

Immigrant Resentment and the Republican Vote: A Comparison of Voting
Behavior in the 2012 and 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections

By

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Abstract

Donald Trump's rhetoric in the 2016 presidential election focused on an attack toward latinx immigrants. Much of the literature argues that racial resentment, authoritarianism, education, and class allowed Trump to obtain enough support from white voters to win the election. Some research discusses immigrant resentment, but it lacks necessary control variables and an understanding if immigrant resentment actually helped Trump. Therefore, an important question has yet to be answered: Did immigrant resentment help Trump win the election, or did it hurt him among white voters? Using the ANES survey and logistic regression, this research compares the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections. Specifically, I compare white Romney, the Republican candidate in the 2012 presidential election, and Trump voters to Obama and Hillary Clinton voters, respectively, in terms of immigrant resentment. I hypothesize that those with greater immigrant resentment are more likely to vote for Trump instead of Clinton, and this likelihood is stronger compared to the matchup between Romney and Obama. Furthermore, I explore whether Trump lost more votes, proportionally, instead of gaining compared to the 2012 election by way of immigrant resentment even when controlling for important factors such as racial resentment, sexism, and demographics. Although immigrant resentment was a much stronger predictor of voting behavior in the 2016 election compared to 2012, Trump lost white votes, proportionally, because of asymmetrical polarization as white American voters became more progressive toward immigrants relative to 2012.

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Introduction

On August 31st 2016, Trump spoke to a crowd of devote supporters saying, “[w]hile there are many illegal immigrants in our country who are good people, many, many, this doesn’t change the fact that most illegal immigrants are lower skilled workers with less education, who compete directly against vulnerable American workers, and that these illegal workers draw much more out from the system than they can ever possibly pay back” (The New York Times 2016). Donald Trump’s rhetoric was targeted to those with immigrant resentment against latinx and Muslim immigrants. Even though Trump was successfully elected in the 2016 presidential election, did he actually win because white voters had higher immigrant resentment than in 2012?

The United States, and the world for that matter, is experiencing ever increasing political and voter polarization. Quantitative and qualitative social science research shows a spread in the political spectrum where politicians have begun making their decisions strictly based on their party lines. Also, both the Democratic and Republican parties have shifted further left and right, respectively. For example, the 2016 and current 2020 election have included strong voter support for Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren who are arguably further left than traditional Democratic front runners. On the other end, Donald Trump, who is arguably far-right, won the presidency and continues to have support as we approach the 2020 election. Polarization is increasing over time, but how did this change in the United States from the 2012 presidential election to the 2016 presidential election?

The media, my focus being news outlets and web-based publications, have tackled the question of how Trump was successful. The main themes being Trump’s populism, white working-class people, polarization, and immigrant resentment, are prevalent throughout the

media where journalists have attempted to explain the Trump phenomenon. The dominant themes in the media seem to apply to peer-reviewed research.

Many researchers have offered explanations for increased polarization ranging from a realignment of the parties, a white identity crisis and backlash, racial resentment, class-based arguments, immigrant and Muslim resentment. This research specifically looks at latinx immigrant resentment. In 2012, President Barack Obama beat Mitt Romney, but, in 2016, Donald Trump was able to win the Electoral College with a platform based on hostility toward latinx immigrants. Regarding latinx immigrants, Trump's plan of attack included building a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. Trump won the votes of people who have higher immigrant resentment, and, it is quite possible, that he changed people's perspectives on immigrants through hate and fear. That being said, how does immigrant resentment compare between 2012 and 2016 among white voters? Was the electorate more polarized in terms of immigrant resentment? More specifically, how did Romney voters compare to Trump voters on immigrant resentment as well as Obama and Clinton voters? Overall, did Trump win the election based on immigrant resentment, or did he lose a proportion of white votes relative to 2012?

Donald Trump and the White Electorate

Is Polarization a Myth?

The media has investigated polarization among the electorate ranging from the rural and urban divide to a general divide of the electorate. Lazaro Gamio (November 17, 2016) at the Washington Post argues, with good evidence, that the political division between rural and urban areas has substantially increased since 2008. That is, rural areas have become significantly more Republican and urban areas more Democrat. Jeremy W. Peters, Megan Thee-Brenan, and Dalia

Sussman (November 8, 2016) at the New York Times agree with Gamio as they also argue there was greater divergence in the rural and urban divide, but they add that polarization among gender, race, class, religion, and certain ideologies has also increased thus showing an increase in the general divergence of the electorate. It is argued by some that an increase in polarization can increase the likelihood of success for populist leaders, especially right-wing populists. A main argument comes from Thomas B. Edsall at the New York Times who shows how a polarized electorate allows Trump to persist and maintain relative support throughout his time in office (January 22, 2020). But, how does immigrant resentment play a role in polarization?

Before an investigation of a relationship between immigrant resentment and polarization, polarization must be discussed thoroughly. I will discuss two kinds of polarization: political and voter polarization. Political polarization is the divergence of political beliefs and ideologies within the political class. The term *political class* is taken from Fiorina (2011) as not just the political elites, representatives, senators, and legislatures, but the media as well. Voter polarization is the divergence of political beliefs and ideologies within the actual electorate: the people entitled to vote. It is key to understand the difference of these terms and how they are defined, for as past research has used them interchangeably or without definitions.

Scholars have debated the reality of polarization. For example, Fiorina et al. (2008) and Fiorina (2011), and Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) have contradictory views as the former believes voter polarization to be a myth while the latter sees it as reality. Fiorina (2011) argues that political polarization is very real in American society because political figures are moving to more extreme positions¹ rather than remaining in moderate/centrist zones. Political polarization,

¹ Further left or right.

according to Fiorina (2011), makes an illusion of voter polarization when, in reality, “it is polarization of people’s *choices*, not polarization of their *positions*” (p.26). The electorate appears to be polarized because of their voting behavior, but it is actually the polarization of their choices. Fiorina (2011) further argues that even the attitudes of the electorate are not polarized because, using survey data, most of them fall in the middle².

Fiorina et al. (2008) and Fiorina (2011) used raw data, descriptive statistics, and basic statistical tests while Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) used a little more sophisticated statistical and recoding techniques allowing them to discover contrary evidence. This evidence “indicated that since the 1970s, [voter] polarization has increased dramatically among the mass public in the United States as well as among political elites” (Abramowitz & Saunders 2008, p. 542). The electorate is becoming less moderate as statistically significant differences show throughout time when looking at party affiliation, political ideology, and several cultural ideologies (Abramowitz & Saunders 2008). Much research has found compelling evidence for both voter and political polarization (for empirical analyses, see: Abrajano & Hajnal 2015; Abramowitz 2018; Abramowitz & Saunders 2008; Bail et al. 2018; Boven et al. 2012; Duca & Saving 2015 & 2017; Effron 2018; Galbraith & Hale 2008; Grechyna 2016; Han 2016; McCarty et al. 1997 & 2006; Sides et al. 2018; Smith & Hanley 2018; & Spohr 2017).

Although this analysis is not meant to decide if voter or political polarization comes first, it is clear that presidential candidates are more polarized than before. To decipher possible voter polarization on attitudes toward latinx immigrants, this paper will inquire if people diverged in immigrant resentment since 2012, and if, accordingly, there is voter polarization on attitudes

² This includes survey respondents who select “moderate”, “I don’t care”, and “I don’t know”.

toward immigrants. If there is greater polarization by immigrant resentment in 2016, it is not within the bounds of this research to conclude if Trump’s rhetoric made people more resentful toward immigrants, or if the voters already had these beliefs. Nevertheless, it will be worth attempting to understand this phenomenon as we will see a change over time.

