What Structures Political Behavior? Evidence from Latino Voters, 2016–2024

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Abstract

What structures political behavior, and which distinctions persist across elections? This study examines what differentiates Latino voters who supported Donald Trump from those who supported other presidential candidates in 2016, 2020, and 2024. Using Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Surveys, random forests, and SHAP, it identifies which variables most clearly distinguish these voters across three nested models that progressively exclude election-proximate and direct partisan measures. Across all three elections, judgments concerning racial justice and immigration consistently emerge among the most informative distinctions. These racialized judgments appear alongside other important differences involving economic expectations, ideology, and evaluations of political events. The analysis also finds that racialized judgments extend beyond policy preferences to perceptions of political parties. Together, these findings underscore racialization as a sociopolitical process shaping political judgments across elections and political environments, including within ethnoracial groups.

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What Structures Political Behavior? Evidence from Latino Voters, 2016–2024

What structures political behavior? Political scientists have long examined the roles of partisanship, ideology, economic interests, social identities, and political evaluations in explaining electoral choice (Campbell et al. 1960; Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981). But these factors do not operate in isolation. Examining them together raises two key questions. Which political differences most clearly separate supporters of competing candidates? Which persist across elections, and which change with the issues and events of each contest?

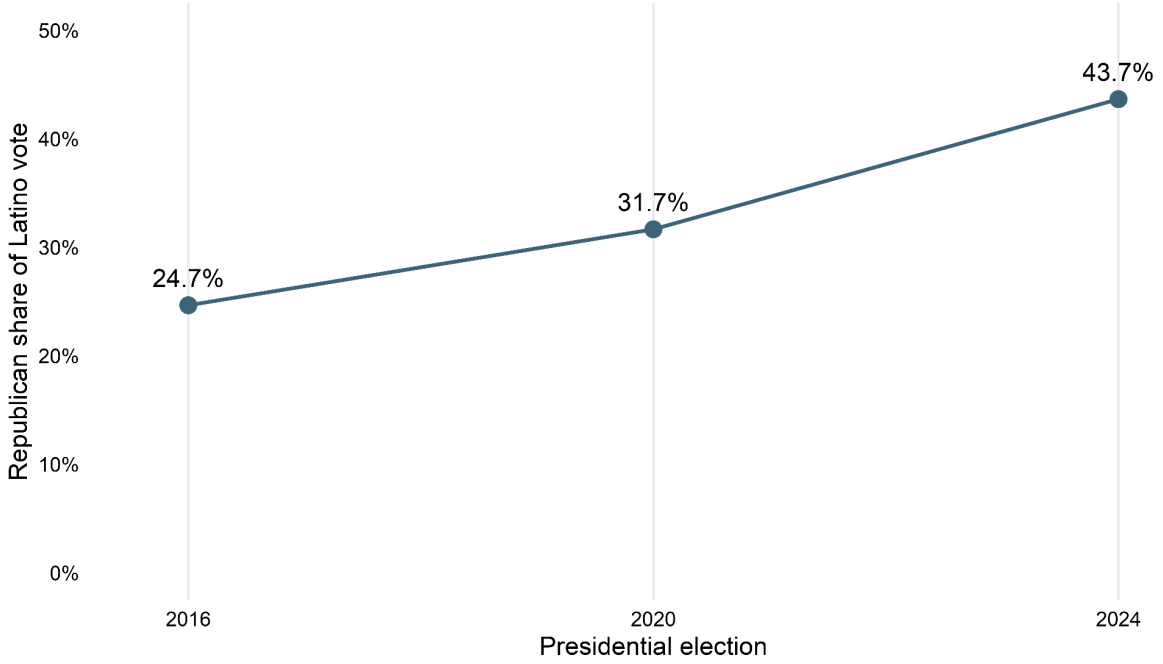
Latinos offer a particularly revealing case for examining these questions. Their diversity in national origin, race, religion, and class is accompanied by substantial differences in partisanship, ideology, and issue positions (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Alvarez and García Bedolla 2003; Barreto and Segura 2014; de la Garza et al. 1992; Fraga et al. 2010; Hajnal and Lee 2011). This heterogeneity allows the analysis to investigate political differences within a shared ethnoracial category without assuming that political preferences or responses are monolithic. The resulting comparisons can inform broader questions about the organization of American political behavior.

The 2016, 2020, and 2024 presidential elections provide two further sources of leverage. First, Trump appeared as the Republican nominee in all three contests, while his opponents and the issues and events surrounding each election changed. His repeated candidacy provides a common electoral alternative against which to distinguish recurring political patterns from those specific to an election. Second, these presidential elections took place at a time when disputes over immigration and national belonging directly implicated Latino communities. At his 2015 campaign announcement, Trump portrayed people arriving from Mexico as bringing drugs and crime into the United States, and being rapists (Trump 2015). During his presidency, his

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administration separated thousands of migrant children from their parents (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General 2019). By the 2024 campaign, Trump was describing undocumented immigrants as "poisoning the blood of our country" (Trump 2023) and promising the largest deportation operation in American history (Republican National Committee 2024). Across these elections, Latino support for Trump increased substantially, although most Latino voters continued to support other candidates, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1. Republican Share of the Latino Presidential Vote, 2016–2024



Notes: Equal-weight averages of Edison/NEP, Pew, and Latino Decisions (2016–2020)/AEP (2024) estimates; see Online Appendix.

This essay examines the political differences associated with Latino voters' self-reported presidential choices and what those differences reveal about the structure of American political behavior. Specifically, the analysis asks which distinctions emerge as election-proximate and direct partisan measures are progressively withheld, and which substantive domains recur across elections. Drawing on the 2016, 2020, and 2024 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Surveys

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(CMPS; Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey n.d.; Frasure et al. 2022, 2024), the study employs an analytical strategy that combines random forests and Shapley additive explanations (SHAP). The surveys allow demographic characteristics, identities, experiences, issue positions, and evaluations to be examined together. Three nested information sets progressively withhold election-proximate and then direct partisan measures. Out-of-sample validation assesses how well the models distinguish held-out respondents (Grimmer, Roberts, and Stewart 2021), while SHAP attribution identifies the measures contributing most to the fitted predictions (Lundberg and Lee 2017). The original survey response distributions provide the substantive context needed to interpret these statistical patterns.

Across the three elections, a recurring core of racialized political judgments concerning racial justice and immigration emerged among the most informative substantive distinctions, although their specific content and prominence varied. Other prominent distinctions included economic expectations, ideology, evaluations of political events, and institutional preferences. Racialized judgments also extended to perceptions of the political parties, including which party voters believed offered the better approach to immigration and how they understood the Republican Party's racial and social character.

Together, these findings suggest that racialization is not confined to racial identities or explicitly measured racial attitudes. It is also implicated in judgments about political objects, from social movements and immigration policy to institutions and partisan alternatives. This study contributes to scholarship on racialized political behavior by examining how these distinct judgments figure in the broader organization of political differences across elections.

The next section reviews established explanations of Latino political behavior, including the developing scholarship on racialized political behavior, establishing the intellectual

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motivation for investigating a broader range of political information. The article then presents the data and analytical strategy, followed by model performance and a review of the substantive differences revealed through the survey responses. Finally, the discussion considers the implications for racialized political behavior and the broader structure of American political behavior.

Understanding Latino Political Behavior

Political Orientations

Partisanship and ideology have long been central to understanding American political behavior. Party identification can provide an enduring attachment through which citizens interpret political issues and candidates (Campbell et al. 1960), even when their ideological beliefs are less consistently organized (Converse 1964). The relationship between these orientations has also changed as the major parties have become more ideologically distinct and partisan affiliations more closely aligned with ideological commitments (Levendusky 2009). Research on Latino political behavior has long examined how partisan attachments develop and why relationships with the major political parties differ. Early scholarship documented differences in partisan affiliation, political values, and issue preferences across Mexican-, Puerto Rican-, and Cuban-origin populations (de la Garza et al. 1992). Subsequent research questioned conventional accounts of party identification rooted primarily in political socialization, finding that ideological and policy commitments, alongside national-origin, religious, and generational differences, help structure Latino partisanship (Alvarez and García Bedolla 2003). At the same time, differences in identity, ideology, and political information help explain why many Latinos remain unaffiliated with either major party (Hajnal and Lee 2011), while overlapping social identities can also shape partisan preferences (Saavedra Cisneros 2017).

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Research has also examined how ideology and issue positions relate to electoral choice. Ideological commitments and policy preferences have long distinguished Latino presidential voters, with moral values and national security contributing to Republican support in the 2004 election (Abrajano, Alvarez, and Nagler 2008). More recently, ideology, issue positions, and presidential vote choice became more closely aligned between 2016 and 2020, consistent with ideological sorting rather than a broad-based shift in Latino political preferences (Fraga, Velez, and West 2025). Qualitative research further demonstrates how longstanding commitments concerning religion, family, and social order can become aligned with Republican partisanship as the parties grow more ideologically distinct, even among Latinos who retain strong attachments to their ethnoracial identity and immigrant heritage (Solís and Pérez 2026).

Identity, Group Consciousness, and Linked Fate

Research on identity, group consciousness, and linked fate places ethnoracial group membership at the center of political behavior. This scholarship asks how racial and ethnic identities acquire political meaning, an inquiry Lee (2008) describes as the identity-to-politics link. Drawing on scholarship in Black politics, this work examines how identification with a group relates to perceptions of shared interests and collective action. Dawson's (1994) concept of linked fate captures the belief that what happens to one's racial group affects one's own life prospects. Group consciousness concerns identification with a group and an understanding of shared circumstances and interests that can inform collective political action (Miller et al. 1981).

Within Latino politics, scholars have examined how ethnic and national-origin attachments contribute to panethnic consciousness and relate to political attitudes. Experiences of discrimination and engagement in politics are associated with stronger panethnic consciousness, alongside differences in nativity and education (Masuoka 2006). Group consciousness has also

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been associated with attitudes toward immigration and bilingual education (Sanchez 2006), while perceptions of linked fate vary with economic marginalization and immigration experiences (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010).

Research on perceived group threats and collective mobilization further examines when these attachments become politically consequential. The "Latino threat" narrative portrays Latinos, particularly Mexican immigrants, as outsiders whose presence challenges American culture and national belonging (Chavez 2008). Research on restrictive immigration legislation shows how immigration policy can become a basis for mobilization, including among citizens not directly subject to deportation (Zepeda-Millán 2017). Political responses to such rhetoric, however, can depend on the strength of group identification. Pérez (2015) finds that xenophobic messages strengthen expressions of group pride and ethnocentrism among Latinos with stronger ethnic attachments relative to those with weaker identification. Group solidarity has also been associated with collective mobilization during the nationwide 2006 immigrant-rights protests (Barreto et al. 2009), while immigrant-linked fate and anger toward anti-Latino rhetoric were associated with political engagement during the 2016 presidential election (Gutierrez et al. 2019).

