recent years and their support for Trump is understandable and expected based on the literature mentioned.

Age and Sex

Next, age and sex are two variables that seem to have a large effect on whether someone may be a Trump supporter. Measuring the different support levels for Trump between the different generations can be a valuable assertion of what the President’s followers may value. While most of the literature I have researched has shown that the younger generations, such as that of millennials, tend to have more democratic values instead of conservative ones. They tend to be more understanding of social justice issues instead of what older generations focus on, such as the economy or foreign affairs. With this in mind, many of the younger generations’ citizens tend to not support President Trump, and the older generations seem to be his main supporters. The Roper Center for Public Opinion has data determining what percentage of each population voted for each candidate in the 2016 election, and their research concluded that voters over the age of 45 favored Trump over Hillary Clinton. This is compared to voters below 45 that favored
Clinton heavily (over 50%), (Roper 2016). While there are many underlying reasons that may contribute to this, it is worth noting that there is such a drastic difference between support between the generations.

When it comes to the sex of the citizen, most research suggests that men favor Trump much more than women do. While there are many reasons experts may attribute this to, many believe that it is because of Trump’s vernacular. For example, there have been many occasions where Trump has been caught saying things that he called “locker room talk” which has caused a negative relationship with women. In the Roper data, Trump claimed the male vote (52%), while Clinton claimed the women vote (54%), (Roper 2016). Daniel Faber also states that “…every possible demographic subset of white voters (young, old, women, and especially men) voted for Trump” (Faber 2017). Faber shows that people who are older and men have stronger support for Trump overall, and in turn had shaped the election for Trump and continue to support him to this day. These two variables seem to have a direct correlation for support for Trump and the research in my paper will use these to help determine where the support for Trump comes from.

**Political Party Affiliation**

Party affiliation is an important factor when it comes to support for Presidential candidates in recent years more than ever as the country grows more partisan. While it an easy assumption that the most support for Trump comes from Republicans more than Democrats, it is worth analyzing the overall support from republicans towards Trump as well. According to the Roper Center data, Trump had 88% of the Republican vote while Clinton had only 8% (Roper 2016). It is interesting to try and understand why the 12% of Republicans that did not vote for Trump voted for another candidate. As aforementioned, most of the voting in recent years has been more and more partisan, yet understanding and viewing the other variables that the
democratic voters who voted for Trump have in common can be important information in understand the support for President Trump. A recent Gallup poll has Trump’s approval at 94% from Republicans and at just under 7% from Democrats (Jones 2020). This shows that Trump’s approval rating is very high from his respective party, but not perfect, and he does have some support from Democrats currently as well. Michael J Lee also states that Trump “...accelerated a conservative political identity” (Lee 2017). In this literature, Lee shares that conservatives lacked a conservative figure, and they rallied around Trump and continue to support him because Trump showed that he was a conservative like them and for them. This shows that people who are conservative will support Trump more than their democratic brethren because Trump is exactly what they wanted in the end.

Religion

Religion is another variable that is under consideration in this paper. While President Trump may not be the most religious President, his voter base seems to trend toward a Christian background. If anything, many experts view Trump as a non-Christian, yet he seems to be viewed positively by those who follow the Christian faith, especially those of evangelical belief, that of “born-again” Christians. In Gerardo Marti’s findings, 81% of evangelists supported Trump (Marti 2020). While Trump portrays values that go against many of the ideals of Christians, they still show support for Trump in unwavering ways. Whether religion has anything to do with the support is the real question. The research shows that it does have a strong connection to whether someone voted and supports Trump today. In Marti’s literature, he also claims that Trump’s Christian supporters felt “...that their interests were excluded from the Obama presidency and that their religious convictions were under attack” (Marti 2020). In this
instance, Trump may be getting the support from Christians because they have felt persecuted by previous presidents, in particular the Obama administration. Daniel Bell states “...that the break Trump does signify (but did not initiate) lies within American Christianity” (Bell 2020). Bell shows that Trump may not be exactly what we think Christian values should be, yet he embodies what modern Christians are. President Trump shows that all of our instinctive values are hidden inside of us and the way to bring them out is to connect with something, and in this case, it is Trump himself and how he calls for togetherness and to make America Great Again. While it is difficult to measure this hypothesis, it is no mistake that Trump has overwhelming support from the Christian faiths’ followers.