Alignment & Backlash

In this section, I will develop my theoretical framework using various theories to understand what allowed for the rise of populism, authoritarianism, and, therefore, immigrant resentment.

Before I explain my theoretical framework, a corollary is necessary: authoritarianism and immigrant resentment have been studied separately in past research. By separately, I mean two things. One, literature focuses on either authoritarianism or immigrant resentment. Second, research may use both authoritarianism and immigrant resentment as independent variables, but they are separate variables in the models. The purpose of this paper is not to delve with the disagreement of whether authoritarianism is the main ideology that includes immigrant resentment, or if they are indeed separate. However, whether the former or the latter is true, my future arguments will hold because my examination of immigrant resentment can be included in both outcomes which should be understood by the end of my theoretical discussion.

My theoretical framework³, illustrated in Figure 1, is based on Norris and Inglehart’s *Cultural Backlash* (2019) which I expand upon using Abrajano and Hajnal’s *White Backlash* (2015) and Abramowitz’s *The Great Alignment* (2018). First, there is what Inglehart (1977) calls the “Silent Revolution”. In the post-WWII period, Western countries began to pursue

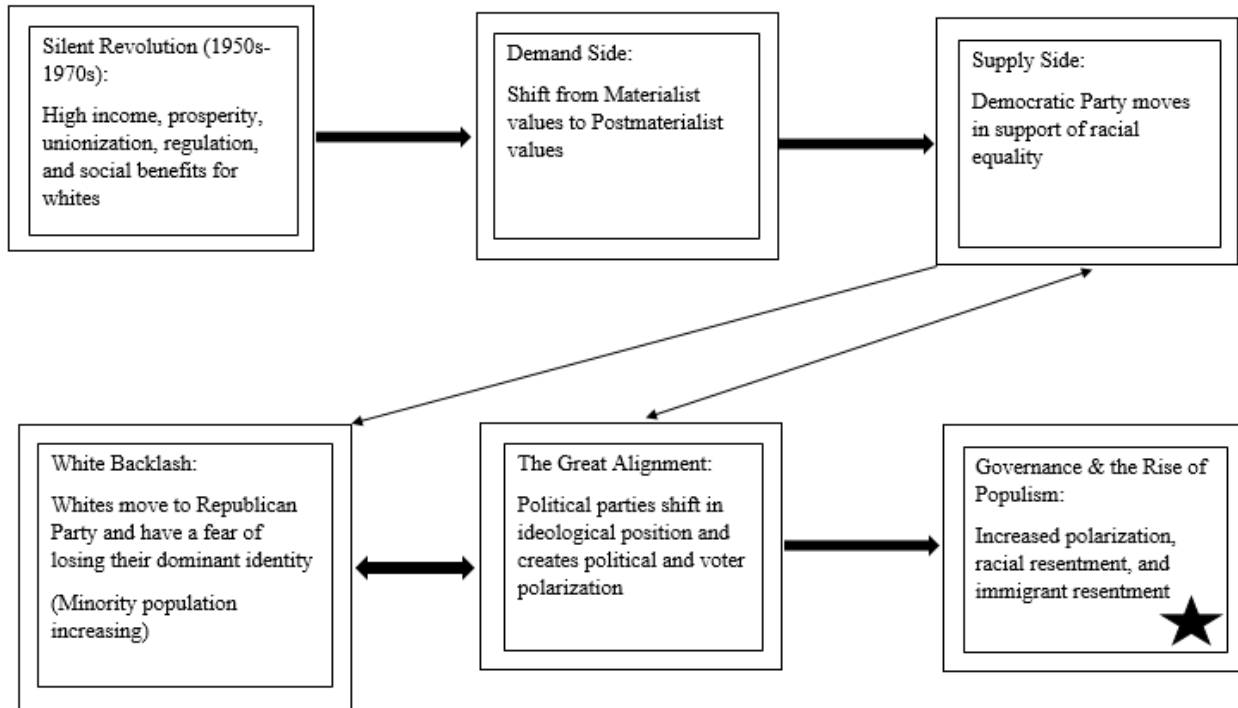
³ Keep in mind that this theoretical framework specifically examines the United States.

postmaterialist values more so than materialist values. Because these countries, and, specifically, the United States, had high incomes, prosperity, unionization, economic regulation, and social benefits for the dominant group⁴, there was no longer much emphasis and stress toward materialist values. In other words, Americans became less focused on what is necessary to survive like food, water, shelter, and other “values that emphasiz[e] economic and physical security” (Norris & Inglehart 2019, p. 32). Rather, Americans put more focus on postmaterialist values “prioritizing individual free choice and self-expression” (p. 32). Postmaterialist values include things like Civil Rights, gender equality, freedom of sexual expression, and environmental protection. This shift from materialist to postmaterialist values is considered to be the “demand-side” of ideologies and values as it is the people, the electorate, that gain these values.

The “supply-side” of ideologies and values occur next in the process. The supply-side is represented by political parties and leaders that adhere to public opinion and try to gain votes. In terms of my framework, we should specifically pay attention to the shift by the Democratic Party. From the 1970s to late 80s, the Democrats lost many white votes, especially from the South and conservatives, because the party became pro-Civil Rights and therefore in support of racial equality, a postmaterialist value (Abramowitz 2018).

⁴ Mainly white men.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Note: This theoretical framework expands on the cultural backlash theory (Norris & Inglehart 2019) using theories of white backlash (Abrajano & Hajnal 2015) and great alignment (Abramowitz 2018).

This shift in the supply-side constitutes Abramowitz’s alignment theory (2018). The Democratic Party moved further from the Republican Party through support for racial equality. Therefore, political polarization emerged. From this, voter polarization also occurred because some followed suit with the new postmaterialist value while others did not and left the Democrats for the Republicans. Of course, this can be argued for in terms of gender equality and freedom of sexuality, but this framework will be used to understand racial and immigrant resentment⁵.

At the same time as the great alignment, the population of minority groups were vastly increasing and were even expected to surpass the population of the ethnic majority: whites

⁵ Researchers could use this exact framework for a connection of other postmaterialist values to political and voter polarization thus affecting voting behavior and the rise of populism.

(Abrajano & Hajnal 2015). It was also true that most of the minority population voted Democrat. With these two facts in mind, whites began to leave the Democrats to the Republicans in fear that they would lose their dominant positions, identities, and way of life. From this, an increase in immigrant and racial resentment occurs (Abrajano & Hajnal 2015; Abramowitz 2018; Norris & Inglehart 2019). The processes of white flight and “white backlash”, like the great alignment, added to the demand- and supply-side as mentioned above.

All the processes mentioned above finally contribute to governance and the rise of populism. The populist parties or leaders can gain seats and presidential power from the backlash that whites have toward the “others”, or immigrants, blacks, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. Thus, we see the rise of populism in the United States. The postmaterialist values emerged because the country was well-off, and the citizens no longer needed to stress as much about materialist values. But, a few recessions occurred as the United States began deregulating capitalism in the name of neoliberalism which emphasized class struggle. Whites then connected the very disconnected dots: before freedoms and equality were given to the “others”, or minorities, the economy was good. After postmaterialist values were pursued, the economy worsened. Therefore, authoritarian populists were able to gain power by preaching about the “better time”. The most notable preach is Trump’s “Make America Great Again” slogan. Go back to a time where whites were successful, and we didn’t mainly focus on postmaterialist values. What is the outcome? An increase in racial and immigrant resentment, sexism, and homophobia resulting in greater political and voter polarization. My research focuses on immigrant resentment and polarization while controlling for racial resentment and sexism, hence the star in Figure 1.

The Trump Voter

In order to apply this theoretical framework to my results, I must first describe past empirical research. Past literature focused on authoritarianism, class and education, racial resentment, Muslim resentment, and immigrant resentment as causes of white votes for Trump. I will discuss these findings in their respected order.

