

The Polarization of Nationalist Cleavages and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election*

Bart Bonikowski¹, Yuval Feinstein², and Sean Bock¹

¹Harvard University

²University of Haifa

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Abstract: Research in political science has acknowledged the importance of ethno-nationalism (or more commonly, nativism) as a constitutive element of radical-right politics, but it has typically reduced this phenomenon to its downstream correlates, like attitudes toward ethnic and religious minorities or immigration policy preferences. Sociologists, on the other hand, have extensively studied nationalism as a feature of political culture, but have rarely weighed in on debates about institutional politics, and the radical-right in particular. In this study, we bring these literatures together by considering how multiple conceptions of American nationhood shaped respondents' voting preferences in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and how the election outcome built on long-term changes in the distribution of nationalist beliefs in the U.S. population. The results suggest that competing definitions of nationhood constitute important cultural cleavages that were effectively mobilized by candidates from both parties. In particular, we show that exclusionary varieties of nationalism were strongly predictive of Trump support in the Republican primary and the general election, while disengagement from the nation was predictive of Sanders support in the Democratic primary. Furthermore, over the past twenty years, nationalism has become sorted by party: respondents identifying with the Republican Party have become predominantly ethno-nationalist, while those identifying with the Democratic Party have increasingly espoused creedal and disengaged conceptions of nationhood. The resulting mutual reinforcement of nationalist cleavages with other sources of cultural and demographic distinction represents a potential danger for the long-term stability of U.S. democracy. More broadly, this research demonstrates that to understand the 2016 presidential election—and contemporary American political culture—scholars should take nationalism seriously as a primary source of collective identification and political behavior.

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1 Introduction

There is an emerging consensus in the political science and sociology literature that contemporary radical-right politics—a category that subsumes most European right-wing parties, but also Donald Trump’s presidential victory and the Brexit referendum—consists of three constitutive elements: populism, exclusionary nationalism, and authoritarianism (Bonikowski 2017; Mudde 2007; Rooduijn 2014). While much recent research has explored the measurement and political consequences of populist attitudes (Akkerman et al. 2014; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Schulz et al. 2017; Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018), the careful theorization and operationalization of nationalist beliefs has received comparably less attention, as has the study of the relationship between nationalism and political preferences. Instead, political scientists have focused on down-stream attitudes that comprise what they call “cultural” factors explaining radical-right support. These include xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia, anti-cosmopolitan backlash, and related beliefs. In this paper, we address this gap in the literature by bringing insights from cultural and political sociology to the study of institutional politics. Specifically, we use original survey data to inductively identify multiple varieties of popular American nationalism and examine their relationship to respondents’ voting preferences in the 2016 election. We then rely on repeated cross-sectional surveys of nationalist attitudes administered in 1996, 2004, 2012, and 2016 to investigate whether long-term trends in the distribution of nationalist beliefs, both in the aggregate and across the two U.S. na-

tional parties, help explain Donald Trump’s rise to political prominence.

Our analyses reveal that the four types of American nationalism—creedal, restrictive, ardent, and disengaged—identified in previous research (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016) were central to the 2016 presidential election. Even after controlling for sociodemographic covariates and partisan identification, adherence to restrictive and ardent nationalism was significantly predictive of endorsing Trump over the moderate candidates in the Republican primary and of voting for Trump over Clinton in the general election. In contrast, a disengaged disposition toward the nation—which we interpret as the absence of strong nationalist beliefs—was predictive of support for Sanders over Clinton in the Democratic primary, but had no predictive power in the general election. These associations are placed into further relief by a striking finding from our longitudinal analysis: while exclusionary forms of nationalism have not been on the rise in the U.S. population (indeed, strong forms of nationalism in general have been giving way to disengagement from the nation), there is strong evidence of persistent partisan sorting of nationalist beliefs over the past two decades. Whereas the four varieties of nationalism had cut across partisan identification in 1996, by 2016, respondents identifying with the Republican Party had become predominantly ethno-nationalist, while a large majority of those identifying with the Democratic Party had come to see the nation in inclusive terms.

These results point to the central role played by nationalist beliefs in the 2016 election, and in contemporary U.S. politics more broadly. Differences in popu-

lar conceptions of nationhood appear to have transformed over time from latent cultural cleavages—correlated with political attitudes but not primarily driving political behavior—to active political cleavages that have been effectively mobilized by recent presidential campaigns, most successfully so by Donald Trump’s persistently ethnonationalist appeals. Moreover, while nationalist beliefs are not reducible to partisanship (as evidenced by the persistent marginal effects of nationalism in our statistical models), the increasing correlation between these two types of identities is likely to reinforce other sociodemographic and ideological cleavages, potentially leading to greater negative partisanship and lower probability of political compromise in the coming years (Manza and Brooks 1999; Rokkan and Lipset 1967).

2 “Cultural” Sources of Radical-Right Support

Political science explanations—as well as media accounts—of popular support for radical-right parties tend to fall into two categories: those stressing economic factors, such as exposure to financial crises, income inequality, deindustrialization-driven unemployment, trade shocks, or the redistributive consequences of capital mobility, and those emphasizing “cultural” factors, such as racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, or a backlash against cosmopolitanism (Golder 2016).¹ Economic explanations claim that

a range of structural shocks have generated a growing sense of precariousness in local communities, particularly among white working-class individuals residing outside of major urban centers, and that the resulting economic anxiety has led these voters to favor anti-establishment candidates on the radical right. Right-wing politicians have effectively mobilized economic discontent through their vocal opposition to economic globalization and their moral vilification of liberal elites, as well as immigrants and minorities. The latter in particular have been portrayed as recipients of unfair advantages in access to jobs, educational institutions, and welfare state programs.

In contrast, what political scientists refer to as “cultural” explanations focus on the primary role of out-group stigmatization in driving radical-right support. This perspective rests on the claim that economic anxiety is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause of voters’ favorability toward candidates who capitalize on out-group antipathies. Instead, it is voters’ deep-seated racism and xenophobia—or at the very least, a general distaste for multicultural and cosmopolitan cultural norms (Norris and Inglehart 2018)—that gives resonance to such campaign messages. In addition to furnishing correlations between the relevant attitudes and radical-right support, those favoring cultural explanations often point to the weaknesses of the economic framework: that radical-right supporters tend not to be the worst off in society, that they often oppose economic redistribution (especially if it involves benefits for the groups they dislike),

¹In addition to explaining the demand side of radical-right politics, political scientists stress the importance of institutional mechanisms, such as changes in candidate selection processes and the weakening of party organizations, as well as the impact on public opinion of the rise of social media and the growth of partisan cable news (Golder 2016). We bracket these factors, because our interest is primarily in individual-level correlates of political behavior.

and that racial segregation is a more typical characteristic of the areas in which these voters live than is having borne the brunt of economic decline.

Increasingly, the evidence, in both Europe and the United States, appears to favor cultural explanations of radical-right support (Mutz 2018b; Sides et al. 2018). Nonetheless, the economy-culture debate suffers from two fundamental problems. First, its central dichotomy is misplaced (Gidron and Hall 2017), because it ignores the fact that culture shapes economic perceptions (e.g., sociotropic economic concerns can be based not only on personal experience but also perceptions of how people in one’s reference group are faring compared to those in perceived out-groups [Citrin et al. 1997; Hochschild 2018:137–140]) and that economic anxieties are themselves mediated by cultural frames (e.g., it is only those economic shocks that are perceived as unfair that tend to activate radical-right support [Rodrik 2018]). Second, and more relevant for our purposes, the debate subsumes under “culture” a wide range of attitudes—including xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia, and anti-cosmopolitanism—without specifying the cultural mechanisms that connect them (but see Jardina 2019; Mason 2018). While these phenomena are easily operationalized, they are theoretically thin and analytically inadequate, not least because they are able to explain radical-right support only in some contexts but not others. For instance, Islamophobia is useful for understanding the successes of the Front National in France, but xenophobia against Polish immigrants is more relevant for making sense of the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom. In the U.S. case, the vilification of Mexican migrants was centrally

important to the Trump campaign while overt racial claims were largely absent from it (Lamont et al. 2017), and yet, both racism and anti-immigrant sentiments were highly predictive of a people’s decision to vote for Trump (Sides et al. 2018).

One way in which some scholars have sought to bridge these distinct phenomena is to subsume them under the category of nativism: the principle “that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007:19). This is a more promising analytical category than “culture” writ large, because it places emphasis on definitions of legitimate membership in the nation, which are core to people’s collective identities. Nativism, however, is less flexible than our preferred term, ethno-nationalism (Bonikowski 2017; Manza and Crowley 2018). The latter is one among multiple possible varieties of national self-understanding, which allows for meaningful comparisons across alternative belief systems, and it is less directly associated with anti-immigrant sentiments (cf. Higham 1955)—it subsumes them but is not limited to them. Finally, nationalism is rooted in a rich tradition of research on the rise of the modern-nation state and the ideologies that legitimize it as a primary object of popular identification and loyalty. These include criteria of legitimate membership in the nation, but also other relevant aspects of nationhood, such as domain-specific national pride and perceptions of national superiority. Together, these beliefs constitute people’s cultural schemas of the nation, which have important implications for their political preferences and are empir-

ically tractable using survey data. Bringing these phenomena to bear on Donald Trump’s election, an important case of contemporary radical-right politics, is the primary objective of this study.

3 Nationalist Cleavages in the United States

In his influential book *Civic Ideals*, Rogers Smith (1997) demonstrates that American national identity has never been characterized by singular adherence to the liberal values of the American Creed. Instead, it has vacillated between sharply distinct and competing belief systems (liberalism, but also republicanism and white supremacy), the residues of which Smith painstakingly traces across the patchwork of U.S. citizenship law. The notion that conceptions of nationhood are heterogeneous within countries has also motivated survey researchers, who have shown that similar distinctions to those observed in archival data are found in public opinion, and that these beliefs are strongly associated with key policy preferences (Citrin et al. 2001; Theiss-Morse 2009; Schildkraut 2010). More recently, Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) used inductive survey analysis methods to identify four distinct schemas of American nationhood: creedal, restrictive, ardent, and disengaged. Their findings differed from past studies in four important ways: (1) they were based on a wide range of items that tapped criteria of national membership, national pride, chauvinism, and the strength of national attachment; (2) instead of aggregating variables (as in factor analysis, for instance), they clustered respondents based on the latter’s

shared beliefs; and (3) they demonstrated that the resulting configurations of nationalist attitudes were not only patterned and correlated with political preferences, but also large invariant in their composition over time.