Race

Lastly, race of the citizen is a very important variable to measure when judging support for a presidential candidate. The general consensus is that white Americans comprise most of Trump’s voter base. If this is true, it will be an interesting topic to debate because there are many questions as to why this would be the case. Do they vote for Trump because they are Caucasian, or is it simply a coincidence? In the Roper Center Data, we see that Trump received 57% of the white vote, with the next highest demographic he received being the Hispanic vote (28%) (Roper 2016). This shows that Trump won because of the Caucasian vote, and without it, his support dwindles to much less than what he currently has. In the paper by John Sides, he says that the election and Trump’s platform “…heightened Trump’s appeal to white voters…” (Sides 2017). He goes on to talk about how the Trump targeted white voters in order to win a majority, and that Trump could win this race’s vote because of the growing racial tensions in the United States.
This shows that white voters should have more support for Trump in the model, unlike the citizens who are not white that Sides shows were not targeted by Trump.

**Hypothesis and Model**

As mentioned previously, my independent variables that I examine are nativism, socioeconomic status (education and income), age, sex, partisanship, race and religion. To examine their influence on support for President Trump I used a data set from a 2018 Pew Research poll.

Nativism is difficult to use in public opinion polls as I had mentioned earlier because it is hard to find one question that can show someone’s nativism. If someone is asked whether they are racist or hate immigrants, most people will answer “no” no matter what they actually feel. Yet, we can still measure nativism by asking certain questions with precise wording that we can attribute to nativism. We must look into those sentiments without just asking explicitly if someone hates immigrants into their country. Understanding the nativism of Trump supporters helps us understand what their values are and in turn can help us predict future elections as well.

Most polls ask a question and the respondents answer in two ways, positively or negatively which lets us determine their nativism. While not perfect, this type of questioning is the best way to measure this variable at its present state. My hypothesis for this variable is those who have a more nativist view will be more favorable of Trump. Specific question wordings will be available in the next section of my paper.

Socioeconomic status is another variable that many people may have trouble measuring because there are two things that make up what your status is (education and income). In most
studies, these two move in the same direction as each other, that is a higher education leads to a higher income. While there are exceptions to this assumption, in most cases this holds true. In my research, higher income and education lead to a higher socioeconomic status. In my literature review from early in the paper, we see that citizens in the middle class are expected to support Trump and those in the upper class having some support as well. Also, those with middle class education to higher education will also have more support for Trump. Polls will typically ask the respondent what their highest level of education and income are. These two are examined on brackets because they have more than one answer. Income can be viewed as someone who made $0 to $10000, $10001 to $25000, $25001 to etc. Education can be viewed as no education, high school, undergraduate college, graduate college, and etc. The hypothesis for this variable is that those who fall in the middle to upper income and education bracket will have a more favorable view of President Trump.

Age is one of the demographic variables that I examine in my paper. What my research has shown is that age is a very determining factor when it comes to the support of Trump based on the varying beliefs of the different generations, such as political, social, foreign affairs, and economic values. The literature has shown that younger generations tend to focus more on social values and in turn have a lower support for Trump. While the later generations such as Generation Z having higher support for Trump. This is because President Trump ran his campaign focusing on closing immigration, helping the economy, and focusing on patriotism. Younger generations tend to be more focused on social justice issues, which Trump did not favor very highly. Older generations tend to have more conservative views as well, and since Trump is a conservative candidate, this may be another reason that the older generations show the most
support for his Presidency. In conclusion, my hypothesis is that older generations will favor Trump more than the younger generations.

Sex is another factor that can vastly change the support for Trump. In the literature, women tend to have a lower approval rating of the President, While I discussed different reasoning for this earlier in the paper, it may be because women tend to have more liberal viewpoints on politics, and also Trump has had multiple instances where he has not spoken highly of women. Men tend to have more conservative views, and also view Trump as an alpha, which they are attracted to as a leader. Because of these differences, my hypothesis is that men will favor Trump much more than women.

Political Affiliation is another variable that we will be examining. In this model we will be focusing on Republicans and Democrats. The reasoning for this distinction is that Independents do not seem to sway one way or another when it comes to support for Trump. In the literature, we see that it is more likely that Republicans will have higher support for Trump because he is a Republican, and the country has been voting partisan more and more in recent years. In doing this, we can measure how strong partisanship can determine approval for Trump overall. In accordance with the literature findings, my hypothesis is that republicans will favor Trump much more than democrats.

Race is the final demographic variable that I examine in my model. While there are many different ways to measure race, we will be focusing on the Caucasian vote compared to every other race. The reasoning behind this is that I have found from the literature that white citizens tend to have a more positive view of Trump. Whether this be because they do not like other races, or even the fact that they feel as if they have been overlooked in favor of other races in recent history, we find a direct correlation between support for Trump and the race of the voter.
My hypothesis is that the citizens who identify as Caucasian will have a more favorable view of Trump.