The concept of authoritarianism includes the compulsion to support authority and direct aggression toward outgroups, such as immigrants in the case of the United States, through anger or fear (Altamura 2018). Trump reflects a so-called authoritarian president and voters with authoritarian values moved in his direction. Because of a backlash against the cultural changes happening in the U.S., many white voters began supporting Trump and his populist, authoritarian rhetoric (Inglehart & Norris 2017). Other research shows that Trump's base shares his authoritarian prejudice toward immigrants and women, and, along with group-based dominance, has illuminated Trump's support (Smith & Hanley 2018; Womick et al. 2018). Class and education were used as popular depictions of Trump voters throughout the media which, for the most part, avoided conversations on authoritarianism, racial resentment, immigrant resentment, and Muslim resentment. For example, see Alberta's (2016) article in the National Review.

Class and education have been argued as possible causes of a Trump vote in 2016 (Alberta 2016), but others argue that class and education distinguish voters on racial and immigrant resentment which causes a Trump vote (Morgan & Lee 2017; Schaffner et al. 2018; Sides et al. 2017; Tesler 2016). The media has stirred debate regarding this argument. For example, Whit Ayres at US News believed Trump gained support from the white working class and people who disliked Hillary Clinton. Though Trump lost the popular vote, his anti-

immigrant rhetoric showed success (November 28, 2016). On the same hand, Thomas B. Edsall writing for the New York Times argued that in areas with a high concentration of whites, obviously meaning less diversity, the likelihood of a Trump vote increased, especially if the area had lower educated working-class whites (November 16, 2017). On the other hand, Ted Mellnik, John Muyskens, Kim Soffen and Scott Clement from the Washington Post argue that there was not an increase in the proportion of white voters, especially less-educated whites as shown in data from the US Census and PEW research (May 10, 2017). Jens Manuel Krogstad and Mark Hugo Lopez for the PEW research center find that black voter turnout substantially decreased in 2016 and that the white vote remained relatively the same (May 12, 2017). This finding corresponds with that of the US Census Bureau (see Thom File, September 2018). There has not been clear agreement among the different media outlets on Trump's success, which is expected, but this is also true among scholars.

The 2016 presidential election portrayed the biggest divide in education between Republicans and Democrats compared to past elections (Alberta 2016). Alberta (2016) argues that "educational attainment is the single factor that increasingly predicts partisan preference", but others show the contrary (see: Morgan & Lee 2017; Schaffner et al. 2018; Sides et al. 2017; Sides et al. 2018; Smith & Hanley 2018; Tesler 2016). Education is an important variable behind voter choice, but once you control for other variables such as authoritarianism (Smith & Hanley 2018), racial resentment (Abramowitz 2018), and immigrant resentment (Sides et al. 2018; Tesler 2016), education's effect becomes nonexistent.

According to Morgan and Lee (2017), the so-called white working class increased in voter turnout while the non-white working class decreased. Since minority groups are more likely than whites to vote Democrat, Trump was able to gain more votes from whites and Clinton

lost votes from other races. A major problem found in works like Morgan and Lee (2017) is that “working class” is not necessarily defined in a conventional manner. Nevertheless, this increase in white voters and decrease of other races has an important effect on presidential elections which lessen the explanatory power of education on voting behavior. A major factor that reduces the effect of education is racial resentment.

Party politics realigned when the Democrats progressed to support the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s because once they did this, they lost much of the South to the Republican Party (Abramowitz 2018; Abramowitz & McCoy 2019). This historical shift has slowly polarized the parties especially in terms of racial resentment. Abramowitz (2018) and Sides et al. (2018) demonstrate that racial resentment became stronger in 2008 compared to other years, and this resentment increased in explanatory power for a Republican vote up to the 2016 presidential election. Racial resentment clearly distinguishes Republican and Democratic voters. Another important aspect of voting behavior can be tracked to resentment toward Muslims.

Trump voters are found to be anti-Muslim or Islamophobic (Ekins 2017; Blair 2016). Ekins (2017) identifies five types of Trump voters: Staunch Conservatives, Free Marketeers, American Preservationists, Anti-Elites, and The Disengaged. All five types of Trump voters have some level of disapproval toward Muslims. The group of Trump voters that has the least amount of disapproval toward Muslims are the Free Marketeers who “only tepidly support a temporary Muslim travel ban” (Ekins 2017, p. 6). Blair (2016) argues in her blog post that Trump supporters are more likely to be Islamophobic. A major limitation is that Blair (2016) uses a small, nonrepresentative sample taken from Utah that is mostly men. It is near impossible to make inferences to the voting, or Trump voter, population with this data. Even though there are

major limitations, Blair (2016) corresponds, more or less, with Ekins (2017) on issues of attitudes toward Muslims.

Past research has delved into possible changes in attitudes toward Muslims (Kalkan et al. 2009; Panagopoulos 2006) and Muslim voting behavior (Ayers 2007; Ayers & Hofstetter 2008) after the occurrence of 9/11. It is found that attitudes toward Muslims did not necessarily change after 9/11 among the American people (Kalkan et al. 2009; Panagopoulos 2006), but right after 9/11 there was an anomaly where more negative attitudes toward Muslims were recorded, yet these attitudes later stabilized (Panagopoulos 2006). Post-9/11, Muslim political participation substantially increased (Ayers 2007; Ayers & Hofstetter 2008), but, more importantly, Muslim voters overwhelmingly shifted to the left toward John Kerry over George W. Bush (Ayers 2007). This shift to the left matches the theory proposed by both Sides et al. (2018) and Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) suggesting that minority groups are increasing the Democratic voter base. Therefore, white Americans may have backlash toward Muslims because of the fear of losing their white identity (Abrajano & Hajnal 2015; Sides et al. 2018).

Research on attitudes toward Muslims continued after comparisons of pre- and post-9/11 (Collingwood et al. 2017; Khan & Ecklund 2012; Lajevardi & Abrajano 2018; Nagel 2016; Penning 2009; Sides & Gross 2013; Whitehead et al. 2018). Some find that Americans are getting more polarized on attitudes toward Muslims, even when using a nationally representative sample, but those that have positive views of Muslims remain relatively high (Penning 2009). A psychological experiment agrees with Penning (2009) because it was found that negative attitudes toward Muslims were not high on global issues, and there were only a few specific instances where Muslims were seen negatively relative to unidentified individuals (Khan & Ecklund 2012).

Using varying measures of attitudes toward Muslims, research has attempted to find causal inferences of attitudes on voting behavior (Collingwood et al. 2017; Lajevardi & Abrajano 2018; Sides & Gross 2013; Whitehead et al. 2018). First, attitudes toward Muslims influenced support for policies and executive action (Collingwood et al. 2017; Sides & Gross 2013). From 2004 to 2007, negative stereotypes of Muslims, mainly the idea that Muslims are violent, gave more probability of support for the War on Terror (Sides & Gross 2013). Also, people with “high American identifiers” shifted against Trump’s travel ban on Muslims (Collingwood et al. 2017). This may have occurred because the ban was seen as un-American. In the first case, people who saw Muslims as violent were more likely to support the War on Terror. One major limitation with this conclusion is that an attitude is tested on another attitude. In the second case, we have the same limitation with so-called high American identifiers shifting on their beliefs of the travel ban on Muslims. Nevertheless, there are important ideas to take away from this past research.