Bonikowski and DiMaggio’s (2016) results suggest that the four types of nationalism identified in their study can be thought of as stable cultural cleavages in the U.S. population, which function as the public-opinion counterparts (with some variations) to the policymaking traditions documented by Smith (1997). These cleavages are likely to be latent during settled historical times, operating largely in the cultural background. Under such circumstances, nationalist beliefs may manifest themselves in micro-interactions, as either sources of in-group cohesion or inter-group animosity, but not as primary features of electoral campaigns or voting behavior (though their downstream policy correlates may well be more salient). Occasionally, however, a confluence of structural conditions may bring disputes about the nation’s meaning to the forefront of political claims-making and individual-level political preferences (Bonikowski 2017). Given the prominence of anti-minority discourse in contemporary radical-right politics, the current era appears to represent precisely this kind of conjuncture.

Following these insights, our paper examines whether nationalist beliefs were significantly associated with presidential candidate preferences in the 2016 election (cf. Manza and Crowley 2018), a watershed for exclusionary politics in the United States, and if so, whether this outcome was preceded by a shift in the distribution of ethno-nationalist beliefs in the U.S. population

over the prior two decades. Our interest in the former questions is prompted by the widespread reliance of 2016 presidential candidates on multiple types of nationalist rhetoric. Donald Trump is the most obvious example. His primary and general campaigns escalated racial fear-mongering to levels not seen in decades, by unabashedly portraying Mexican migrants as immoral and dangerous, Mexican-Americans as un-American, and Muslim refugees as national security threats. This rhetoric emerged out of Trump’s earlier championing of the “birther” movement, which questioned the legitimacy of President Barack Obama as an elected official and an American. Against this backdrop, Trump’s persistent appeals to white working and middle class Americans had a decidedly white nationalist undertone, only further reinforced by his refusal to disavow the support of extremist movement leaders like former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke (Lamont et al. 2017). Donald Trump was not, however, the only Republican to make such claims. Ted Cruz, though less explicit, was eager to compete with Trump on the latter’s terms, frequently signaling his toughness on immigration and his national security bona fides. The remaining candidates for the Republican nomination either downplayed nationalism altogether or relied on boilerplate patriotic imagery typical of creedal nationalism.

On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton’s campaign was more centrally concerned with policy proposals than identitarian appeals, but when she did reference nationalist claims and imagery, she did so in a decidedly civic nationalist register, depicting America as an exceptional imagined community whose egalitarian ideals and human achievements are deserving of deep na-

tional pride. These themes were featured especially prominently in the Democratic National Convention, the overtly patriotic pageantry of which bore striking resemblance to traditional Republican campaigns. In contrast to Clinton, her chief rival in the primary election, Bernie Sanders, eschewed nationalism altogether, focusing instead on a broadly populist economic message.

To ensure that our characterization of the content of the 2016 election campaigns is accurate, we perform a descriptive analysis of the candidates’ campaign speeches. The data were obtained from two online sources: Factba.se, a database of all public statements made by Donald Trump over his lifetime, and the American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, a compendium of political statements by prominent U.S. politicians, which we use as a source of Hillary Clinton’s, Bernie Sanders’, Ted Cruz’s, and the moderate Republicans’ campaign discourse. We limit our corpus to speeches delivered during the 2016 primary and general elections, beginning with each candidate’s presidential run announcement and ending with his or her concession speech. After scraping and cleaning the speech transcripts, we use a word embedding model (specifically word2vec) and Tensorflow visualization to examine differences in the meaning of key terms relevant to our research question between the campaigns.

Word embedding models use shallow neural networks to arrive at a representation of each word in a corpus as a dense k-dimensional vector, such that distance between words in the resulting k-dimensional space is indicative of the proximity of the words to one another in the corpus (the algorithm arrives at the solution by predict-

ing the probability of each word’s occurrence given the co-presence of its neighboring words) (Mikolov et al. 2013). One of the many advantages of this method is that it allows for the visualization of a word’s meaning in a given corpus (assuming that meaning emerges out of the relations of similarity and difference between symbols [Mohr 1998]). We take advantage of this feature to compare the meanings of key words across multiple 50-dimensional vector spaces generated by the campaign-specific text corpora. Data collection and analysis was performed in Python using a variety of web scraping and text analysis packages, including `scrapy` and `gensim`.

To highlight differences in the campaigns’ rhetoric, we focus on the candidate-specific meanings of two terms: ‘dangerous’ and ‘politics.’ The former illustrates what the candidate views as the most pressing concerns facing the country (e.g., climate change, terrorism, immigrants) and, given the word’s potency, is likely to elicit morally charged content typical of nationalist discourse. The latter term may reveal whether or not the candidate frames the political establishment in morally negative terms, which may activate varieties of nationalism that score low on institutional pride (i.e., restrictive nationalism and disengagement from the nation). Figures 1 and 2 use a two-dimensional mapping of the vector space to visualize the 50 word vectors most proximate to each of the two key terms, respectively, across the multiple campaigns. Due to the small number of speeches by moderate Republican primary candidates, we group them into a single corpus. [Please note: in this draft of the paper, we only include the figures for Clinton and Trump.]

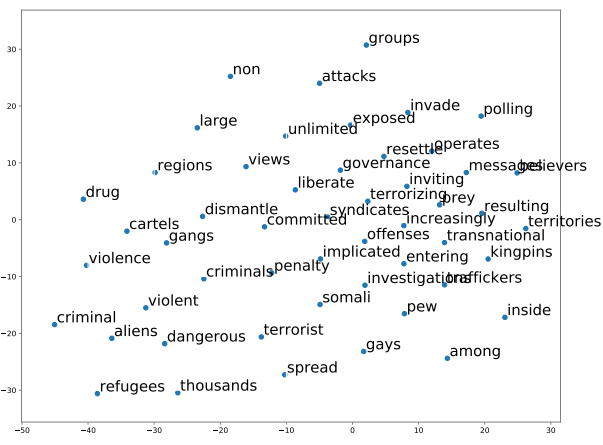
The results of the word embedding anal-

ysis are broadly consistent with our earlier characterization of the campaigns. Donald Trump’s discourse stands out in its alarmist conflation of ‘aliens’ and ‘refugees’ (as well as ‘somali’ and ‘overstay [presumably a visa]’) with ‘gangs,’ ‘cartels,’ ‘terrorist[s],’ ‘kingpins,’ and other types of criminal activity. This paints a picture of America as a nation under siege by dangerous outsiders. This is combined with an acrimonious view of politics as characterized by the ‘failures’ and ‘hypocrisy’ of ‘corrupt’ and ‘arrogant’ ‘establishment’ ‘elites,’ who have ‘failed’ the people.

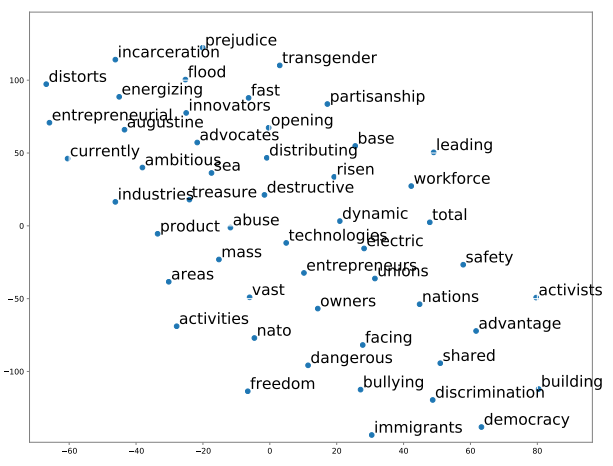
Clinton’s claims about the problems facing America are starkly different. Rather than focusing on specific groups of people and their alleged threatening deeds, she focuses on the dangers posed by ‘prejudice,’ ‘discrimination,’ ‘bullying,’ and ‘partisanship.’ Her view of politics is largely positive, as indicated by terms such as ‘optimistic,’ ‘inspire,’ ‘obligation,’ ‘diversity,’ and ‘bipartisan.’ To the degree that politics is ‘broken,’ it is due to its ‘partisanship,’ not any attribute of the elites.

Whereas the Republican moderates are similar in their depictions of danger and politics to Clinton, the same cannot be said of Sanders or Cruz. Sanders’ speeches lack any discussion of immigrants or minorities, instead focusing on the dangers posed by neoliberalism and growing economic inequality, but his depiction of politics shares much in common with Trump’s. Cruz’s discourse, on the other hand, identified similar dangers to Trump’s (though with a stronger focus on terrorism than immigration, which is consistent with his intended appeals to Latinos) and depicted politics in a similarly negative light to that of Trump and Sanders.

