

What if everyone voted?

And what the answer tells us about voter suppression

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What is a "data journalist"?

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A "data journalist" is just like a "regular" journalist who relies on their own skills in empiricism to tell a story.

Process:

- 1. Find a story**
- 2. Find a data-driven angle in said story**
- 3. Analyze data with statistics programs (Excel, STATA, Python, R)**
- 4. Convey information (with words and graphics)**

What if everyone voted?

Guiding questions

1. How many Democrats and Republicans are there?

Given data constraints, we're really asking: How many Clinton and Trump voters are there?

2. How are they distributed geographically?

The answer lets us assign Electoral College votes.

Data

1. Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES): A survey of 64,000 Americans

Includes demographic data and 2016 vote choice for 40,000+ validated voters

2. American Community Survey (ACS): A Census Bureau survey of 175,000 Americans

Includes the same demographic data as the CCES 32,640 “cells”

Method

1. Train a predictive model on CCES data

- Multi-level logistic regression
- Predict vote choice with: age, gender, race, education, region and interactions between them

2. Use the model to predict voting habits for every eligible American

Via “post-stratification” on the ACS

ACS Post-stratification

1. Each "type" of person gets their own "cell":

- One cell for white men ages 18-30 without college degrees who live in the Northeast
- Another for white men ages 18-30 without college degrees who live in the South
- Another for non-white men ages 18-30 without college degrees who live in the Northeast
- etc.

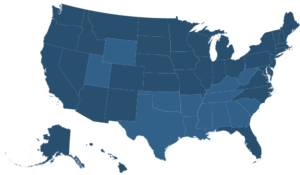
2. We know how many voters in that "cell" live in each state

3. So we can say that x and y% of each "cell" vote for Clinton or Trump, then add up

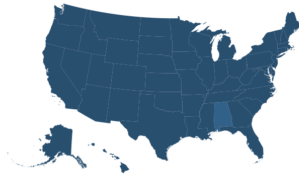
- For example, a Latino female age 18-30 with a college degree in Texas is 85% likely to vote for a Democrat for president (White man 65+ is 80% Republican)

Results

Black, Non-Hispanic
HS or less



Black, Non-Hispanic
Some college



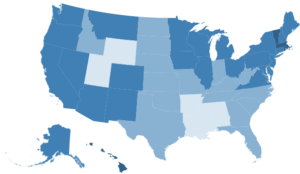
Black, Non-Hispanic
College



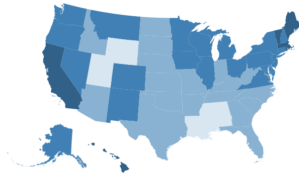
Black, Non-Hispanic
Post-grad



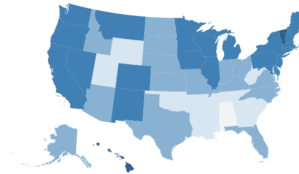
Hispanic
HS or less



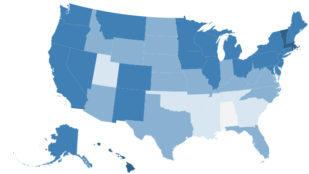
Hispanic
Some college



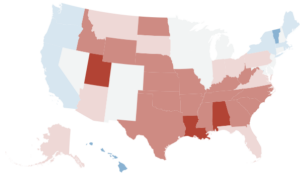
Hispanic
College



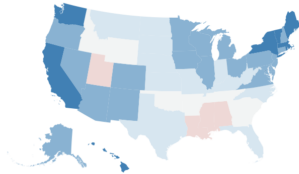
Hispanic
Post-grad



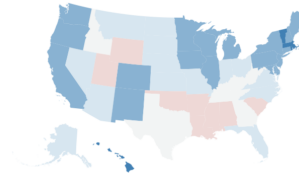
Other, Non-Hispanic
HS or less



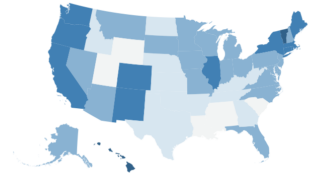
Other, Non-Hispanic
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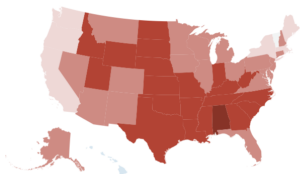
Other, Non-Hispanic
College



