

AUTHORITARIANISM FOR AND AGAINST TRUMP

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The election of Donald Trump to the presidency has invited renewed scholarly attention to the underlying social and economic factors surrounding presidential campaigns in the United States. It has been suggested that Trump won due to the failure of globalization, which marginalized a significant segment of the White working class. White nationalism was also believed to be a major force for Trump's success in 2016, in addition to his populist campaign style. In the present paper, we examine these claims using the 2016 American National Election Study data and show that the social-economic and populist explanations of the rise of Trump are insufficient, even misleading. In order to explain the election of Trump, one has to examine the deep-seated belief system of his voters. Our empirical models reveal that Trump voters had a strong authoritarian value orientation. However, the effect of the authoritarian belief system on Trump's election was also conditional. Racial minorities were more likely to have authoritarian predispositions than Whites. While the White authoritarians certainly helped elect Trump, minority authoritarians, whose racial group was attacked by the Trump campaign, were more likely to vote against Trump than other non-authoritarian fellow group members.

The rapid rise of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election was surprising to many scholars of American politics. The scholarly accounts of Trump's success among his core supporters have been centered around three distinct groups of factors. The first group of factors is concerned with social, economic, racial, and partisan explanations of the Trump voters.

These voters tended to be economically insecure, less educated, and racially antagonistic toward Muslims, Mexicans, and other minorities. Trump voters were believed to be politically located toward the right extreme of the partisan spectrum. The second group of factors centered around the ability of Trump to appeal to populist sentiment. This populist belief suggests that Trump voters were especially representative of those individuals who mistrusted the political elites and showed strong anti-intellectual biases. The final group of factors, which we contend contributed to the success of Trump, are related to a deep-seated authoritarian predisposition among Trump voters. This predisposition may be learned through early socialization

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processes or triggered by an enhanced perception of threat to an individual's belief system.

In the current paper, we not only test the competing hypotheses of the aforementioned scholarship on the election of Trump but also integrate the previous theories into a logically coherent framework. Going beyond the previous studies of Trump voters, we examine those individuals who were traditional authoritarians and whether this authoritarian belief system helped Trump eventually win the presidency. More importantly, we ask *whose authoritarianism* helped put Trump into the U.S. presidency. Theoretically, we argue that the authoritarian effect on Trump's rise is conditional in that authoritarian voters from Trump's in-group embraced him while the authoritarians from the outgroup voted against him. This differentiation between the in-group and outgroup support can be attributed to the fact that the authoritarian preconception is deeply rooted in how individuals are socialized to be loyal to their in-group and are fearful of outgroups. The empirical analysis presented in the present paper confirms our theory, which provides new insight into the intricacy of voter authoritarianism and its impact on the rise of Trump as well as American democracy in general.

Popular Explanations for Trump's Rise to Power

Jacobson (2017), one of the shrewdest observers of American politics, examined the factors that contributed to the rise of Trump in 2016. His analysis pointed out that, economically, Trump's voters felt that they were significantly behind, especially in comparison to Clinton voters who were less likely to feel this way. Jacobson further suggested that Trump's rise in the Republican primary was due to the "anti-globalization" sentiment shared by a large number of Republicans and Independents (p. 20).

Political scientists (e.g., Sides et al., 2017) empirically analyzed the economic impact on the election, arguing that Clinton's win in the overall popular vote was related to economic fundamentals. However, using Gallup data, Jacobson (2017) also found that Trump voters, regardless of their feelings, were "no worse off economically than other Americans in similar occupations" (p. 22). In addition, Jacobson found industries that were "threatened by

foreign competition" were less likely to employ Trump voters, casting a shadow on previous notions of economic insecurity driving Trump voters (p. 22).

Thus, there is a puzzle as to whether economic factors were a determinant of Trump voters or not and, if so, how? Gusterson (2017) criticized the media's obsession with economic factors. Citing an earlier study of the Trump vote, Gusterson indicated that a more accurate portrayal of Trump in the media should have reflected him as the candidate representing economically advantaged Americans; specifically, those earning more than \$50,000 annually (p. 210). Gusterson, however, did not dispute the effect of income. In order to fully understand the effects of income, he simply felt that other factors must also be included. While "media accounts have fetishized these working-class swing voters, turning them into the ultimate icons of Trumpism," these voters were just one component of a much larger coalition (Gusterson, 2017, p. 211). Other parts of this coalition that were being ignored are what Gusterson referred to as the "petty bourgeoisie." This petty bourgeoisie is described as being "intensely patriotic, resentful of the educated cosmopolitans above them and intensely fearful of slipping into the working class below them," while also believing that those individuals below them are getting government handouts paid with their tax dollars (Gusterson, 2017, p. 211).

Gusterson (2017) also emphasized the effect of education on the Trump vote, stating the following: "educational capital becomes a key element of social stratification in the move from an industrial economy to a neoliberal knowledge economy" (p. 212). Individuals who are lacking in higher education are economically disadvantaged and are "acutely aware of being condescended to by those" individuals who do have a post-secondary education (212). Jacobson (2017) also brought educational factors into his explanation for the Trump phenomenon, claiming that Trump supporters were more likely to be less educated and would occupy jobs classified as blue-collar.

Moving away from the economic rationale for Trump's rise to power, Gusterson (2017) examined the so-called "rise of nationalist populism" (p. 209). Jacobson (2017) described this rise of nationalistic populism sweeping the

nation as “a rich vein of right-wing populist disdain for cultural, corporate, and political elites, most emphatically including Hillary Clinton” (p. 20; also see Jacobson 2016, p. 234). One issue with the populist explanation is the difficulty in identifying a useful empirical measure of what precisely populism is. Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008, p. 3) defined populism as the following: “an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others.’” While this definition does seem to depict Donald Trump’s political style, it likewise might be used to describe other figures with wildly different political agendas, like Iran’s former president Mahmoud Ahmadi-njad, South Africa’s Jacob Zuma, or France’s Marine Le Pen. As Art (2011) points out: “populism is confrontational, chameleonic, culture-bound and context-dependent.” Much like former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s definition of obscenity, we cannot seem to define populism but we know it when we see it (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 1964).

Gidron and Bonikowski (2013) identified three different approaches to studying populism in academic literature. These approaches include the following: first, studying populism as a particular political ideology defined by a “set of interrelated ideas about the nature of politics and society,” second, viewing populism as a discursive style and a “way of making claims about politics characteristics of discourse,” and last as “a form of mobilization and organization” in political strategy (p. 17). These disparate dimensions of populism have made the understanding of populism as a concept difficult to ascertain. As Stanley (2008) writes: “the mercurial nature of populism has often exasperated those attempting to take it seriously” (p. 108).

In addition to populism, Jacobson (2017) indicated that voters “also shared Trump’s disdain for ‘political correctness,’ viewed his vulgarity as authenticity, and were attracted rather than repelled by his authoritarian impulses” (p. 22). Jacobson did not provide any rationale for Trump voters’ attachment to Trump’s “authoritarian impulses” and, more importantly, it is still uncertain whether Trump voters themselves were likely to be authoritarians. In order to help answer this question, MacWilliams (2016) designed a national online survey in December 2015, which “sampled 1,800 registered

voters and was conducted approximately one month before the opening contests in Iowa and New Hampshire” (p. 718). He found that while voter authoritarianism was a statistically significant predictor of support for Trump, it had no effect on support for other Republican candidates such as Ted Cruz, Ben Carson, Marco Rubio, and Jeb Bush. What, then, is the defining characteristic of authoritarian thought? MacWilliams (2016) described the authoritarian predisposition in this way:

Uniformity and order are authoritarian watchwords. Authoritarians obey. They seek order. They follow authoritarian leaders. They eschew diversity, fear ‘the other,’ act aggressively toward others, and, once they have identified friend from foe, hold tight to their decision (p. 717).