In light of these supply-side patterns,

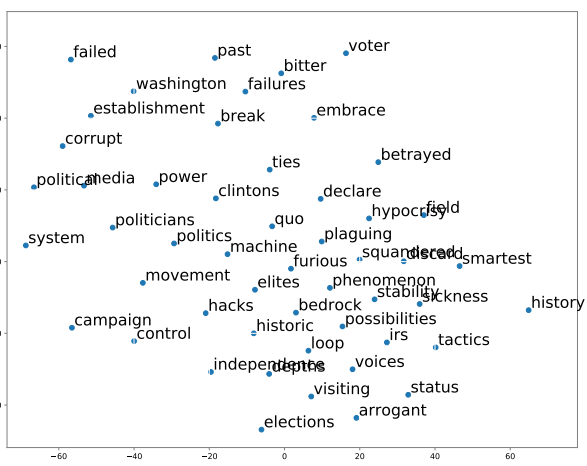


(a) Trump

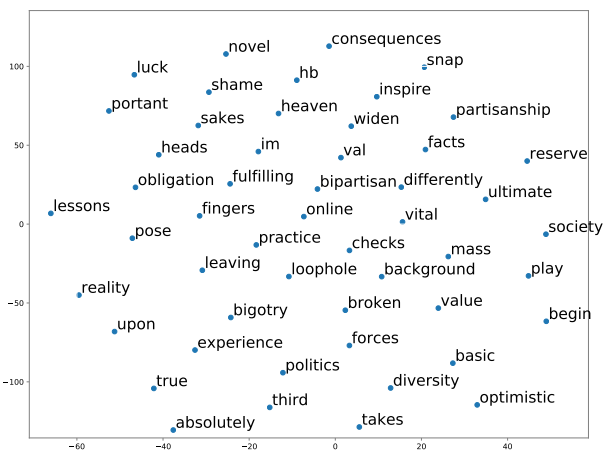


(b) Clinton

Figure 1: Word embedding results: 50 most proximate word vectors to "dangerous"



(a) Trump



(b) Clinton

Figure 2: Word embedding results: 50 most proximate word vectors to "politics"

we can generate some broad expectations for the survey data analysis. We divide these between those concerning voters' preferences in the Republican and Democratic primaries and those specific to the general election. Given the strength of partisan identification in the United States and the resulting prevalence of party-line voting, the question of why Donald Trump won the election is actually less interesting than why he was able to capture his party's nomination in the first place. Nonetheless, nationalism may have played a role, albeit a smaller one, in the final Clinton vs. Trump contest as well. In general, we expect Donald Trump's supporters to be particularly likely to espouse forms of nationalism that privilege ethnoculturally exclusionary criteria of national membership (Manza and Crowley 2018). Among those, we may find both restrictive nationalists, who score relatively low on measures of national pride (in line with Trump's own pessimistic view of contemporary American society), and ardent nationalists, whose jingoism is more in line with traditional Republican beliefs. Clinton's supporters in the general election, on the other hand, should be more likely to espouse either creedal nationalism that is high in national pride but favors inclusive criteria of national belonging or general disengagement from the nation. Hence the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *In the general election, support for Trump, as opposed to Clinton, was significantly associated with adherence to restrictive and ardent nationalism. This relationship should hold even after controlling for partisan identification.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *In the general election, support for Clinton, as opposed to Trump, was significantly associated with ad-*

herence to creedal and disengaged dispositions toward the nation. This relationship should hold even after controlling for partisan identification.

In the primaries, we should observe little difference in the nationalist beliefs of Trump and Cruz supporters, given that both candidates engaged in persistent appeals to ethnocultural exclusion and nationalist nostalgia. The supporters of mainstream candidates, like John Kasich, Jeb Bush, and Marco Rubio, however, should be less likely to adhere to exclusionary forms of nationalism and more likely to favor a creedal definition of nationhood (in line with the campaign speech analysis). For Democratic candidates, the main difference between Clinton and Sanders supporters should consist of endorsement or rejection of affirmative nationalism, respectively, with Sanders supporters more likely to be disengaged from the nation. Sanders' use of populist rhetoric may have found appeal among this group as well, given their low level of pride in both the nation and the state. This leads to the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *In the Republican primary election, support for Trump, as opposed to the mainstream candidates, should be significantly associated with adherence to restrictive and ardent nationalism.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *In the Republican primary election, there should be no significant differences in nationalist beliefs between Trump and Cruz supporters.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *In the Democratic primary election, support for Sanders, as opposed to Clinton, should be significantly associated with disengagement toward the nation.*

If the tests of the above hypotheses confirm that nationalist beliefs played an im-

portant role in the 2016 election, this raises the question of what led to nationalism’s rise in prominence at this historical juncture. While many reasonable structural and institutional explanations have been suggested—and a complete account is likely to be multicausal—we focus specifically on long-term trends in the distribution of nationalist beliefs in the United States, because such beliefs provide a fertile soil within which radical politics can take root. Using data spanning two decades between 1996 and 2016, we evaluate two possible causal preconditions for nationalism’s newfound relevance: an aggregate increase in exclusionary nationalism in the U.S. population, which would have increased the overall demand for radical-right politics, and the partisan sorting of exclusionary nationalist beliefs, which would have made nationalism more salient within each party. Although both of these trends could have developed simultaneously, prior research suggests that changes to the relative salience of ethno-nationalism may be more relevant than changes in its aggregate prevalence (Bonikowski 2017; Hatton 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Rydgren 2003). Moreover, the partisan sorting of a wide range of policy attitudes has been a major trend in U.S. politics over the past thirty years (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008), so there is good reason to expect nationalism to follow suit. This leads to our final two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Restrictive and ardent nationalism increased in prevalence between 1996 and 2016, reaching a peak prior to the 2016 election.*

Hypothesis 7 (H7): *Restrictive and ardent nationalism became more closely associated with Republican partisan identification between 1996 and 2016, while creedal*

nationalism and disengagement from the nation became more closely associated with Democratic partisan identification between 1996 and 2016.

4 Data

The main data used for the cross-sectional analysis of the 2016 election were collected by YouGov on November 5-6, the weekend before Election Day, as part of a larger comparative survey on nationalism funded by the U.S.-Israeli Binational Science Foundation. The sample was drawn from YouGov’s panel using Census-based quotas and then matched to the U.S. non-institutionalized population using post-stratification weighting. The final sample consists of 956 respondents.

The survey asked respondents a wide range of questions about their collective identities, social attitudes, and political preferences. Our study focuses in particular on a battery of twenty-six items measuring multiple aspects of popular nationalism, including strength of national attachment, criteria of legitimate membership in the nation, domain-specific national pride, and chauvinism. This battery was directly modeled on questions from the General Social Survey—collected under the auspices the International Social Survey Programme—which have been the subject of numerous scholarly studies (e.g., Huddy and Khatib 2007; Kunovich 2009; Wright 2011). Most recently, these GSS data were used by Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) to construct the same four types of nationalism used as independent variables in our hypotheses.

Our main dependent variables are vot-

ing preferences in the 2016 primary and general elections. The fact that the data were collected only a couple of days before Election Day allows us to obtain reliable measures of vote intention, in line with best practices in political science (Atkeson 1999; Mutz 2018a). Data on primary vote choices are based on retrospective accounts and are therefore susceptible to bias in favor of the primary winner. Given that our main interest, however, is in how ethno-nationalist beliefs shaped Trump support, the overestimation of Trump primary votes should make our results more conservative.²

For the longitudinal analysis (H6 and H7), we rely on a unique dataset of nationally representative repeated cross-sectional surveys that feature a consistent set of nationalism items. We compile these from the 1996 and 2004 General Social Surveys, a 2012 GfK Custom Research Survey featured in Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016), and the 2016 YouGov data used for our cross-sectional analyses. To the best of our knowledge, this is the most complete time series of Americans’ nationalist beliefs ever used in social science research. The data cover a period of important developments in U.S. politics—including rising polarization, growth in executive power, the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the Great Recession—spanning the Clinton, Bush, and Obama presidencies. The weighted descriptive statistics for the five waves of data are shown in Table 1.

²Under the null hypothesis of no relationship between nationalism and primary vote, the retrospective overestimation of Trump support should make little difference, while under the alternative hypothesis, it should have a downward bias on the ethno-nationalism coefficients, by conflating true ethno-nationalist Trump supporters with false-recall supporters who did not espouse ethno-nationalist beliefs.

5 Methods

To identify varieties of American nationalism, we use latent class analysis (LCA), a data reduction method that groups observations based on their shared response patterns across multiple indicators. We do so both for theoretical reasons—because we view this relational and inductive approach as most appropriate for measuring domain-specific cognitive representations, and those of the nation in particular—and for practical reasons—because this was the method used in past research (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016) to segment nationalist beliefs in the U.S. population and the resulting classification scheme informed our hypotheses. For three of the four waves of data (1996, 2004, and 2012), our use of LCA amounts to an independent in-sample replication of Bonikowski and DiMaggio’s (2016) descriptive results, but for the remaining wave (2016), it is an empirical question whether the same four nationalism types emerge out of the data.

The LCA models in all of our analyses are partially homogeneous; that is, the posterior distribution of the latent classes in the sample is allowed to vary, but the composition of the classes (i.e., the posterior probability of a particular response to each nationalism indicator within each class) is fixed. We employ this strategy in order to enable meaningful comparisons over time. As a robustness check, we also estimate fully heterogeneous models and examine the stability of the class composition across the four waves of data. In both the partially

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Four Waves of Nationalism Survey Data

	1996	2004	2012	2016
Not Born in US	955	916	—	782
Mean	0.08	0.10	—	0.28
SD	0.27	0.30	—	0.45
Age	953	916	2341	782
Mean	43.20	44.61	51.20	45.73
SD	16.19	16.01	16.46	17.43
Male	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.50	0.47	0.51	0.48
SD	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
<i>Party ID</i>				
Strong Democrat	937	905	2183	754
Mean	0.14	0.16	0.21	0.20
SD	0.35	0.37	0.41	0.40
Democrat	937	905	2183	754
Mean	0.32	0.28	0.21	0.24
SD	0.47	0.45	0.41	0.42
Independent	937	905	2183	754
Mean	0.13	0.13	0.17	0.23
SD	0.34	0.34	0.38	0.42
Republican	937	905	2183	754
Mean	0.29	0.26	0.21	0.21
SD	0.45	0.44	0.41	0.41
Strong Republican	937	905	2183	754
Mean	0.12	0.16	0.20	0.13
SD	0.33	0.37	0.40	0.34
<i>Race</i>				
White	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.83	0.78	0.77	0.65
SD	0.38	0.42	0.42	0.48
Black	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.09	0.12	0.07	0.12
SD	0.29	0.32	0.26	0.33
Hispanic	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.04	0.06	0.10	0.16
SD	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.37
Other	956	916	2341	782