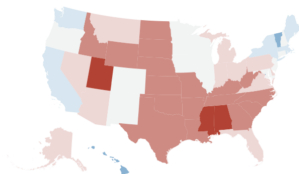
Other, Non-Hispanic
Post-grad



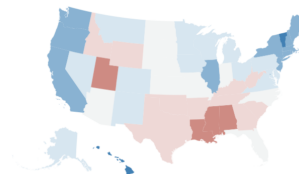
White, Non-Hispanic
HS or less



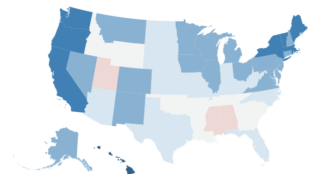
White, Non-Hispanic
Some college



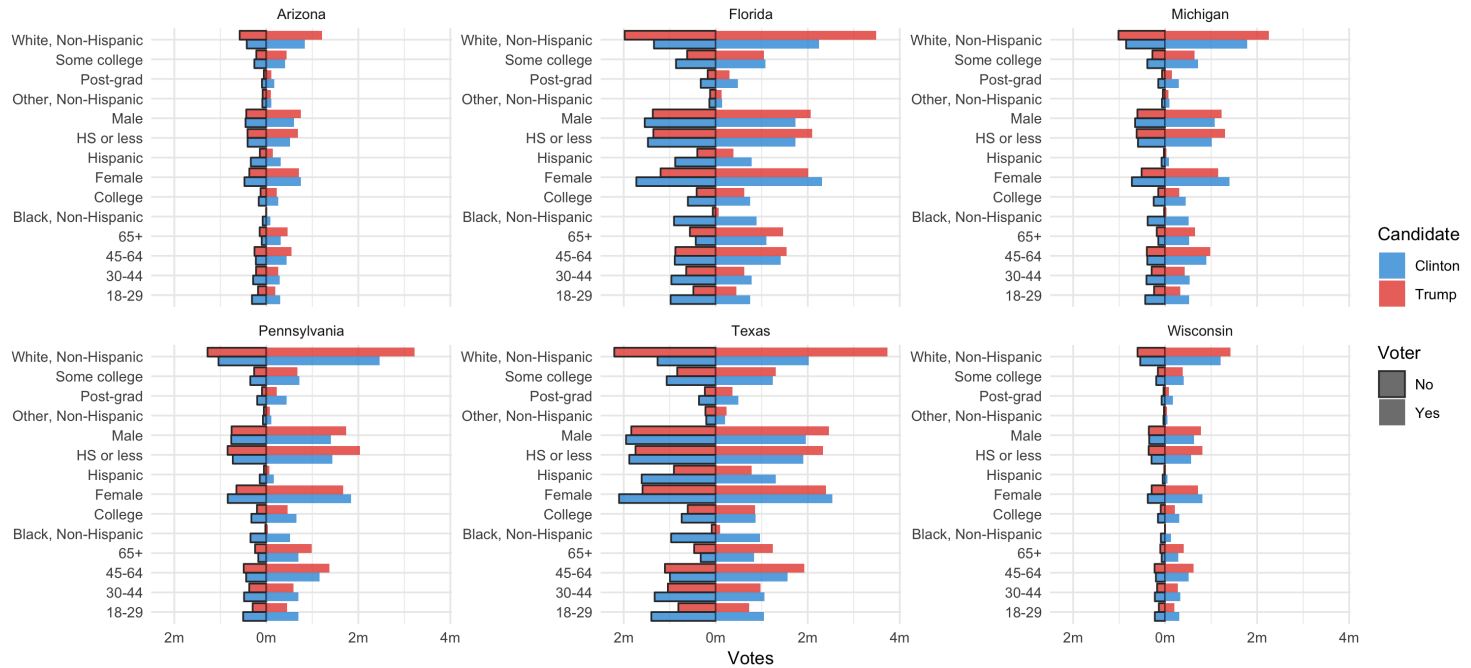
White, Non-Hispanic
College



White, Non-Hispanic
Post-grad



Results



Results: If everyone voted