Racialized Political Behavior

An emerging body of scholarship on Latino politics examines how racialization structures the political environment and shapes political behavior. Racialization refers to the social and political processes through which racial meanings become attached to people, practices, and institutions, shaping how racial hierarchies are established, maintained, and contested (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Omi and Winant 2014). Rather than treating race solely as an

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individual identity or attitude, this research examines how racialization operates through political rhetoric, public policies, and institutions.

An important contribution of this research is its attention to how racialization enters political judgments about immigration and belonging. Studies of immigration enforcement demonstrate that perceived deportation threats can alter the relationship between acculturation and immigration-policy preferences, complicating expectations that greater incorporation produces convergence toward prevailing political attitudes (Roman 2023). Such research also highlights how debates over immigration and enforcement involve more than competing policy preferences. They carry racial meanings concerning citizenship, belonging, and the exercise of state authority.

The scope of this inquiry extends to political judgments about racial hierarchy and relations among groups. Research on Latino attitudes toward Black Lives Matter connects racial identification and intergroup perceptions to evaluations of racial justice and policing (Corral 2020). Racialized judgments can also concern members of one's own ethnoracial group. Research links resentment toward immigrant coethnics to support for restrictive immigration policies and anti-immigrant candidates (Hickel, Oskooii, and Collingwood 2024). What connects this scholarship is an interest in how racialized political conditions shape judgments about distinct political objects, not in identifying one racial attitude shared across those contexts.

A Broader Empirical Inquiry

Scholarship on Latino political behavior has substantially advanced our understanding of political orientations, group attachments, and racialization. These perspectives identify important dimensions of political behavior, but voters bring multiple attachments, experiences, interests, and political judgments to electoral choice. Their relative significance may differ across

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individuals and political circumstances. Elections provide an opportunity to examine these dimensions together through a common political choice, offering insight into what distinguishes supporters of competing candidates.

This study brings these perspectives together to address a foundational question about American politics. What structures political behavior? More specifically, which political distinctions most clearly separate Latino voters who supported Trump from those who chose another candidate in 2016, 2020, and 2024, and which substantive domains recur or change across elections? Rather than beginning with a particular explanation for Trump support, the analysis examines a broad range of political information, including what remains informative when election-proximate and direct partisan measures are withheld.

Data and Analytical Strategy

Data and Study Population

The analysis draws on the 2016, 2020, and 2024 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Surveys (CMPS; Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey n.d.; Frasure et al. 2022, 2024). The CMPS combines large national samples of racial and ethnic populations with extensive questionnaires covering demographic characteristics, identities, experiences, political attachments, issue preferences, and evaluations of political events. The present study examines Latino respondents who reported voting in the presidential election in 2016 (n = 1,655), 2020 (n = 2,087), and 2024 (n = 2,232), comparing those who supported Trump with those who chose another candidate.

Each survey draws a new cross-sectional sample rather than following the same respondents over time. Although they share a common framework, the questionnaires cover recurring substantive domains while incorporating questions that reflect the political issues and

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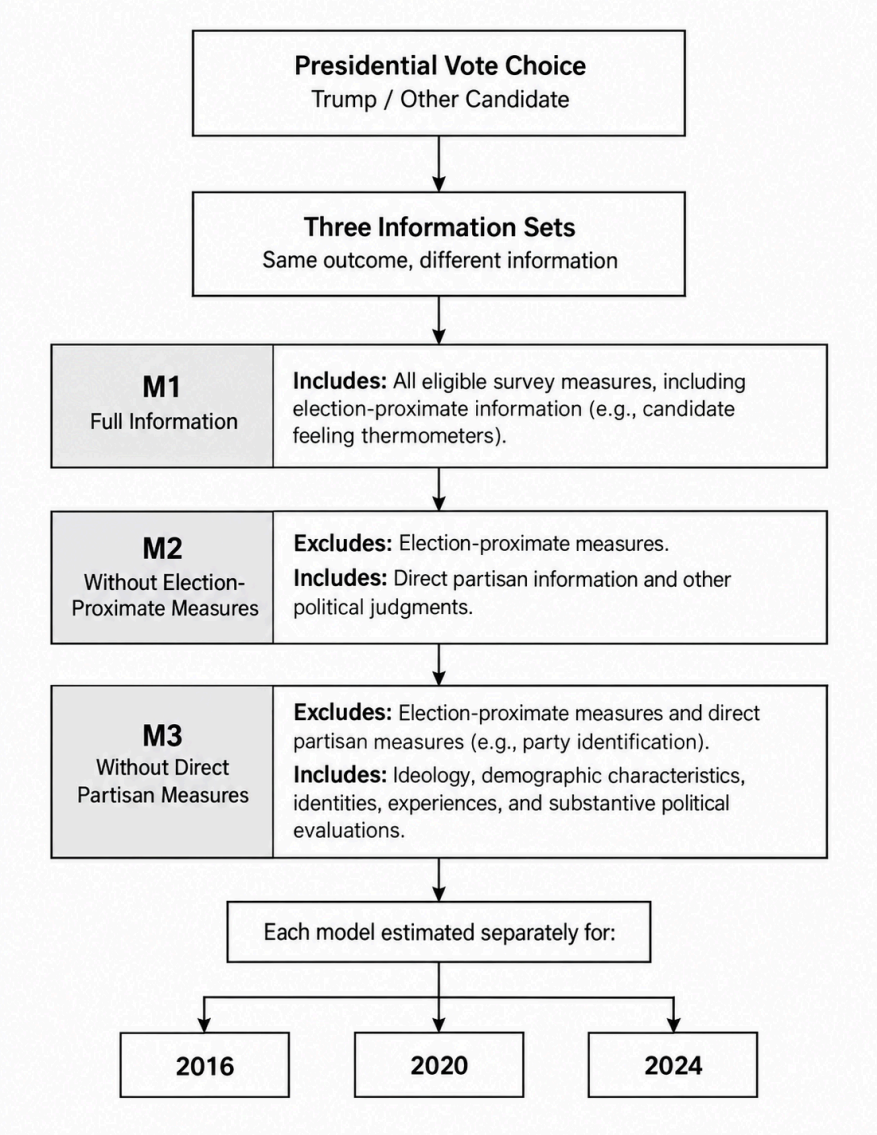
events surrounding each election. This flexibility allows the analysis to examine recurring political distinctions alongside those specific to each election, while limiting direct comparisons of individual questions across elections (see Appendix F). All three surveys were conducted after their respective elections, with the 2024 survey fielded in 2025 following the change in administration. Further details on the samples, weighting, and fieldwork are provided in Appendix A.

Analytical Design

The study employs three nested information sets to examine which political distinctions remain informative as increasingly direct indicators of presidential choice are withheld. The first model (M1) includes all eligible survey variables. The second (M2) excludes election-proximate measures, such as candidate evaluations and reported same-election choices, while retaining direct partisan information. The third (M3) additionally excludes direct partisan measures, including party identification and explicit party comparisons, while retaining ideology, demographic characteristics, identities, experiences, and broader substantive political judgments. This design, as shown in Figure 2, makes it possible to examine which characteristics and judgments remain informative when information most closely aligned with electoral and partisan choices is unavailable.

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Figure 2. Analytical Design Across Three Elections



The same design is applied independently to 2016, 2020, and 2024, producing nine models. Comparing model performance shows how much information remains available to distinguish electoral choices, while examining the contributions of individual variables reveals which substantive judgments become prominent. These comparisons do not isolate causal effects or establish that excluded measures are politically unimportant. Rather, they provide complementary views of the information associated with electoral choice and the substantive patterns that emerge under different specifications.

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Estimation and Interpretation

Random forests are used to estimate the relationship between survey responses and reported presidential vote choice (Breiman 2001). By combining results from multiple decision trees, random forests accommodate nonlinear relationships and interactions without requiring their functional forms to be prespecified. This flexibility is particularly useful for examining a broad range of political information without imposing a predetermined ordering of variables or their relative importance. Models are estimated separately for each election and information set, with performance assessed across three held-out splits for each model. Details on model estimation, tuning, and validation are provided in Appendix B.

Model performance is assessed using the area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC) and the Brier score. AUC measures how well a model distinguishes voters making different presidential choices, with 0.50 indicating chance-level discrimination and 1.00 indicating perfect discrimination (Fawcett 2006). The Brier score measures the average squared difference between predicted probabilities and observed outcomes, with 0 indicating perfect predictions and lower values indicating smaller prediction errors (Brier 1950). Together, these measures assess how well the models distinguish reported electoral choices and the accuracy of their estimated probabilities.

Model performance alone does not reveal which political judgments are most informative or what they mean substantively. The analysis therefore combines out-of-sample validation with Shapley additive explanations (SHAP; Lundberg and Lee 2017) and weighted comparisons of the original survey responses. SHAP identifies which variables contribute most to the fitted models, while the original responses show how voters in each group answered those questions. Table 1 summarizes the analytical components.

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Table 1. Estimation, Validation, and Interpretation

Component	Approach	Interpretation
Estimation	Random forests	Predictive relationships between survey variables and reported electoral choice
Validation	Held-out AUC and Brier score	AUC: 0.50 = chance, 1.00 = perfect discrimination. Lower Brier = less prediction error.
Attribution	SHAP attribution	Mean absolute SHAP identifies the relative prominence of questionnaire measures in fitted predictions.
Substantive interpretation	Weighted survey responses	How Trump voters and other voters answered the selected questions

SHAP attributes contributions to variables within the fitted model (Lundberg et al. 2020). For questions containing multiple components, their contributions are combined at the question level before calculating relative importance. Mean absolute SHAP values identify which questions contribute most prominently to the fitted models, regardless of direction. Table 3 reports the ten leading survey variables for each election as percentages of total within-model attribution. These shares represent relative importance within the fitted model, not the percentage of voters holding a particular view. Signed SHAP values indicate whether a variable contributes toward a higher or lower fitted probability of a Trump vote relative to the model's reference prediction. These contributions depend on the fitted model and available information (Chen et al. 2023; Molnar 2025).

To establish the substantive meaning of these distinctions, the analysis examines weighted distributions of the original survey responses. These comparisons reveal which responses are more common among Trump voters and those who chose another candidate, as well as where their views overlap. Across elections, the analysis considers recurring substantive

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domains while recognizing differences in questionnaire content, measurement, and political circumstances. Complete response distributions are provided in Appendix D.

To assess the stability of these findings, the analysis also compares random forests with alternative models, including elastic net and XGBoost. Additional robustness and sensitivity analyses examine alternative sample definitions, variable specifications, and the information provided by different substantive domains. These procedures and results are documented in Appendix E.