Finally, literature has endeavored on possible causes of attitudes toward Muslims and voting for Trump (Lajevardi & Abrajano 2018; Whitehead et al. 2018). Whitehead et al. (2018) indirectly found causal power of Islamophobia and voting for Trump when controlling for other factors (See Table 2, p. 160). The main finding, however, is that Christian nationalist ideology was a predictor of voting for Trump. Backing the causal power of Islamophobia found by Whitehead et al. (2018), Lajevardi and Abrajano (2018) find compelling evidence that negative sentiments toward Muslim Americans increase the probability of voting for Trump rather than Clinton by using convenience and nationally representative samples. Arguably one of the best variables to study Muslim resentment called the Muslim American Resentment scale (MAR) is used finding clear predictability of a Trump vote (Lajevardi & Abrajano 2018).

As political studies on immigrant resentment have become popular from Trump's rhetoric, researchers have tried to explore the possible causes of immigrant resentment. Ethnocultural identity affects neutral and negative attitudes toward immigration and, even when this identity is weak, affinity for civic-political dimensions increases immigrant resentment (Byrne & Dixon 2013). Sociotropic concerns about the possible cultural effects of immigration seem to play a role in immigrant resentment whether it is economic, national identity, or national culture concerns (Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014). Brader et al. (2008) contends that anxiety triggers emotional opposition to immigrants, but others argue the cause of opposition toward immigrants comes simply from bitterness in life (Poutvaara & Steinhardt 2018). It is challenging to find a single reasoning or cause of immigrant resentment because immigrant resentment is very complicated and changes over time. Does the polarization of political elites cause an increase in immigrant resentment, or does the electorate already have these ideologies? Whatever the cause may be, there is still good evidence of the effect that immigrant resentment has on voting behavior.

In terms of policy preference, Udani and Kimball (2017) find that in the years 2012 and 2014, people with more hostility and resentment toward immigrants were more likely to believe in an increase of voter fraud in the United States. Therefore, more hostility toward immigrants influences more support to voting restrictions within the United States. Some research makes slight mistakes in that they have attitudinal variables as their dependent and main independent variables. The logic is flawed because, for example, if you run a study that argues that political ideology affects your beliefs on immigrants (Brooks et al. 2016), it is hard to decipher the real causal direction. Did political ideology affect beliefs on immigrants, or vice versa? That is why it is important to have one of the variables be an actual action such as voting for Trump or Clinton.

Many have discussed the changing effect of immigrant resentment on voting behavior over time (Abrajano & Hajnal 2015; Abramowitz 2018; Sides et al. 2018), whether it is based on anxiety ultimately leading to backlash, the realignment of party lines and ideologies, or how Trump used the white identity to build his base.

Views toward undocumented immigrants correlated with party identification in 2008, but it was not very strong (Abrajano & Hajnal 2015). Negative attitudes toward undocumented immigrants correlated with being Republican controlling for demographics, but when racial resentment, political ideology, and issue positions were added, the coefficient of immigration dropped. Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) argued that immigrant resentment would be important even though it wasn't as powerful in the time of their research, and their argument was correct because Sides et al. (2018) and Abramowitz (2018) find compelling evidence that immigrant resentment increased substantially and increased the odds of voting for Trump over Clinton. The limitation of all these studies is the lack of investigating whether Trump actually gained probability of white votes relative to 2012. Sides et al. (2018) produce the predicted probabilities of voting Trump over Clinton compared to Romney over Obama, but they only focus on the high end of the figure that shows greater probability of voting for Trump among white voters who have high immigrant resentment. This is a strong finding, but it does not answer the question of immigrant resentment being one of the deciding factors of the election. The only paper that argues Trump may have lost white votes in 2016 based on immigrant resentment is the New York Times article by Lavine and Rahn (2018).

In their article, Lavine and Rahn (2018) argue against Sides et al. (2018) saying Trump may have actually lost white votes because of attitudes toward immigrants. Sides et al. (2018) argue that immigrant resentment is one of many major variables that gave Trump a victory.

Statistical analysis shows that white voters with high immigrant resentment are more likely to vote for Trump over Clinton, and this explanatory power is considerably greater in 2016 compared to 2012 (Sides et al. 2018). But, when factoring just for demographics, political ideology, and party identification, high immigrant resentment predicts a Republican vote over Democratic in 2016, which is greater than 2012, yet the better information may lay on the other side of immigrant resentment (Lavine & Rahn 2018), that is, among those that have less or lack immigrant resentment. Immigrant resentment, when controlling for simple variables, helps explain a loss in the predictability of a Trump vote in 2016 compared to a Republican vote in 2012. The coefficient of immigrant resentment on voting behavior may be higher in the 2016 presidential election relative to 2012 (Sides et al. 2018), yet the case may be that white voters have become less resentful toward immigrants over time which led to less probability of a Trump vote (Lavine & Rahn 2018). A major limitation is that Lavine and Rahn (2018) do not control for important factors such as racial resentment and sexism. My research delves into a solution to the disagreement between Sides et al. (2018) and Lavine and Rahn (2018).

Research Questions

How did immigrant resentment change voting behavior among whites from the 2012 to the 2016 presidential election? Did Donald Trump win because of higher levels of immigrant resentment, or did he lose white votes, proportionally, relative to 2012?

Methods

Data

I used data from the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES), which selected respondents using a multistage area-probability sampling with face-to-face interviews to obtain a representative sample of the American population. The study contains detailed, high-quality data not only on respondents' voting behavior but also their demographic, socioeconomic, and attitudinal profiles. Because my focus is on the voting behavior of white Americans, the analysis has been restricted to white respondents alone. Missing values on key demographic and attitudinal variables (gender, age, education, income, racial resentment, sexism, and immigrant resentment) were omitted from the analysis.

Variables

The dependent variable is dummy coded where voting for the Republican presidential candidate is referred to voting for the Democratic candidate. In 2012, the variable is coded 1 if the respondent voted Romney and 0 if the respondent voted Obama. Likewise, in 2016, the dependent variable is coded 1 for a Trump vote and 0 for a Clinton vote.

The main independent variable is immigrant resentment. I used responses to four questions on the 2012 and 2016 ANES to construct this scale: whether the number of immigrants permitted to come to the U.S. should be increased or decreased, whether unauthorized immigrants should be allowed to remain in the U.S. or sent home, whether the U.S. Constitution should be changed so that the children of unauthorized immigrants do not automatically get citizenship if they are born in the U.S., and whether recent immigration levels will take jobs

away from people already here. I therefore constructed the immigrant resentment scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=.74$) by reverse coding, standardizing, and averaging the four items in question. I then recoded the scale from 0 to 10 with high scores representing more resentment toward immigrants. Racial resentment, sexism, and fundamentalism are all reverse coded, if necessary, standardized, and averaged which are then recoded to scales ranging from 0 to 10 with high scores representing more racial resentment, sexism, and fundamentalist attitudes, respectively.

The control variables used throughout my tests are racial resentment, sexism, fundamentalism, party identification, political ideology, gender, age, education, and income. The racial resentment scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=.86$) is based on four 5-point Likert-scale items researchers developed which have appeared on ANES surveys across several election cycles (see Henry and Sears 2002). According to the developers of the scale, traditional forms of racism, which found expression in such notions as the inherent inferiority of African Americans and support for segregation, have been replaced by modern and more subtle forms of racism which avoid displays of overt prejudice. The scale has proven to be a consistently strong predictor of white opposition to racially targeted policies such as affirmative action (Hughes 1997), the preferential hiring of blacks (Rabinowitz et al. 2009), and federal assistance to blacks in general (Sears and Henry 2003). The items used to construct the scale read as follows: "Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up; Blacks should do the same without any special favors"; "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class"; "Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve"; and "It's really a matter of

some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.”

The sexism scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.77$) is an amalgamation of three items derived from Swim’s (Swim et al. 1995) modern sexism scale (“Should the news media pay more or less attention to discrimination against women”; “when women demand equality these days, how often are they actually seeking special favors”; and “when women complain about discrimination, how often do they cause more problems than they solve”), a feelings thermometer toward feminists (“How would you rate feminists on a scale from 0-100?”), and a discrimination variable (“How much discrimination is there in the United States today against women?”).

