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## **White Identity and Ethno-Traditional Nationalism in Trump's America**

Eric Kaufmann

As the United States and other western countries become more diverse due to immigration and the cumulative effects of previous waves of newcomers, the nature of politics is changing. An ethnocultural 'open-closed' dimension pitting national conservatives against cosmopolitan liberals is overshadowing the old left-right economic axis, even in America. This realignment is most advanced in Europe, especially Britain, where the class composition of the Conservative and Labour parties have nearly converged because white working-class voters have left Labour for the Tories while professional white liberals have migrated in the opposite direction. Indeed, across western Europe, social democratic parties no longer win the majority of white working-class votes. In the US, high-income suburbanites are following their liberal values into the Democratic fold while whites without a degree are attracted by Trump's defense of both the border and Social Security (Abramowitz 2018: 139).

The central issue around which the new cultural politics revolves is not religion and social mores, as it was during the heyday of the American religious right (1980-2004) or during the historic ascent of European Christian Democracy. Hence value change, and the division between 'postmaterialist' and traditionalist value segments, is too broad a concept (Norris and Inglehart 2019). Rather, a subset of these considerations - secular-conservative concerns about ethno-religious change and national identity, symbolized by the question of immigration - occupies centre stage.

In my book *Whiteshift* I outline two key actors in this new secular national conservatism, *ethnic majorities*, such as White Americans; and American *ethno-traditional nationalists* – those of any racial background who are attached to their nation, including its

historic pattern of ethnicity and culture (Kaufmann 2018). Ethnic groups, such as white Americans, are communities that believe themselves to be of shared ancestry. Nations, such as the United States, are territorial communities with political aspirations. White ethnicity and a white-conserving ethno-traditional American nationalism are independent forces behind the rise of Trump - even as white ethnicism tends to track people toward adopting an ethno-traditional variant of American nationalism.

### *White American (Ethnic Majority) Identity*

White Americans are an ethnic group formed of the admixture of different European groups through intermarriage and the adoption of aspects of common culture. While some whites are attracted to a narrower European origin such as Italian or Irish, the extent of inter-ethnic mixing has diluted the political relevance of these categories for many. Those who retain a 'white ethnic' identity such as Italian often do so in an optional and symbolic way (Gans 1979; Waters 1990). All but the recently arrived are cognizant of the wider pan-ethnic 'white' umbrella group which is typically a more salient aspect of their social interactions, voting behaviour, choice of neighbourhood and recreational activity. Furthermore, whites with many generations' ancestry in America often refer to their ethnicity as simply 'American' or unhyphenated white (Alba 1990; Lieberman 1985).

Growing diversity throws white identity into greater relief. No longer a 'hidden' or 'normal' backdrop against which exotic identities are visible - like heterosexual identity, for instance - ethnic majority identity becomes increasingly distinctive. For instance, Linda Tropp and Eric Knowles show that in American counties where whites are a smaller share of the population, more of them identify as white. Whites in neighbourhoods with no Latinos scored a 3.1 out of 5 for white identity while those in neighbourhoods which were half Latino

scored around 3.6, a significant difference (Tropp and Knowles 2016). More broadly, Ashley Jardina suggests that the proportion of white Americans for whom white identity is at least somewhat important rose between the 1990s and 2016, reaching some 45-65 percent of the white population (Jardina 2019: 50-53, 70, 82).

Of course, partisanship strongly inflects white identity. Given the associations that progressive commentators draw between white identity and concepts of supremacy and privilege, it's unsurprising that the share of progressives willing to express a white identity on surveys is both low and, since Trump's election in 2016, declining (Illing 2019). In a similar vein, those of mixed white and Latino heritage who vote Democratic are considerably less likely to identify as white than Republicans with the same ancestry (Egan 2018). This can help explain the phenomenon of mixed individuals 'dropping out' of the Hispanic category into the white one over time, which has been documented by sociologists using longitudinal data (Darrity 2016).

### White Identity and the Trump Vote

The relative importance of cultural, identity or psychological dispositions for the Trump vote, compared to personal economic circumstances, has been repeatedly confirmed in large-N individual-level data analysis (Sides et. al. 2019; Jardina 2019; Abramowitz 2018; Kaufmann 2016, 2019).

A set of models of Trump voting, using a small Amazon MTurk opt-in dataset of around 350 white Americans, is summarized in figure 1. The first model, which contains party identity and ideology, has a model fit of .350 (pseudo  $R^2$ ). Demographics (age, income, education, gender) improve this to .388. However, from our point of view, it is models 3 onward that are

of interest. Both identifying one's ancestry as unhyphenated 'American', and saying that one's white identity is important for 'your sense of who you are' emerge as significant predictors of both a Trump vote (models 3 and 4) and Trump warmth on a 0-100 thermometer (Therm 1 and 2). This is so even when I control for immigration attitudes (Model 4 and Therm 1 and 2).<sup>1</sup>