ChatGPT (OpenAI) assisted with R code development, execution, and troubleshooting for the statistical analyses, as well as with the preparation of tables, figures, and the appendix. The analytical procedures, validation checks, and reproducibility documentation are provided in the appendix and replication materials.

Results

How Well the Models Distinguish Voters

The analysis begins by examining how well the models distinguish Trump voters from other voters as different kinds of information are withheld. Table 2 presents performance across three information sets for each election. With full information (M1), the models perform exceptionally well, with AUC values ranging from 0.964 to 0.988. Performance declines as election-proximate information is removed (M2), and again when direct partisan information is withheld (M3). Even after election-proximate and direct partisan measures are withheld, M3 continues to distinguish voters at a high level, with AUC values of 0.906, 0.944, and 0.889.

These findings demonstrate that substantial information distinguishing voters remains even after the most direct electoral and partisan indicators are removed. The next question is which substantive political judgments contribute most to that differentiation.

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Table 2. Analytical Samples and Out-of-Sample Predictive Performance, 2016–2024

Election	Total N	Trump / Other N	M1 AUC / Brier	M2 AUC / Brier	M3 AUC / Brier
2016	1,655	364 / 1,291	0.988 / 0.034	0.956 / 0.060	0.906 / 0.081
2020	2,087	570 / 1,517	0.988 / 0.043	0.972 / 0.063	0.944 / 0.087
2024	2,232	924 / 1,308	0.964 / 0.066	0.951 / 0.081	0.889 / 0.134

Notes: Sample counts are unweighted. Performance values are mean weighted held-out AUC and Brier scores across three splits. M3 improves on the prevalence-only Brier benchmark in every election.

Leading Political Distinctions Across Elections

Table 3 identifies the ten most informative M3 survey variables in each election and shows how Trump voters and other voters responded to selected questions. Together, the rankings and original responses reveal both which political judgments distinguish voters and the substantive differences underlying those distinctions. Complete response distributions are provided in Appendix D.

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Table 3. Leading M3 Measures and Selected Survey Responses, 2016–2024

Panel A. 2016

Rank	Measure	SHAP (%)	Selected response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1	Evaluations of BLM activism	14.2	Strongly oppose BLM activism	57.0	7.2
2	Assessments of BLM effectiveness	7.3	BLM not at all effective	61.8	13.0
3	Perceptions of immigrant discrimination	7.2	Immigrant discrimination: a lot	24.7	70.6
4	Views on amending or repealing health law	2.4	Strongly disagree with amending law	25.0	3.0
5	Reactions to immigrant-rights rally flags	2.4	Flags bother me a lot (form A)	58.9	11.8
6	Views on a federal apology for slavery	2.3	Government should not apologize	72.1	25.8
7	Perceptions of anti-Black discrimination	2.2	Anti-Black discrimination: a lot	19.0	63.9
8	Views on immigrant-rights activism	1.9	Somewhat oppose activism	21.2	2.2
9	Views on police treatment of Latinos	1.9	Police often treat Latinos fairly	43.6	8.5
10	Views on voter photo-ID requirements	1.6	Strongly support voter photo-ID	71.7	33.3

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Panel B. 2020

Rank	Measure	SHAP (%)	Selected response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1	Views on border spending and wall	13.8	Support spending and wall	76.8	20.8
2	Evaluations of Black Lives Matter	10.3	Strongly oppose BLM	57.1	6.1
3	Feelings toward Black Lives Matter	7.4	BLM warmth: 0	32.2	5.9
4	Policy priorities (mainly border security)	5.3	Border security prioritized*	44.0	4.2
5	Political ideology	3.5	Very conservative	36.1	3.0
6	Perceived racial bias in enforcement	2.8	Neither enforcement system biased	61.6	14.3
7	Feelings toward gun owners	2.0	Gun-owner warmth: 75–99	22.5	6.7
8	Views on police-to-community funding	1.9	Strongly oppose funding shift	62.2	16.7
9	Views on border security and migrant deaths	1.8	Strongly agree (despite deaths)	58.4	13.6
10	Perceived LGBTQ political representation	1.6	LGBTQ politicians fairly represented	47.7	24.3

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Panel C. 2024

Rank	Measure	SHAP (%)	Selected response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1	Family economic expectations	22.4	Family outlook: optimistic	77.3	29.4
2	Feelings toward BLM protesters	9.8	BLM protester warmth: 1–24	30.6	8.6
3	Supreme Court appointment preferences	9.2	Liberal racial-minority judges*	14.0	52.9
4	Feelings toward January 6 participants	6.8	Jan. 6 participant warmth: 0	8.2	30.7
5	Feelings toward undocumented immigrants	3.9	Undoc. immigrant warmth: 1–24	27.2	7.3
6	Feelings toward transgender people	2.6	Transgender warmth: 1–24	30.2	10.2
7	Feelings toward Palestine protesters	2.4	Palestine protester warmth: 1–24	27.1	10.1
8	Views on abortion and government bans	1.9	Support government abortion bans	33.3	7.4
9	Political ideology	1.7	Very conservative	21.9	3.0
10	Views on racism, sexism, and anti-LGBT bias	1.6	Strongly agree: fight listed prejudices	24.2	58.3

*Notes: SHAP (%) is each measure's within-year share of total survey-weighted mean absolute parent attribution. Response percentages are weighted within each voting group. Selected answers do not exhaust a measure's response distribution. Form A is a separate question condition; * marks one option within a multi-response item. The 2024 survey was fielded in 2025.*

In 2016, the most prominent distinctions concerned racial justice and immigration. Evaluations of Black Lives Matter (BLM) activism, assessments of its effectiveness, and perceptions of immigrant discrimination occupied the three leading positions. These differences were substantial. Among Trump voters, 57.0% strongly opposed BLM activism, compared with 7.2% of other voters. Meanwhile, 24.7% of Trump voters believed immigrants experienced a lot of discrimination, compared with 70.6% of not-Trump voters. Other prominent distinctions included views on health policy, immigrant-rights activism, discrimination against Black Americans, policing, and voting requirements. The findings reveal differences not only in policy

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preferences but also in how voters understood racial inequality and evaluated movements seeking racial justice.

In 2020, immigration enforcement and BLM remained central, although the questions reflected a different political environment. Support for the proposed $25 billion border-security and wall package was the leading distinction, with 76.8% of Trump voters supporting the proposal compared with 20.8% of other voters. Strong opposition to Black Lives Matter was also pronounced, at 57.1% and 6.1%, respectively. Voters also differed in whether they perceived racial bias in policing and immigration enforcement. These judgments concerned how government authority should be exercised and whether existing enforcement practices were understood as racially unequal. Political ideology, feelings toward gun owners, police funding, and perceived political representation also distinguished voters.

The 2024 findings reveal a different configuration of political judgments. Family economic expectations emerged as the leading distinction, accounting for 22.4% of M3 attribution. Optimism about family economic prospects was reported by 77.3% of Trump voters and 29.4% of other voters. Judgments about racial justice, institutions, and social groups also remained prominent. Feelings toward BLM protesters ranked second, followed by Supreme Court appointment preferences, feelings toward January 6 participants, and feelings toward undocumented immigrants. The judicial preferences revealed particularly notable differences. For example, 14.0% of Trump voters selected liberal racial-minority judges as justices they would support, compared with 52.9% of other voters. Other distinctions included feelings toward transgender people and Palestine protesters, abortion preferences, and ideology.

These findings describe political differences measured after the elections, not necessarily the considerations that motivated voters beforehand. This distinction is especially important in

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2024, when respondents were interviewed in 2025, after both the election and the change in administration.

Political Perceptions of Parties

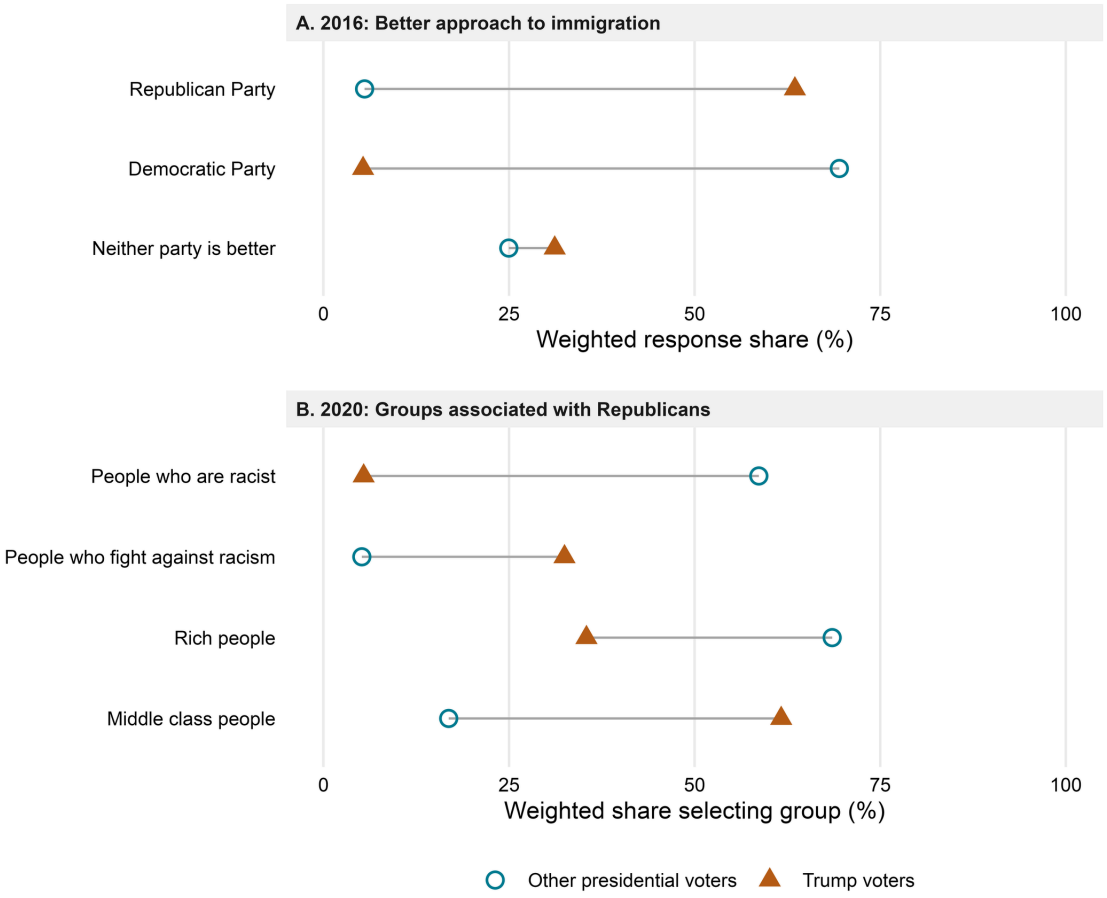
Racialized political judgments also extend to how voters understand the political parties themselves. In 2016, judgments about which party offered the better approach to immigration were the leading M2 variable, ahead of party identification. Among Trump voters, 63.5% selected Republicans as better on immigration, compared with 5.5% of other voters.

