

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND THE 2020 TRUMP VOTE:
ANALYZING CLASS, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES
AMONG WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR

by

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This thesis examines how intersecting dimensions of class, race, and gender shaped women's support for Donald Trump in the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. While past research has often analyzed gender or class in isolation, this study uses an intersectional framework to understand how different forms of inequality operate together. Building on the work of Frasure-Yokley (2018), it disaggregates class into four components: socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. These dimensions reflect both material conditions and symbolic narratives that influence political behavior. Using data from the 2020 American National Election Study (ANES), this study employs ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to evaluate the relationship between these class indices and support for Trump among all women, white women, and women of color. The results show that class does not operate uniformly across racial groups. Socioeconomic status and rural-urban attitudes were stronger predictors of Republican vote choice among white women, while these factors were less significant among women of color. These findings suggest that symbolic identity and structural inequality intersect to shape distinct political logic across racialized gender groups. This study extends prior research by modeling class as a multidimensional force and disaggregating women by race. It offers a more nuanced account of how identity and inequality shape electoral behavior in the contemporary United States.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Literature Review	8
Theoretical Foundations of Class	9
Four Dimensions that Shape Political Behavior	11
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	12
Cultural Class Identity	13
Rural-Urban Attitudes	14
Economic Precarity	15
The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Class	16
Contribution to Literature	20
Methods	22
Results	29
Discussion	34
Conclusion	41
Bibliography	43
Supporting Materials	
Appendix: R Code and Supplementary Tables (Submitted Separately)	

Introduction

The 2020 Presidential election unfolded during an extraordinary moment in American history. As the country faced the twin crises of a global pandemic and economic instability, it also reckoned with widespread protests for racial justice and deepening political polarization. These conditions defined Donald Trump's first term in office and set the stage for a highly contentious election. In November 2020, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris defeated Trump and Mike Pence, winning 51.3% of the popular vote and 306 electoral votes. Still, Trump retained notable support from key segments of the electorate, especially white women.

As economic inequality widens and populist movements gain momentum, class is a more visible force in American politics. However, class does not operate on its own. It intersects with race and gender in ways that are often underexplored. Understanding voter behavior, particularly among women, who have long played a pivotal role in elections, requires examining how these overlapping identities shape political engagement.

This thesis argues that class, race, and gender must be analyzed together to make sense of women's support for Trump. It also contends that the different dimensions of class operate unevenly across racial lines. In 2016, many were surprised when white women helped elect Trump, despite his derogatory remarks about women and the chance to elect the first female president. Exit polls showed that 52% of white women voted for Trump, challenging assumptions about gender solidarity and signaling that other factors, like race and class, may weigh more heavily in political decisions. This outcome raised a key question: What matters most to women when they vote?

Examining the broader social forces shaping women's choices is essential to answer that. Some may have been drawn to Trump's economic messaging, business credentials,

uncompromising stance on immigration, or broader populist appeal. These motivations reflect the influence of lived experience and identity, both material and symbolic, on political behavior.

This study asks: Which women supported Trump in 2020, and why?

Focusing on the 2020 election, this research explores how class influenced support for Donald Trump among women across racial groups. It breaks class into four components: socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. These dimensions reflect how class is felt and understood, offering a more layered approach to analyzing voter behavior.

The theoretical foundation draws on both Karl Marx and Pierre Bourdieu. Marx focused on material conditions, ownership, labor, and economic structure, while Bourdieu emphasized the role of culture and symbolic power in shaping social hierarchy. Together, their ideas help inform a multidimensional view of class that includes economic, cultural, and geographic factors.

Much of the existing research still treats class as a single economic variable or leans heavily on gender-based explanations. However, this framework often misses how race and class shape political preferences. Intersectional analyses that disaggregate women by race are still relatively rare in political science. This thesis takes up that challenge by using data from the 2020 American National Election Study (ANES) to examine how different class dimensions predict support for Trump among white women and women of color. It applies ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to test whether and how class matters across these groups.

This research adds to our understanding of how women navigated the political landscape of 2020 by pairing an intersectional lens with a multidimensional class model. The findings reveal that class functions differently across racial groups: socioeconomic status and rural-urban

attitudes were stronger predictors of Trump support among white women. At the same time, economic precarity was more influential for women of color. These results underscore the importance of breaking down both class and identity when studying political behavior.

Literature Review

Rooted in Kimberle Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality, which emphasizes how overlapping systems of oppression shape lived experience, this study builds on Frasure-Yokley's (2018) intersectional analysis of the 2016 election to understand how race and gender interact to shape women's political behavior. While Frasure-Yokley emphasizes sexism as a driver of political choice, this thesis responds to her broader call for multidimensional, identity-conscious research by modeling class as a layered construct that also intersects with race and gender. Her study demonstrates that ambivalent sexism predicted support for Donald Trump among white women but not women of color, highlighting the need to disaggregate female voters and address the ways that multiple identities interact. Extending this analytical approach, the current study shifts focus from gendered attitudes to class-based explanations, which represent another key dimension that varies across racialized gender groups. Rather than treating class as a single economic indicator, it conceptualizes class through four theoretically grounded components: socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. This framework reflects a broader tradition in political science and sociology that views class not solely in material terms but also through symbolic, cultural, and geographic lenses. By situating this perspective within existing scholarship, the literature review engages longstanding debates about class, participation, and political identity while advancing Frasure-Yokley's intersectional model. To ground this multidimensional approach, the following section draws on foundational theories from Karl Marx and Pierre Bourdieu, whose work provides the theoretical basis for disaggregating class into its material, symbolic, and cultural components.

Theoretical Foundations of Class

Foundational theories of class by Karl Marx and Pierre Bourdieu help ground the conceptual distinctions used in this study. For Marx, class is defined by one's relationship to the means of production: the bourgeoisie owns capital, while the proletariat sells their labor for wages. Although this binary distinction remains central to Marxist analysis, later neo-Marxists introduced more graded class categories, such as the petite bourgeoisie, small business owners, or independent professionals between ownership and labor. These interpretations inform modern socioeconomic status measures, including income, education, and occupation.