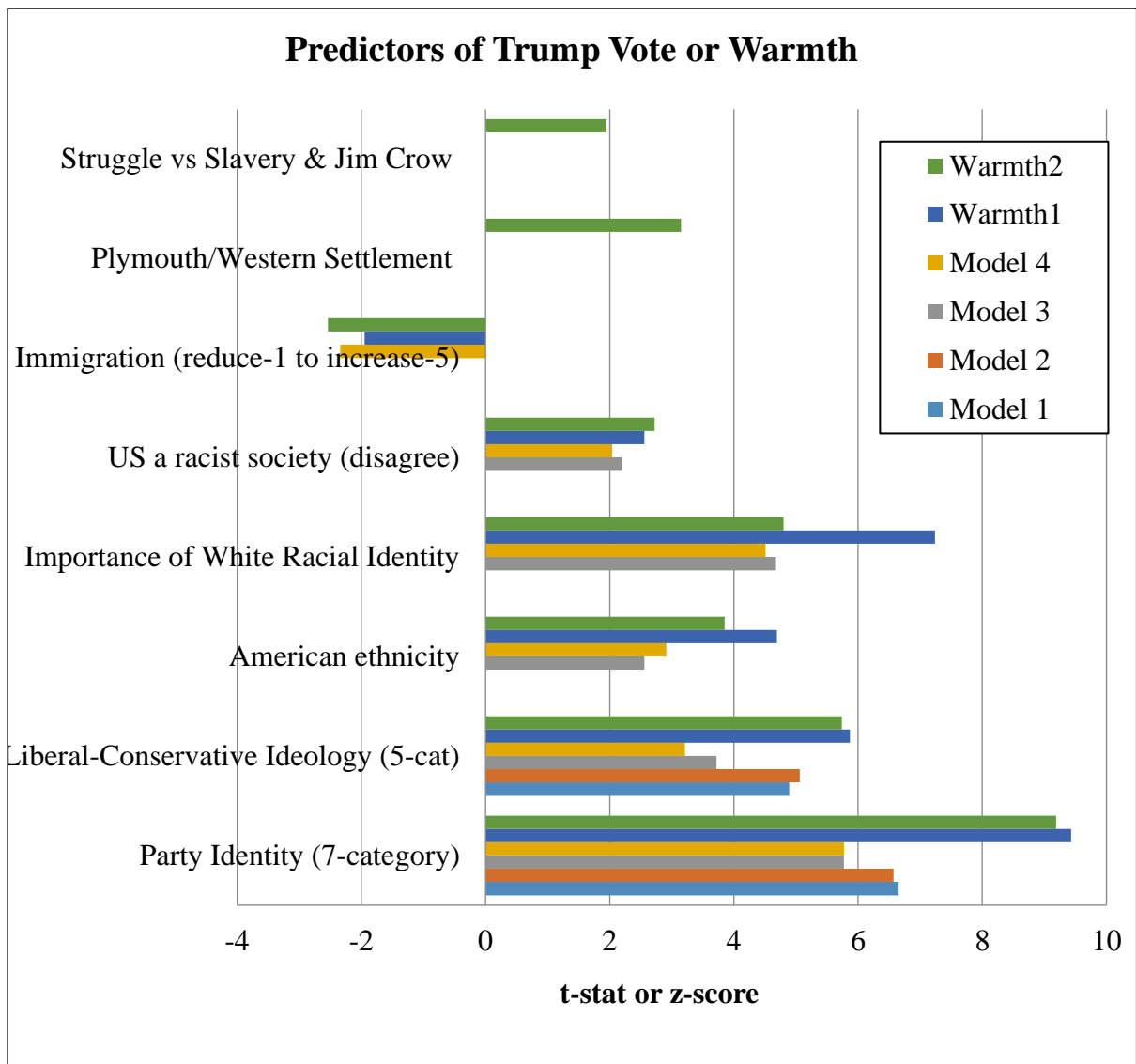
Next to party identity, white identity is the second most important predictor of Trump vote and warmth, ahead of liberal-conservative ideology. However, when I add a thermometer item on how important 'the arrival of settlers at Plymouth Rock and Jamestown; the Settling of the West' is for one's identity, this emerges as a significant predictor of Trump support (t-statistic of 3.15 in figure 1). The question taps a collective memory that is simultaneously meaningful for white American identity and for American ethno-traditional nationalists of other races who value their country's Anglo-Protestant heritage.

Of course, it is also an indicator of non-adherence to progressivism's anti-settler/anticolonial ethos. This intersects with the concept of racial resentment which, following recent work by Carney et. al. (2017), seems more a measure of progressivism than racism. Indeed, many measures of racism may more accurately be said to gauge racial *ideology*, not attitudes toward racial outgroups. Progressive racial ideology is, however, extremely important, and has enjoyed a revival among liberal whites. Thus whites who score in the most liberal three categories on the liberal-conservative ideology scale have become markedly more likely to say that racism is the reason blacks cannot get ahead, favour increased immigration and approve of illegal immigration since 2013. This is a development that appears to track the rise of social media and online news (Kaufmann 2019b; Goldberg 2019).

An example of this kind of measure in my MTurk data is agreement with the statement 'America is a racist society'. Compared to those who endorse this statement, whites

who disagree are significantly more likely to back Trump in the models in figure 1. In addition, approximately 21 percent of white respondents felt zero identification with Anglo-Protestant (Jamestown/Plymouth Rock/Western) settlement history, which seems as much an indication of progressive sentiment as of weak ethno-traditionalism. The important group of respondents who felt cold toward Anglo settlement helped produce an average thermometer score of 41/100 on this item across all white respondents. Removing those with zero identification increases its average score to 52. White Trump voters rate it a 60, White Clinton voters a mere 30.

Figure 1.



Source: Amazon MTurk sample, white Americans only, N=349-351. Sample collected March 25, 2019. First 4 models are on reported 2016 vote. Trump warmth models on 0-100 thermometer. Age, education, income and gender are in the model but not shown. Variables with t-statistic or z-score that is greater than +2 or less than -2 are statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

The focus on white voters can obscure the power of ethno-traditional nationalism among minorities. Among the 100 nonwhites in the survey, identification with Anglo settlement history is, after ideology, party identification and immigration opinion, the strongest predictor

of Trump support. Identifying one's ancestry as 'American', which is true of 13 minority individuals, is also significantly associated with Trump warmth and voting.

#### White Identity: Instrumental or Symbolic Motivations?

Theories of nationalism and ethnicity distinguish between instrumentalist and ethnosymbolist theories. Instrumentalist arguments focus on the political and economic motivations of elites as the drivers of ethnic differentiation (Brass 1985; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Economic and power elites have an incentive to divide the working-class by ethnicity to limit resistance to capitalism or the power elite. Group members are motivated to organize to improve their material conditions or protect their privileges. Critical race theory's emphasis on the material benefits of whiteness is an example of instrumentalist theory (Roediger 1991). Against this perspective, ethnosymbolists argue that attachment to ethnicity or nationhood stems from affective bonds to symbols, myths and memories. These are reproduced, either by the state, or - just as often - by secular-romantic intellectuals in associations, or by lesser clergy in religious institutions (Smith 1991; Kaufman 2006).