Hetherington and Weiler (2009) offered one of the most influential explanations of the political impact of voter authoritarianism in the contemporary era. Their empirical analysis of American National Election Studies (ANES) data demonstrated that the sorting of authoritarian predispositions led to increasing party polarization in the U.S. before the rise of Trump. Hetherington and Weiler argued that the two major political parties have sorted “clearly along authoritarian/non-authoritarian lines” with authoritarians moving towards the Republican party and non-authoritarian towards the Democratic party (p. 158).

Political scientists have also examined party polarization at the voter level. Jacobson (2016) observed that before the 2016 general election, “ordinary Americans have also become increasingly polarized by party, and the more active they are politically, the more their divisions echo those of elected leaders” (p. 228). Although, as suggested by Hetherington and Weiler (2009), not all Republicans are authoritarian, party elites recognize that this sorting is happening and have structured many of the issues in the Republican party around authoritarianism. According to MacWilliams (2016), Trump used this “authoritarian-driven partisan polarization” in order to drive his narrative in the Republican campaign (p. 716). Centered on the fears, both real and imagined, of those within the Republican party, Trump used

this authoritarian message to find himself as the electoral winner.

MacWilliams' study (2016) also discovered that the "fear of the threat of terrorism is another statistically significant predictor of Trump support" (p. 719). Notably, one of the main effects of the authoritarian predisposition is the fear toward "others." Many studies have documented the anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican, anti-immigration during the Trump campaign (see Jacobson 2017, p. 11, p. 14). The anti-Muslim sentiment was especially enhanced during the Obama administration. During October 2016, right before the 2016 general election, 43% of Republicans surveyed still believed that Obama was a Muslim (Jacobson 2017, p. 18). According to Jacobson (2016), Trump's slogan of "make America great again" was akin to "make America white again" (p. 235). Moss (2018) further discussed that one of the main manifestations of candidate authoritarianism in the Trump era was the so-called "negative othering," a practice that marginalized the outgroups" (p. 21). Moss goes on to state that this practice of "negative othering" is a style of "divide-and-rule" typically used by authoritarian politicians.

A New Theory of Interaction of Authoritarianism and Race

Moral psychologist Haidt (2012) argued that Trump was not a conservative who appealed to traditional conservatives. Instead, he was an authoritarian politician who was "profiting from the chaos in Washington" (Edsall 2016, para 6; also see Stenner & Haidt, 2018). For Haidt (2012): "If authority is in part about protecting order and fending off chaos, then everyone has a stake in supporting the existing order and in holding people accountable for fulfilling the obligations of their station" (p. 168). To empirically examine how voter authoritarianism worked to help Trump win the presidency in 2016, it is essential to ask whether the effect of authoritarianism on the Trump voters applies to the White electorate only. What about other races? Is it possible that voter authoritarianism may work for and against Trump simultaneously? Unfortunately, no previous studies have examined whether Trump's authoritarian voters have been primarily White voters and no scholar has theorized whether voter authoritarianism

may work against Trump. The present paper is designed to fill this gap.

Few scholars have examined the effect of voter authoritarianism on minority voters. The lack of attention to the effect of voter authoritarianism on minority voting behavior in the existing literature is profoundly related to the emphasis of the central role of the White electorate in the presidential elections. Perez and Hetherington (2014) have even suggested that typical empirical measures, such as the authoritarian index created based on the ANES childrearing questions, can only be applied to White voters. They argued the following: "individuals from low-status groups [such as Blacks] may not translate their understanding of family order to the political and social world because their group does not occupy in the same station that parents do in a family" (p. 401). In other words, a Black voter is not authoritarian even if they answer the same way to the four childrearing questions as does a White authoritarian because of the differences of group positions between Blacks and Whites. Perez and Hetherington drew this conclusion based on two non-probabilistic online polls (YGP) in addition to the 2008 ANES. More importantly, if their logic holds, many other conventional measures such as moral traditionalism, racial resentment, and egalitarianism may not be applied to minority groups either because of their marginalized positions. Unfortunately, Perez and Hetherington did not empirically test and compare White and Black voters concerning any other measurements that are commonly seen in the literature. Perez and Hetherington's measurement study certainly failed to answer a fundamental question of why the same trait of minority voters characterized as authoritarianism, as the present article will show, led minority voters to vote differently from those White authoritarians.

As Pettigrew indicated (2017), "(a)uthoritarianism has been successfully measured in different ways" by political scientists and social psychologists (p. 108) and the key is to see whether an empirical measure captures the underlining personality trait. The authoritarian personality, as it was called in the earlier literature, is believed to be a complicated trait, involving more than just submitting to authority (Adorno et al., 1950). These scholars identified as many as nine dimensions of the

authoritarian personality. Contemporary scholars have emphasized three major clusters of authoritarian attitudes: submission, conventionalism, and aggression (Altemeyer, 1996). While authoritarians value the importance of authority, order, and conventions, they may become extremely hostile toward outgroups. Many previous empirical studies have demonstrated that White racism often has its root in authoritarianism. Stenner (2005), for example, found that White authoritarian respondents in social surveys were much more likely to blame Blacks for their positions than White non-authoritarians. These White authoritarians felt “the relative safety and comfort” to attack Blacks when the interviewers were White (Stenner, 2005, p. 248). Furthermore, White authoritarians were much more likely to claim Whites themselves “had been discriminated against or disadvantaged for being white” (Stenner, 2005, p. 249).

If we use the three characteristics (i.e., submission, conventionalism, and aggression) to describe voter authoritarianism, it certainly should not apply to only White authoritarians. Other racial minorities should have significant authoritarian components as well, since they also may have individuals who value submission, conventionalism, and aggression more than other rules and conducts. Do White and minority authoritarians share similar political opinions and behave in politically similar ways? Would voter authoritarianism produce conformity in the 2016 presidential election? Were authoritarians irrespective of race supporters of Trump?

It is tempting to answer affirmatively to the above questions, especially if voter authoritarianism is supposed to be a factor explaining individuals regardless of race. Nevertheless, theoretically, voter authoritarianism should naturally lead to different, very often exactly opposite, behavior patterns for different racial groups. This conclusion is because the third characteristic, aggression, is not a bound-less behavioral pattern. Authoritarians act aggressively toward members of outgroups and, at the same time, they also act loyally to members of in-groups. Specifically, White authoritarians have what Wong (2018) calls “in-group embattlement,” referring to their feeling of persecution because of their race and religion (p. 82). They have the tendency to enforce conformity

based on how they want to maintain the authority, order, and convention from their in-group perspectives. They may follow the authority to the political extreme but that loyalty is based on how the authority can bring order and convention in the interest of their in-group. If this logic holds, we would naturally expect White authoritarians to act very differently from non-White authoritarians. The key is that the racial identity of these authoritarians is different; therefore, the in-group and outgroup memberships are different. For White authoritarians, Trump is an authoritarian figure they should enthusiastically support but for non-White authoritarians, Trump may or may not be the authority for whom they will vote. If they perceive Trump as a formidable political foe, these non-White authoritarians should be especially vigilant and vote against him.

The most convenient way to check the conditional effect of voter authoritarianism, dependent upon race, is to examine the difference between White authoritarians and Hispanic authoritarians. Due to Trump’s anti-immigrant, and specifically anti-Mexican campaign, we expect that Hispanic authoritarians are more likely to vote against Trump than Hispanic non-authoritarians. On the contrary, we expect White authoritarians to vote for Trump at a much greater rate than White non-authoritarians.