The fundamentalism scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.68$) includes responses to the extent to which respondents believe that the Bible is the Word of God, the extent to which respondents believe themselves to be “born again,” and where respondents place Christian fundamentalists on a 100-point feeling thermometer.

I also incorporated into the analysis measures of political ideology and party affiliation based on respondents’ self-identification on a 7-point liberal-conservative continuum and 7-point Democrat-Republican continuum. Both measures were recoded to range from 0 to 10 to permit comparison of parameter estimates.

Finally, four demographic characteristics were included in all of the analyses as controls: gender (a dummy variable coded 1 if respondents were male), age (in years), education (a dummy variable coded 1 if the highest educational level respondents achieved was some college or less), and income (on a 23-point scale converted into thousands of US dollars by using the

midpoints of each category). For means and standard deviations for all variables used in my study, the reader can consult Table A1 in the Appendix.

Analyses

The methods used to answer the research question include bivariate and multivariate analyses. First, I convert immigrant resentment and racial resentment into dummy variables and combine them where a value of 1 represents high scores (scores greater than and equal to 5) on both racial and immigrant resentment. This newly constructed variable allows a study of “high scorers”, or people with high immigrant and racial resentment, compared to those who relatively lack or have low immigrant or racial resentment⁶. From this, I analyze the differences over time of high immigrant and racial resentment among white respondents and white voters. Secondly, using a dummy coded variable of immigrant resentment where 1 represents a high score of 5 or greater, I investigate the differences in the percentage of white Republican and Democrat voters by year with high immigrant resentment. Thirdly, using the original, continuous immigrant resentment scale, I study the differences in the percentage of voting Republican at each quartile of immigrant resentment over time. Then, I conduct logistic regressions for both 2012 and 2016. I also include the differences in effects between 2012 and 2016 by interacting every independent variable and control with a dummy coded year variable where a value of 1 represents 2016. Finally, I produce the predicted probability, in a graph, of voting Republican over Democrat based on immigrant resentment. The points of reference for both 2012 and 2016 are immigrant resentment at the 10th and 90th percentile of each year.

⁶ A code of 0 represents those that score low on at least one of the two scales. Therefore, this includes people that may score high on immigrant resentment but not racial resentment, and vice versa.

Results

With Donald Trump's rhetoric and the fact that white voters have become polarized over time, I expect that immigrant resentment was more important in 2016 compared to 2012, and that white voters became more polarized in their attitudes toward immigrants over time. First, I examine the bivariate association of immigrant resentment on vote choice between 2012 and 2016. Second, I explore possible polarization among voters in terms of immigrant resentment. Finally, using multivariate analysis, I determine the effect of immigrant resentment on vote choice for both 2012 and 2016 and inspect possible differences while controlling for several other independent variables.

Bivariate Association

To understand the bivariate association between immigrant resentment and vote choice, I first begin by looking at racial and immigrant resentment among all white respondents and then all white voters⁷ (see Table 1). This table shows the percentage and changes of those that score high on both racial and immigrant resentment. Among all white respondents, the percentage of those that have both high racial and immigrant resentment dropped by 5.4 from 2012 to 2016. The percentage dropped among all white voters as well, this drop being by 4.5. This basic statistical analysis shows that, overall, whites became less resentful toward black Americans and immigrants. It is important to keep this in mind because, if immigrant resentment is statistically powerful in 2016, it is possible that Trump lost white votes, proportionally, compared to 2012 in terms of immigrant resentment.

⁷ This includes whites who voted for a candidate other than the Republican or Democrat candidate.

Table 1: Percentage of High Scorers on Both Racial and Immigrant Resentment among all White Respondents and White Voters

	2012	2016	Differences	N
White Respondents	44.0	38.6	5.4***	5,774
White Voters	42.9	38.4	4.5*	4,536

Note: High scorers by percentage. Analysis is weighted. 2012 & 2016 ANES. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Now that we have a basic realization of all white respondents and voters, we can move to a bivariate relationship between immigrant resentment and vote choice among whites. By and large, researchers have failed to examine closely the direct association between anti-immigrant attitudes and vote choice which has severely rendered their conclusions incomplete as demonstrated below. Table 2 shows the change of immigrant resentment over time within and between white voters of the Republican and Democrat presidential candidate. The results presented here show that the association between immigrant resentment and voting behavior is much stronger in 2016 than 2012. In 2012, 65.3% of Romney voters scored high on immigrant resentment. This significantly increased by 6.6% for Trump voters in 2016. White Democrat voters have an even bigger shift, but this shift is toward the progressive end of immigrant resentment, that is, less or lack of immigrant resentment. Among white Obama voters in 2012, 30.1% had high immigrant resentment which significantly decreased by 13.1% for white Clinton voters. In summary, white Republican voters shifted to the right on their views of immigrants while white Democrat voters shifted to the left. The key takeaway is that Democrat voters shifted further to the left than Republicans to the right. Since the difference between Republican and Democrat voters increased by 19.8% from 2012 to 2016, the association of immigrant resentment and vote choice became stronger in 2016. However, this association shows that Trump may have lost white votes, proportionally, since, relative to Republican voters, Democrat voters shifted more dramatically away from high immigrant resentment.

Table 2: Percentage of Whites Scoring High on Anti-Immigrant Scale by Presidential Vote Choice and Year

	2012	2016	Difference	N
Republican	65.3	71.9	6.6**	2,119
Democrat	30.1	17.0	-13.1***	1,654
Difference	35.7***	55.6***	19.8***	3,773

Note: High scorers by percentage. The difference of difference cell shows the row difference. Analysis is weighted. 2012 & 2016 ANES. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Polarization

The bivariate association in Table 2 gives hints of voter polarization. Between white Republican voters in 2012 and 2016, the percentage of those with high immigrant resentment increased by almost 7%. This basic finding adds to Abramowitz’s (2018) argument that polarization within the Republican party exists. In 2016, Republican voters did not diverge that much relative to Democrat voters, “[but] on one issue, Trump supporters were substantially more conservative than supporters of other GOP candidates: immigration” (Abramowitz 2018, p. 162). This argument is expanded from my finding by election year because not only are Republican voters polarized in the 2016 primary on immigration, but they became more conservative on immigration in 2016 compared to 2012.

For white Democratic voters, the percentage of people with high immigrant resentment sharply declined in 2016 by 13% compared to 2012. More so than 2016 Republican primary voters, Democrat voters in the primary diverged in terms of certain policies and political ideology⁸ (Abramowitz 2018, p. 163). Comparatively over time, Democrat voters moved further to the left on attitudes toward immigrants. Within party differences over time are clear, but between party differences tell an even more significant story.

⁸ Bernie Sanders voters were more liberal than Clinton supporters.

In 2012, the difference in the percentage of people with high immigrant resentment by party was almost 36%. That is, Republican voters included a lot more people with high immigrant resentment compared to Democrat voters. This difference, however, increased by 19.8% in 2016 because the percentage of Republican voters with high immigrant resentment increased while the proportion of voters with high immigrant resentment decreased among Democrat voters. White voters diverged even more from each other in terms of immigrant resentment in 2016 relative to 2012. It is obvious that Trump's campaign emphasized ideologies toward immigrants, and this was portrayed in the 2016 election from white voters.

The above descriptions of polarization elude to what Abramowitz (2018) calls "asymmetrical polarization" which means that white Republican and Democrat voters both moved further from the center, but that one of these groups moved further away (p. 106-7). Based on immigrant resentment, both voter groups moved away from the center, Republicans moved to the right and Democrats to the left, but the Democrats significantly moved further to the left than Republicans to the right. Therefore, based on the bivariate analysis alone, there is asymmetrical voter polarization in terms of immigrant resentment among white voters.