In 2020, voters differed substantially in the racial and social characteristics they associated with Republicans. Only 5.4% of Trump voters associated Republicans with people who are racist, compared with 58.6% of other voters. Conversely, 32.5% of Trump voters associated Republicans with people who fight against racism, compared with 5.2% of other voters. These differences also extended to perceptions of class, with Trump voters more likely to associate Republicans with middle-class people and other voters more likely to associate them with wealthy people.

These findings reveal differences not simply in partisan attachments, but in what voters believed the parties represented. Immigration, racial inequality, and social groups informed contrasting understandings of the political and social character of partisan alternatives. Figure 3 presents these differences.

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Figure 3. Political Perceptions of Parties Among Latino Presidential Voters, 2016 and 2020



Notes: Weighted response shares by reported presidential choice. Panel A records which party respondents judged better on immigration (2016). Panel B reports groups associated with Republicans (2020), for which multiple responses were allowed.

Recurring and Changing Political Patterns

Across the three elections, a recurring core of racialized political judgments remained prominent in distinguishing electoral choices. BLM appeared among the leading variables in every election, although voters evaluated activism in 2016, the movement in 2020, and protesters in 2024. Immigration also recurred, through perceptions of discrimination and immigrant-rights activism in 2016, border enforcement and security in 2020, and feelings toward undocumented immigrants in 2024.

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The important continuity lies in the political issues and groups being evaluated, not in a single racial attitude shared across these different judgments. Evaluating a social movement, assessing racial discrimination, supporting an immigration policy, and expressing feelings toward undocumented immigrants are substantively different political judgments. Their recurring prominence shows how racialization enters multiple dimensions of political behavior, even as the particular questions and circumstances change.

At the same time, racialized judgments were not the only important distinctions. Economic expectations, ideology, institutional preferences, and evaluations of political events also distinguished voters, with their prominence varying across elections. The leading role of family economic expectations in 2024 is especially important because it demonstrates how other political considerations can occupy a central position alongside racialized judgments.

Because questionnaire content, measurement opportunities, and fieldwork differed across elections, these comparisons identify recurring substantive domains rather than equivalent changes in the importance of particular attitudes. Additional information on cross-election measurement differences is provided in Appendix F.

Discussion

Electoral Choice and the Structure of Political Behavior

Political behavior research has developed substantial knowledge about how political orientations, interests, identities, and evaluations relate to electoral choice. Much of this scholarship begins with a theoretically motivated relationship, estimating how partisanship, ideology, or group identification is associated with voting. These studies establish the direction and magnitude of particular relationships. This study contributes a complementary perspective by examining how political differences are organized when these considerations are evaluated

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together. Which distinctions most clearly separate voters who choose competing candidates, and what does their relative prominence reveal about political behavior?

Presidential elections provide a particularly valuable setting for investigating this question. They concentrate political attention around competing candidates, issues, and events, bringing different dimensions of political behavior into a common setting (Gelman and King 1993; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018). The electoral significance of established political attachments can also change over time (Bartels 2000). Examining these considerations across elections allows us to identify which substantive distinctions remain prominent and which become especially informative in particular political environments.

The contribution of machine learning here extends beyond its capacity to distinguish voters accurately. It provides a way to investigate the substantive organization of political differences across a broad range of considerations. The nested models establish how much information remains as election-proximate and direct partisan measures are withheld. SHAP identifies the variables contributing most to that differentiation, while examining the original survey responses reveals the specific political judgments distinguishing voters. Together, these analyses move beyond identifying which variables are informative to understanding what those differences represent politically, how they relate to electoral choice, and how their prominence changes across elections. Additionally, this research design can be adapted to other questions and settings in political behavior, offering a systematic approach to investigating political differentiation.

Racialized Political Judgments Across Elections

One of the most consequential findings is that racialized political judgments consistently distinguish Latino voters across elections, but through different substantive questions. In 2016,

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voters differed in their perceptions of discrimination, evaluations of BLM activism, and even reactions to flags displayed at immigrant-rights rallies. In 2020, border enforcement, BLM, and perceptions of racial bias in policing and immigration enforcement figured prominently. By 2024, evaluations of BLM protesters and undocumented immigrants remained informative. These differences extend beyond conventional policy disagreements to how voters understand racial inequality, political protest, and immigrant belonging. The prominence of reactions to flags at immigrant-rights rallies is particularly revealing, demonstrating how even symbolic expressions of immigrant political mobilization can distinguish voters within the Latino electorate.

Racialization also extends to how voters interpret the political parties themselves. In 2016, perceptions of which party offered the better approach to immigration distinguished voters more prominently than party identification in M2. In 2020, voters differed substantially in whether they associated Republicans with people who are racist or those who fight against racism. These differences concern more than partisan preferences. They reveal contrasting understandings of what political parties represent, suggesting that racialized judgments are implicated not only in evaluations of issues and policies but also in the substantive meaning voters attach to partisan alternatives.

Importantly, the prominence of racialized judgments does not diminish the significance of familiar political considerations. Family economic expectations were the leading distinction in 2024, while ideology, institutional preferences, and evaluations of political events also distinguished voters. What makes the findings consequential is that these considerations coexist with substantial differences over racial justice and immigration across all three elections. This is especially revealing within an electorate whose members have themselves been targets of

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racializing political rhetoric. Shared ethnoracial membership does not necessarily produce similar interpretations of racialized political issues, claims, or movements. Instead, these differences can be central to understanding what distinguishes voters, demonstrating the significance of racialization for political heterogeneity within ethnoracial groups.

Racialized Political Behavior in American Politics

The significance of racialization in American politics is well established. Foundational scholarship demonstrates how racial hierarchies and the political alliances surrounding them have shaped American institutions, policymaking, and political development (King and Smith 2005, 2011; Smith and King 2024). Research on racial issue evolution and partisan realignment demonstrates how struggles over racial equality fundamentally reshaped American party politics over decades, reorganizing party coalitions, transforming political identities, and redefining the meaning of partisan attachments (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Schickler 2016). These relationships extend into contemporary party politics, where opposition to immigrants and Latinos has contributed to shifts in white partisanship, policy preferences, and electoral choice (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015). Collectively, this scholarship establishes racialization as an enduring sociopolitical process implicated in the development and organization of American institutions and political life.

A complementary body of political behavior scholarship extends this understanding of racialization by demonstrating its significance for political preferences, electoral choices, and identities. Research on racial resentment has established how anti-Black attitudes shape white Americans' preferences across major policy debates, while subsequent studies demonstrate their growing significance for presidential voting, particularly in 2016 (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2017). Racialization can also transform the political meaning of issues

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not previously understood primarily in racial terms. Health care, for example, became increasingly associated with racial attitudes through its connection to Barack Obama (Tesler 2012). Its significance also extends to political identity itself, as perceived threats to white group status have made white racial identity more salient and consequential for policy preferences and candidate support (Jardina 2019).

A growing body of scholarship extends this inquiry to political heterogeneity within ethnoracial groups, demonstrating how racialization also shapes differences among their members. Research on Black political behavior reveals how interpretations of racial inequality and beliefs about respectability inform political judgments, including support for punitive policies (Jefferson 2023; Kam and Burge 2018, 2019). Among Latinos, ethnic identification and intergroup perceptions shape responses to xenophobic rhetoric and Black Lives Matter (Corral 2020; Pérez 2015), while deportation threats and attitudes toward immigrant coethnics inform immigration preferences and candidate support (Hickel, Oskooii, and Collingwood 2024; Roman 2023).

Rather than examining particular racial attitudes or policy preferences in isolation, this study brings a broad range of political considerations into a common analysis across three presidential elections. This approach reveals the consistent prominence of racialized judgments alongside economic, ideological, and institutional considerations, even as their substantive expression varies across elections. It also brings into view dimensions of racialization that extend beyond policy preferences, particularly how voters evaluate social movements, immigrant groups, and political parties themselves. Importantly, these differences emerge within a Latino electorate subjected to racializing rhetoric and policies, demonstrating how individuals within the same ethnoracial group can interpret and respond differently to racialized political environments.

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Conclusion

The findings of this study raise broader questions about how political judgments develop, acquire meaning, and become connected to one another. If racialization figures in how individuals understand issues, social groups, and political parties, what does this mean for how we understand familiar political orientations such as partisanship, ideology, and economic interests? How do parties and political institutions shape the racial meanings attached to these considerations? And why do individuals interpret and respond differently to racialized political environments, even within the same ethnoracial group? These questions invite a deeper examination of racialization as a sociopolitical process implicated in the development and organization of American political behavior.

Advancing this inquiry requires approaches that examine political judgments together and across elections, rather than studying individual relationships in isolation. The analytical strategy developed here provides one way to identify which substantive differences remain prominent, which change across political environments, and where meaningful similarities exist among voters. These patterns can guide further research into how racialized judgments develop, become connected to partisan and ideological orientations, and shape political behavior over time, while opening new avenues for investigating how deeply racialization is embedded in domains of political behavior not ordinarily understood as racialized. The stakes extend beyond the study of racial identity or racial attitudes. Racialization can also shape what political parties represent, how citizens understand their interests, and the meanings of the very orientations we use to explain American political behavior.

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AI Assistance Disclosure

OpenAI's GPT models were used from April 2025 through October 2026 to assist with manuscript revision, editing, formatting, and the development, debugging, and execution of statistical analyses in R. The most recent assistance used GPT-6.1 (gpt-6.1-sol). Assistance was accessed through ChatGPT and, for the most recent work, the Codex desktop application. The research, substantive arguments, and interpretation of findings are the author's original work. The author takes responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the manuscript.

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What Structures Political Behavior? Evidence from Latino Voters, 2016-2024

Online Appendix

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A. Data and measurement

The study uses three independent post-election CMPS cross-sections. Each analytical sample contains Latino respondents reporting a valid presidential vote and contrasts Trump voters with voters choosing another candidate. The latter group includes third-party and other valid choices; it is not treated as a single political coalition. Table A1 documents the accepted sample and measurement contracts (Frasure et al. 2022, 2024; Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey 2025).