In sum, it is reasonable to propose that the positive effect of voter authoritarianism on the Trump vote is at least greater for White voters than for voters of other racial groups. The purpose of the present study was to not only empirically examine the competing hypotheses for Trump’s voters concerning income, education, and populism (Gusterson 2017; Jacobson 2017; Sides et al., 2017; Whitehead et al., 2018), but also test our theory of the interactive effect of voter authoritarianism with race. We also empirically analyzed whether voter authoritarianism was correlated with the partisan polarization in the 2016 electorate suggested by Hetherington and Weiler (2009) and MacWilliams (2016).

Hypotheses and Control Variables

The social and economic model of the Trump vote, offered by Sides et al. (2017) and Gusterson (2017), among others, can be simply

stated as the following two hypotheses, controlling for other factors:

Hypothesis 1: the lower the income level, the higher the probability of voting for Trump

Hypothesis 2: the lower the education level, the higher the probability of voting for Trump.

We also examined the effectiveness of the populist explanation of the Trump vote (Gusterson, 2017; Jacobson, 2017). Our third hypothesis, controlling for other factors, was the following:

Hypothesis 3: the higher the level of populist belief, the higher the probability of voting for Trump.

Finally, concerning the effect of voter authoritarianism on the Trump vote, we proposed three more hypotheses. We first retested the proposition made by Hetherington and Weiler (2009; i.e., that authoritarianism contributed to the partisan polarization in America). Thus, our Hypothesis 4 was (controlling for other factors) the following:

Hypothesis 4: authoritarian voters are more likely to be Republican than to be Democratic.

Next, we tested whether voter authoritarianism had a direct impact on a Trump vote (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; MacWilliams, 2016; Stenner, 2005), and as we proposed in the present paper, whether or not the effect of voter authoritarianism is conditional, dependent upon the in-group and outgroup differences measured by racial identification. Our final two hypotheses are stated as controlling for other factors:

Hypothesis 5: authoritarian voters are more likely to vote for Trump than are non-authoritarian voters.

Hypothesis 6: the authoritarian voter effect on the Trump vote is greater for White voters than for voters from minority groups.

Based on the findings from the existing literature on the 2016 presidential elections, we also controlled for other possible effects in our models. Specifically, we controlled for the strength of partisanship, the attitude toward Muslims, and a participant's gender when we tested the above six main hypotheses. We expected that a stronger Republican party identification would contribute to the probability of voting for Trump as a Republican candidate. We also expected that an anti-Muslim attitude would contribute

to the probability of voting for Trump due to Trump's campaign that emphasized the threat from Islam. Regarding the effect of gender, we expected female voters would be less likely than male voters to vote for Trump due to media coverage of Trump's history concerning sexual harassment against women.

Method

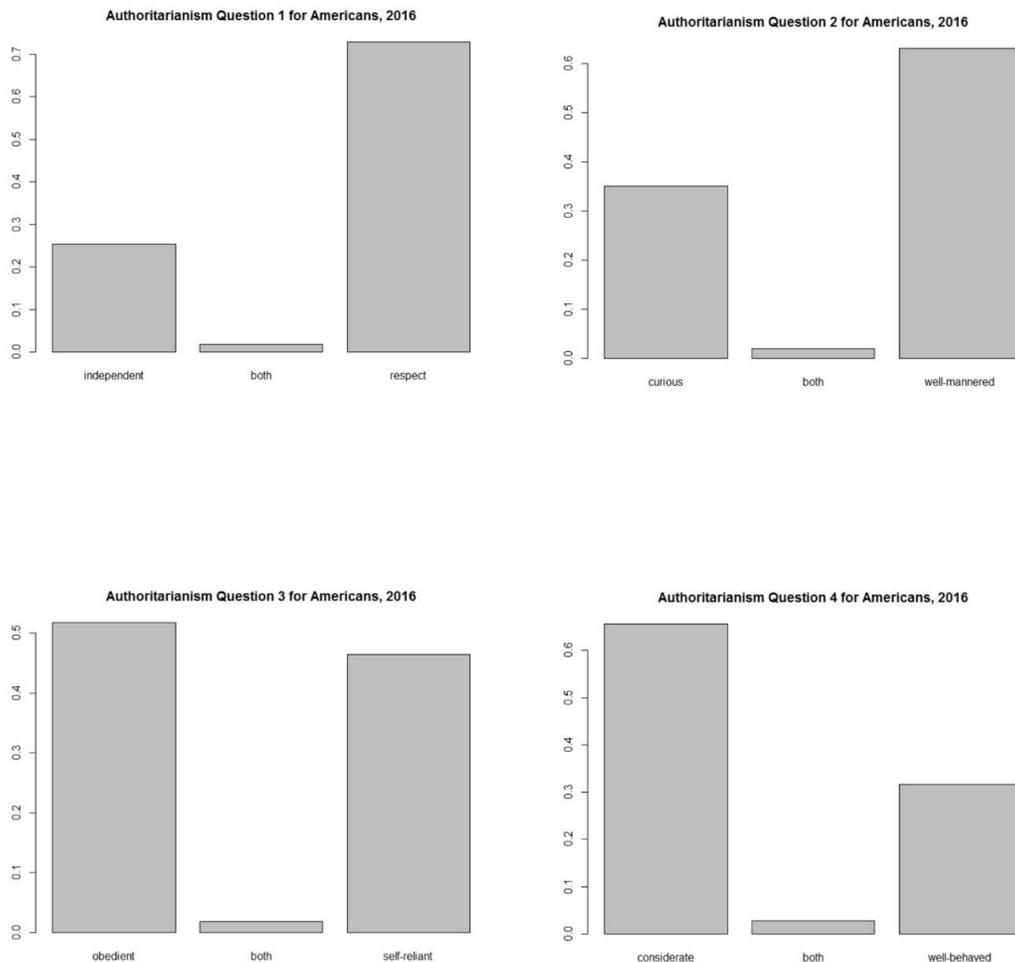
We used the survey data from the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES) administered by the University of Michigan. The 2016 ANES data were obtained based on national samples from both face-to-face and internet interviews between early September 2016 and January 2017 ($n=4271$). Of those surveyed, 47% identified as male, 52% identified as female, and 1% identified as other or refused to answer the question. The self-reported ethnicity of those surveyed was 71% White, 9% Black, 3% Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 1% Native American or Alaska Native, 11% Hispanic, 4% Other, and .007% no response. With regards to political party identification, 45% of the respondents identified as a Democrat (strong, not very strong, or independent), 40% identified as Republican (strong, not very strong, or independent), and 14% identified as independent. We focused on the general election because previous studies, such as MacWilliams (2016), surveyed American voters based on the Republican primary and were ill-suited for testing our hypotheses, such as the partisan polarization explored in the present paper (see hypothesis four above).

The Appendix provides the detailed wording for the 2016 ANES questions used to measure the response variables and all explanatory variables. For the Trump vote response variable, ANES contains a question about whom the voters decided to vote for and we recoded it as a value of one for Trump and zero for all others. Next, we explain how our other response variable, voter authoritarianism, is measured.

Similar to MacWilliams (2016) and Hetherington and Weiler (2009), we measured voter authoritarianism based on a battery of four childrearing questions asked in ANES. MacWilliams (2016, p. 718) provided a detailed description of the history of these questions adopted by scholars in the last three decades:

These questions first appeared on the 1992 ANES survey and have since

Figure 1
Authoritarianism Questions and Responses based on 2016 ANES



been used by some authoritarian scholars to estimate authoritarianism (Feldman & Stenner 1997; Hetherington & Suhay 2011; Hetherington & Weiler 2009; Stenner 2005). These questions tap deep-seated preconceptions about children and childrearing: whether it is more important for a child to be respectful or independent, obedient or self-reliant, well-behaved or considerate, and well-mannered or curious. Survey respondents who pick the first option in each of these pairs are strong authoritarians.