Are white Americans attached to their identity for instrumental or symbolic reasons?

While it can be difficult to fully prise these elements apart, it is striking that those who identify with the Jamestown-Plymouth Rock-Western settlement history are so much more inclined toward Trump than other whites. While this might stem from a desire to racially dominate and maintain white privilege, this interpretation is at odds with the finding that identifying with the struggle against Slavery and Jim Crow *positively* predicts a Trump vote at the  $p < .10$  level. It also fails to explain why minorities who identify with the colonial/settler past are also significantly more likely to back Trump - as they cannot benefit from a white power structure. Likewise, it is unclear how identifying as unhyphenated American (rather



than a European ancestry) is an instrumentally-motivated act that can deliver material benefits to a white person or somehow maintain their group's domination. The fact that both whites and nonwhites who state their ancestry as 'American' are more likely to back Trump further indicates that something more than instrumental desires to exclude and dominate are at work.

### Identification With Ancestry

Most importantly, there is powerful evidence that, for many whites, white identification is strongly associated with attachment to lineage. Recall that ethnic groups are communities who believe themselves to be of shared ancestry (Francis 1976). Hence genealogy and identification with ancestors are both intimately constitutive of ethnic identification. From an ethnosymbolist standpoint, the quest for meaning, belonging and continuity of existence beyond one's own life are the key psychological features underpinning ethnic and national identity. Social psychologists also emphasise the importance of group loyalty among conservatives (Haidt 2012; Stenner 2005). The popularity of ancestry websites and DNA testing services like 23 and Me testify to the emotional appeal of tracing one's ancestry and finding out about the stories of one's forbears (Nelson 2016). In short, ethnicity and nationhood are far more than political phenomena - they are also cultural and psychological.

Let's examine some relationships in the data. First, there is an important correlation between identifying with one's race and identifying with one's principal ancestry. Controlling for party identity, ideology and education, the correlation between the ancestral and racial identity thermometer scales is .65 among minorities. For whites, it is only somewhat weaker, at .50. Among whites who identify with ancestry at under 50/100, most are weak white

identifiers, giving their racial identity a mean thermometer score of just 30. However, among those who score their ancestry above a 70 in importance, mean attachment to white identity rises to 61 among those of South/East European origin, 72 for North/West European backgrounds and 79 for those giving their ancestry as 'American'.

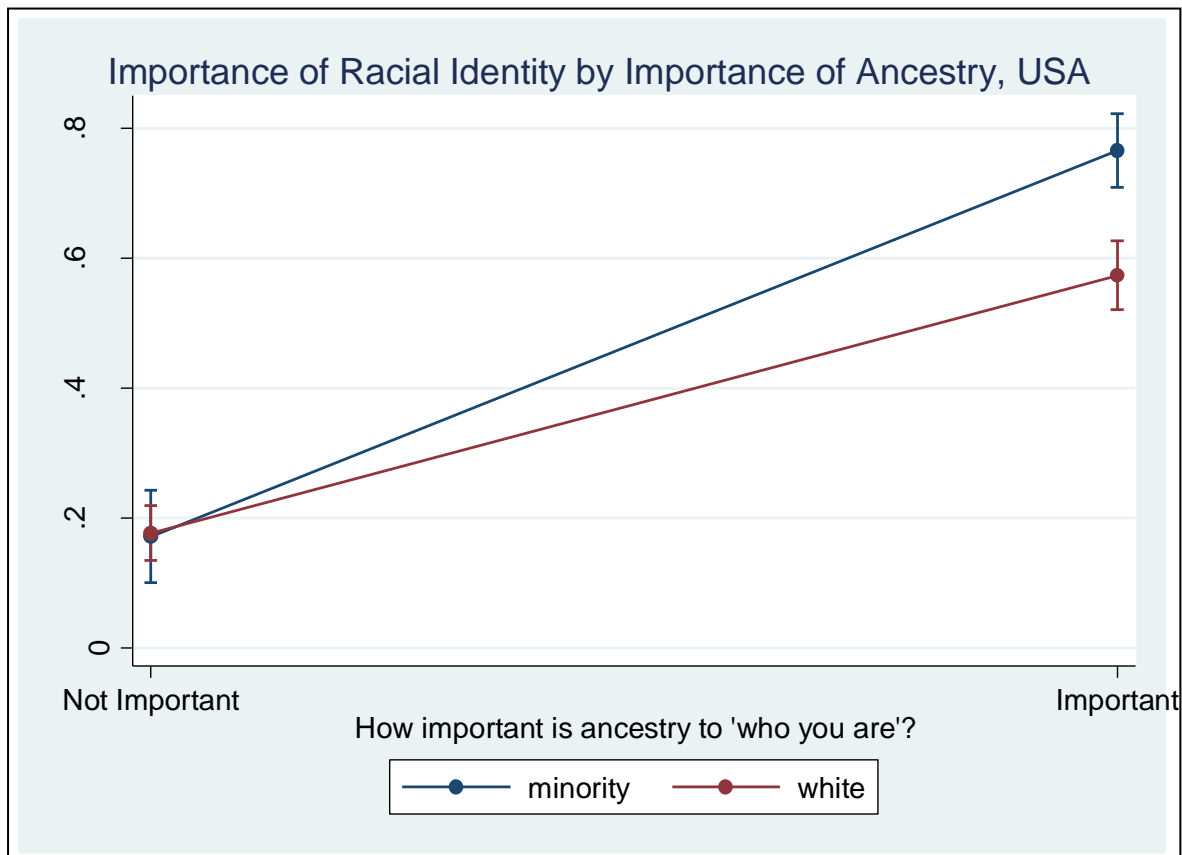
Repeating the exercise with a larger sample of representative data from a YouGov survey conducted on September 19, 2019 on a sample of 1219 Americans using a 4-category scale from ancestry being 'very important to who you are' (1) to 'not at all important' (4) shows a substantially similar result. The importance of race and ethnicity are correlated at .443 for nonwhites and .257 for whites in an OLS model (.208 for minorities vs .131 for whites using an ordered logit model). This is somewhat lower than was true for the MTurk sample, though this can be explained by the less precise 4-point scale used in this survey compared to the 100-point thermometer scale used in the MTurk sample.