Table 1 - continued from previous page

	1996	2004	2012	2016
Mean	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07
SD	0.19	0.22	0.23	0.26
<i>Region</i>				
North East	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.18
SD	0.40	0.39	0.39	0.38
Midwest	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.21
SD	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.41
South	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.31	0.33	0.34	0.37
SD	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.48
Mountain	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.08
SD	0.28	0.26	0.25	0.27
Pacific	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
SD	0.37	0.36	0.37	0.36
<i>Education</i>				
Less than HS	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.13	0.10	0.07	0.08
SD	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.27
HS or Some College	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.58	0.56	0.59	0.68
SD	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.47
Bachelor's Degree	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.16	0.20	0.20	0.16
SD	0.36	0.40	0.40	0.37
Advanced Degree	956	916	2341	782
Mean	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.08
SD	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.28
<i>Religious Tradition</i>				
Protestant	956	916	2135	782
Mean	0.53	0.45	0.41	0.24
SD	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.43
Roman Catholic	956	916	2135	782
Mean	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.26

Table 1 - continued from previous page

	1996	2004	2012	2016
SD	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44
Jewish	956	916	2135	782
Mean	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01
SD	0.12	0.17	0.15	0.11
Other	956	916	2135	782
Mean	0.09	0.12	0.11	0.19
SD	0.28	0.33	0.31	0.39
None	956	916	2135	782
Mean	0.11	0.13	0.19	0.29
SD	0.31	0.33	0.40	0.46
Religiosity	918	910	2267	782
Mean	0.36	0.39	0.43	0.41
SD	0.48	0.49	0.50	0.49

homogeneous and fully heterogeneous models, we rely on statistical goodness of fit and interpretive criteria to select the appropriate number of classes. As in past studies, a four-class solution provides the best compromise between precision and interpretability (besides not offering an advantage in model fit, the addition of a fifth class does not add theoretically meaningful information to the analysis). For more details about model selection, see Appendix A. Once we identify the four types of nationalism in the data, we regress on them respondents’ vote preferences in the primary and general elections using logistic regression.

6 Results

6.1 Varieties of American Nationalism

The LCA analysis yields four types of nationalist beliefs, summarized in Figure 3.

Following Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016), we label them *creedal*, *restrictive*, *ardent*, and *disengaged*. *Creedal nationalists* favor elective criteria of national belonging—rating subjective identification with the nation and respect for American laws and institutions as very important—while being more equivocal than others about importance of life-long residence and language skills, and viewing birth in the country, having American ancestry, and being Christian as not very important. They display moderate levels of national pride (with pride in America’s scientific accomplishments ranking highest and pride in its social security system ranking lowest) and low levels of chauvinism (e.g., only 24 percent agree that the world would be a better place if others were more like Americans). This response pattern is broadly consistent with the central tenets of the American liberal creed (Lipset 1967).

Restrictive and *ardent nationalists* endorse both elective and ascriptive criteria of

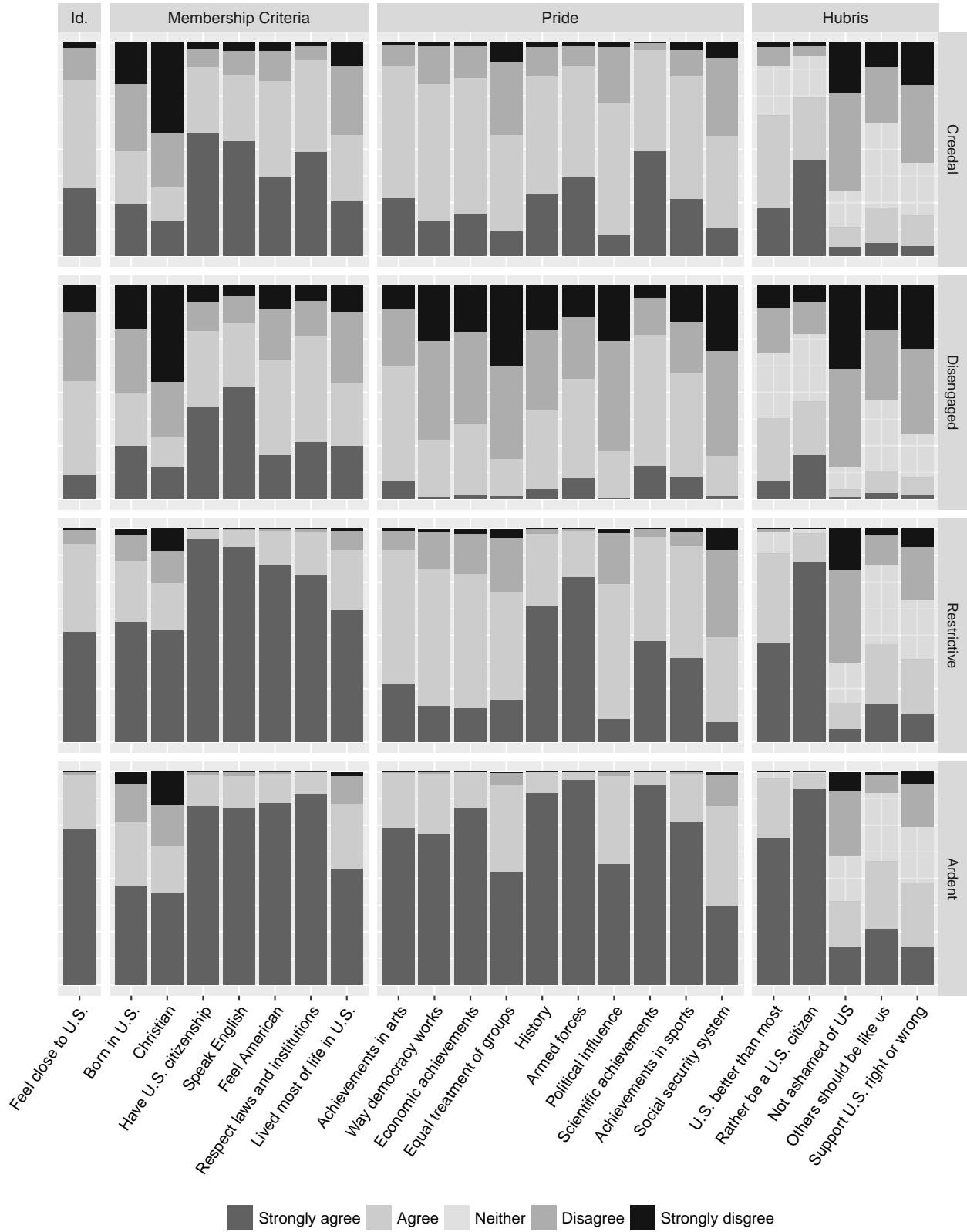


Figure 3: Posterior Probabilities of Nationalist Item Responses by Latent Class

national belonging, rating them all as very important (with the importance of Christian faith ranking lowest, endorsed by 71 percent of ardents and 84 percent of restrictives). The two classes differ, however, in their degree of pride in America’s accomplishments and their evaluation of the country’s relative standing in the world. Restrictive nationalists exhibit considerably lower levels of pride than ardent nationalists and these differences are most pronounced for questions related to national institutions, such as pride in the way the country’s democracy works (with 13 percent of restrictives expressing strong pride compared to 71 percent of ardents), its political influence in the world (8 vs. 55 percent), and its economic achievements (13 vs. 76 percent). With respect to chauvinist attitudes, restrictives are also less effusive in their celebration of American exceptionalism than ardents, with, for instance, only 39 percent of the former, compared to 72 of the latter, strongly agreeing that America is better than most countries, and 45 percent of the former, compared to 61 percent of the latter, strongly endorsing the idea that the world would be a better place if others were more like Americans.

For restrictive nationalists, unlike ardent nationalists, then, high barriers to national membership are accompanied by muted affect toward the nation—and the state—at least in its contemporary form. The fact that pride in America’s history is an exception to this pattern suggests that restrictive nationalists may espouse a sense of nostalgia for a (real or imagined) bygone America, one that is at odds with contemporary social and cultural changes. If so, this would place their beliefs squarely in line with the

alarmist rhetoric of the Trump campaign and administration. At the same time, the exclusionary and chauvinistic beliefs of the ardent nationalists are likely to have attracted them to the Trump message as well.

Finally, the *disengaged* class is characterized by an arm’s length relationship to the nation. Respondents in this group do not view any criteria of national membership as particularly important, they are not especially proud of any aspect of American nationhood, and they do not view America as exceptional or superior compared to other countries. While we hesitate to go so far as to label these respondents as “non-nationalist” or “post-nationalist,” it does appear that for them, the national frame of reference is not particularly salient. Given these characteristics, the absence of overt nationalism in Bernie Sanders’ campaign may have held particularly strong appeal for these respondents.³

6.2 Nationalism in the 2016 Election

The four types of nationalism successfully replicated in our data have been shown to be significantly associated with social attitudes and policy preferences, but no research has examined their implications for electoral politics. This is the analysis to which we turn next. Having generated the latent classes and assigned respondents to each using modal assignment based on posterior membership probabilities, we regress self-reported voting preferences on class assignment. We do so using stepwise logistic regression, beginning with a baseline model, then adding respondents’ sociodemographic

³Of course, they may have also supported other candidates based on issues distinct from national identity.

attributes (birth in the U.S., age, gender, race, geographic region, income, education, and religion) in the second model, and partisan identification in the third model (we include partisanship only in the general election analyses). All analyses were carried out in the LatentGOLD 5.1 software package using a three-step model with a maximum likelihood adjustment for classification bias (Bakk et al. 2013). For ease of interpretation, we present only the nationalism coefficients in a series of figures, but the complete regression results are available in Appendix C.

The results of the general election models are presented in the first panel of Figure 4. Consistent with our expectations, in the baseline model, creedal nationalism and disengagement from the nation are both negatively associated with Trump support, compared to support for Hillary Clinton, whereas restrictive and ardent nationalism are positively associated with Trump support. These results are consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2: Trump’s campaign discourse activated exclusionary varieties of nationalism among the American public.