However, scholars still have not formed a consensus regarding how to use these four questions in order to construct a valid measure of

voter authoritarianism. The main disagreement is about how to treat the answer of “both” offered by the survey respondents who felt an attachment to both authoritarian answers and anti-authoritarian answers (see Appendix for the questions and possible answers). Hetherington and Weiler (2009, p. 48) used the score of .5 to represent those individuals who answered “both” on the four authoritarian questions (zero for anti-authoritarian answers and one for authoritarian answers). MacWilliams (2016) excluded these “both” answers in his recent study of the 2016 Republican primary. MacWilliams, however, did not provide the reason for why it is important to exclude the “both” answer from the analysis. We offer our reasons here.

The most important reason to build a scale, in this case, is to measure the respondents from the un-authoritarian (or “anti-authoritarian”) to the authoritarian extreme. The scale should have an important function to measure the ordinal nature of differences; thus, the ranking order must be preserved in order to show the degree of difference from anti-authoritarian to authoritarian. If someone provides a “both” answer to two of the four questions, this person, according to Stenner’s measure, would receive a value of one (.5 + .5). This person is very different from another person who scored a value of one because they selected only one of the four authoritarian answers. Therefore, to include a .5 value for the “both” answer would potentially distort the nature of the ordinal scale to measure the degree of difference between anti-authoritarian tendencies and authoritarian tendencies.

The Cronbach tests showed that excluding the “both” answers from the empirical analysis can increase the internal consistency of the authoritarian index from .641 to .644 for the 2016 ANES data. Figure 1 shows the distributions of the responses to all ANES questions in 2016. It is clear that the respondents who answered “both” represented less than 5% of all respondents for all four questions. Thus, to exclude the “both” answers from our analysis does not produce a significant missing data problem. It is also worth noting that even though we used the measure of MacWilliams (2016), the measure used by Heatherington and Weiler (2009; i.e., including “both” answers) also produced findings that are consistent with the ones reported below. Thus, although we acknowledge the different measurements of voter authoritarianism, it is important to emphasize that our substantive conclusions would not be changed if the different measurements were used.

Results

Because our primary variable of interest, voter authoritarianism, was measured by counts of authoritarian answers to the four child-rearing questions, Poisson regression, which is for a count response variable, is the most common choice to examine who tends to hold authoritarian values. We also adopted the Negative Binomial regression method to reexamine the findings reported in Table 1 and found that the Poisson and Negative Binomial models

produced consistent results. We adopted the logit model in order to test our hypotheses regarding Trump’s vote (Hypotheses one through three and five through six), while controlling for other variables, such as gender and party identification. We also used an additional ordered logit model in order to test the effect of voter authoritarianism on immigration-policy positions.

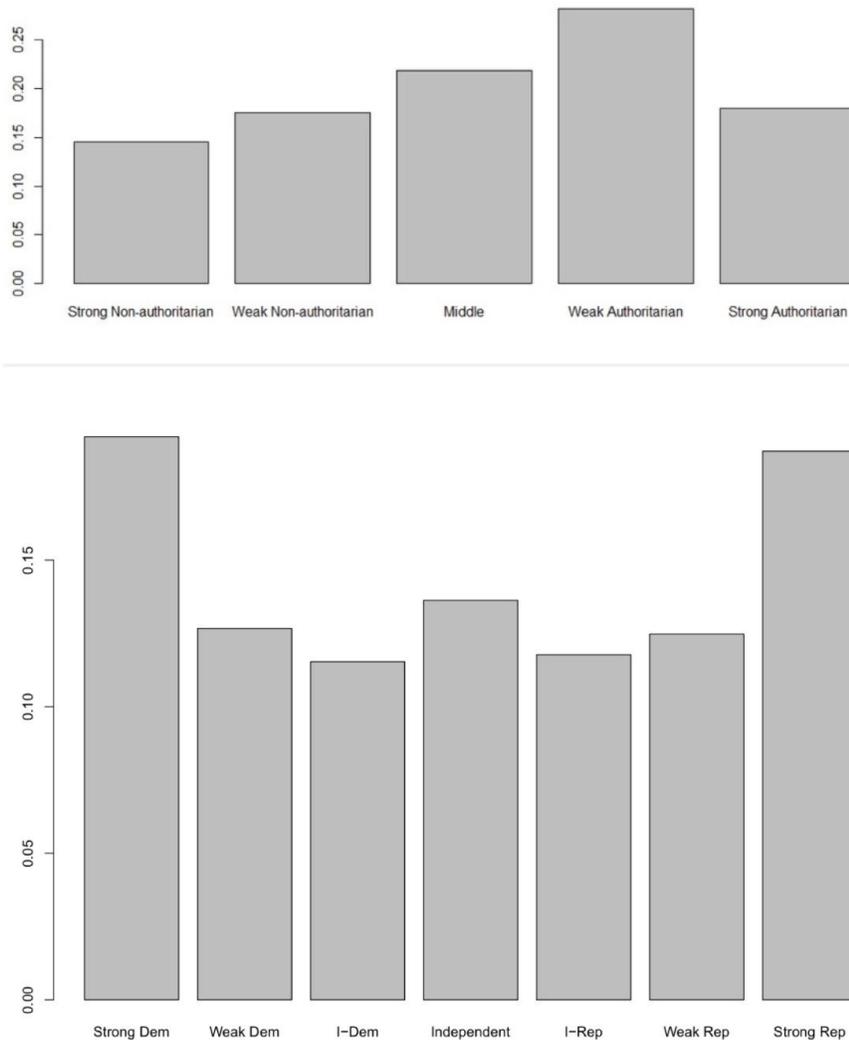
Our authoritarian index measure showed a negatively skewed distribution (-.23), based on the 2016 ANES data while the median of the authoritarian index showed the value of six based on a scale of four to eight, which is located in the middle of the anti-authoritarian and authoritarian spectrum. Americans who showed the two extreme values of either strong anti-authoritarian or authoritarian tendencies were only about 14.5% and 18.0% of the total electorate, respectively. Americans who were positioned at the exact middle of the spectrum represented 21.8%. The mode of the authoritarian index is seven, indicating that almost 30% of Americans had a somewhat weak authoritarian predisposition in 2016 (Figure 2).

The partisan measure of the 2016 ANES data, however, shows a bimodal and polarized distribution discussed in Heatherington and Weiler (2009). The largest frequencies occurred for Strong Democrats or Strong Republicans (19.2% and 18.7%, respectively) while those individuals who called themselves independents were only 13.6% of the electorate. Figure 2 shows the comparison between the authoritarian and partisanship distributions. It appears that as Americans are more normally distributed in terms of the authoritarian spectrum, they are polarized along party lines.

Authoritarianism, Partisanship, and Race

Are authoritarians more likely to be associated with the Republican Party, as suggested by Heatherington and Weiler (2009)? We first examined the descriptive findings based on the 2016 ANES data. Our data show there is no clear correlation between voter authoritarianism and partisanship. As partisanship changes from strong Democratic on the left to strong Republican on the right, there is no increase in the authoritarian voter share at all. Pearson’s correlation test showed that the *r* between the authoritarian index and partisanship is small

Figure 2
Authoritarian and Partisanship Distributions based on 2016 NAES, Compared



($r = .031$, $t = 1.87$) and fails the $p < .05$ significance test.

Figure 3 displays the distribution of the authoritarian index by party identification. We found that the Republican Party does not have a larger share of authoritarians than the Democratic Party. More specifically, Independent-Democrats were the least likely to be authoritarian. Compared to strong Democrats, Independent-Democrats were less likely to be authoritarian. While Independents and strong Republicans were most likely authoritarian

among all party categories, Independents were slightly more likely to be authoritarian than strong Republicans. The findings (represented in Figure 3) suggest that the partisan polarization identified by Hetherington and Weiler (2009) does not seem to be a function of voter authoritarianism in America. Why, then, is there also a significant presence of authoritarians among the Democrats?