It is also worth mentioning that racial identity is not as important as ethnic identity to people: 54 percent of whites and 68 percent of minorities say their ethnicity is important for 'who you are' but the corresponding figures for racial identity are just 39 percent for whites and 58 percent for minorities. People are more attached to their narrower ancestry-based ethnic groups than their larger racial groups, despite the fact the larger entities are more important political vehicles for material gain. This indicates that cultural-psychological motives are more important than politico-economic ones, comports with ethnosymbolist rather than instrumentalist arguments.

To get a sense of the magnitude of the ethnicity-race association, 63 percent of white Americans who rate their specific ancestry as 'very' or 'somewhat' important also say being white is 'very' or 'somewhat' important. This compares to just 21 percent reporting their white identity as important among low-ancestry-identifying whites. This is a massive difference, accounting for a great deal of the variation in white identity.

The magnitude of the gap in white identity between whites with low and high ancestral identification (21%-65%) is only somewhat narrower than that obtaining among nonwhites (25%-83%). Figure 2 shows that moving from a situation where a person thinks their ancestry is not important to who they are to one where it is important, with demographic variables and party identification held at their means, increases a white person's chance of saying white identity is important from .18 to .57. Among minorities it rises from .18 to .76. Given that the 'black/African-American' ancestry response is nearly coterminous with the African-American race response and many Latin American countries share similar ancestral antecedents, ancestry is arguably only modestly less important a predictor of racial identity for white Americans as for minorities.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2.



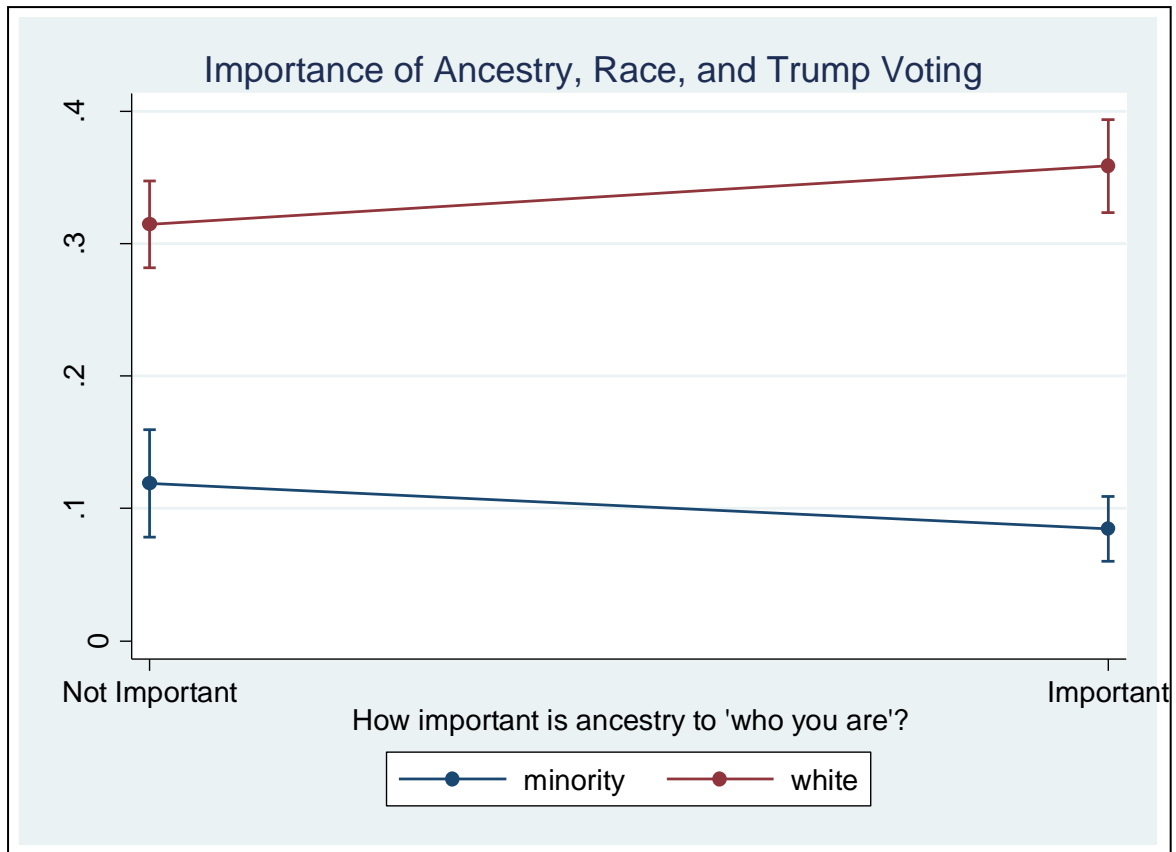
Source: YouGov survey, Sept. 19, 2019. N=1,219. Controls for age, gender, income and party identity.

One difference between the YouGov and MTurk samples, however, is that the association between ancestral and racial identity among whites doesn't appear to be moderated by a person's ancestral region (i.e. northern/western or 'American' vs. southern/eastern Europe), with those attached to a southern European origin as likely to be a white identifier as someone attached to northern European or 'American' ancestry.

#### Attachment to Ancestry and the Trump Vote

In combination with the MTurk findings stated earlier, this suggests that ethnic attachment is a crucial factor explaining white identity, which in turn bears on Trump support, as noted by Jardina (2019). The effects run the other way for minorities, as figure 3 shows, with high-ethnic-identifying minorities less likely to have voted for Trump than low-identifying minorities.

Figure 3.



Source: YouGov survey, Sept. 19, 2019. N=1,219. Controls for age, gender, income and party identity.

