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Madison Demaris

Chapman University, demaris@chapman.edu

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The emergence of Democrats voting Republican, fears about race, and a breaking point for the working class: A look at the 2016 Presidential election and Donald Trump's historic win.

Madison Demaris

Chapman University, Department of Political Science, Orange, CA

Abstract

The 2016 Presidential election shocked everyone, including the candidates, with the results directly refuting most of the widely accepted surveys and polls. What fears, demographics and ideas changed in the election to make it a historic defeat for the democratic party? Why exactly did Trump win and why was it such a surprise? I examine and compare the results from 2012 and 2016 of the American National Election Study and the Chapman Survey of American Fears to discuss what has changed in the minds of Americans. In the continually polarized media, I have seen theory after theory about what exactly happened. Some people theorize that it was Russia, white women, lack of democratic voter turnout, Trump actually listening to what Americans want, and so on. One of the most prominent theories we examine is that the working class finally hit a breaking point and wanted someone to listen to them, and this was Trump. Trump catered many of his political speeches to hit on the issues of working-class voters. There has also been an emergence of Democrats voting Republican in 2016 for a variety of reasons. Finally, we will discuss how race played a significant role in this election, unlike what we have seen before. Race has always been a critical contention for many Americans, but this election proved more critical than ever. In my findings, I examine how racial issues are more important than every single other issue for voters, including the fear of white people no longer being the majority in the US, which proved to be significant.

Hypotheses and Expectations

H1: That race topics have become the most significant issues for voters, thus giving Donald Trump a bigger platform for his contentions.

H2: That low-income voters supported Donald Trump more heavily than any other candidate and brought out more first-time voters.

H3: That there was a significant increase in the number of Democrats voting for the Republican nominee in the 2016 election in comparison to previous years.

Race issues have heated up all across the country from the Mexico border wall to the travel bans. These became cornerstone issues on the campaign trail for the 2016 presidential election. The US census has put out findings that show that Non-Hispanic white Americans will become a minority race by 2045. These findings have led to a more substantial fear growing among white Americans leading them to find homes in the more conservative ideologies that favor stricter immigration regulations amongst other ideologies. I believe that race issues will be more significant than any other issues. I believe that there will be a higher number of lower income first-time voters in this election. I also believe that we will see a surge of the lower income voter voting for Trump because of his economic promises about creating jobs and cutting taxes. I expect that there is a large number of Democrats that did not vote or voted Republican because of the candidate they were presented with. There was much pushback when Bernie Sanders did not win the Democratic nomination. Many sources in the media claim that Trump's win could be accounted to the lack of voter turnout on the part of the Democrats, but do the numbers reflect this, and why? There was a polarization like no other in the lead up to the election, and many voters were among the mindset that they had to "choose from a lesser of two evils."

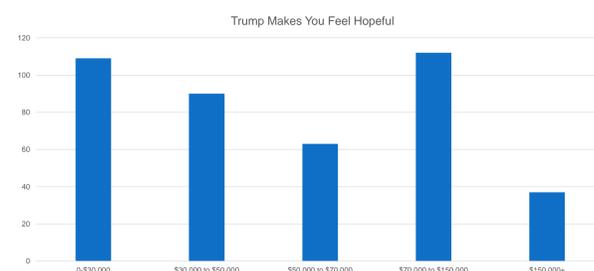
Results

Hypothesis 1



There is a significant increase in the number of people across the board that thing immigrants are problematic and that are fearful of whites no longer being the majority in the US. There is a significant group of Republicans that feel this way according to the survey, which lines up with the ideas and rhetoric used during the Trump campaign.

Hypothesis 2



Looking at the American National Election Survey, we see that the most prominent group that finds the Trump presidency hopeful is people earning \$20,000 or under a year. They are also the group that is the proudest of Trump. This shows me that it is true that they find Trump to be a possibility at a better life. This could have added to the additional votes he needed in the swing states to win the Presidency.

Hypothesis 3

I found that there is a large percentage of people that are unhappy with their political party on both sides. This leads me to question whether the Democrats broke finally and voted against their party or if there is consistently people upset with their party, but they do not break party alignment. At this time, my results are inconclusive.

Conclusions

Patterns and trends are what run the political system and our knowledge about it. The 2016 election results came as a surprise to many people, so the need to examine and research it is necessary. We need to understand if voter demographics have changed, if there is a shift in what voters care about, and what that means for our future. In this case, the media plays a large part in our political system therefore issues become densely covered and polarized. Does this represent what the United States voter think? In the research that I have conducted, it appears that there is a sizable population of people that have negative views about immigrant as well as white Americans no longer being the majority in the US. There are more significant numbers of low-income voters voting for the Republican party. Will these trends continue or will this be a one-off political season? The research started here lays the groundwork to further explore these pertinent questions about our political climate and social situations. From here it would be essential to observe the upcoming elections, media, and shifts in demographical data to determine what this means for our current climate.

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