Lastly, the final variable is Religion. In accordance with the literature, those citizens that have Christian values tend to be more favorable of Trump. While this is not because Trump himself is a Christian, it may be because Christians have been overlooked from recent presidents as well. Trump has portrayed more of the Christian values then many of these Christians have seen so they view him more favorably. My hypothesis for this variable is that the citizens who consider themselves as Christian will have a more favorable view of President Trump.

**Research Design**

To test and understand the degree of how each independent variable can be predictors of support for President Trump. I have used a 2018 Pew Research public opinion poll and made a binary logistic regression model to do so (Pew 2018). The public opinion poll was a telephone survey that had 2,002 respondents using a random dial sample. While the poll itself was intended to predict how immigration attitudes have changed and how the public views immigration now, using it for my purpose is appropriate because it asks many of the questions I need in order to get my findings. For the dependent variable, I utilized a question (Q.2) asking, “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?” I chose this selection because it asks exactly what I am trying to understand, and it is not a loaded question with multiple answers other yes approve or disapprove. Using this question, I can hold all of the independent variables on the same platform and use them to understand where the support for President Trump comes from.
To use the binary logistic regression model, I adjusted the variable to a binary scale. A value of 1 indicates approval for President Trump, while a value of 0 indicates disapproval for President Trump. Any answers that were recorded as “Don’t know/refused” were omitted in the model.

The independent variables that are included in the model are nativism, party affiliation, education, income, sex, age, religion, and race. Party affiliation also uses the 0-1 scale as a value of 1 represents Republican and a value of 0 indicates Democrat. 1 was chosen for Republican because they tend to have a higher approval for Trump, and 0 was chosen for Democrats because they have a more negative approval of Trump. All other answers were omitted from the model.

Sex was also coded as 0-1 values. A value of 1 represents a man because they tend to have a higher approval for President Trump, while a value of 0 represents a woman because they have a more negative view of Trump. All other answers were omitted. Religion was also done with the 0-1 binary scale. I adjusted the answers based on whether or not someone answered as being Christian. If they answered as being Christian, they received a value of 1 because they tend to have a higher approval for President Trump, but all other religions received a value of 0 because they did not have a positive view of Trump. Likewise, all other answers were omitted. Lastly, Race was also given the 0-1 binary range. I adjusted the answers based on whether or not they answered as being Caucasian or not. All Caucasians received a code of 1 because they tend to have a more positive view of Trump, while all other races received a code of 0 because they have a more negative view of Trump. All other answers were omitted.

Education, income, and age were left as is because they are defined by predetermined ranges that cannot be changed. All answers of “Don’t know/refused” were omitted from the model. For nativism, I used a question (Q94) because it asked whether a citizen thought
immigration should be increased or decreased. If answered as decreased, they received a value of 1 because they would have a more nativist view, and in turn would have a higher approval for Trump. All of those who answered increased or stay the same were given the value of 0 because they would have a less nativist view and in turn would have a more negative view of President Trump. All other answers were omitted.

As stated earlier, a binary logistic regression model was used with these variables in order to analyze the public opinion of Trump and how the independent variables can attribute to a citizen’s support for the President.
Table 1: Binary Logistic Results of Support for President Trump

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage Change in Odds</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nativism (Q94)</td>
<td>-.413</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>.265</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>.505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>.332</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.644</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.000</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.795</td>
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</table>

P<.05

N=1004

-2 Log likelihood= 489.383

Nagelkerke R-Square= .790

Analysis and Discussion

The results in Table 1 indicate that sex, education, race, religion, and party affiliation were all significant at the p<.05 level as predictors of support for President Trump. This also shows that the significant variables trend in the same direction as the dependent variable. This
shows that the literature and my hypothesis were correct. However, nativism, age, and income were not in line with my hypothesis and thus refute it. Also, the Nagelkerke R-Square value of .790 shows that my research is acceptable in scientific research, yet some improvements can still be made towards the higher percentage of predictability.

Sex (p=.004) proved to be a very strong predictor of support for Trump. This means that men do tend to favor President Trump much more than women. The percent change in odds of .505 shows that a one unit increase in sex increases the likelihood of support for President Trump by .505%. The change in odds can help us understand that most men do have a more positive view of Trump and women do not. In accordance with the literature and my hypothesis, the male sex views Trump and his ideals as a positive fit for the country, while women do not support the way he performs as President.

Education (p=.020) was another strong indicator of support for the President. Because there were multiple ages in the data set, the change in odds did not compute individually, but according to the data, there was a significant increase in support for Trump for people with middle to upper education. This is in accordance with my hypothesis and the literature.