### *American Ethno-Traditional Nationalism*

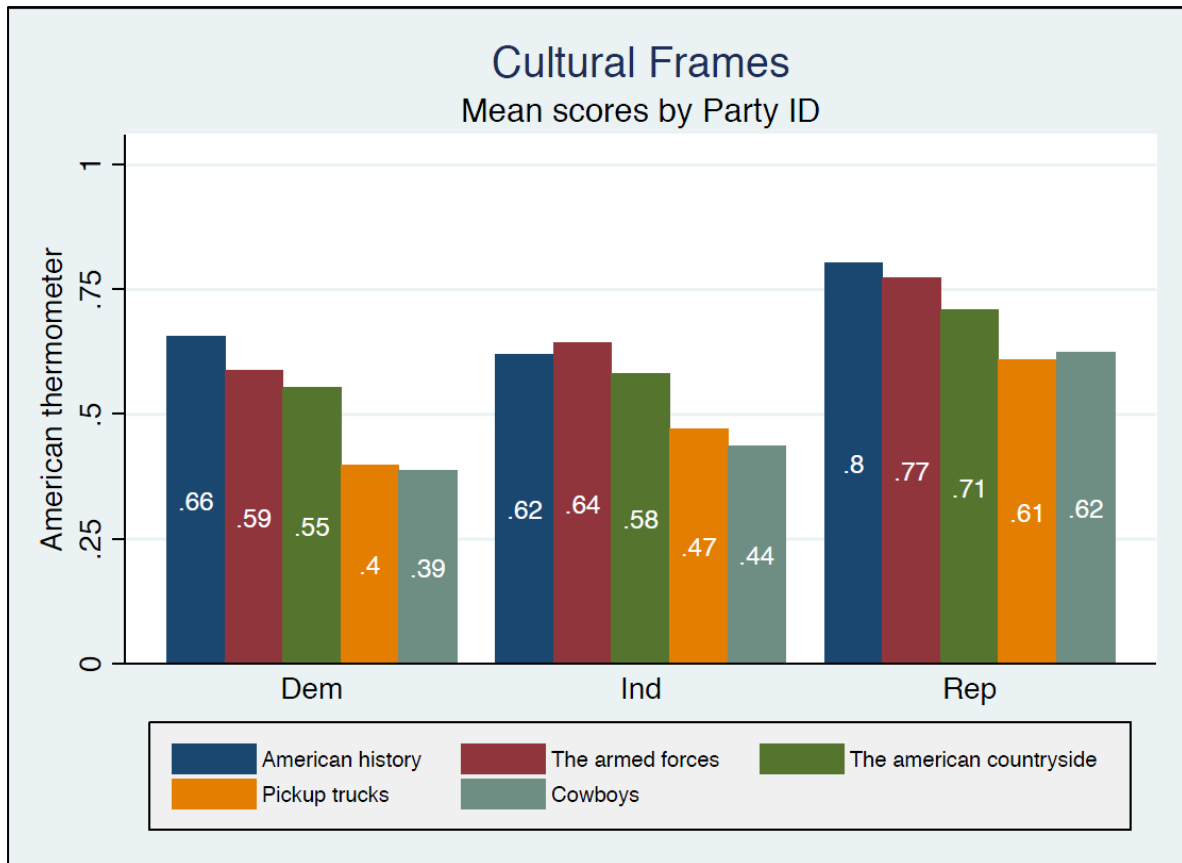
Ethno-traditional nationalists are not coterminous with white identifiers, even if their ranks overlap considerably. Rather, they are Americans of all ethnic backgrounds who are attached to the American *nation* in a particular form. While the American Idea, or Creed, and liberal symbols like the Statue of Liberty are central to the national identity of most Americans, partisan differences emerge among what scholars term ‘everyday’ symbols of nationalism (Deloye 2013). These secondary aspects run into the hundreds of symbols, from the landscape to apple pie, and flesh out the texture of people’s ‘personal nationalism’ (Cohen

1996). That is, the picture of the nation people carry in their heads, and which emotionally attaches them to their country.

Consider the question, asked by David Leal, Joe Tafoya and I on a specially-commissioned module of the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES): ‘A foreign tourist wrote up this list of things that struck him as typically American. For each one, don’t tell us whether you like it or not, but instead tell us how American it makes you feel, from 0 (not at all) to 100 (very much).’ Items included: Cowboys, the American countryside, Pickup trucks, The diverse mix of ethnic and racial groups, ‘Alternative neighborhoods like Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco, or Greenwich Village, New York City,’ American history, The armed forces, National parks, Immigrants, and four sports: football, basketball, hockey and baseball.

Figure 4 shows how the responses differ by partisanship. Unsurprisingly, Republicans feel more nationalistic than Democrats about American history, the armed forces, the countryside, pickup trucks and cowboys. The differences are especially pronounced for pickup trucks and cowboys, two masculine symbols associated with a rural working-class lifestyle. This gets to the point about how the most important 'everyday' symbols of nationalism tend to systematically differ among Americans.