Inclusion vs. exclusion, however, is not the only axis of variation driving the association between nationalism and voting preferences in the general election. Among the two types of exclusionary nationalism, restrictive nationalism, characterized by relatively low pride in the nation-state is significantly more predictive of Trump support than is ardent nationalism, which features high levels of national pride. A similar pattern is found among the inclusive classes: disengagement from the nation is significantly more predictive of Trump support than is creedal nationalism. It appears then

that the appeal of radical-right discourse is not limited to claims based on ascriptive in-group identity and out-group hostility: low levels of national pride (and chauvinism) are also likely to be activated by populist critiques of political elites and institutions and the nostalgic glorification of the nation’s past. These motifs featured prominently in our earlier analyses of Trump’s (but also Sanders’) campaign speeches.

Controlling for respondents’ sociodemographic characteristics in the second general-election model does not have a major impact on the magnitude or significance of the coefficients comparing creedal nationalism with the other three latent classes: nationalist exclusion and low levels of national pride continue to predict Trump support. The differences among ardent, restrictive, and disengaged classes, however, are no longer significant. This is primarily a result of controlling for race (Trump support is lower among African Americans and Latinos), religion (Catholics, Jews, and the non-religious are more favorable of Clinton), education (Trump supporters are most likely to have a high school diploma or some college), and income (which is positively associated with Trump support).⁴

The final model predicting Trump support in the general election introduces partisan identification as an additional covariate. Although we predicted that nationalism would continue to have net effects of candidate preferences in this model (see H1 and H2), there is good reason to expect the opposite as well. As suggested by the literature on partisan polarization, motivated reasoning, and negative partisanship (for a recent synthesis see Mason (2018)), partisan identity typically outweighs all other predic-

⁴The income and education results are consistent with Manza and Crowley (2017).

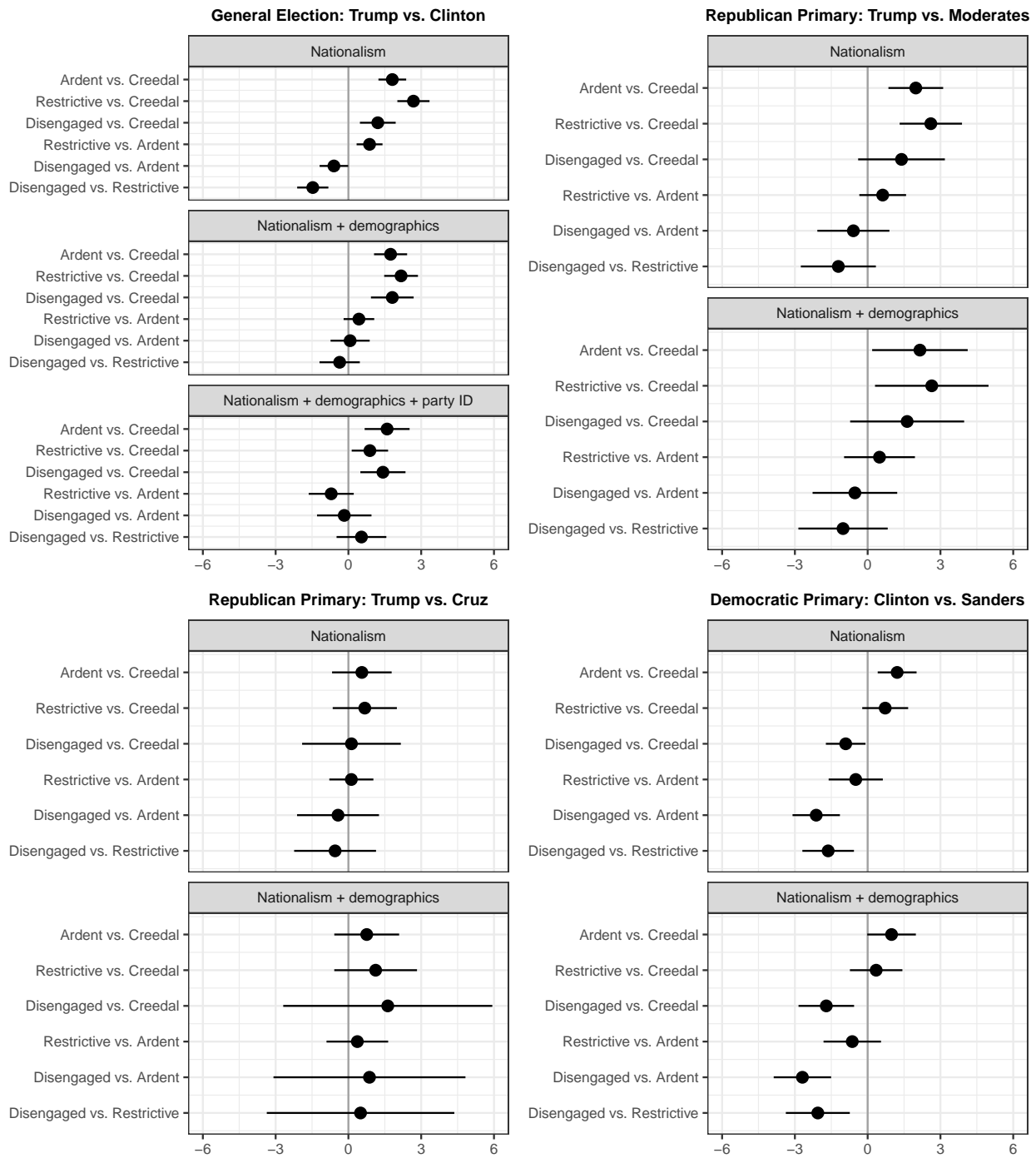


Figure 4: Logistic Regression of General Election Vote Preferences on Nationalist Attitudes, Trump vs. Clinton

tors of vote choice in U.S. presidential elections. Once candidates are chosen by the parties, Republicans are likely to vote for a Republican and Democrats for a Democrat, regardless of who is at the top of each ticket (Bartels 2016). Yet, despite this common finding, our results provide evidence for the persistent relevance of nationalism in the 2016 election. The party coefficients are large and highly significant (see Appendix C), but the ardent, restrictive, and disengaged classes (when compared to creedal nationalism) continue to be predictive of Trump support net of partisan identification.

We now turn to the two party primaries. The second panel of Figure 4 presents results for the Republican race, comparing Trump support with support for the moderate candidates (i.e., John Kasich, Jeb Bush, and Marco Rubio). Compared to creedal nationalism, restrictive and ardent nationalism are consistently associated with greater support for Trump over his moderate rivals, whereas the difference between restrictive and ardent nationalism is not significant. The coefficients comparing disengagement from the nation to ardent and restrictive nationalism are negative as well, but they fail to reach statistical significance. There are no major differences between the baseline model and a model that includes sociodemographic covariates.

These results provide partial evidence for Hypothesis 3: respondents who favor an inclusive definition of the nation are more likely to support moderate Republican candidates, but only when such beliefs are accompanied by strong national pride (as in the creedal class). This suggests that,

ethno-nationalism—a feature of both restrictive and ardent nationalism—and lower satisfaction with the nation-state—a feature of the disengaged class—were important factors in Donald Trump’s successful capture of the Republican Party prior to the 2016 general election.⁵ Indeed, once nationalist beliefs are accounted for, few of the standard sociodemographic predictors of voting preferences reach statistical significance (see Appendix C).

Do these patterns hold when Trump support is compared to support for Ted Cruz? Given the similarities between the two campaigns’ rhetoric, we hypothesized that nationalist attitudes would not be an important distinguishing factor between Trump and Cruz supporters. Indeed, as the third panel of Figure 4 illustrates, we find no significant relationships between nationalism and vote choice when comparing support for these two candidates. Given the small sample size ($N = 135$) and resulting large standard errors, particularly in the full model, we hesitate to draw conclusive inferences from these results. Nonetheless, they do provide suggestive evidence in favor of Hypothesis 4.

Finally, we turn to our last cross-sectional analysis, comparing Clinton and Sanders support in the Democratic primary. We predicted that Sanders’ reluctance to engage with identity-based appeals, and nationalist rhetoric in particular, along with his populism, should make it more likely for him than for Clinton to draw support from nationally disengaged voters (H5). The results are presented in the fourth panel of Figure 4. As expected, disengagement from the nation is consistently associated with re-

⁵It is important to keep in mind that the dependent variable is based on retrospective accounts of primary voting behavior, so our estimates are likely to overestimate Trump support, making our analysis conservative.

spondents' recall of having voted for Sanders over Clinton. Interestingly, we also observe a significant difference between creedal and ardent nationalism, which had not been anticipated by our hypotheses: among respondents with high levels of pride in the nation, those who adhere to exclusionary conceptions of national membership were more likely to support Clinton than Sanders, even net of sociodemographic controls.⁶

6.3 Did Trump Ride a Nativist Wave?

The cross-sectional analyses confirmed that nationalism played a crucial role in the 2016 presidential election. Restrictive and ardent nationalists were more likely to support Trump over moderate candidates in the Republican primary and over Clinton in the general election, while the disengaged were more likely to support Sanders over Clinton in the Democratic primary. Most of these associations held even when partisan identification was included in the models. But why was an ethno-nationalist populist able to capture the Republican Party and the presidency in 2016 and not in prior elections? Were the mid-2010s characterized by a sudden surge in exclusionary nationalism and a drop in national pride across the U.S. population? Or were other temporal trends—such as partisan sorting (Bal-dassarri and Gelman 2008)—more relevant for explaining the increased importance of nationalism in the 2016 election?

These questions led us to posit two temporal hypotheses: that exclusionary forms

of nationalism have been rising in general prevalence in the United States (H6) and that restrictive and ardent nationalism have become increasingly overrepresented among Republicans, while creedal nationalism and disengagement from the nation have become increasingly overrepresented among Democrats (H7). In principle, these two scenarios may be independent of one another: it is possible that both are true or, alternatively, that only one is true. While both might also be false, it is unlikely that the Trump election, which marked a radical change in American politics, emerged out of a period of absolute stability in public opinion.