As discussed above, in order to accurately observe the influence of voter authoritarianism in America, one needs to take race into

Figure 3
Authoritarianism and Political Party Identification

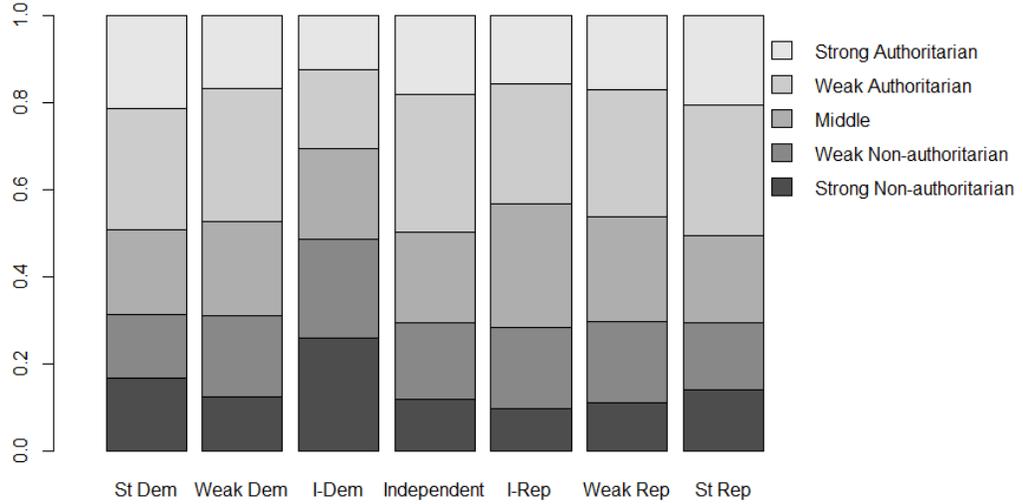
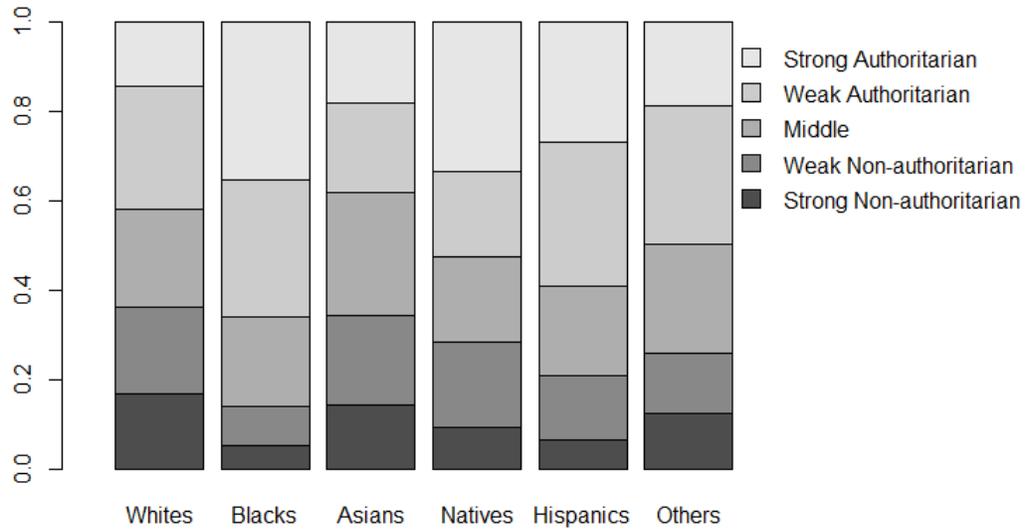


Figure 4
Authoritarianism and Race



account as well. It is possible that the significant presence of authoritarians inside the Democratic Party is a result of the presence of authoritarians from racial minority groups. Figure 4 shows the distribution of authoritarian index across all six different racial groups according to the 2016 ANES data. The most striking

finding was that the second racial group in the figure, Blacks, was more authoritarian than the first group, Whites. It is also clear that all minority groups, especially Blacks and Hispanics, were more likely to have authoritarian voters than the White racial group.

Table 1
Poisson Regression for Authoritarianism Index

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4
	β (s.e.)	β (s.e.)	β (s.e.)	β (s.e.)
Party ID	.003 (.003)	---	---	---
Weak Democrat	---	-.00 (.02)	---	.00 (.03)
Independent Democrat	---	-.09 (.03)***	---	-.08 (.03)**
Independent Independent	---	.01 (.03)	---	.01 (.03)
Independent Republican	---	-.00 (.03)	---	.02 (.03)
Weak Republican	---	-.00 (.03)	---	.02 (.03)
Strong Republican	---	.01 (.02)	---	.02 (.02)
Race	---	---	---	---
Black	---	---	.12 (.03)***	.13 (.02)***
Asian	---	---	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)
Native American	---	---	.07 (.09)	.08 (.08)
Hispanic	---	---	.09 (.02)***	.09 (.02)***
Other Race	---	---	.04 (.04)	.05 (.04)
Pseudo R Squared	.02	.02	.03	.05
N	3389	3389	3387	3374

Note: Two-tailed t-test
* $p < .5$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The fact that both political parties have strong components of authoritarian voters invites the question of whether or not all authoritarians, regardless of party or race, supported Trump in 2016. Before we investigated the effect of voter authoritarianism on the rise of Trump to the presidency, we first focused on authoritarian predisposition as a dependent variable in our Poisson Regression models. Equation 1 showed that party identification as a numeric variable, measured as one for strong Democrat and seven as strong Republican, failed to predict voter authoritarianism (see Table 1). Equation 2 showed that if the party identification variable is coded as a factor, only the Independent-Democratic party categories had less authoritarian share than did the base group, Strong Democrats. None of the Republican categories had a greater presence of authoritarians than did any Democratic category. Therefore, our hypothesis about the effect of voter authoritarianism on party polarization (see hypothesis four above) was not to be empirically supported.

As for the race, in Equation 3 we used four dummy variables in order to measure the effects of Black, Asian, Native, Hispanic, and other racial identities on voter authoritarianism, compared to the base group of White Americans. The results showed that all dummy variables had a positive sign, indicating that minority racial groups had a greater chance to display the authoritarian trait than Whites. However, only Hispanic and African Americans as minority groups succeeded in the $p < .05$ significance test.

Equation 4 reports the Poisson result when all the partisanship and racial variables are entered into the model (see Table 1). Again, the Hispanic and African-American variables were statistically significant at $p < .001$ level and Independent-Democrats, based on the $p < 0.01$ statistical level, were less likely to be authoritarians than the strong-Democrat base group. Also, when the interactive terms between partisanship and race were entered into the model, none of the interactive variables passed the $p < .05$ significance test (results not shown in

Table 2
Logistical Regression for the Trump Vote in the 2016 General Election

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
	β (s.e.)	β (s.e.)	β (s.e.)
Party Identification	.19 (.02)***	.19 (.02)***	.20 (.02)***
Populism	.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)
Income	.10 (.04)**	.04 (.03)	.05 (.04)
Education	-.06 (.05)	-.07 (.05)	-.08 (.05)
Gender	-.19 (.10)	-.16 (.10)	-.17 (.10)
Muslim Thermometer	-.04 (.00)***	-.04 (.00)***	-.04 (.00)***
Authoritarianism	.39 (.00)***	.50 (.05)***	.57 (.05)***
Race	-.32 (.04)***	---	---
Black	---	-3.61 (.34)***	.58 (2.05)
Asian	---	-1.00 (.30)**	1.72 (1.41)
Native American	---	-1.0 (.80)	1.24 (4.31)
Hispanic	---	-1.61 (.21)***	2.50 (1.04)*
Other Race	---	-.71 (.27)*	.61 (1.42)
Black x Authoritarianism	---	---	-.60 (.30)*
Asian x Authoritarianism	---	---	-.45 (.24)
Native x Authoritarianism	---	---	-.34 (.63)
Hispanic x Authoritarianism	---	---	-.63 (.16)***
Other Race x Authoritarianism	---	---	-.21 (.96)
Pseudo R Squared	.53	.59	.59
N	2432	2432	2432