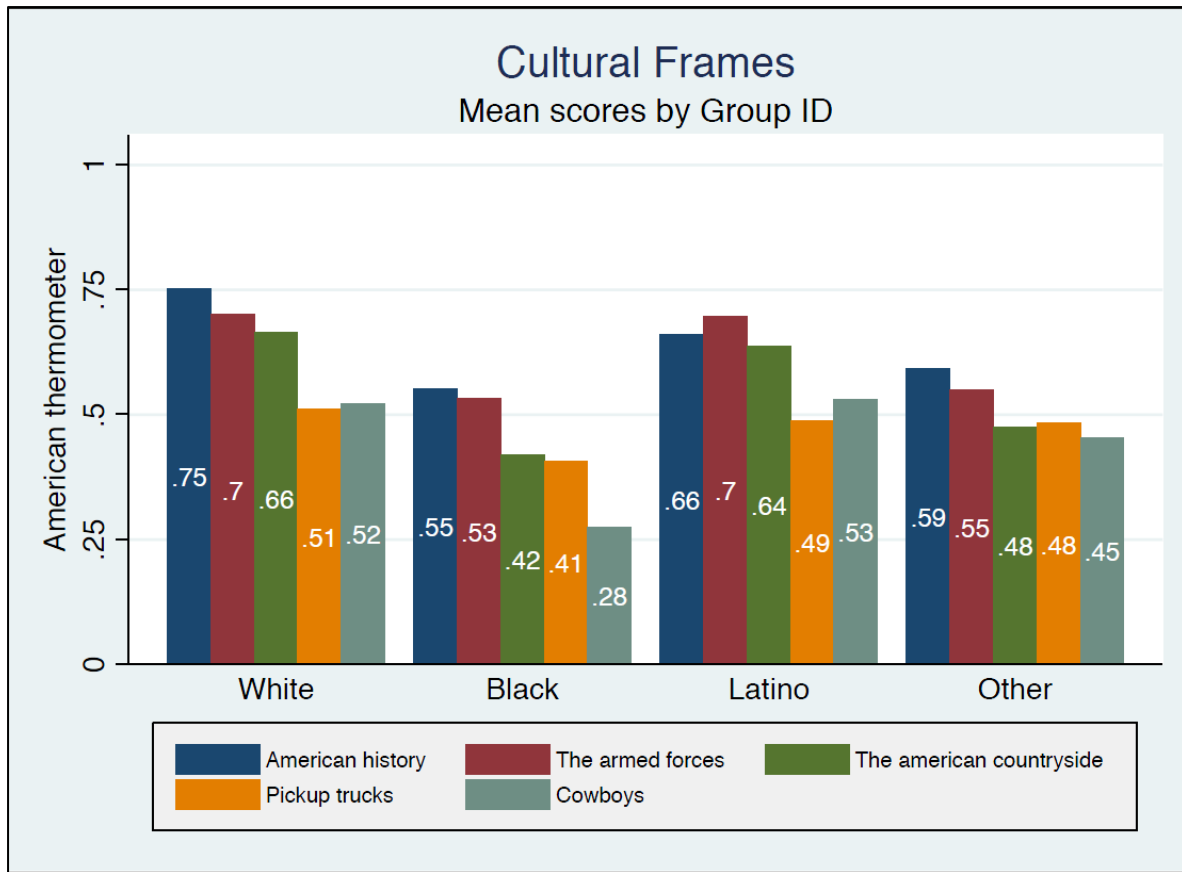
Figure 4.



Source: Kaufmann, Leal and Tafoya, ' Divided Images: How Perceptions of Nationhood Shape Voting and Opinion among Americans and the English,' paper presented at 2019 American Political Science Association meetings, Washington, Aug. 29.

Figure 5 presents the same chart by racial group. Here we find that black Americans feel markedly less nationalistic about these symbols, across all dimensions, than other groups. Whites and Hispanics score similarly, though whites are somewhat more attached to American history. The 'other' category, mainly Asian, lies in between, scoring lower than whites and Latinos in their attachment to American history, the armed forces and the countryside, but higher than African-Americans.

Figure 5.

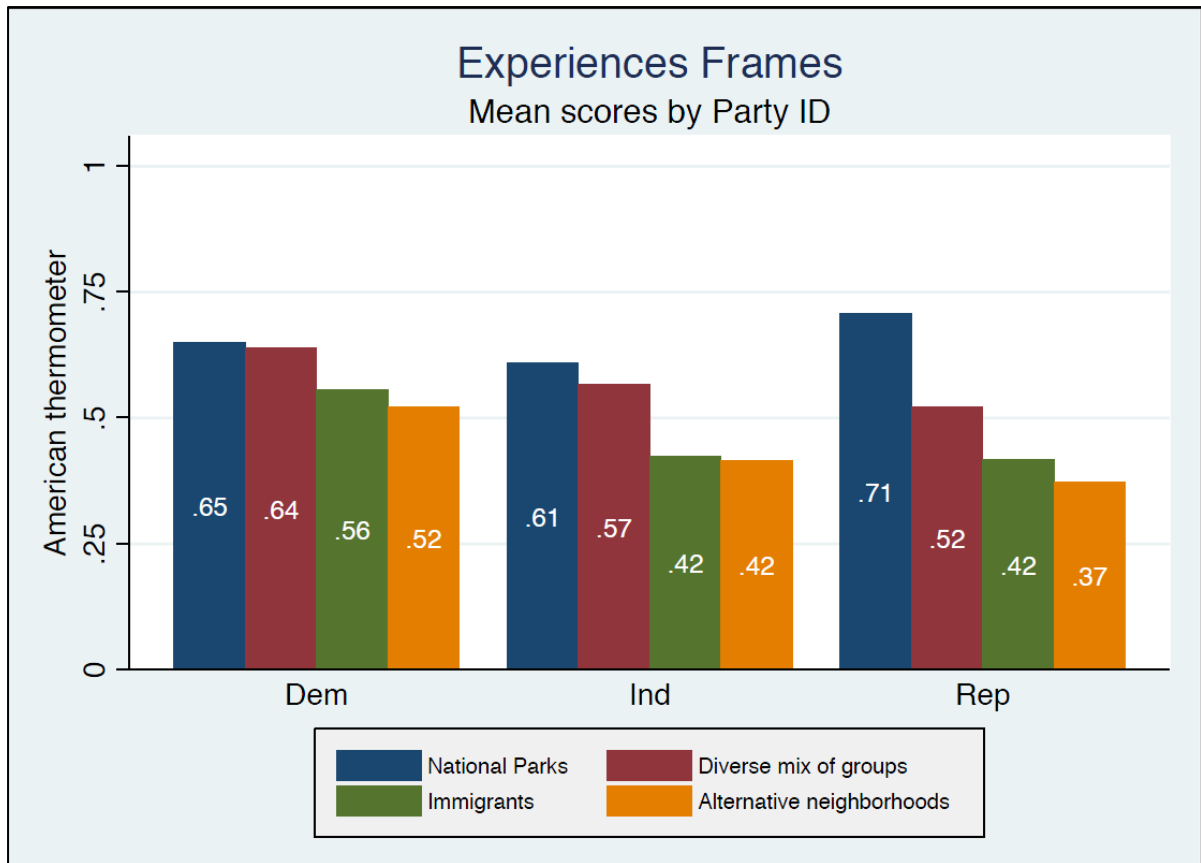


Source: Kaufmann, Leal and Tafoya, 'Divided Images'.