In testing these predictions, we use cross-sectional data collected in 1996, 2004, 2012, and 2016 to identify long-term trends in the distribution of the four nationalism types, both in the aggregate and across the two parties. The aggregate results are presented in Figure 5. The x-axis represents time, while the y-axis indicates the relative proportion of the nationalism classes—visualized with the four trend lines—in each survey year.

The patterns in the top panel of Figure 5, which plots the distribution of classes over time for all respondents, are at odds with Hypothesis 6. While there has been a small secular increase in ardent nationalism between 1996 and 2016, restrictive nationalism reached a peak at 44 percent of the sample in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and has been steadily declining since, to less than 25 percent of the sample in 2016 (down from 32 percent in 1996). Creedal nationalism remains at a similar level in 2016

⁶Among the controls, Clinton supporters were more likely to be African American, have either low or advanced education, and live in the Northeast (compared to the Mountain West). Given Sanders' well documented difficulties of appealing to minority voters, the race results have considerable face validity.

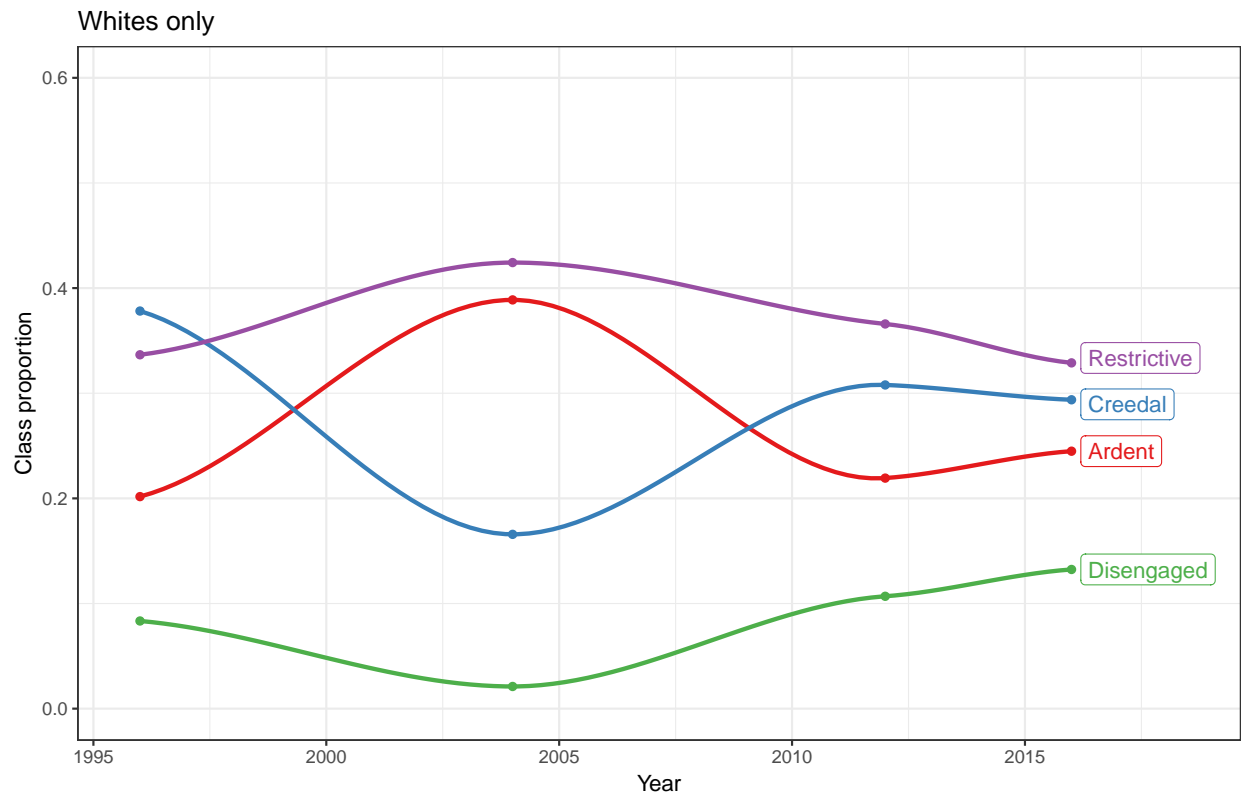
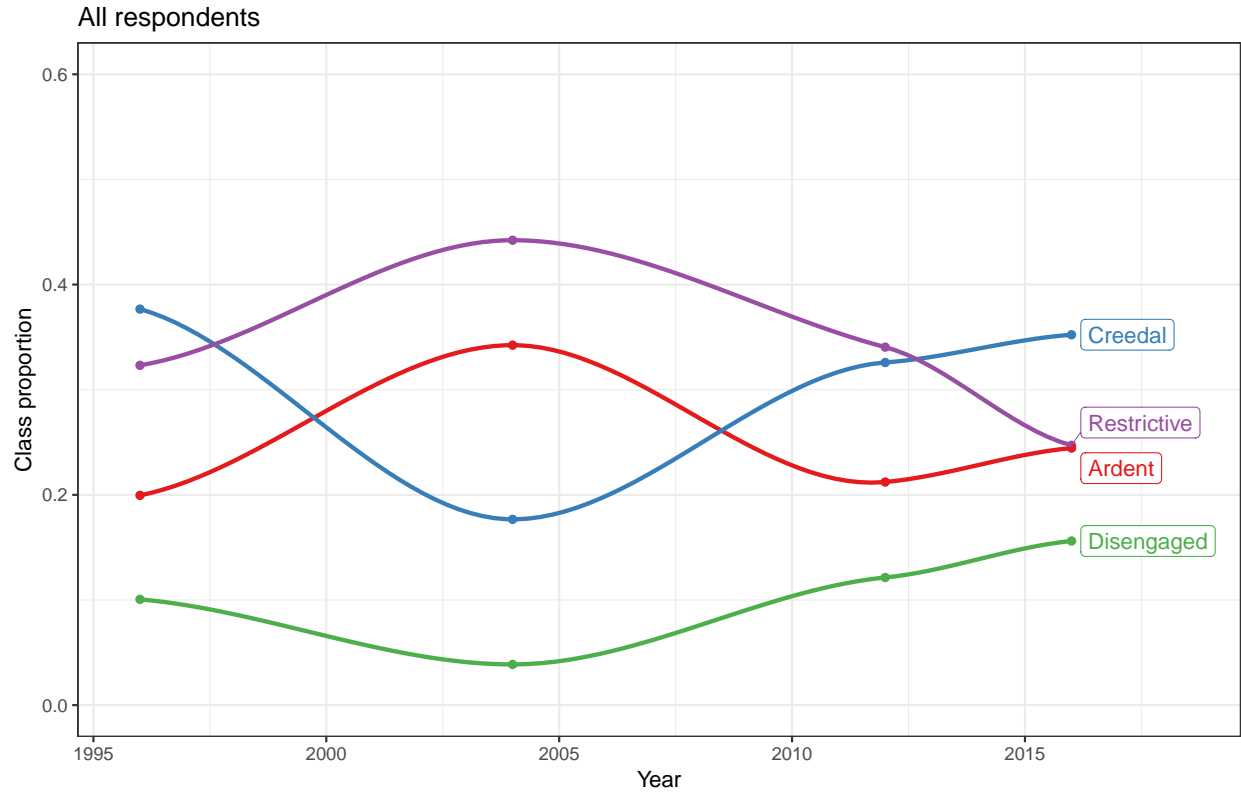


Figure 5: Class Proportions by Year, 1996-2016

(36 percent) to what it was in 1996 (38 percent), having recovered from its 2004 low of 18 percent of the sample. Finally, disengagement from the nation has increased in recent years from a low of 10 percent in 1996 to a high of nearly 18 percent in 2016.

Together these results demonstrate that strong nationalist attitudes in general—and their exclusionary varieties in particular—have been in decline over the past twenty years. This trend was temporarily reversed in the aftermath of 9/11, when ardent and restrictive nationalism increased sharply and overtook creedal nationalism as dominant orientations toward the nation, but this change was short-lived: by 2012, the distribution of nationalist beliefs looked remarkably similar to 1996, with the exception of growing disengagement with the nation. The 2016 election, therefore, did not occur in the context of a pronounced spike in the types of nationalism that fueled Donald Trump’s support in the primary and general election. It appears that the relative salience of pre-existing attitudes—and possibly their changing distribution across parties—holds more promise for explaining the timing of Donald Trump’s victory than do aggregate shifts in public opinion (Bonikowski 2017).

One possible objection to this conclusion is that the above analysis includes ethnic and racial minorities, who are less likely to espouse exclusionary forms of nationalism. Would the downward trend in nationalism be absent among whites? The bottom panel in Figure 5, which reports the distribution of nationalist classes among the white subsample, suggests otherwise. The main differences between the two graphs are a higher prevalence of ardent and restrictive nationalism among whites in 2004, a

less steep decline in restrictive nationalism among whites between 2012 and 2016, and a sharper increase in creedal nationalism between 2012 and 2016 in the sample as a whole. That aside, many of the same patterns hold in both figures: since 9/11, restrictive and ardent nationalism has been declining, while creedal nationalism and disengagement with the nation has been growing. There is little evidence of an ethno-nationalist surge in the prelude to the 2016 election.

Even though ethno-nationalism has been declining in the general population, it is possible that at the same time, the four types of nationalism have become increasingly sorted between the two national parties, as predicted in Hypothesis 7. Figure 6 presents trends in the distribution of nationalist beliefs broken down by partisan identification. These results differ sharply from what we observed in the sample as a whole: instead of relative stability, there is a sharp divergence in nationalism over time, both within and across parties.