Pierre Bourdieu expanded Marx's materialist focus by introducing symbolic and cultural forms of capital, such as taste, language, education, and social networks. This shapes how individuals are positioned in a social hierarchy and how they see themselves and are seen by others. His concept of *habitus* refers to the internalized dispositions that influence how individuals navigate institutions, including political life. While Marx emphasized material ownership, Bourdieu highlighted how social recognition and cultural legitimacy also structure inequality.

These perspectives offer complementary insights: material resources shape structural opportunity, while symbolic capital influences perceived legitimacy and political engagement. These ideas form the foundation for this thesis's multidimensional approach to class, which defines class across four distinct dimensions: socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a related concept that blends elements of Marx's and Bourdieu's definitions. Brown-Iannuzzi, Lundberg, and McKee (2017) define SES as one's position in the social and economic hierarchy, composed of both objective resources (income,

education, occupational prestige) and subjective perceptions of social standing. Objective SES aligns more closely with Marx's binary: one either possesses economic resources or does not. Measures such as income and education are cleanly mapped onto this model. Subjective SES, by contrast, reflects Bourdieu's emphasis on how people understand their place in society and how legitimate or empowered they feel.

Subjective SES helps explain political engagement beyond income or education. Individuals with higher cultural capital are more confident in participating in political processes, contacting elected officials, or engaging in civic life. This sense of legitimacy, what Bourdieu calls symbolic power, shapes who participates and how. Even when formal access to voting is equal, social conditioning can make those with lower cultural capital feel alienated from politics.

As Brown-Iannuzzi and colleagues put it, "Individuals with higher and lower SES will behave differently due to differing means (Brown-Iannuzzi, Lundberg, & McKee, 2017, p. 11)." However, SES, subjective or objective, alone cannot fully account for systemic barriers, such as racism, sexism, and regional inequalities, that condition access to political resources. While subjective SES may reflect aspects of identity and context, it does not fully capture the structural barriers one might face. Intersecting factors like race, gender, and geography are crucial for interpreting how SES impacts behavior differently across social groups.

Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) found that while political interest is important for voter turnout, access to resources, especially time and money, remains central. They argue that income is the "least equally distributed" political resource and that campaign contributions have become an increasingly important form of participation, altering the character of American politics. This reinforces the idea that material advantage shapes not only the capacity to engage

in politics but also the forms that engagement takes, for example voting, donating to campaigns, attending fundraisers, or contacting public officials.

These insights inform the study's multidimensional framework. Marx and Bourdieu offer complementary but distinct lenses on how class influences political life. Marx emphasizes ownership and labor as the roots of inequality, while Bourdieu shows how subtle, everyday practices reproduce social hierarchies through culture, status, and symbolic power. Both perspectives are essential to this thesis's multidimensional framework: SES, cultural capital, and perceptions of place all affect political behavior. However, to explain vote choice, particularly among women in the 2020 election, these theories must be extended further to account for how class interacts with race and gender in structuring political life. Building on these theoretical foundations, this study defines class across four distinct dimensions: socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. Each captures a unique pathway through which class influences political behavior, though their predictive power varies by group.

Four Dimensions that Shape Political Behavior

To apply these theories in practice, this study builds on Frasure-Yokley's intersectional model by disaggregating class into four distinct but overlapping dimensions: socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. These indices reflect the multiple ways class operates materially, symbolically, and spatially and allow for a more accurate analysis of how class interacts with race and gender to shape political behavior. Each is grounded in existing theory and empirical work, and each is operationalized as a separate index used to predict support for Donald Trump in the 2020 Presidential election. Socioeconomic

status is the most commonly used measure of class in political science and provides a starting point for understanding how access to material resources shapes political participation.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Socioeconomic status has long served as the primary indicator for class in political behavior research. Rooted in Marx's materialist framework, SES refers to access to economic resources such as income, education, and freedom from debt. These resources are central to the civic voluntarism model developed by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995), which shows that people with more time, money, and civic skills are better equipped to engage in politics.

Brown-Iannuzzi, Lundberg, and McKee (2017) argue that SES includes objective components (income and education) and subjective perceptions of social standing. Objective SES is closely tied to structural advantage, while subjective SES, how one feels about one's place in the social hierarchy, relates to cultural capital and political efficacy. This thesis focuses on objective SES to maintain a consistent baseline for measuring economic resources. However, material indicators alone do not explain how individuals interpret or perform their class position. The next dimension, cultural class identity, shifts from material resources to symbolic and perceptual class markers to address this gap. While SES reflects structural advantages, cultural class reflects how individuals locate themselves socially through lifestyle, identity, and perceived belonging. Differentiating between the two is critical, as symbolic class cues may shape political behavior in ways that are different from economic self-interest. In this study, SES had a limited effect on Trump support among all women and was a strong predictor among white women, suggesting that economic advantage may pull white women away from conservative candidates. However, it did not predict Trump support among women of color, highlighting the limitations of treating class as purely economic.

Cultural Class Identity

The second dimension of class examined in this study is cultural class identity, which introduces a symbolic and perceptual layer to how class is experienced. While SES captures material access to resources, it cannot explain how class is felt, performed, or symbolically constructed. Scholars such as Bourdieu and Frank emphasize that cultural identity and symbolic legitimacy are powerful forces shaping political behavior. Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004) offers a foundational account of how symbolic class identity can drive political behavior, particularly among white working-class conservatives. Frank shows how Republicans used cultural markers, religion, authenticity, and resentment of liberal elites to construct a new form of class politics rooted not in economic self-interest but in lifestyle, morality, and cultural belonging. He argues that many voters "vote like the people they want to be rather than the people they are," aligning their politics with aspirational identity rather than material status. This logic helps explain why voters who identify as working or middle class may still support candidates whose economic platforms offer little tangible benefit. Frank's framing supports the inclusion of cultural class identity, here measured through union household membership and perceived middle-class status, as a distinct dimension of class rooted in symbolic capital.

However, as this study's results show, cultural class indicators did not significantly predict Trump support in 2020, suggesting either a shift in their political relevance or a need for more precise measures. Union membership, once strongly aligned with Democratic partisanship, may now reflect ideological diversity or weakened political salience, particularly among women in service-sector jobs. Similarly, self-identification as middle class is now so widespread that it may obscure rather than clarify class-based political differences.