Race (p=.000) was an extremely strong predictor of support for the President. The percent change in odds of .41 shows that as people answered as identifying as white instead of other races as represented as 0, they increased their probability of supporting President Trump by .41%. In accordance with the literature and my hypothesis, if the respondent was Caucasian, they had much more support for Trump typically than those who are not white.

Religion (p=.046) shows that it is a decent predictor of support for Trump, but not extremely strong as the previous variables mentioned. The data shows that those who are
Christian tend to have more support for Trump, while those who identify as any other religion do not support the President. The percent change in odds of .644 shows that as someone identified as Christian, they were .644% more likely to support President Trump overall. This shows that my hypothesis and the literature are correct.

Lastly, party affiliation (p=.000) was another strong indicator of support for the President. The percent change in odds of .007, while minimal, does show that as someone identified as Republican, they were .007% more likely to support President Trump. The data suggests that those who are Republicans support Trump much more than Democrats as in accordance with the literature and my hypothesis.

Nativism (p=.187) was not a strong indicator of support for Trump. As mentioned earlier, I used the question of whether immigration should be increased or decreased because those who believe immigration should be increased tended to not favor Trump as well as those who answered decreased. The p value does not support the hypothesis however. The reasoning for this is that possibly another question could have been used because this question was not a good example of nativism. This may also mean that citizens’ support for patriotism may not be as strong as understood by the literature.

Age (p=.943) was another variable that does not seem to indicate support for Trump. This may be because of the many values that age used in the dataset. This refutes my hypothesis and the literature I have spoken on previously. The reasoning for this may also be that the difference in the thinking process and values of generations is shrinking and becoming more alike.

Lastly, Income (p=.651) was another variable that does not indicate support for Trump. This may also be because of the many values that were in the dataset. This refutes my hypothesis
and the literature. This may be because income of the respondent may not matter in support or not of Trump. The classes such as middle class may have similar views of the President based on the other variables instead of how much income they had.

**Conclusion**

Overall, public opinion polls can help legislators and Political Scientists try and predict how citizens will vote depending on certain variables. While they may have many respondents, they are not perfect and will not show the overall sentiment of the population, but instead an estimation based on a certain group that was recorded. While the population of the United States will never have the same opinion on one subject, the opinion polls can help us understand how the public may favor one subject over another. While many experts suggested certain variables that they believed showed who supports President Trump, it is clear that Party and Race are at the forefront of the discussion. The Republican party and white voters had such strong support for Trump, that in order for experts to understand this information and use it to predict future elections, they must use these two variables more than in the past. While party affiliation grows more partisan every day, experts must understand that people will vote solely based on party instead of policies as in the past. As with race, if a candidate tends to connect more with a certain race, they can receive strong support over the other candidate. President Trump has been one of the most polarizing Presidents we have ever had, and he is splitting the country into sides based on party and race more than ever.
References


Appendix A

**Dependent Variable**

**Q.2** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

1 Approve
0 Disapprove
OMIT Don’t Know Refused

**Independent Variables**

**Nativism (Q.94)** Should LEGAL immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?

1 Decreased
0 Increased
OMIT Don’t Know/Refused

**Party** In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

1 Republican
0 Democrat
OMIT Independent
OMIT No preference
OMIT Other party
OMIT Don’t know/refused
**EDUC**

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than high school (Grades 1-8 or no formal schooling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school incomplete (Grades 9-11 or Grade 12 with NO diploma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High school graduate (Grade 12 with diploma or GED certificate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Some college, no degree (includes some community college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Two year associate degree from a college or university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Four year college or university degree/Bachelor’s degree (e.g., BS, BA, AB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree (e.g. some graduate school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Postgraduate or professional degree, including master’s, doctorate, medical or law degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD, graduate school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OMIT**

Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**INCOME**

Last year, that is in 2017, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 to under $20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20 to under $30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30 to under $40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40 to under $50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>50 to under $75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>75 to under $100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>100 to under $150,000 [OR]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$150,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OMIT**

Don’t Know/refused
AGE  What is your age?

_______ years

97  97 or older

OMIT  Don’t know/Refused

SEX

1  Male

0  Female

OMIT  Don’t know/refused

RACE  Which of the following describes your race? You can select as many as apply. White, Black or African American, Asian or Asian American or some other race.

1  White

0  Not White

OMIT  Don’t know/refused

RELIGION  Do you think of yourself as a Christian or not?

1  Christian

0  Non-Christian

OMIT  Don’t know/refused