These patterns are clearest among strong partisans. Whereas in 1996, restrictive nationalism was common among strong Democrats (at 23 percent, just below creedal and ardent nationalism), by 2016 it was the least prevalent form of nationalism in this group, found only among 8 percent of strong Democratic partisans. Over the same time period, creedal nationalism increased dramatically among strong Democrats, from 32 percent in 1996 to 50 percent in 2016. Among strong Republicans, the opposite was true: restrictive nationalism increased between 1996 and 2016 from 38 to 48 percent, while creedal nationalism declined precipitously, from 32 to 9 percent. Similar, though more muted,

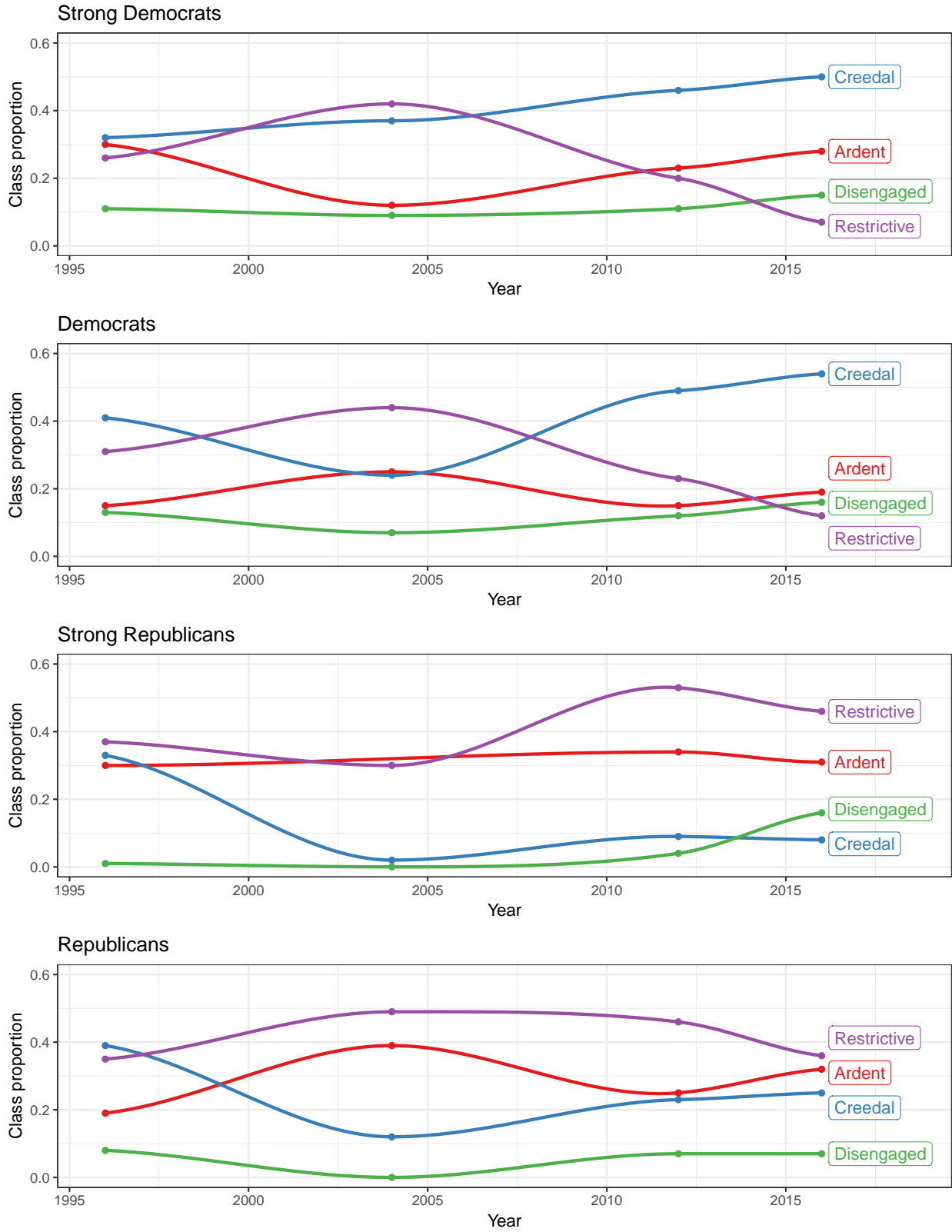


Figure 6: Class Proportions by Party and Year, 1996-2016

patterns are present among less strongly committed Democratic and Republican partisans: an increase in creedal nationalism and decrease in restrictive nationalism among Democrats and an increase in ethno-nationalism (especially its ardent variety) and a decrease in creedal nationalism among Republicans.⁷

What these temporal trends clearly reveal is that nationalism has been increasingly sorted by party in the United States. In 1996, it would have been difficult to predict a respondent's partisan identity based on his or her nationalist beliefs (and vice versa), whereas by 2016, partisanship and nationalism had become tightly coupled: Republicans had become predominantly ethno-nationalist and Democrats had become overwhelmingly committed to inclusive nationalism.

To more formally capture the partisan sorting process, we calculate lambda coefficients for each wave of the data. These measures of association between categorical variables are comparable across samples, unlike unstandardized measures like Chi-squared. The results are presented in Figure 7; higher lambda values correspond to stronger association between party identification and nationalism in a given year. The two trend lines correspond to two types of comparison: (1) between all four varieties of nationalism and weak/strong Democratic/Republican identification and (2) between exclusive/inclusive nationalism (i.e., creedal and disengaged classes on one hand and ardent and restrictive on the other) and weak/strong Democratic/Republican identification.

⁷Although we did not formulate hypotheses for independents, the temporal patterns among them are striking, with a moderate decrease in restrictive and creedal nationalism offset by a major increase in disengagement (from 16 to 26 percent).

Consistently with the patterns observed in Figure 6, the association between the four types of nationalism and party increases dramatically over the span of our data, from 0.004 to 0.097, with the largest relative change occurring between 1996 and 2004 and the trend stabilizing after 2012. This further confirms that nationalism has become increasingly predictive of partisan identification (and vice versa). This temporal comparison, however, treats all four nationalism types as equivalent, whereas our interest is specifically in the polarization of exclusive and inclusive nationalism. The second trend line in Figure 6 captures this distinction. Here, the pattern is even starker: partisan sorting has been increasing sharply and steadily between 2004 and 2016, reaching a peak of 0.1841 in the latter year.

These results demonstrate that by 2016, Democrats and Republicans were sharply divided in their understanding of the nation, with Republican overwhelmingly favoring ethno-nationalist conceptions of national belonging. This was not a sudden change, however, but one that had been gradually building over the prior two decades, and particularly since the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. It appears then that Donald Trump did not catalyze a major shift in the political relevance of American nationalism, but rather capitalized on a demand for ethno-nationalist politics that had long been growing among Republican voters.

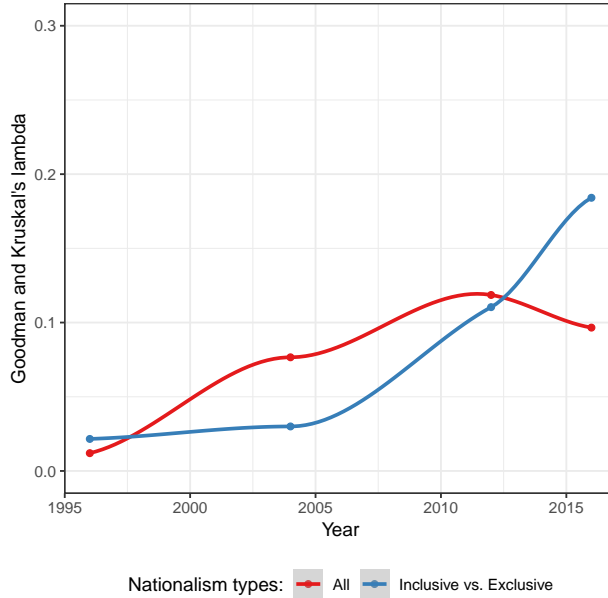


Figure 7: Association between Party and Nationalism Type, 1996-2016

7 Discussion and Conclusion

This study has used a unique combination of computational text analysis and primary and secondary survey data to examine the relationship between multiple forms of American nationalism and voting preferences in the 2016 presidential election. Our cross-sectional analysis has demonstrated that exclusionary forms of nationalism provided a crucial base of support for Donald Trump, both during the Republican primary and the general election. The latter results held even once partisan identification—the strongest predictor of vote choice—was taken into account. Ethnic exclusion, however, wasn’t the only relevant aspect of nationalism in the 2016 election. Varieties of nationalism characterized by low levels of national pride (i.e., restrictive nationalism and disengagement

form the nation), were highly predictive of support for Trump over Clinton, and disengagement from the nation was associated with a preference for Sanders over Clinton in the Democratic primary.

As our longitudinal analysis demonstrates, the importance of nationalism in the 2016 election did not result from a sudden surge in nationalist beliefs among the U.S. electorate. On the contrary, popular conceptions of nationhood, on average, have been either stable or have become increasingly inclusive (though the immediate aftermath of 9/11 marked a temporary deviation from this trend). This does not imply, however, that public opinion trends were irrelevant for Donald Trump’s success. What our analysis reveals is that between 1996 and 2016, Americans’ nationalist beliefs have become increasingly mapped onto their partisan identities. By 2016, most Republicans adhered to restrictive or ardent nationalism, while most Democrats espoused creedal na-

nationalist beliefs. The sorting of nationalism by party represents a marked difference from the configuration of nationalist beliefs in 1996, the first wave of our data, when nationalist cleavages were largely cross-cutting across parties.

In identifying these empirical patterns, this study makes four primary contributions to the sociology and political science literature on radical politics and nationalism. First, it sets aside the vague category of "cultural" sources of radical-right support and offers a more theoretically precise and empirically grounded framework for understanding the common source of antipathy toward both native- and foreign-born ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, as well as of skepticism toward established institutions and elites. These seemingly disparate sentiments are rooted in fundamental beliefs about the meaning of one's own national identity. Sharp distinctions in collective self-understanding constitute cultural cleavages in a national population that may be latent much of the time, but under particular circumstances can guide people's political decisions. The 2016 presidential election was clearly one such moment. In addition to a variety of structural changes that may have increased the resonance of distinct nationalist appeals, the partisan sorting of—but not aggregate increase in—nationalist beliefs appears to have been an important contributing factor.