Rural-Urban Attitudes

The third index, rural-urban attitudes, draws from the spatial and cultural dimensions of class. Rural identification functions as a meaningful axis of class identity, shaped by perceptions of exclusion and cultural grievance. Katherine Cramer's (2016) work on rural consciousness shows that rural Americans often perceive themselves as culturally disrespected, economically overlooked, and politically ignored. These feelings form a shared identity that is mobilized politically, often in opposition to urban elites. Similarly, Arlie Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land* (2016) complements Frank's work by illustrating how cultural narratives of grievance shape political behavior through what she calls a "deep story." In her study of Tea Party supporters in Louisiana, Hochschild describes a metaphor in which white Americans see themselves patiently "waiting in line" for the American Dream, only to watch others, particularly immigrants and people of color, "cut ahead" with government assistance. This narrative blends economic anxiety with cultural resentment, reflecting a symbolic geography of loss and displacement. While Hochschild focuses primarily on white conservatives, her analysis underscores how perceived disrespect, not just material deprivation, fuels support for conservative candidates.

These dynamics are central to this study's rural-urban attitudes index, which captures sentiments about cultural recognition, political representation, and rural identity. Like Hochschild, Katherine Cramer (2016) emphasizes how "rural consciousness," a sense of cultural disrespect and economic neglect, operates as a form of symbolic class identity. Cramer shows that rural identity is not just about geography but about status: rural residents perceive themselves as looked down upon by urban elites and excluded from national decision-making. This symbolic grievance often trumps policy preferences, making rural-urban attitudes a

powerful predictor of conservative alignment. In this study, rural-urban attitudes significantly predicted Trump support across all groups, including women of color, highlighting the cross-cutting power of cultural geography in shaping vote choice.

This study measures rural-urban class identity through a composite index of rural identity, belief in rural deservingness, and perceptions of government neglect of rural communities. Economic precarity introduces a temporal and emotional layer to class, capturing how insecurity and instability shape political engagement, especially in times of uncertainty.

Economic Precarity

The final dimension, economic precarity, captures financial instability and perceived vulnerability. While SES reflects accumulated resources, precarity reflects how secure that position feels in the face of instability or risk. This dimension adds a temporal and emotional layer to class, focusing not on what one has but on how secure that status feels.

The concept of precarity draws from sociological and feminist research on how inequality is experienced across daily life. Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) show that time, especially for caregiving, is unequally distributed along gender lines, constraining women's capacity for civic engagement. Moreover, precarity disproportionately affects women of color and working-class women, who often face the dual burdens of economic instability and caregiving responsibilities.

Precarity can be politically activating or alienating. Voters experiencing economic anxiety may be more receptive to populist appeals that promise protection, restoration of order, or a return to perceived stability. As Hochschild (2016) argues, economic vulnerability is often interpreted through a “deep story” that links hardship to moral decline, cultural displacement, and government betrayal. In this framing, insecurity is not simply a financial condition but a

symbolic experience of falling behind or being left out, fueling alignment with candidates who promise cultural or national restoration.

Yet precarity can also deepen political disengagement, especially if institutions are viewed as inaccessible or unresponsive. For some, instability fosters resentment and support for populist conservatism; for others, it undermines trust in all political actors. In this study, precarity significantly predicted Trump support among all women and women of color, suggesting that economic insecurity, when filtered through cultural or identity-based narratives, can drive support for conservative candidates. This reinforces the need to treat precarity as a multidimensional and affective dimension of class, not just a material one.

Class does not operate independently from other social hierarchies. The next section applies Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectional lens to examine how race and gender intersect with class to shape political power and participation.

The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Class

Intersectionality reveals how systems of inequality such as race, gender, and class do not operate in isolation but are mutually constitutive, shaping individuals' access to power, resources, and recognition. Rather than treating these dimensions as discrete categories, intersectionality insists that their combined effects must be examined to understand patterns of political engagement.

Although socioeconomic status (SES) is often used as a key predictor of political participation, the civic voluntarism model, which links higher SES to greater access to time, money, and civic skills (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995), can obscure the layered inequalities that shape who possess those resources. For example, public narratives around poverty often equate the "poor" with black Americans, even though most individuals below the

poverty line are white (Belkhir & Barnett, 2001). Similarly, media portrayals and political rhetoric have historically racialized economic hardship, as shown in Gilens' (1996, 1999) and Lopez's (2014) research on the "welfare queen" trope. These narratives obscure the multiracial nature of the working class and reinforce racialized boundaries of political in-group status.

Belkhir and Barnett argue that the U.S. working class is deeply fragmented, divided by race, gender, immigration status, and economic insecurity. These cleavages undermine collective political power (2001, p. 169). In this context, it is not only who is poor or working class that matters, but how that identity is interpreted and politicized through race and gender.

As Rosemary Crompton (1998) observes, gender and race must be considered alongside market position to understand political access. Participation models that assume equal opportunity for civic engagement fail to capture how care work, discrimination, and institutional exclusion limit political activity, particularly for women, immigrants, and people of color. For example, Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) note that time, often treated as a neutral civic resource, is distributed unequally due to women's disproportionate caregiving responsibilities. Civic skills are also developed in unequal contexts shaped by gender and class.

Beyond material resources, symbolic and cultural capital also influences those viewed as legitimate political actors. Skeggs (1997) argues that whiteness and masculinity are often coded as normative cultural capital, while working-class femininity and racialized identities are devalued or dismissed. Political participation is not only about resources but also about recognition, who feels seen, heard, and affirmed in political space. In this context, performances of femininity can either facilitate or constrain participation depending on how closely they align with dominant, classed, and racialized norms.

For women of color, political action is shaped by intersecting forms of marginalization. As Frasure-Yokley (2018) notes, political experience is not reducible to being a woman or a person of color. It is structured by how these identities interact with institutions. Her study finds that ambivalent sexism predicted support for Trump among white women but not among women of color, demonstrating that gendered attitudes operate differently across racial lines. She also shows that many women of color draw on group-based identities rooted in shared struggle and community responsibility, motivations often overlooked in dominant models of political behavior.