Note: Two-tailed t-test
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

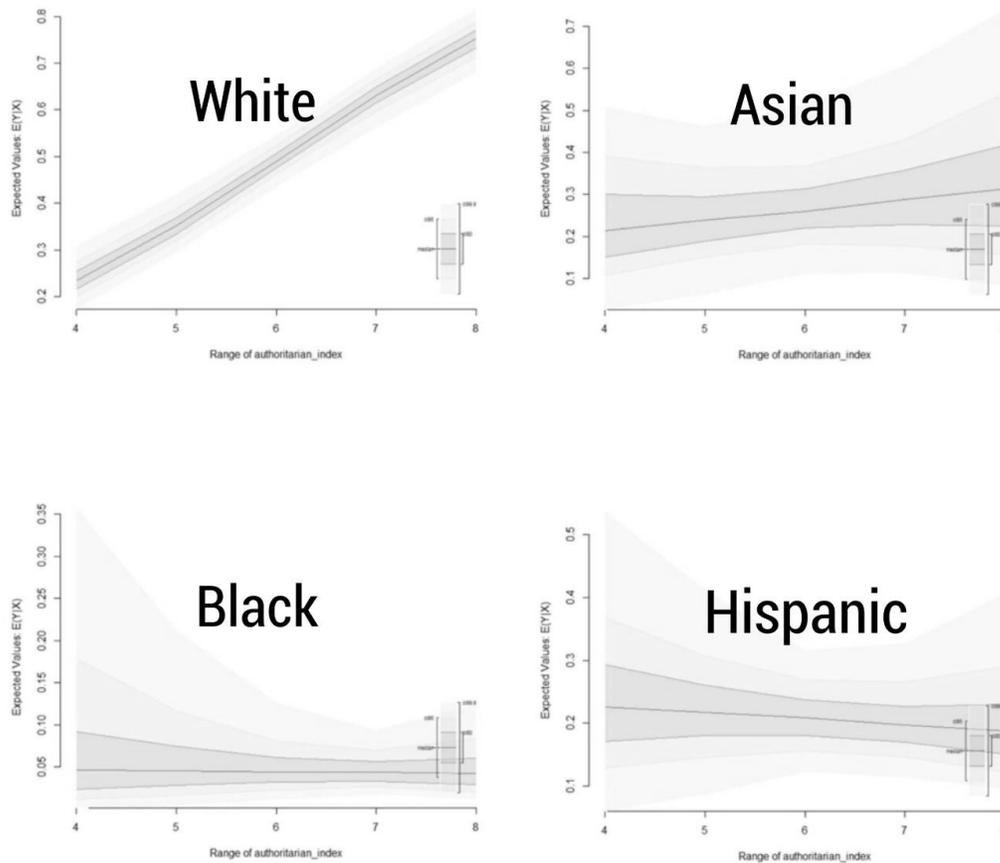
Table 1). In short, our empirical analysis of the 2016 ANES data showed that Blacks and Hispanics were more likely to be authoritarian than the White majority and political partisanship overall had no statistical relationship with voter authoritarianism. Next, we tested our main hypotheses concerning the Trump voters.

Explaining the Trump Voter

Table 2 reports the results of the Trump vote as the response variable. Equation 1 shows the general findings derived from the competing hypotheses discussed above. Education and populism were not statistically significant, so hypothesis two and hypothesis three were rejected. Income was statistically significant but it was positive, suggesting that the higher the income, the greater the probability of voting for Trump. Thus, hypothesis one was also rejected. Authoritarianism was significant and results suggest a higher authoritarian index value did

lead to a greater probability of voting for Trump in 2016. Hence, hypothesis five was supported. For control variables, Republicans were indeed more likely to vote for Trump than Independents and Democrats. Those individuals who reported a warmer feeling toward Muslims were less likely to vote for Trump than those individuals with a strong reservation against Muslims.

In order to see the voting choice for each racial category, we coded race as a multinomial variable in Equation 2. The baseline group was Whites; therefore, all other racial groups were compared to this baseline group in the model in order to show their probabilities of voting for Trump. The signs of the racial variables were all negative, indicating that all other racial groups were less likely to vote for Trump. Native Americans were the only group that did not pass the p < .05 test. It is important to note that Equation 2 also shows that the income variable was no longer significant as we controlled for these racial categories. This change is because

Figure 5*The Conditional Effect of Authoritarianism on the Probability of Voting for Trump*

of the greater share of African American and Hispanic voters belonging to the lower economic level. In other words, we have further evidence to reject our first hypothesis derived from the economic explanation of Trump's success in 2016.

In order to test our own newly developed theory of the conditional effect of voter authoritarianism on the Trump vote, dependent upon race, we ran Equation 3, which adds the interactive terms into the model. The conditional effect of voter authoritarianism is examined based on its interaction with the specific racial groups. Again, the baseline group is White. These findings revealed that all the interaction terms between minority groups and voter authoritarianism had a negative sign, suggesting that minority group status reduced the positive effect of voter authoritarianism on the chance of voting for Trump.

The Hispanic Americans with the authoritarian trait were less likely to vote for Trump according to Equation 3 and the significance level succeeded at the $p < .001$ level while the African American interactive term passed the $p < .05$ level. Next, we used the results from Equation 3 in order to simulate the probability of voting for Trump with respect to different racial groups. As represented in Figure 5, we used the Zeligverse R package in order to produce the simulations of one's probability of voting for Trump (Choirat et al., 2017; Imai et al., 2008; King et al., 2000). The figure displays four racial groups: Whites, Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians. The horizontal dimension is based on the authoritarian index from the anti-authoritarian to the authoritarian extreme. The positive slope indicates a positive effect of authoritarian predispositions on the probability of

voting for Trump with respect to the particular racial group of interest.

The most important finding of the present paper is that the authoritarian predisposition works differently for different racial groups. While White authoritarians were much more likely to vote for Trump than non-authoritarian White voters (slope = .61), only the Asian American group shared this pattern. However, the slope for Asians was much smaller than that for Whites (slope = .15), suggesting that the enthusiasm of Asian authoritarians for Trump was much smaller than that of White authoritarians. For Blacks, the authoritarian trait did not matter at all. As shown by the cross-board, Black voters had a less than 5% chance of voting for Trump regardless of whether they were authoritarian (slope = 0). Hispanics, as we expected based on our theory regarding the interaction of authoritarianism and race, came out completely contrary to Whites. For Hispanics, an authoritarian predisposition enhanced the probability of voting *against* Trump, which was demonstrated by the negative slope for Hispanic authoritarians (slope = -.06) in Figure 5.

As suggested in the present paper, it appears that the authoritarian predisposition triggered Hispanics to worry about a strong man like Trump, who was the most ardent opponent of Hispanic interests. In other words, Trump's anti-Mexican rhetoric in the 2016 presidential campaign threatened the Hispanic authoritarians who turned out as a voting bloc against Trump in the general election. Thus, the authoritarian predisposition produced the exact opposite consequences for White and Hispanic racial groups. While White authoritarians regarded Trump as the strong-man who they could trust to protect the White group, Hispanic authoritarians regarded him as the arch-enemy of the Hispanic group.