Second, by relating the discursive strategies of the various campaigns in the 2016 election to the cultural schemas held by voters, the paper draws attention to the importance of bringing together the supply and demand sides of politics. The computational text analysis of campaign speeches, combined with our reading of the secondary

literature, enabled us to posit a series of hypotheses about the likely sources of support for the various candidates. As our analyses reveal, in 2016, when identity concerns appear to have been crucial, campaign's decisions to rely on a particular forms of nationalist appeals—or to sidestep nationalism altogether—had important implications for respondents' evaluations of the candidates. While the ultimate outcomes of the primary and general elections were likely a function of a host of causal factors, both institutional and symbolic, it is likely that the relative resonance of various forms of nationalist claims-making played an important role in the process.

Third, by exploring questions related to polarization, we have demonstrated that nationalism represents yet another belief domain that has become increasingly sorted by party in the recent decades. Given the cultural importance of nationalist beliefs, however, we view this trend as particularly concerning. Cultural schemas of the nation are not merely an isolated social attitude or policy preference; they are one of the master frames that organizes people's collective self-understanding, shapes their disposition toward other groups, affects their evaluation of the nation's past and future trajectories, and may impact the structure and content of interpersonal interactions. When these cultural rifts become mutually reinforcing vis-à-vis other sociodemographic and political cleavages, they are likely to further contribute to the erosion of social solidarity and democratic consensus-building, with potentially deleterious consequences for long-term political stability. To put things more concretely, the fact that one of the two national parties has become a party of ethno-nationalist exclusion is unlikely to produce a

stable democratic equilibrium, particularly in the context of rapidly rising elite polarization, mass negative partisanship, and growing demographic diversity.

Fourth, our temporal analysis demonstrates that the partisan sorting of nationalist beliefs did not occur in the immediate prelude to the 2016 election. On the contrary, it was a product of a long-term process that appears to have begun in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and continued largely unabated for the subsequent decade and a half. This suggests that symbolic crises may be more important in producing changes in nationalist beliefs than structural shocks, such as the Great Recession. Although the George W. Bush administration sought to unite the nation after 9/11 and prevent the attack from generating excessive inter-group tensions, the choice to treat the event as an unprecedented national security crisis rather than a crime, the concomitant radicalization of political discourse related to Islam and Muslims (Bail 2014), and the subsequent doubling down of Republican political elites on white identity politics (Bonikowski 2019) appear to have had long-term consequences.

In light of these trends, it makes more sense to view the Trump campaign and presidency as products of underlying crevice changes in U.S. political culture, rather than as causes in themselves of the country's turn toward right-wing radicalism. Over the past ten years, the demand for radical-right politics, characterized by ethno-nationalist exclusion, a moral critique of political elites, and nostalgia for the nation's past glory, has been steadily growing among Republicans. This helps explain Republican voters' support for Sarah Palin vice presidential candidacy in the 2008 election and for

the Tea Party's public protests and electoral activism in the early 2010s. Neither of these political projects, however, was able to give voice to, empower, and mobilize the growing ardent- and restrictive-nationalist Republican voting block with the same degree of efficacy as Donald Trump. It is by skillfully articulating and amplifying the nationalist grievances of a growing majority of Republicans that Trump was able to capture the Republican Party and ultimately the presidency.

Finally, this paper demonstrates the value of bridging the divide between political science and sociology in the study of radical politics. By synthesizing insights on the conceptualization and measurement of belief structures from cultural sociology and the role of conflicting nationhood schemas from the nationalism literature with the focal subject matter of comparative party politics scholarship, we have sought to make contributions to both disciplines. We hope that our work will inspire political sociologists to continue their re-engagement with the study of institutional politics, while prompting political scientists to take culture more seriously in their research on electoral outcomes. The areas of commonality between these historically related fields are expanding and our work is both inspired by and seeks to fuel the continued cross-pollination of ideas between them. The value of such engagement is not purely academic: the dangers posed to the future of democracy by the rise of radical politics demand rigorous, multicausal analyses that transcend disciplinary limitations. It is our view that nationalism—clearly theorized and precisely measured—belongs at the center of such analyses.

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Appendices

A Latent Class Analysis Model Selection

This is the LCA appendix.

B Results of Regressions of Voting Preferences on Nationalism Variables and Covariates

Table 2: Logistic regression of vote choice on nationalism classes

	Trump vs. Clinton		Clinton vs. Sanders		Trump vs. Cruz		Trump vs. Moderates		
	Baseline	Soc Dem	Full	Baseline	Soc Dem	Baseline	Soc Dem	Baseline	Soc Dem
Creedal	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Restrictive	2.6830*** (0.338)	2.170*** (0.355)	0.885* (0.383)	0.723 (0.483)	0.35 (0.552)	0.675 (0.675)	1.122 (0.870)	2.603*** (0.656)	2.642* (1.193)
Ardent	1.809*** (0.292)	1.738*** (0.348)	1.595*** (0.473)	1.215** (0.409)	0.985 (0.511)	0.554 (0.627)	0.754 (0.682)	1.984*** (0.576)	2.154* (1.005)
Disengaged	1.211** (0.376)	1.808*** (0.449)	1.423** (0.475)	-0.906* (0.417)	-1.705** (0.584)	0.125 (1.038)	1.622 (2.199)	1.395 (0.912)	1.628 (1.199)
White	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Black	-2.447*** (0.451)	-0.095 (0.613)	-0.095 (0.613)	2.147*** (0.625)	-2.894 (1.597)	-0.135 (1.125)	-1.774 (1.836)	-0.602 (0.750)	-1.44 (0.957)
Hispanic	-1.1174** (0.423)	-0.699 (0.546)	-1.094 (0.574)	-0.161 (0.538)	-0.421 (0.856)	-1.177 (1.140)	Ref	Ref	Ref
Other	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Less than HS	1.7028* (0.697)	1.33 (0.764)	1.868*** (0.565)	-2.035* (0.992)	1.165 (1.252)	1.986 (1.362)	1.608 (1.715)	-1.451 (1.639)	-1.901 (1.715)
HS or some college	0.558	0.724	0.724	-0.801	1.608	1.608	1.608	1.608	1.608
BA									
Advanced degree									

Table 2 continued from previous page

Northeast	(0.817)	(0.828)	(1.175)	(1.383)	(1.686)
	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Midwest	-0.943**	-1.114*	-0.778	-1.998*	0.17
	(0.3523)	(0.535)	(0.584)	(0.877)	(0.901)
South	0.0292	-0.523	-0.824	-1.220	0.268
	(0.3237)	(0.469)	(0.580)	(0.855)	(0.785)
Mountain	-0.4762	-0.688	-1.237*	-0.930	1.133
	(0.4422)	(0.627)	(0.619)	(1.356)	(1.465)
Pacific	-1.502***	-1.705**	-0.290	-1.356	0.02
	(0.3971)	(0.627)	(0.620)	(1.047)	(0.948)
Protestant	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Roman Catholic	-0.8854*	-0.823*	0.985	1.203	0.383
	(0.319)	(0.399)	(0.555)	(0.692)	(0.659)
Jewish	-7.862***	-8.692***	0.171	-5.413*	-6.046**
	(0.804)	(1.379)	(0.928)	(2.222)	(2.303)
Other	-0.582	-0.601	-0.145	-0.156	-0.802
	(0.402)	(0.498)	(0.516)	(0.744)	(0.800)
None	-1.007**	-1.018*	-0.286	0.891	1.126
	(0.333)	(0.449)	(0.583)	(0.843)	(0.774)
Religiosity	0.3242	0.260	0.255	0.325	1.294*
	(0.273)	(0.352)	(0.463)	(0.588)	(0.525)
Not Born in US	0.240	-0.614	0.946	-0.111	-1.183
	(0.3533)	(0.409)	(0.555)	(0.891)	(0.642)
Male	-0.237	-0.976	0.244	0.046	-2.173**
	(0.224)	(0.322)	(0.337)	(0.531)	(0.681)
Age	0.013	0.029**	-0.004	0.015	0.030*

C Sociodemographic Predictors of Class Membership

Table 3: Conditional Probabilities of Class Membership by Sociodemographic Attributes

	Creedal	Disengaged	Restrictive	Ardent	<i>P</i> -Value
Class prevalence	0.36	0.15	0.25	0.25	
White	0.33	0.13	0.32	0.23	0.000
Black	0.42	0.28	0.12	0.18	
Hispanic	0.32	0.15	0.10	0.43	
Other	0.60	0.15	0.12	0.13	
Less than HS	0.41	0.00	0.26	0.34	0.000
HS or some college	0.31	0.17	0.27	0.25	
Bachelor's degree	0.41	0.12	0.20	0.27	
Advanced degree	0.63	0.11	0.14	0.13	
Lives in Northeast	0.33	0.23	0.22	0.21	0.270
Lives in Midwest	0.36	0.18	0.22	0.24	
Lives in South	0.36	0.13	0.27	0.25	
Lives in Mountain	0.39	0.02	0.22	0.37	
Lives in Pacific	0.36	0.15	0.26	0.23	
Protestant	0.22	0.12	0.37	0.30	0.000
Roman Catholic	0.26	0.06	0.29	0.39	
Jewish	0.48	0.24	0.00	0.28	
Other	0.53	0.16	0.25	0.06	
None	0.44	0.25	0.11	0.19	
Not Strongly Religious	0.46	0.15	0.18	0.21	0.000
Strongly Religious	0.22	0.14	0.34	0.29	
Female	0.37	0.17	0.29	0.17	0.000
Male	0.34	0.13	0.20	0.32	
Born in US	0.36	0.12	0.30	0.22	0.000
Not born in US	0.36	0.24	0.08	0.31	
Mean age	43.74	39.36	47.80	51.81	0.000
Mean income (2004 dollars)	\$36,887	\$38,985	\$47,635	\$33,544	0.000
Strong Democrat	0.53	0.14	0.08	0.25	0.000
Democrat	0.54	0.11	0.16	0.19	
Independent	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.20	
Republican	0.23	0.08	0.39	0.30	
Strong Republican	0.14	0.15	0.39	0.33	