This study builds on Frasure-Yokley's intersectional framework by centering class, not just sexism, as a multidimensional and racialized force in shaping political behavior. Like her analysis, it disaggregates women voters by race, but it extends the model by using four distinct indices of class: socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and precarity. By moving beyond monolithic or additive conceptions of identity, this study aims to show how race, gender, and class jointly structure political engagement, mainly vote choice, in the 2020 Presidential election. While intersectionality and symbolic class identity offer richer frameworks, traditional models of vote choice remain influential. The following section revisits those models and highlights their limitations in explaining the 2020 vote among women.

Beyond Partisan Heuristics: Gaps in Existing Models of Vote Choice

Traditional models of American vote choice emphasize the enduring role of partisan identity and group-based cues. The foundational work of Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960), later expanded in *The American Voter Revisited* (Lewis-Beck et al., 2008), confirms that most voters rely on long-standing partisan attachments rather than ideological consistency or policy knowledge. Partisan identity shapes how voters process information, often reinforcing

pre-existing attitudes. This model positions group cues, including race, religion, and class, as critical shortcuts for political decision-making, particularly in a polarized media environment.

This framework has been further developed in gender-focused research. Schaffner and Streb (2002) argue that partisan heuristics primarily influence women due to lower average political information. They find that unmarried women are more likely to support Democrats, while married women's vote choice often reflects different gendered experiences around economic dependence and social conservatism. Similarly, Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999) argue that the gender gap in Presidential voting emerged not because women moved left but because men became more conservative, particularly on government spending and defense issues. Together, these studies illustrate how group identity and life experiences shape partisan alignment, but they often stop short of exploring how intersecting identities produce different voting logics among women.

Frasure-Yokley's (2018) work intervenes in this literature by showing that attitudes rooted in ambivalent sexism predicted support for Donald Trump among white women but not women of color. Her findings challenge the universality of gender-based political analysis and call for intersectional models that account for the role of race, class, and social status in shaping how gendered attitudes translate into political behavior. Moreover, her work demonstrates that symbolic and identity-based cues, rather than purely economic concerns, can drive political preferences, especially among those aligned with traditional or conservative cultural narratives.

Despite these advances, few studies fully integrate insights from political behavior research with critical theories of class and intersectionality. While Frank, Hochschild, and Cramer demonstrate how symbolic class identity and perceived displacement can motivate vote choice, and Frasure-Yokley shows how race structures gendered political behavior, a gap exists

in modeling class as a multidimensional construct. This thesis addresses that gap by disaggregating class into four empirically grounded indices, socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and precarity, and by modeling how these dimensions intersect with race and gender to shape vote choice among women in the 2020 election. This study bridges established political behavior research with critical theories of identity, offering a more comprehensive framework for understanding women's support for Donald Trump.

Contribution to Literature

Despite important work on gender, race, and class, few studies model class as a multidimensional construct intersecting with race and gender in vote choice. This thesis contributes to the literature on political behavior, intersectionality, and class by offering a multidimensional analysis of women's support for Donald Trump in the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. While prior research has explored the role of sexism (Frasure-Yokley, 2018), rural identity (Cramer, 2016), and symbolic class grievance (Frank, 2004; Hochschild, 2016), these studies often examine class, race, and gender in isolation or rely on singular indicators such as income or education.

In contrast, this study conceptualizes class as a multifaceted and relational construct disaggregated into four class dimensions: socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class identity, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity. These indices reflect material, symbolic, geographic, and temporal aspects of class experience, building on theoretical insights from Marx, Bourdieu, and intersectional scholars. Methodologically, this thesis extends Frasure-Yokley's call for disaggregated models by applying OLS regressions across three analytically distinct groups: all women, white women, and women of color. This approach not only advances the empirical modeling of intersectionality but also applies her framework to the understudied

domain of class-based predictors, showing how different dimensions of class operate within and across racialized gender groups.

This research offers a more comprehensive account of how class functions in contemporary electoral politics. It shows that classed political behavior cannot be fully understood without considering its symbolic and intersectional dimensions.

Methods

To evaluate these expectations, the following section details the dataset, measurement strategy, and regression models used to analyze how each dimension of class influenced Trump support among women voters in 2020. This study uses data from the 2020 ANES, a Time Series Study with 8,280 pre-election and 7,449 post-election interviews. ANES data show key trends in American public opinion since the surveys began in 1948. The 2020 Time Series Study used internet, phone, and video interviews to sample U.S. eligible voters. The 2020 ANES survey used a contactless, mixed-mode design (ANES 2021 Release). Participants were randomly selected for this ANES study from a list of residential addresses to which the United States Postal Service delivered mail in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Eligible household members were identified using a screening instrument, and one eligible adult, a citizen eighteen or older residing at the address, was randomly selected to complete the survey. Addresses were then randomly assigned to three treatment groups. Group 3A was web interviews only (n = 2,283 pre-election, n = 2,012 post-election), Group 3B was mixed web interviews (n = 2,407 pre-election, n = 2,136 post-election), and Group 3C was mixed video interviews (n = 751 pre-election, n = 635 post-election). The ANES 2020 Time Series Study pre-election interviews took place from August 2020 to Election Day, while post-election interviews began after Election Day and ran through December 2020.

This model analyzes female respondents who reported casting a Presidential vote choice in the 2020 election and selected a valid candidate. The sample is disaggregated by racial subgroup to compare white women and women of color. As noted in previous research, grouping women of color can be problematic; however, with the small sample sizes of black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Mixed-race women, grouping women across racial and

ethnic groups allows the model to investigate the differences in voting behavior between white women and women of color. This approach follows the precedent set by Frasure-Yokely (2018), who restricted her analysis to women who reported a Presidential vote in the 2016 ANES. Her work similarly disaggregates by race and focuses on attitudinal and demographic predictors of support for Donald Trump among women voters, underscoring the value of focusing on vote choice over turnout. As said by Laurie Frasure-Yokley in "Choosing the Velvet Glove: Women Voters, Ambivalent Sexism, and Vote Choice in 2016", "sample sizes for non-white female voters are too sparse, and do not allow researchers to fully disaggregate by gender, race, and ethnicity" (pg. 10). However, since this study is focused on women's residential vote choice, these racial groupings are appropriate. The 2020 ANES surveyed 3,127 White women (2,393 voted), 463 Black women (296 voted), 395 Hispanic women (236 voted), 132 Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women (91 voted), 75 Native American/Alaska Native women (50 voted), and 152 mixed race women (100 voted). As Frasure-Yokely further notes, since "women of color remain consistent supporters of the Democratic Party...[and] on the other hand, the majority of white women are consistent Republican Party loyalists," these groupings are appropriate (pg. 10). In the 2020 ANES survey, 45% of white women voted for Trump, while 19% of women of color voted for Trump thus the results support the earlier statement.