The authoritarian predisposition, however, did not work out the same way for all minority groups. As Figure 4 shows, voter authoritarianism had no effect on Blacks. Regardless of the score on the authoritarian index, Blacks' probability of voting for Trump was below 5% in terms of our simulation study. With respect to Asian Americans, voter authoritarianism did contribute positively to the Trump vote as shown by the positive slope in Figure 4. Asians, in general, had a much smaller probability of voting for Trump, manifested by the less than

30% chance of voting for Trump even for the strong Asian authoritarians. In other words, the authoritarian effect on Asians to vote for Trump was much smaller than for Whites, which again confirms hypothesis six.

Anti-Immigration Policy Position and the Trump Voter

Both Hispanic and Asian Americans are predominantly immigrant groups (Schmidt et al., 2009). The Trump policy, which took the most hostile anti-immigration position in recent presidential history, led to a significant impact on the lives of immigrants, especially Hispanics. Whitehead et al.'s (2018) recent study of the 2016 presidential election revealed that many Trump voters supported him because of their White Christian nationalist agenda which considered immigrants to be a major threat to the American identity.

We used the ordered logit models in order to examine the anti-immigration attitude as a dependent variable (see Table 3). Equation 1 offers the strongest evidence of the impact of voter authoritarianism. Indeed, authoritarians are strong opponents of the previous Obama-era immigration policy. Furthermore, our model shows that, consistent with Table 2, income did not explain whether a voter takes on an anti-immigration position. This finding further contradicts the economic narrative of Trump's success in 2016. Contrary to the findings reported in Table 2, education turned out to be a significant factor affecting the views on immigration policies. A higher level of education led to a decreased level of anti-immigration sentiment which suggests that education can play a positive role in welcoming immigrants from foreign countries.

Race turned out to be a strong predictor of the position on immigration policy as well. Whites were much more likely to take on an anti-immigration position than Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics. Another important finding based on Equation 1 is that populism led to a greater probability of taking the anti-immigration policy position. In this sense, while populism did not have a direct effect on voting for Trump (as shown in Table 2), it did help Trump's rise in 2016 through an indirect relationship with the anti-immigration policy position. In other words, the populists were those

individuals who had a strong tendency to ask for cutting the immigration level, which partly contributed to the eventual success of Trump winning the general election. The key is that the immigration policy debate indeed played a role in the 2016 campaign.

In order to see the effect of anti-immigration sentiment on Trump's success, in Equation 2 we used the probability of voting for Trump as the response variable in the logit model, and added the immigration policy position as one explanatory variable into the final model. Equation 2 provided findings consistent with those reported in the equations of Table 2. It further shows that taking an anti-immigration position led to an enhanced level of support for Trump while controlling all other important variables. Also, as demonstrated by this final model, voter authoritarianism continued to be the most consistent and robust predictor of the Trump vote. The interactive terms concerning race and voter authoritarianism led to the same conclusion as we made for Equation 3 in Table 2 (this finding is discussed in another paper).

Discussion

Political commentators, who used primarily bivariate analysis of the exit polls, were puzzled by the conflicting characteristics of Trump voters. Coates (2017) illustrated this conflict by referencing Gallup Poll researchers Jonathan Rothwell and Pablo Diego Rosell's report, which stated: "people living in areas with diminished economic opportunity" were "somewhat more likely to support Trump" (p. 77). However, exit polls showed that Trump voters were typically employed and economically better off and his Republican primary supporters even had a median household income of \$72,000 (Coates, 2017). Coates simply blamed the American media's obsession with the "White working class" as a failure to capture the real cause for the rise of Trump. For Coates, the media always *mistakenly* found a way to highlight the Democratic failure under the Obama administration to enhance the livelihood of poor Whites which, based on the widespread perception, led to the eventual rise of Trump to the presidency. But Coates did not provide an empirically-based and sound explanation for the decisions of Trump voters.

Indeed, the failure of the media in predicting and explaining Trump's success had its

shared problem in using the wrong methodology. For events as significant as the U.S. presidential elections, simply using an aggregation of exit poll data in order to engage in different sorts of bivariate analysis does not lead to accurate explanations. Our multivariate analyses based on the 2016 ANES data showed that income failed as a predictor of the probability of voting for Trump. In our empirical models, income either failed the basic statistical test or served as a positive effect on the Trump vote when controlling for other important variables.

Education also failed statistically as a predictor of the Trump vote. This finding was especially the case when we controlled for one's attitude toward immigration policy. In other words, voters who took the anti-immigration position were much more likely to vote for Trump regardless of their educational level. In addition to education, gender also failed the statistical test in most of our models. There is no empirical evidence to conclude that women were more likely to be anti-Trump than pro-Trump in the 2016 general election. Populism, which was the watchword for many media studies, also failed to predict Trump's rise to the presidency. The statistical findings indicate that voters with populist tendencies were no more likely to vote for Trump than those individuals without such a tendency. It also should be noted, however, that the populists in our empirical model did tend to take more stringent anti-immigration positions. This finding implied that the Obama-era immigrant policy was viewed by the populists as *elite driven*, which did not reflect the will of common (White) voters who perceived non-White immigrants as a threat. Arguably, there could be other confounding factors that influenced the attitudes toward immigration policy. Voters' preconceived biases against non-White immigrants or minorities, in particular, may be correlated with the authoritarian tendency and anti-immigration policy position.

If the economic and populist narratives promoted by the media and academic research alike have failed to explain the Trump vote, what were the main reasons for Trump voters to support him? Why did recent polls consistently show that a Republican presidential candidate (even Trump) would do better than a Democratic presidential candidate on economic issues? While we did not address the mass opinion on economic issues as our dependent

variable in the present paper, we did offer more empirical support for why populism and the perceived Republican advantage on economic issues might have been driven by other psychological factors.

First, our empirical analysis showed that partisanship was a factor—Republicans were much more likely to vote for Trump than for Clinton. This finding rarely came as a surprise since most American elections take place along party lines. The major finding of the present paper, however, is the power of voter authoritarianism for explaining the Trump phenomenon despite the partisan effect. In a nutshell, Trump's rise to the presidency had a deep root in the authoritarian predisposition of his voters. Our voter authoritarian index was statistically significant in all of our empirical models. But to say that voter authoritarianism uniformly influenced the voters to vote for Trump is also mistaken. In order to fully understand the effect of authoritarianism on vote choice (conditional on race), it is imperative to examine how the authoritarians perceive the world. As political scientists Hetherington and Weiler (2009) emphasized, the authoritarians regard the outside world, especially the political world, as mainly a battle between themselves and outsiders. The racial minorities as the threatening outgroups, for White authoritarians, have gained their political advantages over the *true* Americans (i.e., the Whites themselves) and these outgroups must be dealt with by an authoritarian figure such as Trump to once again restore the order for the nation. The *us versus them* perception of the world can also be deep-seated among minority groups. Blacks and Hispanics, as demonstrated by the empirical findings of the present paper, have a greater chance to develop authoritarian tendencies than Whites. Moreover, if group thinking is enhanced to the level of fear of an authoritarian figure such as Trump who represents the potentially greatest outgroup threat to their own minority group, the minority authoritarian voters are more likely to vote against Trump than other non-authoritarian minority voters.

In sum, the results of our present study provide strong support for the conclusion made by political scientist Stenner (2005), who predicted the rise of radical right-wing politicians to take advantage of the deep-seated predisposition of voter authoritarianism in the American

electorate. This brand of voter authoritarianism, according to Stenner, would embrace the political agenda centered around “legal discrimination against minorities and restriction on immigration” (p. 17). Indeed, it is shown through our models that those voters who held an anti-immigration position voted for Trump enthusiastically.