To further understand the basic story of immigrant resentment's effect on voting behavior, it is of utmost importance to see the changes in the Republican vote by quartiles of immigrant resentment (See Table 3 and Figure 2). To do this, I go back to the original immigrant resentment scale and split it into quartiles. Then, I develop the percentage of white voters voting Republican within each quartile and election year.

In both 2012 and 2016, at the third and fourth quartile of immigrant resentment, the percentage of whites voting Republican was greater than the percentage of voting Democrat. At

the fourth quartile, the percentage of whites voting Republican increased significantly in 2016 from 2012. Also worth noting is the fact that people in the first and second quartile of immigrant resentment significantly moved toward Clinton and away from the Republican party. A major takeaway is that on the far ends of immigrant resentment, those scoring high or low, white voters significantly moved toward Trump and Clinton, respectively, compared to the 2012 election. However, when we compare quartiles two and three, asymmetrical polarization becomes more evident. White voters in the second quartile of immigrant resentment significantly decreased in probability of voting for the Republican candidate while those in the third quartile did not significantly change in voting behavior. Therefore, because both quartiles one and two significantly moved in favor of Clinton and only quartile four moved in favor of Trump, there is asymmetrical polarization that gives evidence that Trump may have lost more votes than gained, proportionally, through his anti-immigrant rhetoric. That is, Trump may have lost more votes from the left than gained from the right.

Table 3 and Figure 2 show voter polarization. First, the majority of people that have high immigrant resentment vote Republican and this has significantly increased since 2012. Therefore, Sides et al. (2018) are legitimated. Secondly, in accordance with Abramowitz (2018), voter polarization has increased which is very noticeable among those that lack or have low immigrant resentment. Abramowitz (2018) showed that white voters became increasingly polarized on racial issues and attitudes. My findings contribute to Abramowitz (2018) by expanding this social phenomenon to immigrant resentment. Voters are becoming either more progressive or more conservative toward immigrants, hence the divergence in ideology and voting behavior. Finally, Lavine and Rahn (2018) may be correct that Trump lost white voters because of the increase in progressive ideology toward immigrants, but it is still unclear from

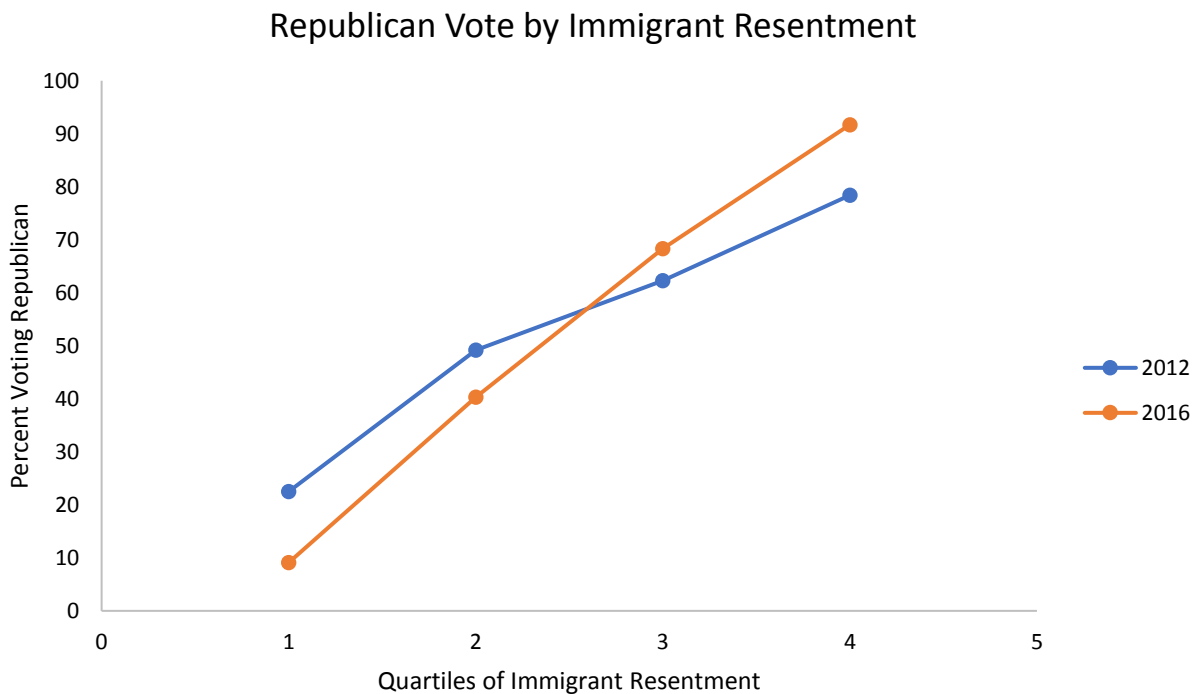
these basic results. White voters have become increasingly polarized on attitudes toward immigrants, like racial attitudes, but the main question remains: Controlled for other factors, did Trump lose more votes, proportionally, than gained from immigrant resentment?

Table 3: Percentage of Whites Voting for the Republican Presidential Candidate by Quartile on Immigrant Resentment Scale and Year, Voters Voting for Democratic and Republican Candidates Only.

Immigrant Resentment	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	N
2012	22.5	49.2	62.3	78.4	2,208
2016	9.1	40.3	68.3	91.7	1,565
Difference	-13.3***	-8.9*	6.0	13.3***	3,773

Note: Percentage voting Republican are reported. Analysis is weighted. 2012 & 2016 ANES. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Figure 2: Percent of Whites Voting Republican by Quartiles of Immigrant Resentment



Note: Analysis is weighted. 2012 & 2016 ANES. White voters only.

Based on bivariate analyses, immigrant resentment became more important in the 2016 presidential election compared to 2012 as polarization between and within political parties

increased over time. Also, the previous analyses show that the high and low ends of immigrant resentment are important, therefore they will be key when comprehending the multivariate analyses discussed below which will give way to answer the question stated above. The above results only show bivariate associations when in fact many ideologies and demographics could covary with immigrant resentment and voting behavior. Therefore, I turn next to a multivariate analysis in an effort to determine the unique effect of anti-immigrant sentiments on vote choice.

Multivariate Analysis

Table 4 depicts the logistic regression coefficients of demographics, racial resentment, sexism, and, most important for this research, immigrant resentment which are compared by the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections. Education, income, age, and gender have no effect on voting behavior both in 2012 and 2016 when controlling for sexism, racial resentment, and immigrant resentment. Religion, specifically fundamentalism, is the only demographic that has an effect which only occurs in 2012. The more fundamental a person is with religion, the more likely they were to vote Romney over Obama. Party identification and political ideology had strong effects in both 2012 and 2016, but they both significantly decreased in 2016 compared to 2012. This decrease in effect, and the lack of effect from fundamentalism, in 2016 means that something else became more important in predicting voting behavior. The effects of the mentioned demographics are consistent with Sides et al. (2018).

Racial resentment and sexism were both powerful factors on voting behavior in 2012 and 2016. There is not a significant difference in their effects over time, so they were consistent in 2016 compared to 2012. Interestingly enough, Trump's rhetoric was pro-domestic blacks and clearly anti-immigrant toward Latinx people and Muslims, but Trump successfully maintained

whites who have high racial resentment toward blacks. Immigrant resentment, however, tells a different story.