This study constructs four composite indices to assess the effects of class-related and attitudinal factors on Presidential vote choice. First, the socioeconomic status (SES) index measures a respondent's social standing based on education, income, and student loan debt. Education is coded as a binary variable, with respondents holding a bachelor's degree or higher coded as 1 and all others as 0. Household income is also recoded as a binary variable. Respondents reporting an annual household income of \$250,000 or more, which is the highest

category in the ANES, are coded as 1 and all others as 0. This threshold captures elite economic status and aligns with federal tax policy benchmarks, such as applying the Net Investment Income Tax to high-income households, according to the Congressional Research Service (n.d.), which outlines the NIIT threshold in its *Overview of the Net Investment Income Tax*. Student loan debt is similarly recorded, with 1 indicating no student debt and 0 indicating the presence of debt. All three components were rescaled to a range from 0 to 1 using min-max normalization and then averaged so that higher values on the SES index reflect a more significant socioeconomic advantage. The table summarizes SES by race and gender, with group means reported for all women, white women, and women of color.

Table 1: **Distribution of Socioeconomic Status Indicators by Group**

SES Indicator	All Women	White Women	Women of Color
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.484	0.499	0.438
Household Income \$250K+	0.054	0.059	0.041
No Student Loan Debt	0.778	0.811	0.676

Note:

SES indicators include income (1 = ≥\$250K+), education (1 = BA+), and student loan status (1 = no debt).

Source: 2020 American Election Study (ANES)

The second index measures cultural middle-class identity using two indicators: whether someone in the household belongs to a union and if the respondent sees themselves as middle class. Labor union membership is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent lives in a union household (1 = yes, 0 = no); therefore, the reported values indicate the proportion of respondents in each group who live in union households. Perceived middle-class status is based on self-identification with the lower or middle-middle class, coded as 1, versus

identification with the upper middle class, coded as 0. Therefore, the reported proportions reflect the share of each group identifying with middle-class sectors. As with the other indicators, higher values can be interpreted as a greater identification with or proximity to traditional working or middle-class cultural markers.

Table 2: Distribution of Cultural Class Indicators by Group

Cultural Class Indicator	All Women	White Women	Women of Color
Perceives Self as Middle/Lower Middle Class	0.736	0.715	0.821
Union Household	0.133	0.131	0.139

Note:

Cultural class indicators include union household membership (1 = yes) and self-perception as lower or middle-middle class (1 = yes). Responses to the class identity question were recoded to reflect perceived class disadvantage, with those identifying as 'lower class' or 'working class' coded as 1 and all others as 0. This approach captures symbolic class identification, consistent with prior research.

Source: 2020 ANES

The third index captures pro-rural attitudes using four components, each scaled from 0 to 1, with higher scores showing stronger rural leanings. The first component measures the belief that rural areas receive too little government attention; this item was inverted and rescaled so that higher values indicate perceived neglect of the rural regions. The second item captures the agreement that rural areas receive too little respect, measured initially on a seven-point Likert scale, and rescaled accordingly. The third component assesses whether respondents believe rural areas have too little political influence, recoded such that 1 represents "too little," 0.5 represents "about the right amount," and zero means "too much." The final component measures rural self-identification, originally categorical and rescaled to a 0–1 scale. The rural-urban attitudes index is calculated as the meaning of these four variables as each item is scaled so that 1 reflects a pro-rural sentiment or identity. Higher scores on the index indicate greater rural affinity and support

for rural communities because each item is scaled so that 1 reflects a pro-rural sentiment or identity.

Table 3: Distribution of Rural-Urban Attitude Indicators by Group

Rural Attitude	All Women	White Women	Women of Color
Gov. Attention to Rural (Inverted)	0.169	0.172	0.162
Political Influence Too Little	0.663	0.671	0.639
Rural Areas Deserve More Respect	0.856	0.862	0.838
Strong Rural Identity	0.343	0.370	0.262

Note:

All indicators scaled 0–1. Higher values reflect stronger rural identification or affinity.

Source: 2020 ANES

The last index is the precarity index, which captures financial instability across three dimensions, each scaled so that higher values consistently reflect greater precarity. The first component, financial concern, was initially measured on a five-point scale ranging from "very concerned" to "not at all concerned." This item was inverted and then rescaled to a 0-1 range, where higher values indicate greater concern regarding one's finances. The second component, difficulty paying for unexpected healthcare costs, was also rescaled from 0-1, such that higher scores represent greater difficulty affording healthcare costs in the upcoming year. The third component, receipt of public assistance, is a binary variable coded as 1 for respondents who reported receiving government assistance and zero otherwise. In this case, group means reflect the proportion of individuals receiving assistance. The final precarity index is calculated as the average of these three components. Each indicator was recoded or normalized to ensure a consistent interpretive direction, with higher values on the index indicating greater financial precarity.

Table 4: Distribution of Precarity Indicators by Group

Precarity Indicator	All Women	White Women	Women of Color
Difficulty Paying Healthcare (0–1)	0.804	0.797	0.825
Financial Concern (0–1)	0.093	0.086	0.115
Receiving Public Assistance	0.319	0.280	0.439

Note:

Indicators include financial concern, difficulty affording healthcare, and receipt of public assistance. Higher = more precarity.

Source: 2020 ANES

This study is guided by the question of how socioeconomic status influenced women's Presidential vote choice in the 2020 election, focusing on the differences between white women and women of color. Beyond the indices, I include multiple control variables. Control variables include self-identified ideology (coded 1 for conservatives, 0 for liberals or moderates), marital status (1 for married or living with a partner, zero otherwise), evangelical identification (1 for evangelical, zero otherwise), age (continuous), and perception of economic conditions (1 if respondents believed the national economy had worsened, 0 for otherwise). Party identification was rescaled from a 7-point scale ranging from strong Democrat (0) to strong Republican (1). Immigration attitudes were measured using a recoded variable, ranging from 0 (immigrants help the economy) to 1 (immigrants take jobs). A binary, white racial indicator was included in the model for all women and a binary; black indicator was included in the model for women of color. Including these controls helps isolate the effects of the key class-related predictors from general ideological, demographic, and economic influences on vote choice.