In figure 6 we consider a different set of symbols we term 'experience frames'. This time, Democrats feel more nationalistic about some symbols ('diverse mix of groups', immigrants and alternative neighbourhoods like Haight-Ashbury) than Republicans, even as Republicans vest their everyday nationalism more strongly in the symbol of national parks (71/100 for Republicans vs. 65 for Democrats). Thus it is not simply the case that Democrats are less nationalistic. Rather, they are differentially attached to component 'everyday' images and symbols in American life. That is, they bond differently to various elements of the 'what is American' tapestry.

Figure 6.





Source: Kaufmann, Leal and Tafoya, 'Divided Images'.

Overall, Republicans feel more American than Democrats when they think about the countryside, American history, cowboys, pickup trucks and baseball. African-Americans are less attached to America's landscape and history than whites, Asians and Hispanics. In addition, at a finer-grained level, different everyday symbols play differently among particular demographics. Thus major (male) team sports like baseball or football matter less for women's sense of American national identity than men's.

We didn't ask about Christianity or Protestantism as a symbol of American identity. However, in England, only 17% of White Britons who say they have 'no religion' report that England's 'Christian tradition' contributes 'strongly' to their sense of being English, compared to 65% of those identifying as Christian (whether attenders or non-attenders). Interestingly, 22% of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims (combined) said the Christian heritage contributed

strongly to their English identity, higher than for nonreligious White Britons.<sup>3</sup> I suspect something similar holds true in the United States.

*Who is American?*

Ethno-traditional nationalism concerns the question ‘what is American’, not ‘who is American’: the symbols in the American corpus people attach to rather than the symbols which determine who is an American, or a ‘true’ American. The latter question involves boundary criteria for membership and exclusion, raising questions of discrimination and second-class citizenship.

Because membership criteria focus on individuals, they have garnered a great deal of attention from scholars of national identity. This has taken the form of the ‘ethnic nationalism versus civic nationalism’ distinction, whether in Europe (i.e. Kohn 1944; Brubaker 1992) or America (ie Schildkraut 2014; Wright et. al. 2012; Bonikowski 2016). However, aside from the white nationalism of the alt-Right, who seek a racially pure ethnostate (Hawley 2017; Stern 2019), ethnic nationalism is not a widely-held view in the United States. Civic nationalism, on the other hand, is not strongly contested. That is, there is only limited disagreement over the merits of the ‘civic’ aspects of nationalism such as loyalty to the country or the American Creed, and this tends to rear its head only during moments of national crisis such as participation in the Vietnam War. Even advocates of multiculturalism accept the need for an overarching national identity, though they part company over the question of how difference should be recognised and whether a uniform or diverse national history and set of values should be promulgated (Uberoi and Modood 2013).

Therefore, rather than limit ourselves to exclusion criteria, we can gain more insight by examining the nature of attachment. Not 'who', but 'what', is American. That is, how do people fill the spaces in their American imaginary that lie *outside* the state-sanctioned civic-national values.

*What is American?*

Most importantly, Republicans and Democrats are attached to different aspects of the country's ethnic composition. Democrats feel more American when thinking about immigrants and diversity. Republicans likely feel more American than Democrats when contemplating America's white majority or historic ethnic composition - though this awaits confirmation from ongoing research. In Britain, I find that whites who voted to leave the European Union are more likely to value British ancestry or the light-haired, light-skinned physical features of many Britons as aspects of nationhood than whites who voted to Remain. Curiously, Sikh (Indian) Britons resemble white Leave voters in locating white physical features as an aspect of their British national identity, even as they are *also* attached to the 'diverse mix of people' in Britain (Kaufmann 2018, ch. 4).

This flags up an important difference between white identity and ethno-traditional American nationalism. The latter can be held by conservative members of minority groups. Thus, after the 2017 Charlottesville riots, Hispanic and Asian Trump voters were as likely (53%) to endorse the idea that it was important to 'preserve and protect' the European and Christian heritage of America as white Trump voters. As with white Trump voters, 70% of Asian and Hispanic Trump voters agreed that 'whites are under attack in America today.'<sup>4</sup> A British

analogue is the fact that the nearly one-third of nonwhites who voted Leave are overwhelmingly in favour of immigration restriction (Rakib 2019).

Having said this, white identifiers are more likely to be ethno-traditional nationalists because they view the American nation through both a white and conservative lens. This echoes theoretical work in which I argue that ethnic, partisan, regional, class and other lenses tend to focus people on different symbols of nationhood while ignoring others - and to interpret those which are used in particular ways (Kaufmann 2008). In this case, conservative whites tend to see the white majority as part of the country's historic ethnic composition, an important component of their American national identity. Thus, in practice, there is a partial overlap between being *ethnically* part of the white majority and holding to an ethno-traditional version of *national* identity, i.e. a version which values the country's ethnocultural character.

Once again, this is not ethnic nationalism, in which membership is restricted to the white majority. But it is also not reducible to a value- or state-based civic nationalism. Rather, it combines a fairly open view on the 'who is American' question with a more white majority-conserving set of attachments regarding the 'what is American' question.

### *Are all Accents American?*

An analogy can be drawn with the American accent. While one may believe that someone with a foreign accent like Arnold Schwarzenegger is an equal American, it is also the case that an American accent is different from an Austrian accent. The fact that most Americans have an American accent adds to America's national particularity, and this is an 'everyday' aspect of Americanism that people can be attached to. A desire to preserve or slow down the

erosion of the accent is a form of cultural nationalism (i.e. Hutchinson 1987) designed to preserve a distinguishing property of the collective. To reduce this to a question of exclusion at the individual level - asserting that this makes Americans with foreign accents feel less American - is to fall into the trap of the fallacy of composition akin to imagining that criticizing the military is the same thing as criticizing soldiers. Indeed, many Americans with foreign accents may feel attached to the American accent as a distinguishing feature of their nation.

Another analogy can be drawn with Irish surnames in Ireland. Smith, an English surname, is much more common in Ireland than most Irish-sounding surnames (such as O' Shaughnessy). Yet no one would claim that an Irishman named Smith or Adams (as with Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams) is less Irish than the Protestant Ulster Unionist Prime Minister Terence O'Neill because of their respective surnames!