Table A1. CMPS samples, outcome definitions, weights, and timing

Feature	2016 election	2020 election	2024 election
Release	ICPSR 38040, v2, DS0001	ICPSR 39096, v1, DS0001	November 24, 2025 Data Extract II; combined adult release
Fieldwork	Dec. 3, 2016-Feb. 15, 2017	April 2-Aug. 25, 2021 (primary sample)	May 15-Sept. 2, 2025 (analytical voters); full release through Oct. 6
Latino population	ETHNIC_QUOTA=2	BASELINE=1; RACE=2	adult=1; qraceid=2; finite positive wt_adult_ps
Voter pathway	S5=1; C12=1; C14 in 1:5	S6=1; Q12 in 1:2; Q14 in 1:5	s27=1; q12 in 3:4; q17 in 1:3; voter pipe verified
Trump / other outcome	C14=2 / C14 in {1,3,4,5}	Q14=1 / Q14 in 2:5	q17=1 / q17 in 2:3
Analytical N: Trump / other	1,655: 364 / 1,291	2,087: 570 / 1,517	2,232: 924 / 1,308
Survey weight	WEIGHT; untrimmed	WEIGHT; primary-sample weight	wt_adult_ps; adult primary-sample weight
Calibration target	2015 ACS adult margins, within racial/ethnic groups	2019 ACS adult margins, within racial groups	2023 ACS adult margins by primary race; within-group and national composition targets
Ranked parents: M1 / M2 / M3	727 / 703 / 689	577 / 545 / 527	350 / 330 / 311

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Notes: Counts are unweighted. Rank counts refer to parents in the accepted across-fit ranking, not a harmonized questionnaire. Survey weights calibrate adult populations and are applied to the voter subsets without a separate Latino-voter turnout calibration. Reported vote is not administratively validated by this analysis.

M1 contains the broad eligible information set, including candidate and same-election information. M2 removes election-proximate items while retaining direct partisan information. M3 additionally removes direct partisan identity, strength, leaning, histories, evaluations, and explicit party comparisons. Ideology and substantive issue judgments remain eligible. Examples of election-proximate exclusions include candidate favorability, campaign contact, and election-legitimacy judgments; direct partisan exclusions include party identification, the 2016 immigration-party comparison, and the 2020 party-association checklist. These cumulative exclusions are information-withholding designs, not causal mediation or treatment decompositions.

Recruitment combined voter-file-linked invitations and online-panel sources, with multilingual instruments. The releases and questionnaires differ. In 2016, the release contains 3,002 Latino records, versus 3,003 in the instrument methodology. In 2020, the operational BASELINE flag identifies 14,977 records, including 3,951 RACE-Latino records, versus 14,988 primary interviews and 4,006 Latino interviews in the methodology statement. The primary 2020 sample also retains 26 voter records marked S6_NON=3 (TERM in the instrument); the final programmed-screening/release rule remains unresolved. The completed Exclude TERM check addresses this ambiguity without replacing the accepted primary sample. The 2024 population uses the updated adult flag and positive adult primary-sample weight; the historical primaryadult flag is used only in a sensitivity analysis.

B. Estimation and validation

Random forests are fitted separately for each election and information set (Breiman 2001). Three outcome-stratified 75/25 development/holdout partitions use seeds 201601-201603, 202001-202003, and 202401-202403. Each development partition has an outcome-stratified 80/20 inner split at seed + 11. Tuning minimizes survey-weighted inner-validation Brier loss; the untouched outer holdout never selects settings. Forest case weights are normalized to mean one.

Preprocessing is learned within the relevant training partition. Rare categorical levels with fewer than ten training observations are pooled as rare/novel; unseen holdout levels follow that learned mapping. Numeric missing values use training medians and, where required, missing indicators. One-hot encoding and constant-column removal are training-only operations. Documented routing, eligible nonselection, nonresponse, and alternative-form states are preserved. In 2016, screening requires at least 30 observed values, no more than 90% missingness, and nonconstant observed values; later waves additionally apply the frozen measurement-certification contracts. No retrospective outcome-based recoding is introduced.

The nine-setting forest grid crosses three mtry rules - floor(sqrt(p)), floor(0.20p), and floor(0.40p), with a minimum of one - with terminal node sizes 5, 20, and 50; p is the encoded training-column count. Tuning forests contain 150 trees and final refits 300 trees, using two threads and seed offsets +20 and +30. Table A3 records the accepted settings. Calibration and validation below are the saved diagnostics, not newly estimated or corrected probabilities.

Table A2. Validation beyond manuscript Table 2

Election / model	AUC range	Brier range	Null Brier: mean; range	Calibration intercept: mean; range	Calibration slope: mean; range
2016 / M1	[0.981, 0.992]	[0.033, 0.037]	0.146; [0.139, 0.151]	-0.285; [-0.466, -0.188]	1.848; [1.387, 2.112]
2016 / M2	[0.933, 0.969]	[0.053, 0.070]	0.146; [0.139, 0.151]	-0.353; [-0.445, -0.238]	1.439; [1.092, 1.726]
2016 / M3	[0.904, 0.908]	[0.077, 0.085]	0.146; [0.139, 0.151]	-0.332; [-0.396, -0.259]	1.501; [1.329, 1.598]
2020 / M1	[0.982, 0.992]	[0.034, 0.054]	0.202; [0.193, 0.217]	0.142; [0.117, 0.193]	1.890; [1.676, 2.072]
2020 / M2	[0.972, 0.973]	[0.057, 0.076]	0.202; [0.193, 0.217]	0.065; [0.034, 0.080]	1.867; [1.522, 2.289]
2020 / M3	[0.939, 0.949]	[0.083, 0.091]	0.202; [0.193, 0.217]	-0.073; [-0.152, 0.016]	1.784; [1.645, 2.031]

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Election / model	AUC range	Brier range	Null Brier: mean; range	Calibration intercept: mean; range	Calibration slope: mean; range
2024 / M1	[0.956, 0.970]	[0.062, 0.071]	0.235; [0.232, 0.238]	-0.021; [-0.116, 0.169]	1.208; [1.091, 1.267]
2024 / M2	[0.945, 0.957]	[0.079, 0.083]	0.235; [0.232, 0.238]	0.019; [-0.064, 0.176]	1.227; [1.120, 1.333]
2024 / M3	[0.884, 0.894]	[0.133, 0.137]	0.235; [0.232, 0.238]	-0.124; [-0.237, -0.021]	1.472; [1.367, 1.644]

Notes: AUC/Brier means appear in manuscript Table 2 and are not duplicated here. All metrics are survey-weighted holdout diagnostics. The null prediction is the development-set outcome prevalence. Ideal calibration has intercept 0 and slope 1. Ranges span three overlapping, fixed holdouts; they are not confidence intervals. Probabilities are not recalibrated using these diagnostics.

Table A3. Accepted forest tuning selections

Election / model	Fit 1: mtry / node	Fit 2: mtry / node	Fit 3: mtry / node
2016 / M1	0.40p / 5	0.40p / 20	0.20p / 5
2016 / M2	0.40p / 20	0.20p / 5	0.40p / 5
2016 / M3	0.40p / 5	0.20p / 5	0.20p / 5
2020 / M1	0.20p / 5	0.40p / 50	0.40p / 5
2020 / M2	0.20p / 5	sqrt(p) / 5	0.20p / 20
2020 / M3	0.20p / 20	0.40p / 5	0.20p / 20
2024 / M1	0.20p / 5	0.20p / 20	0.20p / 5
2024 / M2	0.40p / 5	0.20p / 5	0.40p / 5
2024 / M3	0.40p / 5	0.20p / 5	0.20p / 20

Notes: Fits 1-3 correspond to the three seeds listed above, in ascending order. Fractions and square roots are floored, with a minimum mtry of one. Inner-validation tuning and refitting use their own learned encoded column counts. These are the saved selections, not a new tuning search.

Exact TreeSHAP uses the full, unweighted development reference; its baseline is the mean reference prediction (Lundberg and Lee 2017; Lundberg et al. 2020). Encoded signed contributions are summed within their frozen questionnaire parent before absolute values are taken. Global and vote-group summaries then use survey weights within each holdout. The 2016 signed contributions were recovered previously by exact deterministic reproduction of the nine locked primary fits, using saved tuning selections; the original settings and results were retained. Validation matched saved performance, calibration bins, response-conditioned attribution, and ranks. Original individual prediction vectors were not preserved, so this validation does not claim a pointwise comparison to unavailable originals. No fits, tuning searches, or calibration regressions were run to prepare this appendix.

C. Expanded rankings and SHAP interpretation

A questionnaire parent represents an original question or an accepted multi-component battery. Its mean absolute SHAP is the weighted mean magnitude of the summed signed contribution within each holdout, averaged across accepted fits. Attribution shares divide that parent magnitude by the sum over all retained parents in the same election and model. In 2016, the original conditional-on-retention averaging and unresolved-context denominator are preserved. Raw magnitudes and shares are not placed on a common cross-election scale.

Table A4 gives the full minimum set reaching 50% attribution for M1 and M2, plus the 2016 M3 measures beyond the manuscript top ten needed to complete its 50% set. Fifty percent is an accepted reporting rule, not a significance threshold. The 2020 M3 top ten reach 50.4%; the 2024 top five reach 52.0%. The 2016 M3 top ten reach 43.5%, and sixteen parents are needed to reach 50.4%.