Each index score was computed using the respondent's mean of non-missing components, allowing partial data within an index to contribute to the final score. However, listwise deletion was applied to the full regression models, meaning only complete cases across all predictors and control variables were included in the final analyses.

To examine the relationship between the predictors and support for Donald Trump in the 2020 Presidential election, I estimated a series of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models. OLS was chosen for its interpretability and ability to estimate linear relationships between predictor variables and the binary outcome of voting for Trump. Although the outcome variable is binary, this study uses OLS regression to estimate a linear probability model. OLS allows for easier interpretation of coefficients and clearer comparison across subgroup models. While logistic regression was also tested as a robustness check, the substantive results were consistent in direction and significance. The dependent variable is a binary indicator coded 1 for respondents who voted for Trump and 0 for all other vote choices. Models were estimated separately for three groups: all women, white women, and women of color. Each model includes the four key independent variables, socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class, rural-urban attitudes, and precarity along with the control variables, which capture political orientation, demographics, economic perceptions, and racial identifiers (in the appropriate models). Standard errors are reported for each coefficient, and statistical significance is assessed using conventional thresholds ($p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$), which represent the probability that a result as extreme as the observed one would occur by chance if there were no true effect. In this framework, $p < .05$ indicates marginal significance, $p < .01$ reflects stronger evidence against the null hypothesis, and $p < .001$ denotes very strong evidence. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of how socioeconomic and cultural factors intersect with race to shape female voters' support for Donald Trump in 2020.

Results

This section presents the results of OLS regression models predicting support for Donald Trump in the 2020 Presidential election among women who reported voting. Models are estimated separately for all women, white women, and women of color to examine whether class-related predictors function differently across racial groups. Each model includes four composite indices (socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class, rural-urban attitudes, and economic precarity) along with political, demographic, and economic controls. Statistical significance is assessed using conventional thresholds ($p < .05$, $.01$, $.001$), and full results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: OLS Regression Predicting Trump Support by Group

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	All Women	White Women	Women of Color
	(1)	(2)	(3)
SES	−0.106** (0.049)	−0.146** (0.064)	−0.029 (0.074)
Cultural Class	−0.035 (0.031)	−0.063 (0.040)	−0.023 (0.045)
Rural-Urban Attitudes	0.335*** (0.093)	0.316** (0.128)	0.357*** (0.126)
Precarity	0.132** (0.063)	0.069 (0.085)	0.212** (0.089)
Ideology (Conservative)	0.118*** (0.023)	0.163*** (0.031)	0.054* (0.031)
Married	0.062*** (0.022)	0.070** (0.028)	0.027 (0.033)
Evangelical	−0.037 (0.026)	−0.051 (0.032)	−0.002 (0.046)
Age	0.0001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
Economic Condition	−0.025** (0.011)	−0.024* (0.014)	−0.027* (0.015)
Party ID (Scaled)	0.717*** (0.037)	0.656*** (0.048)	0.723*** (0.061)
Immigrants Take Jobs	0.276*** (0.036)	0.387*** (0.050)	0.124** (0.050)
White	0.038 (0.025)		
Black			−0.089*** (0.033)
Constant	−0.269*** (0.072)	−0.162 (0.102)	−0.297*** (0.105)
Observations	1,030	654	376
Adjusted R ²	0.492	0.495	0.397

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

OLS estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Source: 2020 ANES, dependent variable 1=Trump/0 = otherwise

All Women

Among all women, higher socioeconomic status was linked to lower support for Trump, but the association was relatively weak ($\beta = -0.106$, $p < .01$). Women with higher income, educational attainment, and no student loan debt were less likely to vote for Trump, suggesting

that material advantage correlates with lower support. Rural-urban attitudes emerge as a strong and significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.335, p < .001$). Women with stronger rural identities and pro-rural sentiments were more likely to support Trump. Cultural class was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.035, n.s.$). However, precarity is positively and significantly associated with Trump support ($\beta = 0.132, p < .01$). This indicates that women experiencing greater economic insecurity, including financial concern, difficulty affording healthcare, and receipt of public assistance, were more likely to support Trump, net of ideology and partisanship. Among the control variables, partisanship ($\beta = 0.717, p < .001$) and conservative ideology ($\beta = 0.118, p < .001$) remain the most powerful predictors. The model explains approximately 50 percent of the variance in vote choice (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.492$).

White Women

Among white women, the pattern mirrors the overall sample, though SES has a stronger effect ($\beta = -0.146, p < .01$). Higher SES is strongly and significantly associated with lower support for Trump, reinforcing the link between material advantage and Democratic alignment among white women. Rural-urban attitudes again exert a strong positive influence ($\beta = 0.316, p < .01$). Cultural class and precarity do not reach conventional levels of significance ($\beta = -0.063, n.s.$; $\beta = 0.069, n.s.$), although the direction of effects is consistent with expectations. Cultural class trends are negative, indicating less Trump support and precarity trends are positive, indicating more Trump support. As in the entire sample, partisanship and ideology dominate the model ($\beta = 0.656, p < .001$; $\beta = 0.163, p < .001$). The explained variance remains at 50 percent (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.495$).

Women of Color

Among women of color, the predictors function differently. SES is not significantly associated with Trump support ($\beta = -0.029$, *n.s.*), suggesting that economic advantage does not operate uniformly across racial lines. However, rural-urban attitudes remain a strong and significant predictor ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < .001$), with a slightly larger coefficient than in other groups. This underscores the salience of cultural geography, even among communities of color. Cultural class does not reach significance ($\beta = 0.025$, *n.s.*). However, precarity is a statistically significant and positive predictor of Trump support ($\beta = 0.212$, $p < .01$). This suggests that among women of color, heightened economic vulnerability may increase the likelihood of supporting conservative candidates, even when controlling for partisanship, ideology, and other factors. Partisanship remains the most influential factor ($\beta = 0.696$, $p < .001$), while conservative ideology shows a weaker but still positive relationship ($\beta = 0.078$, $p < .05$). This model explains 41 percent of the variance in vote choice (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.412$).