Controlling for everything, immigrant resentment had no effect on voting behavior in 2012, but this significantly changed in the 2016 election. Immigrant resentment is a huge deciding factor for voting Trump compared to Clinton because as white voters score higher on immigrant resentment, they are more likely to vote for Trump rather than Clinton, *ceteris paribus*. This change from no effect to strong effect is statistically significant, thus my argument that polarization based on immigrant resentment has occurred is further upheld and is consistent with Sides et al. (2018), even when controlling for more variables.

These findings are consistent with Sides et al. (2018), but it is imperative to further dissect the regression output which was not completed by them. So, like Sides et al. (2018), I plot the predicted probabilities of voting Republican over Democrat by immigrant resentment in Figure 3 which is almost identical to the authors' plot (Figure 8.6, p. 171). Sides et al. (2018) only discuss the high end of immigrant resentment, which is important, but lack a discussion of the low end which I now argue is more important due to asymmetrical polarization.

As one would expect, a white voter with high immigrant resentment is more likely to vote for the candidate who is adamant on anti-immigrant ideology. This voting behavior is portrayed in Table 4 and at the high end of immigrant resentment in Figure 3. But, what about the low end of immigrant resentment? Since people that have high immigrant resentment are more likely to vote Trump, does it follow that people with low immigrant resentment are more likely to vote Clinton? The data shows that this logic is sound, but with even more nuance than expected because past literature has avoided the coming argument.

I argue that even though there has been an increase in polarization from immigrant resentment, the pull has come more so from white Democrat voters at the low end of immigrant resentment rather than Republican voters at the high end, i.e. asymmetrical polarization. That is, the reason that immigrant resentment is statistically significant in 2016 and significantly different than 2012 is because white voters have become progressive toward immigrants more so than conservative. Let's go back to Figure 3 to understand this argument. I have plotted the predicted probability of voting Republican over Democrat in 2012 and 2016 by immigrant resentment displayed at the 10th and 90th percentile of immigrant resentment⁹. I omit percentiles of 0 and 100 in the graph so that to have a more conservative presentation as it is very rare for white voters to have a score of 0 (percentile 0) or 10 (percentile 100) on the immigrant resentment scale. Differing from Sides et al. (2018), I include confidence intervals for both percentiles in each year to examine statistical differences between 2012 and 2016 voters.

For those that have high immigrant resentment, white voters in the 90th percentile, have not significantly differed in the predicted probability of voting Republican over Democrat between 2012 and 2016. Though the discrete value has increased, the confidence intervals of both years overlap at the high end of immigrant resentment, so we cannot say there is a statistical difference. But, white voters that have low immigrant resentment, white voters in the 10th percentile, significantly differ in the predicted probability of voting Republican over Democrat in 2016 compared to 2012. In other words, those who are not resentful toward immigrants are much more likely to vote Clinton over Trump than they were to vote Obama over Romney. In contrast to past literature, the difference in voting behavior in 2016 compared to 2012 from immigrant

⁹ I have plotted the same the graph including percentiles 10, 25, 50, 75, and 90 which reveals the same results. Therefore, I produce the simpler Figure with percentiles 10 and 90 rather than displaying the more complex graph.

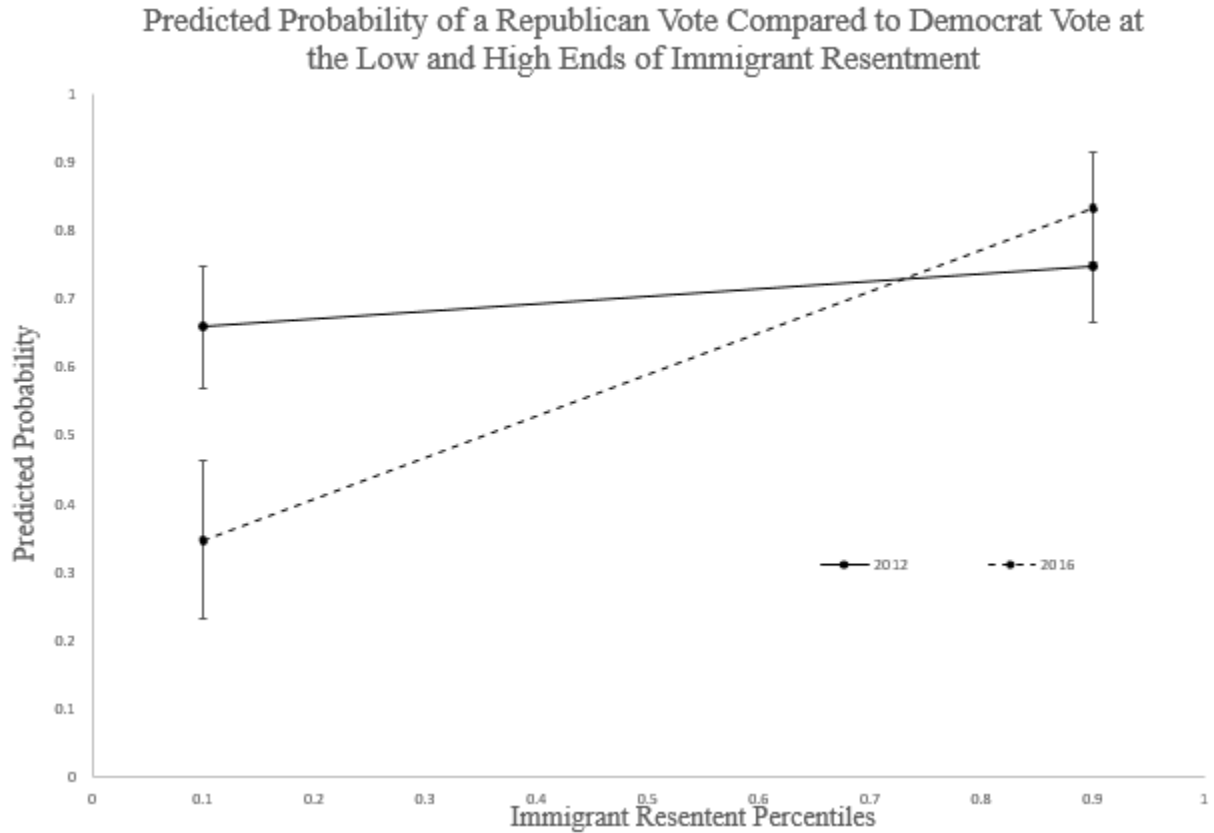
resentment is not that white voters have gained higher resentment toward immigrants and became more likely to vote Republican, but rather that white voters have become more progressive at the low ends of immigrant resentment and increased their likelihood of voting Democrat. Those with high immigrant resentment have not differed in voting behavior, while those with low or lack of immigrant resentment have significantly become more progressive and likely to vote Democrat.

Table 4: Immigrant Resentment and Support for Republicans

	2012	2016	Difference
High Ed	0.004 (0.253)	0.050 (0.300)	0.046 (0.392)
Income	0.028 (0.022)	-0.023 (0.020)	-0.051 (0.030)
Age	0.010 (0.007)	0.001 (0.008)	-0.009 (0.011)
Male	0.040 (0.207)	-0.360 (0.238)	-0.400 (0.315)
Fundamentalism	0.192*** (0.049)	0.114 (0.062)	-0.078 (0.079)
Party	0.587*** (0.046)	0.468*** (0.053)	-0.119*** (0.070)
Ideology	0.338*** (0.061)	0.225* (0.093)	-0.113*** (0.061)
Racial Resentment	0.239*** (0.056)	0.296*** (0.066)	0.057 (0.086)
Sexism	0.298** (0.095)	0.551*** (0.097)	0.253 (0.136)
Immigrant Resentment	0.104 (0.057)	0.402*** (0.078)	0.297** (0.097)
Constant	-9.373*** (0.757)	-9.232*** (0.744)	-9.373*** (0.757)
Pseudo R ²	0.661	0.703	0.677
N	2208	1565	3,773

Note: Logistic Regression. Standard errors in parentheses. Analysis is weighted. Dependent variable is dummy coded where a value of 1 represents voting for the Republican presidential candidate and 0 represents a vote for the Democrat presidential candidate. 2012 & 2016 ANES. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Figure 3: Predicted Probability of Voting Republican Compared to Democrat from Immigrant Resentment in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Elections



Note: Analysis is weighted and controls for all independent variables. Dependent variable is dummy coded where a value of 1 represents voting for the Republican presidential candidate and 0 represents a vote for the Democrat presidential candidate.