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Table A4. Expanded leading-parent sets

Rank	Questionnaire parent	Share (%)	Rank range	Fits retained
2016: Model 1				
1	Donald Trump favorability (C6)	20.48	1-1	3/3
2	Hillary Clinton favorability (C4)	14.90	2-3	3/3
3	Reported congressional vote (C15)	12.78	2-4	3/3
4	Barack Obama favorability (C2)	12.16	3-4	3/3
2016: Model 2				
1	Party with better immigration approach (L46)	18.36	1-1	3/3
2	Party identification (C25)	9.79	2-2	3/3
3	Republican identification history (L28R)	7.74	3-5	3/3
4	Democratic identification history (L28D)	6.05	3-5	3/3
5	Support for Black Lives Matter activism (C228)	6.00	4-5	3/3
6	Democratic Party favorability (L293)	3.39	6-6	3/3
2020: Model 1				
1	Favorability toward Donald Trump (Q2R1)	23.76	1-1	3/3
2	Trump's responsibility for the COVID-19 toll (Q130)	18.06	2-2	3/3
3	Favorability toward Joe Biden (Q2R3)	7.51	3-4	3/3
4	Trump's responsibility for the January 6 attack (Q54)	5.95	3-5	3/3
2020: Model 2				
1	Party identification (Q21)	10.10	1-5	3/3
2	History of Republican identification (Q24)	7.32	2-3	3/3
3	History of Democratic identification (Q25)	6.48	2-6	3/3
4	Border-security spending and wall (Q543)	5.38	4-9	3/3
5	Issue priorities (mainly border security in Model 3) (Q1)	4.60	3-8	3/3
6	Strength of party identification (Q22)	4.50	5-8	3/3
7	Groups associated with Republicans (Q28)	4.46	1-9	3/3
8	Warmth toward Black Lives Matter (0-100) (Q308R7)	4.18	5-9	3/3
9	Support for Black Lives Matter (Q358)	3.61	7-12	3/3
2024: Model 1				
1	Reported 2024 congressional vote (q18)	39.91	1-1	3/3
2	Party identification (s28)	9.30	2-3	3/3
3	Democratic identification history (q6)	7.32	2-4	3/3
2024: Model 2				
1	Party identification (s28)	20.79	1-1	3/3
2	Republican identification history (q5)	14.24	2-3	3/3
3	Democratic identification history (q6)	13.64	2-3	3/3
4	Warmth toward Republicans (q3r2)	8.17	4-4	3/3

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Rank	Questionnaire parent	Share (%)	Rank range	Fits retained
2016: additional M3 parents completing the 50% set				
11	Perceived discrimination against gays and lesbians (C248)	1.37	10-12	3/3
12	Federal laws addressing climate change (C42)	1.34	9-14	3/3
13	Political ideology (C31)	1.20	8-16	3/3
14	Immigrants and competition for resources (BLA207)	1.09	10-17	3/3
15	Support for gay, lesbian and bisexual rights activism (L241)	1.01	9-27	3/3
16	Racial composition of place of worship (C133)	0.86	13-21	3/3

Notes: Shares use all retained parents in the respective model, including unresolved 2016 context. Rank ranges are minimum/maximum saved-fit ranks; retention counts identify whether a parent survived training preprocessing in each fit. An unresolved-context label names a field, not an established substantive construct.

Table A5. Magnitude, rank stability, and signed attribution for the manuscript M3 measures

Rank / parent ID	Mean |SHAP| (pp)	Rank range	Trump signed mean (pp)	Other signed mean (pp)
2016: manuscript M3 top ten				
1. C228	6.26	1-1	9.94	-1.48
2. BL229	3.20	2-3	4.27	-0.67
3. C246	3.17	2-3	2.26	-0.57
4. C45	1.06	6-7	1.14	-0.32
5. C142	1.06	4-8	1.69	-0.24
6. C158	1.03	4-10	1.15	-0.27
7. C244	0.99	5-14	0.80	-0.24
8. L300	0.86	5-11	1.10	-0.35
9. L231	0.85	5-11	0.77	-0.31
10. C44	0.70	8-13	0.37	-0.21
2020: manuscript M3 top ten				
1. Q543	7.23	1-1	6.89	-2.25
2. Q358	5.38	2-3	6.18	-2.36
3. Q308R7	3.85	3-4	3.45	-1.07
4. Q1	2.79	2-7	2.83	-1.24
5. Q43	1.82	5-6	2.23	-0.58
6. Q485	1.46	4-12	1.26	-0.35
7. Q308R2	1.06	7-8	0.51	-0.38
8. Q706_Q708R1	0.98	6-11	0.65	-0.35
9. Q184R1	0.95	6-12	0.46	-0.40
10. Q563_Q572R10	0.84	8-10	0.62	-0.01

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Rank / parent ID	Mean |SHAP| (pp)	Rank range	Trump signed mean (pp)	Other signed mean (pp)
2024: manuscript M3 top ten				
1. q30	13.26	1-1	7.39	-4.37
2. q3r18	5.79	2-3	2.80	-1.76
3. q10	5.43	2-3	3.17	-2.07
4. q3r17	4.04	4-4	1.87	-1.45
5. q3r16	2.29	5-5	0.74	-0.86
6. q3r15	1.55	6-7	0.75	-0.44
7. q3r19	1.41	6-8	0.43	-0.40
8. q283	1.11	9-10	0.45	-0.37
9. q8	0.98	8-11	0.57	-0.41
10. q222	0.96	7-14	0.32	-0.19

Notes: Parent names and original responses appear in Tables A6-A8. Signed means condition the same fitted model on actual reported vote groups and average within-fit weighted quantities across fits. Their signs refer to the model reference prediction; distance from zero is not attitudinal extremity. Mean absolute magnitude, signed contribution, and observed response prevalence are different quantities. No value is a causal effect; cross-election raw magnitude comparisons are not authorized.

D. Complete original survey responses

Tables A6-A8 expand all thirty measures in manuscript Table 3. Percentages use the full locked vote-group weight sum once per respondent, not pooled holdouts. The 2016 flag experiment uses group-by-form denominators. Original categorical options are retained, including neutral and nonresponse states where present. Continuous 0-100 thermometers use the established exhaustive display bins: 0, 1-24, 25-49, 50, 51-74, 75-99, and 100. These bins do not alter the fitted continuous variables. Percentages may not total exactly 100 after rounding.

For checklists, the selected percentage is shown for every original option; its nonselected percentage is exactly 100 minus that value within the same denominator. Thus both binary response states are recoverable without doubling table length. Selection shares across options need not sum to 100, and nonselection is not affirmative opposition. Question text is shortened only in measure headings; response meanings, raw field membership, and certified conditions are unchanged.

Table A6. 2016: complete response distributions for the ten leading M3 measures

Original response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1. Support for Black Lives Matter activism (C228)		
Strongly support	2.9	26.2
Somewhat support	10.5	31.4
Neither support or oppose	16.6	29.4
Somewhat oppose	13.0	5.8
Strongly oppose	57.0	7.2
2. Expected BLM effectiveness for Black equality (BL229)		
Very effective	1.9	10.0
Somewhat effective	10.5	37.3
Not too effective	17.6	27.9
Not at all effective	61.8	13.0
Don't know	8.2	11.8

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Original response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
3. Perceived discrimination against immigrants (C246)		
A lot	24.7	70.6
Some	39.6	21.4
A little	25.8	5.2
None at all	7.6	0.9
Don't know	2.2	2.0
4. Amending versus repealing the health care law (C45)		
Strongly agree	22.2	52.5
Agree	20.1	29.1
Neither agree nor disagree	14.1	10.8
Disagree	18.6	4.5
Strongly disagree	25.0	3.0
5. Flags at immigrant-rights rallies (C142)		
Form A: Mexican flags; Trump n=183, other n=646		
Strongly support	7.3	33.9
Somewhat support	17.7	39.9
Bothers me a lot	58.9	11.8
Bothers me a little	16.2	14.5
Form B: American and other-country flags; Trump n=181, other n=645		
Strongly support	9.9	54.7
Somewhat support	22.9	31.9
Bothers me a lot	46.8	4.1
Bothers me a little	20.4	9.3
6. Federal apology for slavery (C158)		
Should	12.9	48.7
Should not	72.1	25.8
Don't know	15.0	25.6
7. Perceived discrimination against Blacks (C244)		
A lot	19.0	63.9
Some	44.1	26.0
A little	27.9	7.5
None at all	7.2	0.7
Don't know	1.8	1.9
8. Support for immigrant-rights activism (L300)		
Strongly support	4.1	34.1
Somewhat support	17.9	32.0
Neither support or oppose	36.8	29.4
Somewhat oppose	21.2	2.2
Strongly oppose	20.0	2.3

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Original response	Trump (%)	Other (%)
9. Perceived police treatment of Latinos (L231)		
Often treated fairly	43.6	8.5
Sometimes treated fairly	28.8	26.8
Sometimes treated unfairly	23.9	47.2
Often treated unfairly	3.7	17.6
10. Photo identification requirement for voting (C44)		
Strongly agree	71.7	33.3
Agree	18.0	25.6
Neither agree nor disagree	7.0	19.2
Disagree	1.6	13.7
Strongly disagree	1.7	8.3

Notes: Full-group denominators: 364 Trump and 1,291 other voters, except C142 forms A/B, whose counts appear above. C45 asks whether the health-care law should be amended and improved rather than repealed; disagreement is not a generic opposition to health care. C44 concerns requiring state-issued photo identification for voting. C142 describes immigrant-rights rallies and keeps the Mexican-flag and American/other-flag wording separate; no experimental treatment effect is estimated.

Table A7. 2020: complete response distributions for the ten leading M3 measures

Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1. Border-security spending and wall (Q543)		
Support $25 billion for border security, including a U.S.-Mexico wall	76.8	20.8
Oppose $25 billion for border security, including a U.S.-Mexico wall	23.2	79.2
2. Support for Black Lives Matter (Q358)		
Strongly support	5.2	33.5
Somewhat support	6.8	32.4
Neither support nor oppose	16.1	22.5
Somewhat oppose	14.8	5.4
Strongly oppose	57.1	6.1
3. Warmth toward Black Lives Matter (0-100) (Q308R7)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	32.2	5.9
1-24	45.5	20.3
25-49	8.2	11.6
50 (neutral midpoint)	4.0	6.0
51-74	5.7	18.7
75-99	4.3	27.8
100 (favorable endpoint)	0.1	9.7

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Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
4. Issue priorities (mainly border security in Model 3) (Q1)		
Responding to Coronavirus / COVID-19	13.7	32.8
Lowering the costs of health care	22.4	33.7
Improving wages and incomes	16.1	25.5
Unemployment / Creating more jobs	22.4	14.0
Stopping discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities	5.6	27.7
Criminal justice and police reform	7.7	15.3
Protecting immigrant rights	3.3	13.4
Improving K-12 education and schools	6.2	9.3
Lowering taxes	33.9	13.4
Decrease government spending	22.6	3.9
Combating climate change and pollution	2.8	17.4
Creating more affordable housing	3.5	9.0
Addressing mass shootings and gun safety policy	4.5	17.2
Lowering the cost of college	4.6	5.9
Protecting women's reproductive health	0.8	7.0
Limiting abortion	8.7	1.0
Stopping the left-wing Democratic agenda [excluded from M3]	31.7	0.6
Stopping the right-wing Republican agenda [excluded from M3]	0.4	9.8
Border security to control immigration	44.0	4.2
Combating terrorism	9.0	3.2
Reducing crime	18.4	9.2
Eliminating voter suppression	0.9	12.2
Other	1.4	1.6
5. Political ideology (Q43)		
Very Liberal	2.4	17.4
Somewhat Liberal	3.6	27.7
Moderate	23.8	41.4
Somewhat Conservative	30.8	7.3
Very Conservative	36.1	3.0
None of these	3.3	3.3
6. Racial bias in policing and immigration enforcement (Q485)		
Neither enforcement system racially biased	61.6	14.3
Both enforcement systems racially biased	26.9	73.2
Only policing of Black people racially biased	5.9	6.3
Only immigration enforcement for Latinos racially biased	5.6	6.2

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Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
7. Warmth toward gun owners (0-100) (Q308R2)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	2.5	14.0
1-24	17.4	38.9
25-49	13.6	18.2
50 (neutral midpoint)	11.1	7.7
51-74	17.1	12.4
75-99	22.5	6.7
100 (favorable endpoint)	15.9	2.1
8. Shift police funding to community programs (Q706_Q708R1)		
Strongly favor	4.4	15.6
Somewhat favor	5.6	22.1
Neither favor nor oppose	17.2	27.6
Somewhat oppose	10.5	18.0
Strongly oppose	62.2	16.7
9. Border security even if migrants die crossing (Q184R1)		
Strongly agree	58.4	13.6
Weakly agree	16.6	16.6
Neither agree nor disagree	16.4	25.8
Weakly disagree	5.0	14.5
Strongly disagree	3.6	29.5
10. Representation of LGBTQ people among U.S. politicians (Q563_Q572R10)		
Underrepresented	29.0	69.6
Fairly represented	47.7	24.3
Overrepresented	23.3	6.1

Notes: Full-group denominators: 570 Trump and 1,517 other voters. Q1 permits up to three priorities; all 23 original options appear, including two explicitly partisan options excluded from M3. Its nonselected percentages are 100 minus the displayed values. Q485 asks jointly about racial bias in policing of Black people and immigration enforcement of Latinos. Q706_Q708R1 couples reduced police funding with community reinvestment. Q184R1 explicitly includes migrant deaths. The provider-supplied combined fields Q706_Q708R1 and Q563_Q572R10 are retained as certified; no new merging or experimental contrast is performed. Q563_Q572R10 concerns perceived LGBTQ representation among politicians.