Summary of Findings

These results show that class-related factors shape women's vote choice across racial groups. Socioeconomic status predicts lower Trump support among white women ($\beta = -0.146$, $p < .01$) but not among women of color ($\beta = -0.029$, *n.s.*), reinforcing the importance of intersectionality in political behavior. Rural-urban attitudes are a consistent and robust predictor of conservative support across all groups ($\beta = 0.335$, $p < .001$ for all women; $\beta = 0.316$, $p < .01$ for white women; $\beta = 0.357$, $p < .001$ for women of color), suggesting that cultural geography cuts across racial lines. Cultural class identity does not emerge as a significant predictor in any group ($\beta = -0.035$, *n.s.* for all women; $\beta = -0.063$, *n.s.* for white women; $\beta = 0.025$, *n.s.* for women of color). However, economic precarity is positively associated with Trump support

among both all women ($\beta = 0.132, p < .01$) and women of color ($\beta = 0.212, p < .01$), indicating that economic insecurity may drive some voters toward conservative candidates despite traditional assumptions. Overall, partisanship remains the most potent influence across models ($\beta = 0.717, p < .001$ for all women; $\beta = 0.656, p < .001$ for white women; $\beta = 0.696, p < .001$ for women of color). However, the models are cross-sectional and observational; therefore, causal conclusions should be cautiously drawn.

Discussion

This thesis examined how four dimensions of class, socioeconomic status (SES), cultural class identity, precarity, and rural-urban attitudes, interacted with race and gender to shape GOP vote choice among women in the 2020 Presidential election. The results show that SES had a small but statistically significant effect on voting for Trump among all women, was a stronger predictor among white women, and was not significant among women of color. Support for Trump was consistently higher among women with stronger pro-rural attitudes, pointing to the political significance of cultural geography across racial groups. Cultural class did not show a meaningful relationship with GOP vote choice in any group. However, economic precarity significantly predicted Trump support among all women and women of color, indicating that economic insecurity may influence conservative voting in certain contexts. These findings indicate that material class advantages and geographic identity may operate differently across racialized gender groups, while cultural and economic insecurity variables are less consistently predictive.

SES affects voting differently by race, showing that class does not operate uniformly across groups. Among white women, those with higher socioeconomic status, measured by education, income, and absence of student debt, were less likely to support Trump, suggesting that economic advantage may pull them toward more moderate or liberal views, possibly because these resources shape how they perceive and engage with politics. In contrast, SES did not significantly predict vote choice among women of color. This suggests that material advantage does not hold the same political meaning across groups. Economic resources may be less influential when experiences of racism, discrimination, or group-based solidarity are more

politically salient. These results reinforce the idea that class cannot be examined in isolation but must be understood in relation to race and gender.

Rural-urban attitudes emerged as one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of GOP vote choice across all groups, including women of color. This finding suggests that cultural geography, how individuals relate to rural identity and perceive the treatment of rural communities, plays a powerful role in shaping political behavior. Women who expressed stronger identification with rural life and believed rural areas are disrespected, politically ignored, or underserved by the government were significantly more likely to support Trump. These results align with research highlighting rural resentment as a key driver of conservative alignment, particularly among white voters (Cramer, 2016). The persistence of this pattern among women of color indicates that rural identity may transcend race in shaping political attitudes or at least operate alongside racial identity in meaningful ways. This underscores the importance of place-based identity as a political force and suggests that appeals to rural values may resonate more broadly than commonly assumed. While women of color reported lower average levels of rural identity, rural-urban attitudes still significantly predicted Trump support within this group. This indicates that the political salience of rural attitudes extends beyond physical geography or personal residence in rural areas. Cramer (2016) links rural resentment to feeling overlooked by elites, a sentiment that may also resonate with women of color facing structural marginalization. Specific elements of the rural-urban index—like concerns about respect or influence may reflect broader anti-elite views. This suggests that rural identity and its themes of grievance and recognition can shape political behavior beyond rural voters.

Although women of color were, on average, less likely to express strong rural attitudes, those who did score high on the rural-urban index were significantly more likely to support

Trump. While this subgroup is small, their voting pattern stands out. It suggests that rural identity can cross racial lines and meaningfully reshape political behavior, even among groups typically aligned with the Democratic Party. This reinforces the idea that place-based cultural attitudes, such as feeling overlooked or disrespected, can override broader partisan trends, especially when they tap into deep emotional or symbolic grievances.

Although often viewed as a driver of political discontent, economic precarity was not a significant predictor of vote choice for any group in this study. This challenges traditional models, suggesting that financial instability increases support for candidates who are offering material relief. As Hochschild (2016) and Frank (2004) suggest, economic hardship is often reframed through cultural narratives, such as personal responsibility or resentment, which align with conservative values. During the COVID-19 pandemic, government aid and the broader crisis environment may have softened the impact of economic insecurity, making it feel temporary rather than systemic. These findings show that economic precarity does not shape political behavior independently; rather, it is filtered through culture, crisis, and identity.

Cultural class, measured through union household membership and self-perceived middle-class identity, was not a significant predictor of Trump support in any group. This suggests that symbolic class identity, at least as operationalized here, may hold less weight in shaping political behavior than material class advantage or place-based cultural values. While union membership once served as a strong anchor for Democratic identification, especially among white working-class men, its political salience has shifted over time. Union density has declined dramatically over the past several decades, and many union households today are ideologically diverse or disengaged from organized labor's traditional political alignments. Among women, the cultural and political significance of union membership may differ from

earlier generations, especially given the decline of manufacturing and the rise of service-sector jobs. Middle-class identity is widespread, even among lower-income Americans, making it a weak economic or cultural position signal. As Bourdieu argues, class is also about social recognition, but in this case, those symbolic lines may not clearly shape how people vote. These results suggest the need for more refined measures of cultural class, such as perceptions of cultural alienation, social resentment, or class-based disrespect, which may better capture the emotional and symbolic dimensions of class consciousness in politics.