Discussion

Immigrant Resentment in 2016

In the election between Trump and Clinton, immigrant resentment had a much stronger association with vote choice compared to the election of Obama over Romney. Like past literature has found, white voters for Trump are likely to have high immigrant resentment which is consistent with Trump’s rhetoric against immigrants. Hate toward immigrants was, and still is, all over the media and represented by President Trump. Nevertheless, compared to 2012, immigrant resentment did not significantly increase at the high end. Therefore, I give some

evidence that white Trump voters already had high immigrant resentment before Trump ran for office rather than his campaign shaping their attitudes toward immigrants. Of course, qualitatively, negative actions against immigrants may have increased, but, quantitatively, attitudes have not differed, at least among whites with high immigrant resentment.

The importance of attitudes toward immigrants in 2016 represent the importance of post materialist values. However, the 2016 election seems more representative of a progressive “backlash” rather than a white, right-wing backlash. I suggest we further study attitudes, ideologies, and policy views over time to see if this statement holds true.

The Truth of Polarization

One of the purposes of this research was not to examine political polarization, but rather analyze voter polarization, of which is argued by Fiorina (2011) to be nonexistent. My results clearly point to polarization among the electorate within and between Democrat and Republican voters. From 2012 to 2016, the right became slightly more resentful toward immigrants while the left became significantly more progressive on attitudes toward immigrants. That is, Republican and Democrat voters moved further right and left, respectively, in attitudes toward immigrants thus providing evidence of polarization within and between the voters of both parties.

Immigrant resentment is a case of polarization from 2012 to 2016 which is consistent with Sides et al. (2018) and adds to Abramowitz’s (2018) argument. But, it is difficult to decipher whether the electorate is polarized causing political elites to diverge, or vice versa. The endogeneity found in political behavior and attitudes among the electorate and political elites make it problematic to draw a causation arrow. So, Fiorina (2011) is not exactly proven wrong.

Nevertheless, I demonstrate compelling evidence that polarization among the electorate is very real and may be underestimated by Fiorina (2011).

Consistent with Abramowitz's (2018) theory of the historical alignment of political parties, polarization based on race has occurred. Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric was clearly targeted toward nonwhites, specifically latinx and Muslim groups. Therefore, this paper strengthens Abramowitz's historical analysis because the electorate has continually diverged on attitudes toward immigrants.

The basic findings in this project are steady with Abrajano and Hajnal's (2015) theory of the white backlash. Over time, the population of nonwhite groups have proportionally increased in the United States which may contribute to the reason that the right gained a little more resentment toward immigrants in 2016. In fact, Donald Trump's popularity may just be a defining factor of white backlash. However, Abrajano and Hajnal's (2015) theory is limited because it is not consistent with my finding that, among white voters, they have proportionally become more accepting of immigrants relative to people becoming more resentful. So, there exists a sort of white backlash, but, as of now, it is minimal relative to the increased acceptance of immigrants.

Did Trump's Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Help Him?

My findings suggest that Trump lost more votes than gained, proportionally, compared to the 2012 presidential election. So, based on immigrant resentment, Trump actually lost to Clinton. Of course, this is consistent with the results of the election because Trump significantly lost the popular vote, but he was successful due to the Electoral College. Past research has failed to demonstrate the losses Trump accrued. Rather than fixating on regression coefficients and the

high end of predicted probability plots, I show that more interest should be directed to the low end of important independent variables. There may be some nuances that are overseen which explain crucial phenomena.

Future Research

Further research is necessary so that we can better understand voting behavior, Trumpism, and immigrant resentment. Though there is insight in the theories mentioned in this research, they lack arguments about social structure¹⁰. To argue that white people have immigrant resentment because they fear they are becoming a minority group and are losing power is interesting, but *where* does this fear come from and *why* does it exist? What is the relationship between political actors and political ideologies among the electorate? If people originally had these attitudes, where did these attitudes come from? If political elites originally had these ideologies, whether they believe them or not, where did the ideologies come from?

Trump lost the popular vote, and, based on my findings, he proportionally lost more votes compared to Romney from attitudes toward immigrants. So, the question remains: How did Trump beat Clinton? Of course, Trump won the Electoral College, but it is necessary for future research to dig deeper and study voters, and nonvoters for that matter, in swing states. The ANES is somewhat bittersweet because it contains crucial survey questions, but it lacks a sufficient sample size for states. If we could merge these crucial questions into surveys that have good data on voters by state, much could be learned about Trumpism.

¹⁰ This is probably the case because sociological literature is lacking in studying voting behavior. Most of the research comes from political science.

Also, more detailed questions regarding feelings toward Muslims need to be developed. Unfortunately, the ANES only has a couple feelings thermometers rather than detailed questions as found in Lajevardi and Abrajano (2018). With better variables on attitudes toward Muslims, we could compare the effects of racial, immigrant, and Muslim resentment on voting behavior. Could it be that these attitudes work together as just general racism? If we had more detailed questions on attitudes toward Muslims, we could attempt an answer to this question.

Finally, because white voters are more progressive toward immigrants in 2016 compared to 2012 and asymmetrical polarization has occurred, it is of utmost importance for social scientists to study the rise of left-wing populism. Younger people are attaching to the rhetoric of Bernie Sanders which opens questions about what attitudes, ideologies, and policy views, along with demographics, effect voting for Sanders. Trumpism may just be an outlier, but will left-wing populism remain in the shadows, or will it become more popular?

Conclusion

Researchers have avoided closely studying the bivariate association of immigrant resentment on vote choice which has rendered their conclusions incomplete. Examinations of immigrant resentment and voting behavior have been conducted with multivariate analysis alone which lack understandings of asymmetrical polarization. Past research has concluded that Trump was more successful among white voters with high immigrant resentment, which I show to be true, but they fail to find that, overall, whites have become more progressive toward immigrants and black Americans. From this, I found that whites who voted for Clinton were significantly more progressive on immigrant issues than Obama voters. Furthermore, even though Trump voters were more conservative toward immigrants than Romney voters, the shift to the left was far

greater than the shift to the right. Therefore, because of the integration of bivariate and multivariate analyses, this study uniquely finds that Trump actually lost predicted probability of votes through immigrant resentment compared to 2012.

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Appendix

Table A1: Mean Values of Variables Included in Analyses of Presidential Choice in 2012 and 2016.

	Voted in 2012		Voted in 2016	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Dependent Variable:				
Voted for Republican	0.57	0.50	0.55	0.50
Demographics:				
Gender (Male=1)	0.50	0.500	0.48	0.50
Age (years)	53.70	15.89	52.53	17.14
Income (tens of thousands USD)	8.20	6.78	9.30	7.41
Education (Some college or less)	0.58	0.49	0.51	0.50
Attitudinal Variables:				
Party identification scale	5.32	3.68	5.28	3.80
Liberal-conservative scale	5.61	2.55	5.31	2.70
Fundamentalism scale	4.05	3.00	3.72	2.73
Sexism scale	4.44	1.65	3.89	1.88
Racial resentment scale	6.52	2.45	5.60	2.99
Immigrant resentment scale	5.30	2.24	4.98	2.29
N		2,208		1,565

Note: 2012 & 2016 ANES.