Table A8. 2024: complete response distributions for the ten leading M3 measures

Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
1. Family economic outlook (q30)		
Optimistic that things are getting better	77.3	29.4
Pessimistic that things are getting worse	14.3	60.3
Don't know	8.4	10.2

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Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
2. Warmth toward BLM protesters (q3r18)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	14.3	2.3
1-24	30.6	8.6
25-49	16.0	13.7
50 (neutral midpoint)	5.1	5.5
51-74	17.2	23.5
75-99	12.0	28.5
100 (favorable endpoint)	4.9	17.9
3. Supreme Court appointment preferences (q10)		
Liberal racial minority judges	14.0	52.9
Conservative racial minority judges	40.6	22.1
Liberal white judges	12.5	30.2
Conservative white judges	34.5	9.9
Liberal women judges	12.7	47.6
Conservative women judges	31.3	15.9
Don't know	30.6	22.6
4. Warmth toward January 6 participants (q3r17)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	8.2	30.7
1-24	22.5	37.2
25-49	19.1	11.7
50 (neutral midpoint)	10.2	3.6
51-74	21.9	10.0
75-99	12.0	4.8
100 (favorable endpoint)	6.1	2.1
5. Warmth toward undocumented immigrants (q3r16)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	11.5	2.7
1-24	27.2	7.3
25-49	20.4	16.5
50 (neutral midpoint)	5.4	7.1
51-74	17.7	24.9
75-99	12.4	26.0
100 (favorable endpoint)	5.4	15.5
6. Warmth toward transgender people (q3r15)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	14.3	4.4
1-24	30.2	10.2
25-49	19.1	15.5
50 (neutral midpoint)	5.6	7.1
51-74	14.9	22.6
75-99	10.9	24.4
100 (favorable endpoint)	4.8	15.9

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Original response / selected checklist option	Trump (%)	Other (%)
7. Warmth toward Palestine protesters (q3r19)		
0 (unfavorable endpoint)	13.9	3.3
1-24	27.1	10.1
25-49	18.7	17.5
50 (neutral midpoint)	5.9	7.5
51-74	18.8	24.0
75-99	10.2	22.7
100 (favorable endpoint)	5.4	15.0
8. Personal abortion position and government bans (q283)		
I am against abortion and support government efforts to ban abortion	33.3	7.4
I am personally against abortion, but it is wrong for the government to ban abortion for women who might choose that	28.8	29.6
I always support abortion rights for women who might choose that	27.8	57.7
None of these	10.1	5.3
9. Political ideology (q8)		
Very liberal	3.1	18.9
Liberal	5.7	23.1
Moderate, but lean liberal	4.3	14.7
Middle-of-the road/moderate	18.4	23.2
Moderate, but lean conservative	16.7	5.0
Conservative	24.1	6.2
Very conservative	21.9	3.0
I don't think of myself in these terms	5.8	5.8
10. Joint opposition to racism, sexism and anti-LGBT prejudice (q222)		
Strongly agree	24.2	58.3
Somewhat agree	32.8	22.9
Neither agree nor disagree	25.9	14.6
Somewhat disagree	8.1	2.8
Strongly disagree	8.9	1.5

Notes: Full-group denominators: 924 Trump and 1,308 other voters. All attitudes were measured in 2025. q30 asks about expected family economic prospects over the next few years. q10 asks which groups of future Supreme Court justices respondents would support; all seven options appear, with nonselection equal to 100 minus selection. Multiple selections are allowed; do not interpret nonselection as opposition. The instrument specifies ordinary people, rather than candidates, for q3 thermometers; the January 6 target is people who participated in the January 6, 2021 insurrection. q8 retains its original eight-category ideology scale. q222 asks jointly about fighting racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia; no separate dimension is inferred from this one item.

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Table A9. Complete response evidence for manuscript Figure 3

Original response / selected group	Trump (%)	Other (%)
2016: which party has the better approach to immigration? (L46)		
Republican	63.5	5.5
Democrat	5.3	69.5
Neither party is better than the other	31.2	25.0
2020: groups associated with Republicans (Q28)		
Older Americans	51.8	50.4
Younger Americans	17.2	5.6
Men	50.1	42.9
Women	37.4	14.9
LGBTQ Americans	8.9	3.4
Catholics	38.5	22.4
Protestants	36.8	23.3
Jews	19.6	7.2
Muslims	7.1	1.8
Hindus	7.4	1.9
Buddhists	8.0	1.6
Atheists	6.2	7.3
Agnostics	6.0	5.5
Non-religious people	10.4	9.0
Rich people	35.4	68.5
Poor people	16.7	8.6
Middle class people	61.7	16.9
People who are racist	5.4	58.6
People who fight against racism	32.5	5.2

Notes: 2016 denominators: 364 Trump and 1,291 other voters. 2020 denominators: 570 Trump and 1,517 other voters. The full Q28 checklist contains 19 options, including those omitted from the manuscript figure; nonselection is 100 minus each displayed percentage. Associations do not measure approval of, or identification with, a listed group. These direct party perceptions remain eligible in M2 and are excluded from M3.

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Table A10. Interpretation of the two leading multi-component batteries

Original component	Mean |component SHAP| (pp)	Share of component magnitudes (%)
2020 Q1: component attribution within the M3 priority parent		
Responding to Coronavirus / COVID-19	0.068	2.1
Lowering the costs of health care	0.012	0.4
Improving wages and incomes	0.016	0.5
Unemployment / Creating more jobs	0.017	0.5
Stopping discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities	0.149	4.5
Criminal justice and police reform	0.009	0.3
Protecting immigrant rights	0.036	1.1
Improving K-12 education and schools	0.004	0.1
Lowering taxes	0.058	1.8
Decrease government spending	0.157	4.7
Combating climate change and pollution	0.029	0.9
Creating more affordable housing	0.008	0.2
Addressing mass shootings and gun safety policy	0.036	1.1
Lowering the cost of college	0.013	0.4
Protecting women's reproductive health	0.007	0.2
Limiting abortion	0.142	4.3
Border security to control immigration	2.487	75.1
Combating terrorism	0.034	1.0
Reducing crime	0.012	0.4
Eliminating voter suppression	0.014	0.4
Other	0.004	0.1
2024 q10: component attribution within the court parent		
Liberal racial minority judges	3.668	52.7
Conservative racial minority judges	0.186	2.7
Liberal white judges	0.086	1.2
Conservative white judges	0.569	8.2
Liberal women judges	2.373	34.1
Conservative women judges	0.066	0.9
Don't know	0.015	0.2

Notes: Q1R17/Q1R18 are omitted from M3 attribution by design; Table A7 retains their original response prevalences. Shares here divide by the sum of component magnitudes within the parent, not total model attribution. Summing absolute component magnitudes does not recover absolute parent magnitude, because signed contributions can cancel before the parent absolute value is taken. This component audit supplements rather than replaces the frozen parent ranking. Court selected/unselected signed summaries were saved, but respondent-level component SHAP was not retained; no new component-by-vote-group attribution is supplied.

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E. Robustness and sensitivity

This section reports completed checks relevant to the stability and interpretation of the manuscript findings. Alternative learners assess dependence on the prespecified forest; they do not replace it after observing performance. Family-only models ask how informative a measured domain is on its own. Omission models ask what information is lost when measured substitutes remain. Joint-row permutation asks how much a fitted learner relies on a family; it differs from the omission refits. All below are saved results.

Table A11. Accepted alternative-learner and specification checks

Specification	AUC: mean; range	Brier: mean; range	Holdout N range	Prediction correlation: mean; range
2016				
Two-party	0.910; [0.902, 0.916]	0.079; [0.075, 0.082]	[369, 376]	Not saved
No ideology	0.902; [0.899, 0.907]	0.081; [0.078, 0.084]	[414, 414]	Not saved
Elastic net	0.920; [0.915, 0.927]	0.073; [0.070, 0.075]	[414, 414]	0.873; [0.827, 0.897]
XGBoost	0.910; [0.896, 0.927]	0.072; [0.067, 0.077]	[414, 414]	0.885; [0.860, 0.900]
Model 3 without unresolved context	0.909; [0.904, 0.915]	0.079; [0.073, 0.083]	[414, 414]	0.944; [0.942, 0.946]
2020				
Quota sample	0.943; [0.937, 0.950]	0.088; [0.083, 0.092]	[522, 522]	0.995; [0.994, 0.996]
Exclude TERM	0.945; [0.939, 0.952]	0.086; [0.082, 0.089]	[514, 520]	0.994; [0.992, 0.996]
Two-party	0.946; [0.943, 0.952]	0.086; [0.083, 0.088]	[506, 507]	0.993; [0.990, 0.995]
No ideology	0.941; [0.930, 0.949]	0.094; [0.092, 0.095]	[523, 523]	0.986; [0.972, 0.994]
Elastic net	0.961; [0.958, 0.966]	0.074; [0.068, 0.078]	[523, 523]	0.955; [0.951, 0.962]
XGBoost	0.954; [0.951, 0.956]	0.074; [0.069, 0.078]	[523, 523]	0.952; [0.948, 0.956]
2024				
Historical PS	0.886; [0.882, 0.889]	0.136; [0.134, 0.137]	[541, 545]	0.993; [0.991, 0.994]
Certain turnout	0.891; [0.890, 0.892]	0.133; [0.131, 0.135]	[515, 526]	0.993; [0.992, 0.994]
Two-party	0.897; [0.883, 0.904]	0.131; [0.127, 0.137]	[532, 538]	0.990; [0.987, 0.993]
No ideology	0.884; [0.881, 0.890]	0.136; [0.135, 0.138]	[558, 558]	0.993; [0.993, 0.993]
Elastic net	0.901; [0.895, 0.908]	0.124; [0.119, 0.128]	[558, 558]	0.919; [0.899, 0.939]
XGBoost	0.902; [0.899, 0.904]	0.124; [0.121, 0.126]	[558, 558]	0.926; [0.914, 0.937]

Notes: Correlations compare predictions on matched holdouts with primary M3 and retain the original saved diagnostics. Not saved denotes absence of this diagnostic, not zero agreement. Restricted samples inherit the original outer split membership and use their saved tuning. Primary means remain in manuscript Table 2.