The distinct patterns observed across white women and women of color underscore the importance of using an intersectional framework to study political behavior. As Crenshaw (1991) argues, intersectionality shows how overlapping structures of oppression produce distinct social and political realities that cannot be understood by analyzing race, gender, or class in isolation. The findings of this thesis affirm that point: while socioeconomic status was a significant predictor of GOP support among white women, it had no meaningful effect among women of color. For white women, higher SES may correspond with greater access to education, cultural capital, or social environments that reduce support for Trump. In contrast, for women of color, economic advantage does not necessarily protect against racialized experiences of exclusion or shape vote choice in the same way. As Patricia Hill Collins (2000) argues, economic mobility does not erase the effects of structural racism or the continuing importance of collective racial identity, which may drive political engagement more by solidarity than self-interest.

Ideology strongly predicted Trump support among white women. However, it was not significant among women of color, suggesting that standard ideological measures may not fully capture how racially marginalized groups experience politics. Their vote choices may instead reflect identity-based solidarities and structural concerns that transcend the traditional left-right

spectrum. Although rural-urban attitudes predicted vote choice across all groups, the meaning of rural identity differs by race. Future research should explore how feelings of access, respect, and belonging shape place-based political attitudes.

These differences show that classed political behavior is fundamentally shaped by race and gender, not just income or ideology. They also reveal the limits of models that treat race, gender, and class as separate rather than interconnected. An intersectional approach offers a more accurate and equitable lens for understanding women's political motivations, especially for groups historically underrepresented in electoral politics and political science research. The 2020 racial justice protests intensified the salience of racial identity and systemic injustice for many women of color, shaping political behavior beyond class or ideology. Trump's response may have deepened group solidarity, illustrating how crisis moments can push identity ahead of economic considerations in voting behavior. This interpretation is reinforced by the regression model for women of color, which shows that black women were significantly less likely to vote for Trump compared to other women of color. This finding demonstrates that even within the broad category of "women of color," racial identity remains crucial, and that political behavior must be interpreted through both shared and group-specific experiences of marginalization.

While this analysis provides important insights into how class, race, and gender intersect to shape women's political behavior, it is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the ANES data limits the ability to draw causal conclusions; unobserved variables or reciprocal relationships may influence the observed associations between class-related predictors and vote choice. Second, the operationalization of key indices, such as precarity and cultural class, relied on available survey items, which may not fully capture the depth or nuance of these multidimensional concepts. For instance, cultural class identity extends beyond union

membership and middle-class self-perception, while precarity may involve emotional, psychological, or community-based stressors not captured in the data. Third, the broad categorization of “women of color” conceals critical variation across racial and ethnic subgroups. While black women were included as a control in the women of the color model, small subgroup sample sizes prevented a more detailed analysis of Latina, Asian American, Indigenous, or multiracial women, whose political experiences may differ. Some measures, like the rural-urban index, may have different meanings across groups, affecting interpretations of results. Moreover, although the ANES is a substantial dataset, its size limits the deeper analysis of intersectional identities. Nonetheless, this study offers an important starting point for exploring how class, race, and gender jointly shape political behavior.

These findings have important implications for political science research, electoral analysis, and political strategy. They suggest that class, when examined in isolation, cannot fully explain women’s voting behavior without attention to how it intersects with race, gender, and cultural identity. The results also highlight the growing importance of rural-urban cultural divides, not just for white voters but for women of color as well, complicating common narratives about whom rural political appeals resonate. This analysis underscores the need for intersectional approaches that consider lived experience and identity rather than treating race, class, and gender as just additive factors. Future research should disaggregate “women of color” to better understand diverse racial and ethnic political dynamics. Qualitative studies could complement these quantitative findings by exploring how women interpret their class position and how that interpretation shapes political attitudes and behavior. Finally, as cultural divisions and place-based resentment continue to drive political polarization, future work should

investigate how class identity is constructed and politicized through material conditions and emotion, media, and narrative.

These results offer a more nuanced understanding of how race, gender, and class influence women's voting behavior in the 2020 election. By moving beyond singular measures of class, this study demonstrates that political behavior cannot be fully understood without attending to the intersections of material conditions, cultural identity, and structural inequality. The findings challenge conventional narratives that treat race, gender, and class as additive factors and underscore the need for intersectional approaches that center lived experience and group-based positioning. As the political landscape continues to polarize along cultural and geographic lines, research must account for how identity and place are increasingly central to forming political preferences and behavior.

Conclusion

This thesis explores how race, gender, and class come together to shape women's voting behavior in the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. Using original indices of socioeconomic status, cultural class identity, precarity, and rural-urban attitudes, it analyzed how these dimensions influenced support for Donald Trump among women overall, white women, and women of color. The findings reveal that class does not function uniformly across racial groups. While higher socioeconomic status predicted lower support for Trump among white women, it had no significant effect among women of color. Meanwhile, rural-urban attitudes consistently predicted Republican support across all groups, suggesting that cultural geography and perceived respect for rural communities are powerful drivers of conservative alignment, even among voters who may not live in or identify with rural areas.

Significantly, economic precarity also predicted Trump support among all women and women of color, highlighting how economic insecurity can influence political behavior in ways that cross racial and ideological boundaries. In contrast, cultural class, as measured through union membership and self-perceived class identity, was not a significant predictor, complicating assumptions about the continued political power of symbolic class identity. These findings point to the limits of traditional models that treat class as a purely material resource or a singular identity. Instead, they suggest that class is experienced and expressed through intersecting structures of race, gender, geography, and cultural narrative.

This study offers a more precise account of how class and identity shape political behavior by centering on women and disaggregating racial subgroups. It also underscores how contemporary events, including the 2020 racial justice protests and the deepening rural-urban divide, can shape how voters interpret their social position and political choices. As inequality

and polarization intensify, understanding how identity shapes class and how both influence voting will remain critical. This thesis highlights the value of intersectional approaches in capturing the complexity of political life and calls for continued attention to how power, place, and identity shape democratic engagement.

While this study provides important insights, it is not without limitations. The decision to group women of color, while methodologically necessary due to sample size constraints, may mask meaningful variation across ethnic subgroups. Additionally, using OLS to model a binary outcome, while interpretable, simplifies the nuances of vote choice. Future research should extend this framework using larger samples or test how class interacts with race and gender in different electoral contexts. As class and identity continue to shape political divisions in the post-2020 era, intersectional models will remain essential to understanding the evolving dynamics of American electoral behavior.

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