Partisanship, and, to some degree, ethnicity, affects how one views the matter. When asked to choose between 'all accents are American accents' and 'there are American accents and foreign accents', white Democrats, by a 54-41 margin, select the former while white Republicans break 32-65 for the latter. Independents follow the Republican pattern, at 32-63, with African-Americans similar, at 40-53. Asians and Hispanics (combined) resemble white Democrats, at 54-43 (Asians at 63-38 and Hispanics at 45-50).<sup>5</sup> This would suggest that white Democrats' ideological commitments, and - though we lack data on birthplace - groups with a higher share of foreign-born, move them toward personalizing the question into one of inclusion versus exclusion.

This 'what vs. who' distinction also holds for ethnic composition. This is not about whites-only vs. multiculturalism, but about the shades of grey in between. How multicultural should the country become? How white? How fast should things change? Asian and Hispanic Americans may be attached to the country's traditional white majority-black minority character, just as non-Cajuns may be drawn to the Cajun-majority character of Acadiana, or whites to the black majority composition of Harlem. The politics that flows from this ethno-traditionalism is not a quest to return to 1950s America but rather an attempt to regulate the rate of diversification to permit assimilation, so as to counterbalance the increase of diversity through immigration.

Consider the question: 'How important is it to preserve the following in America from change or development, from 0, NOT important, to 100, VERY important': 1) 'The historic balance of ethnic/racial heritages in a town, region or the USA'. The average score on this ethno-traditionalism item oscillates in a narrow band by ethnicity, from 46/100 for whites, to 49 for Asians and Hispanics and 54 for African-Americans. However, among whites, Clinton voters score 36 and Trump voters a 59. Minority Clinton voters incline toward white Trump voters on this measure, averaging 51. In other words, racial ideology, not race, predicts ethno-traditionalism (Kaufmann 2019b). We see something similar when it comes to preserving 'local communities and their way of life,' with white Clinton voters assigning this just 53/100 compared to 70 for white Trump voters. Racial differences were comparatively modest, though African-Americans were somewhat more conservative, at 63, than whites, at 60.

Importantly, there is much less difference between white Clinton and Trump voters when it comes to preserving historic architecture (64 among Clinton, 72 among Trump voters), historic landscapes (68 for Clinton, 71 for Trump), and traditional species of plant and animal

(77 for Clinton, 69 for Trump).<sup>6</sup> The key, therefore, seems to lie in whether a particular form of conservatism can be interpreted as bearing on individual-level inequality and exclusion. Conserving local communities and ways of life or 'the historic balance of racial heritages' carries more exclusionary connotations for white liberals than other Americans.

## Discussion

Demographic shifts are making white identity more salient for more Americans. In addition, ethnic change is challenging the historic ethnic composition of America to which ethno-traditional nationalists of all races are attached. This paper examines both white identity and ethno-traditional nationalism. I find that white identity is, like minority racial identity, underpinned by an attachment to ethnic groups like Irish, 'American' or Italian. Racial categories like 'white' or 'Hispanic' serve as pan-ethnic superordinate groups, drawing on the appeal of lower-level ethnic attachments. Identity with one's ancestry, more than hopes for instrumental gain, seems to lend power to racial identity - whether for minorities or whites.

Ethno-traditional nationalism is also important. The national identities of Republicans and Democrats have different symbolic signatures. Republicans value masculine rural symbols like pickup trucks and the landscape more in their Americanism, while Democrats are more likely to strongly associate diversity, immigrants and alternative urban neighbourhoods with their conception of the nation. Republicans of all races value the colonial and western settlement stories far more than Democrats, but partisans on all sides identify with the narrative of America overcoming slavery and racism.

A third dimension, racial ideology, has emerged strongly since 2013 as a source of partisan contestation. Liberal whites have moved in a dramatically more progressive direction on questions of race and gender, increasingly choosing to view discrimination as a central

feature of American society and racism as a core component of the American story. White identity and ethno-traditional nationalism on the Republican side, and racial progressivism on the Democratic side, help explain the rising affective polarization of American politics and are likely to play an important role in the 2020 election.

The outcome of the contest depends in part on context: a weaker economy or dip in the rate of asylum claims at the southern border could tilt the 2020 election towards the Democrats. Longer term, Republicans may try to appeal to the ethno-traditional nationalism of conservative and/or Americanized Hispanics and Asians. The strategy of building a coalition of white identifiers and minority ethno-traditionalists will be countered by the Democrats' attempt to appeal to the racial progressivism of suburban white liberals, grafting them onto a coalition of African-Americans and liberal and/or high-identifying Asians and Hispanics.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Model 3 has a fit of .465, model 4 (adding immigration) is .477. Therm 1 has an R<sup>2</sup> of .670 and Therm 2 a fit of .692.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the two questions were separated by a series of unrelated queries. Ancestry was an open-text question, as with the MTurk survey. N=688 white Americans with valid responses on both ethnicity and race identity questions.

<sup>3</sup> BBC Englishness Survey, fieldwork March 9-26, 2018. Thanks to Chris Curtis at YouGov for access. [https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/7lnxwjw12j/BBC\\_EnglishIdentity\\_March\\_18\\_Results\\_for\\_website.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/7lnxwjw12j/BBC_EnglishIdentity_March_18_Results_for_website.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> 'New Poll: Some Americans Express Troubling Racial Attitudes Even as Majority Oppose White Supremacists,' *Sabato's Crystal Ball*, Sept. 14, 2017. Crosstabulations with minority respondents gratefully obtained from Ipsos.

<sup>5</sup> Amazon MTurk sample, N=452, including 145 white Clinton voters, 134 white Trump voters, 98 Independents, 40 blacks, 24 Hispanics and 22 Asians. Sample collected March 25, 2019.

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<sup>6</sup> Questions were ordered as follows: architecture, landscapes, local communities, ethnic balance, plants and animals. This could produce priming effects, so future research could alter the order or ask the questions as standalone items.