Two-party checks exclude third-party/other choices. No-ideology checks withhold the original ideology item. In 2020, Quota sample uses MAIN_ETH_QUOTA=2 instead of RACE=2 while retaining the other primary rules; Exclude TERM withholds S6_NON=3 release records, marked TERM in the instrument. In 2024, Historical PS uses primaryadult=1 and Certain turnout keeps q12=4. In 2024, all four forest specification checks preserve the same mean-ordered top five; economic outlook ranks first in every accepted fit. These checks do not convert post-election attitudes into pre-election causes.

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Table A12. Priority-family standalone information and omission loss

Native family	Eligible parents	Family-only AUC: mean; range	Family-only Brier: mean; range	Omission increase in Brier: mean; range
2016				
Immigration / incorporation	22	0.864; [0.855, 0.874]	0.095; [0.089, 0.099]	0.0041; [0.0032, 0.0052]
Discrimination	22	0.850; [0.830, 0.864]	0.098; [0.089, 0.104]	0.0036; [0.0026, 0.0049]
Racial justice / BLM	7	0.862; [0.854, 0.868]	0.094; [0.087, 0.102]	0.0020; [0.0016, 0.0028]
Policing / criminal justice	37	0.851; [0.833, 0.878]	0.103; [0.096, 0.114]	-0.0002; [-0.0006, 0.0004]
Ethnoracial identity	5	0.695; [0.678, 0.718]	0.134; [0.122, 0.141]	0.0000; [-0.0013, 0.0024]
National-origin identity	5	0.673; [0.625, 0.701]	0.138; [0.128, 0.147]	-0.0011; [-0.0018, 0.0001]
Linked fate / group orientation	12	0.811; [0.791, 0.838]	0.113; [0.109, 0.119]	0.0001; [-0.0016, 0.0011]
Ideology	1	0.812; [0.772, 0.836]	0.116; [0.112, 0.121]	0.0005; [-0.0004, 0.0014]
2020				
immigration/incorporation	35	0.899; [0.890, 0.906]	0.111; [0.105, 0.120]	0.0031; [0.0001, 0.0053]
discrimination	63	0.907; [0.904, 0.910]	0.110; [0.106, 0.116]	0.0031; [-0.0001, 0.0077]
racial justice/BLM	16	0.880; [0.860, 0.902]	0.117; [0.114, 0.121]	0.0023; [-0.0005, 0.0041]
policing/criminal justice	54	0.884; [0.869, 0.899]	0.120; [0.111, 0.129]	0.0008; [0.0001, 0.0015]
ethnoracial identity	17	0.759; [0.742, 0.776]	0.166; [0.161, 0.172]	0.0007; [0.0002, 0.0012]
national-origin identity	5	0.575; [0.560, 0.586]	0.202; [0.191, 0.215]	0.0009; [0.0005, 0.0011]
linked fate/group orientation	24	0.779; [0.767, 0.787]	0.162; [0.152, 0.176]	-0.0003; [-0.0009, -0.0001]
ideology	1	0.838; [0.813, 0.871]	0.127; [0.123, 0.132]	0.0064; [0.0035, 0.0112]
2024				
immigration/incorporation	21	0.746; [0.714, 0.782]	0.194; [0.185, 0.205]	0.0013; [0.0006, 0.0018]
discrimination	15	0.670; [0.651, 0.679]	0.215; [0.211, 0.222]	0.0004; [-0.0005, 0.0014]
racial justice/BLM	4	0.768; [0.744, 0.784]	0.187; [0.182, 0.194]	0.0008; [-0.0008, 0.0019]
policing/criminal justice	10	0.681; [0.671, 0.698]	0.211; [0.209, 0.214]	0.0010; [-0.0017, 0.0047]
ethnoracial identity	39	0.746; [0.733, 0.764]	0.195; [0.189, 0.201]	-0.0004; [-0.0008, 0.0002]
linked fate/group orientation	22	0.739; [0.726, 0.748]	0.197; [0.192, 0.202]	0.0007; [-0.0007, 0.0020]
ideology	1	0.790; [0.777, 0.800]	0.175; [0.171, 0.180]	0.0019; [0.0013, 0.0024]

Notes: Families and membership are the accepted within-election definitions. Family-only and omission forests were independently tuned under the frozen design. Positive omission Brier differences indicate loss relative to M3; negative values indicate improved probability accuracy in that saved check. Family size, overlap, and measurement breadth preclude causal or cross-election strength comparisons. National-origin identity has no approved 2024 parent and is not assigned zero.

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Table A13. Common family-permutation evidence across learners

Native family	RF increase in Brier: mean; range	Elastic net increase in Brier: mean; range	XGBoost increase in Brier: mean; range
2016			
Immigration / incorporation	0.0072; [0.0068, 0.0077]	0.0116; [0.0104, 0.0124]	0.0057; [0.0055, 0.0060]
Racial justice / BLM	0.0275; [0.0230, 0.0310]	0.0086; [0.0054, 0.0108]	0.0132; [0.0099, 0.0158]
Ideology	0.0012; [0.0011, 0.0012]	0.0014; [0.0007, 0.0021]	0.0018; [0.0016, 0.0018]
2020			
ideology	0.0059; [0.0052, 0.0067]	0.0095; [0.0057, 0.0155]	0.0143; [0.0131, 0.0164]
immigration/incorporation	0.0195; [0.0148, 0.0250]	0.0131; [0.0124, 0.0140]	0.0144; [0.0118, 0.0162]
racial justice/BLM	0.0222; [0.0187, 0.0282]	0.0062; [0.0047, 0.0089]	0.0124; [0.0101, 0.0149]
2024			
economic/health/public policy	0.0339; [0.0284, 0.0386]	0.0182; [0.0129, 0.0212]	0.0186; [0.0151, 0.0207]
group affect	0.0170; [0.0156, 0.0179]	0.0116; [0.0103, 0.0133]	0.0224; [0.0196, 0.0240]
ideology	0.0025; [0.0022, 0.0028]	0.0105; [0.0089, 0.0134]	0.0099; [0.0082, 0.0126]
immigration/incorporation	0.0017; [0.0014, 0.0019]	0.0021; [0.0002, 0.0044]	0.0018; [-0.0004, 0.0040]
participation/representation/political information	0.0152; [0.0148, 0.0158]	0.0137; [0.0114, 0.0171]	0.0123; [0.0106, 0.0145]
racial justice/BLM	0.0085; [0.0054, 0.0111]	0.0042; [0.0036, 0.0046]	0.0037; [0.0012, 0.0070]

Notes: Selected domains directly address recurring racial-justice/immigration findings, ideology, and the 2024 economic/institutional findings. Joint-row permutations move each family together. In 2020/2024, twenty accepted repetitions per family and fit use identical orders across learners. Summaries first average repetitions within fit, then summarize three fits. These diagnostics use a common probability-error scale rather than comparing SHAP, coefficients, and gain.

F. Cross-election comparability

A recurring substantive domain is not necessarily an equivalent item. Question targets, scales, response tasks, certified availability, and timing differ. The same Republican candidate supplies a common electoral alternative, but these independent cross-sections do not identify within-person change, causal effects, or an invariant attitude scale. Table A14 preserves the accepted comparison permissions.

Table A14. Measurement differences and permitted interpretations

Domain	2016	2020	2024	Comparison permission
Racial justice / BLM	Activism support and expected effectiveness for Black equality	Movement support and affect	Affect toward ordinary BLM protesters	Recurring domain only; targets and scales differ
Immigration	Perceived discrimination, activism, and flag wording	Border spending/wall, priorities, and enforcement judgments	Affect toward ordinary undocumented immigrants	Recurring domain only; policies, discrimination, and affect are distinct
Discrimination / policing	Separate group-discrimination and Latino police-treatment questions	Joint judgment about policing and immigration enforcement; funding proposal	Different certified inequality, policy, and group-affect items	Conceptual synthesis; do not collapse different targets or joint judgments

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Domain	2016	2020	2024	Comparison permission
Ideology	Six original categories	Six aligned original categories	Eight categories, including refusal of these terms	2016/2020 original-category descriptions are permitted; no 2024 scale collapse
Economic / institutional judgments	Health-law preference among leading items	Different policy and enforcement tasks	Family outlook and specific judicial appointment selections, measured 2025	Conceptual synthesis; no equivalent economic or court item established
National-origin attachment	Approved direct attachment measures	Approved direct attachment measures	No approved direct attachment parent	Unavailable is not low importance; ancestry and warmth are not substitutes

Notes: The accepted measurement map and matched-item decisions distinguish restricted category alignment from conceptual recurrence. Repeated cross-sections, population definitions, and survey timing still qualify the aligned 2016/2020 ideology comparison. No measure is silently harmonized, collapsed, or substituted.

Unresolved contextual fields remain in the accepted 2016 M3 model and attribution denominator; they receive no invented substantive interpretation. The saved sensitivity removes exactly 400 admitted unresolved contextual source fields (Table A11), leaving mean AUC at 0.909 while changing concentration: the minimum 50% set falls from sixteen to ten parents. The leading no-context parents are BLM activism, immigrant discrimination, and BLM effectiveness, with respective shares 17.1%, 8.1%, and 7.8%. This is a within-2016 sensitivity, not a harmonized-instrument experiment or a replacement for the accepted primary ranking.

The 2024 political judgments were measured in 2025 after the presidential election and change in administration. The economic outlook item concerns future family prospects at that later interview date. Its prominence therefore describes post-election expectations associated with reported vote; it does not establish the economic evaluation that preceded or caused the 2024 choice. The same temporal caution applies to the 2016 and 2020 post-election interviews. Attribution reflects each available measured information space, so raw SHAP magnitudes, domain shares, and ranks cannot by themselves establish a cross-election change in the causal importance of a domain.

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