The current study also extends MacWilliams' (2016) findings on the significant influence of voter authoritarianism on Trump's Republican primary voters. Our analysis demonstrates that voter authoritarianism contributed to the election of Trump in the 2016 general election as well. The main contribution of the present research to the literature of voter authoritarianism and the election of Trump, however, is the theoretical formulation and empirical verification of the conditional effect of voter authoritarianism. Trump's authoritarian-style campaign does not mean that all authoritarian voters support him uniformly. In the present paper, we articulated a conditional effect of voter authoritarianism, dependent upon group membership. If the authoritarian voter is faced with an authoritarian political figure, the voter would steadfastly support them, as long as the authoritarian voter shares the same group membership with the political figure. If, on the other hand, the authoritarian voter is faced with a “threatening” authoritarian political figure from an outgroup, this voter would vehemently oppose them.

We tested this conditional effect of voter authoritarianism on the Trump voter based on racial membership. Our findings are affirmative with our hypotheses. Trump received the highest level of support from the White authoritarians. It is important to note that for Hispanics, the group that Trump's campaign attacked particularly, voter authoritarianism worked against him.

One more important finding of the present study is that the authoritarian value system is not a Republican or White predisposition. In fact, minorities are more likely to be authoritarians than are Whites, which contributed to the fact that significant segments of the Democratic Party and Independents were authoritarians. Past researchers have already focused on how authoritarianism contributed to the conservative movement and scholars have classified conservatism into three brands, “authoritarianism,

status quo conservatism, and laissez-faire conservatism” (Stenner, 2009, p. 189).

Limitations and Future Research

While the present article brings readers’ attention to the complex ways that authoritarianism may influence the vote choice in a major U.S. presidential election, empirically it faces the limitations of the survey data provided by ANES. The questions that were not answered in the present study but deserve further research include, among others, how campaign events in 2016 affected voters to make their final choices and whether some (authoritarian) voters might decide to vote for Trump, not because of his authoritarian appeals, but because of the ineffective campaign of Hillary Clinton. Perhaps, more importantly, the variables available in the 2016 ANES dataset did not allow us to gauge the complex relationships between the social and psychological forces and other identities, such as union membership and religion. It is, for example, reasonable to ask whether Trump’s surprising victory in the Midwest states had more to do with the regional characteristics concerning economic outlooks and a strong Catholic connection of White electorate there. These factors certainly are beyond our narrow scope of clarifying the conditional effect of authoritarianism. It is, therefore, necessary for future researchers to link authoritarianism to geopolitics and underlying economic competitions between and among racial groups.

More longitudinal studies of authoritarian voters in multiple elections may also help researchers understand whether some of our control variables included in our 2016 models such as income, education, and gender may reveal candidate-specific effects. More authoritarian politicians need to be included in future studies as well in order to see whether the same or similar responses from Whites and minorities prevail in multiple elections. The findings presented in the present article, however, do make it clear that it is very important for future researchers to analyze the differences between the Democratic and Republican authoritarians. Our theorization of the conditional effect of voter authoritarianism on the election of Trump, in this sense, has provided a good starting point to examine the rise of authoritarian political figures in western democracies.

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Appendix: Coding based on the 2016 ANES

V162106 – Muslim Thermometer – recoded as “muslim_therm”

The question included in this variable asked: “How would you rate Muslims?” on a scale of zero to 100, zero being a very cold, negative feeling, and 100 being a very warm, positive feeling. The Muslim Feeling Thermometer variable was recoded so only responses with values from zero to 100 were included. Values outside of this range were not included in our analysis.

V162157 – What should immigration levels be? – recoded as “anti_immigration”

The question included in this variable asked: “Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be: increased a lot, increased a little, left the same as it is now, decreased a little, or decreased a lot?” Responses that did not adhere to one of these options were not included in our analysis.

V162062 – Presidential vote summary – recoded as “Trumpvote”

The question included in this variable asked respondents who they would vote for in the 2016 presidential election. Responses included Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, or Other Candidate. In our analysis, non-responses or negative values (such as “*Don’t Know*”) became NA. A vote for Trump was coded as one, while a vote for any other candidate was coded as zero.

V162260 – Most politicians do not care about the people – recoded as “Populism”

This question asked respondents how much they agreed with the statement: “Most politicians do not care about the people.” Responses were returned on a scale of one to five, one being “*Agree Strongly*” and five being “*Disagree Strongly*.” For our purposes, the order of these values was reversed, so one became equivalent to “*Disagree Strongly*” while five became “*Agree Strongly*.” Values outside of this one to five range were not included in our analysis.

V161310x – Self-Identified Race – recoded as “Race6”

This question asked respondents to select their self-identified race. Responses included White non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander non-Hispanic, Native American or Alaska Native

non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Other non-Hispanic, Multiple races. Values outside of these responses were not included in our analysis.

V161158x – Party ID – recoded as “Partisan7”

This question asked respondents to select their partisanship on a seven point scale, where one equaled “Strong Democrat” and seven equaled “Strong Republican.” Values outside of this seven-point scale were not included in our analysis.

V161270 – Highest Level of Education – recoded as “Education”

This question asked respondents: “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” The original dataset collected responses on a 16-point scale, with one being equal to “less than first grade” and 16 being equal to “Doctorate degree.” For our purposes, this 16 point scale was reduced to a five point scale. Variables two to eight were recoded to a one and labeled “less than high school.” Variables nine and 90 were recoded to two and labeled “high school graduate.” Variables 10, 11, and 12 were recoded to three and labeled “some college or associates degree.” Variable 13 was recoded to four and labeled “bachelor’s degree.” Variables 14, 15, and 16 were recoded to five and labeled as “master’s degree or beyond.” Values outside of this scale were not included in our analysis.

V161361x – Income – recoded as “income”

This question asked respondents to do the following: “Please mark the answer that includes the income of all members of your family living here in 2015 before taxes.” The original dataset collected responses on a 28 point scale. For our purposes, this 28 point scale was reduced to a five point scale. Variables two through eight were recoded as one and labeled “less than 25k.” Variables nine to 14 were recoded as two and labeled as “less than 50k.” Variables 15-19 were recoded as three and labeled as “less than 75k.” Variables 20-22 were recoded as four and labeled as “less than 100k.” Variables 23-28 were recoded as five and labeled as “over 100k.” Values outside of this scale were not included in our analysis.

V161342 – Gender – recoded as “female”

This question asked respondents: “What is your gender?” The answers included Male, Female, and Other. For our purposes, Male and Other were treated as zero, while Female was treated as a one. Values outside of these responses were not included in our analysis.

V162239, V162240, V162241, V162242 – Childrearing questions – recoded as “authoritarian_index”

These four variables relate to childrearing questions which make up our authoritarian index. V162239 asks respondents the following question: “Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: independence or respect for elders?” Responses included independence, respect for elders, or both. V162240 asks respondents the following: “Which one is more important for a child to have: curiosity or good manners?” Responses included Curiosity, Good manners, or both. V162241 asks respondents the following: “Which one is more important for a child to have: obedience or self-reliance?” Responses included Obedience, Self-reliance, or both. V162242 asks respondents the following: “Which one is more important for a child to have: Being considerate or well-behaved?” Responses include Being considerate, Well-behaved, or both. In each of these, responses labeled “both” (which constituted less than 5% of all answers) were removed from our analysis, along with responses outside of the above listed options. These four questions were then aggregated into a single index to represent the overall authoritarian leanings of respondents on a zero to four scale.

Others who have used this data have assigned respondents who selected “both” a value of .5 on their authoritarian index (See Heatherington and Weiler 2009). While we opted to remove this data from our analysis in a manner consistent with more recent work done by MacWilliams (2016), we found that using either method would produce fairly consistent results. The results of these analyses will gladly be made available upon request.