**What does this tell us about
voter suppression?**

Voter suppression

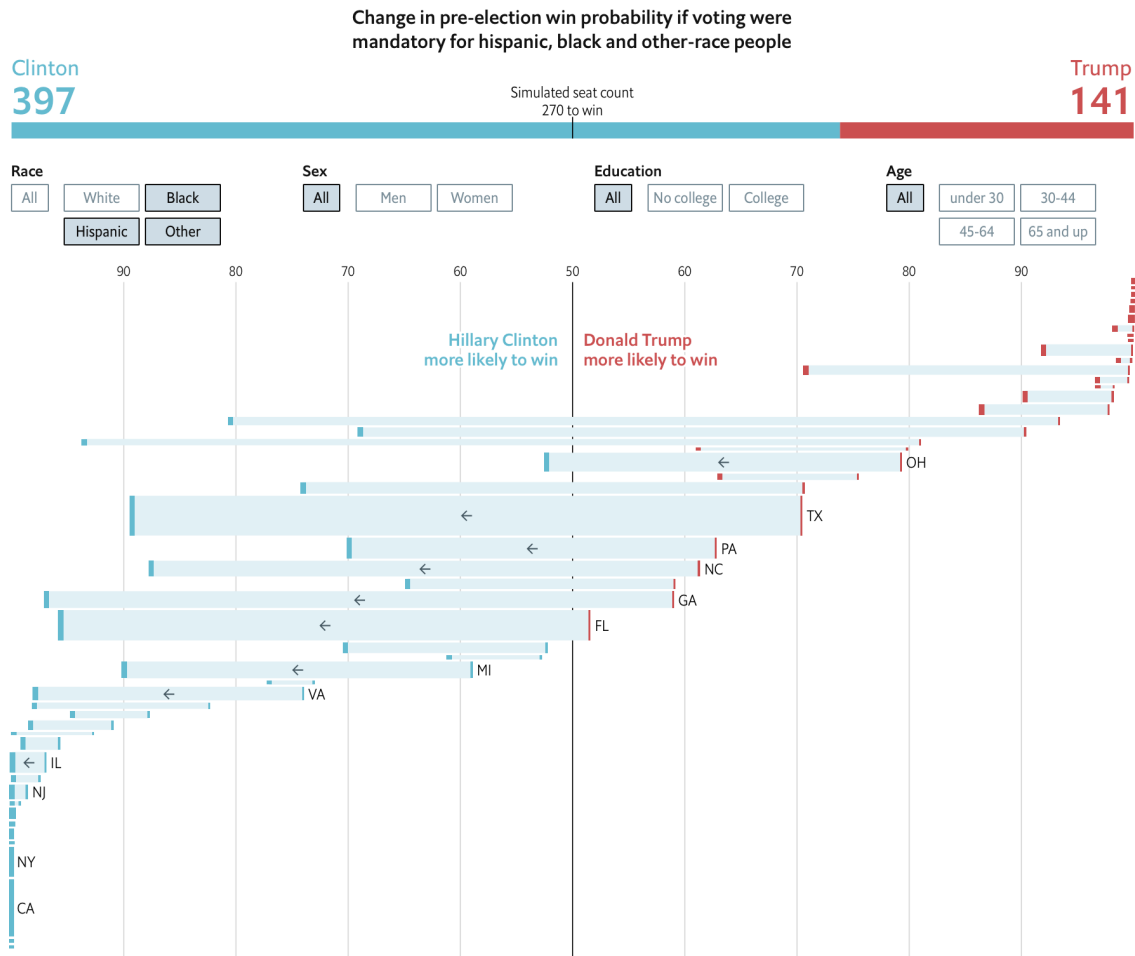
- We can modify the percentage of each group that turns out to vote, then re-predict the election

- What if only all whites vote?
- All non-whites?
- Whites without degrees? Etc.

- Democrats do better when non-whites turnout; Republicans have a vested interest in keeping turnout rates low

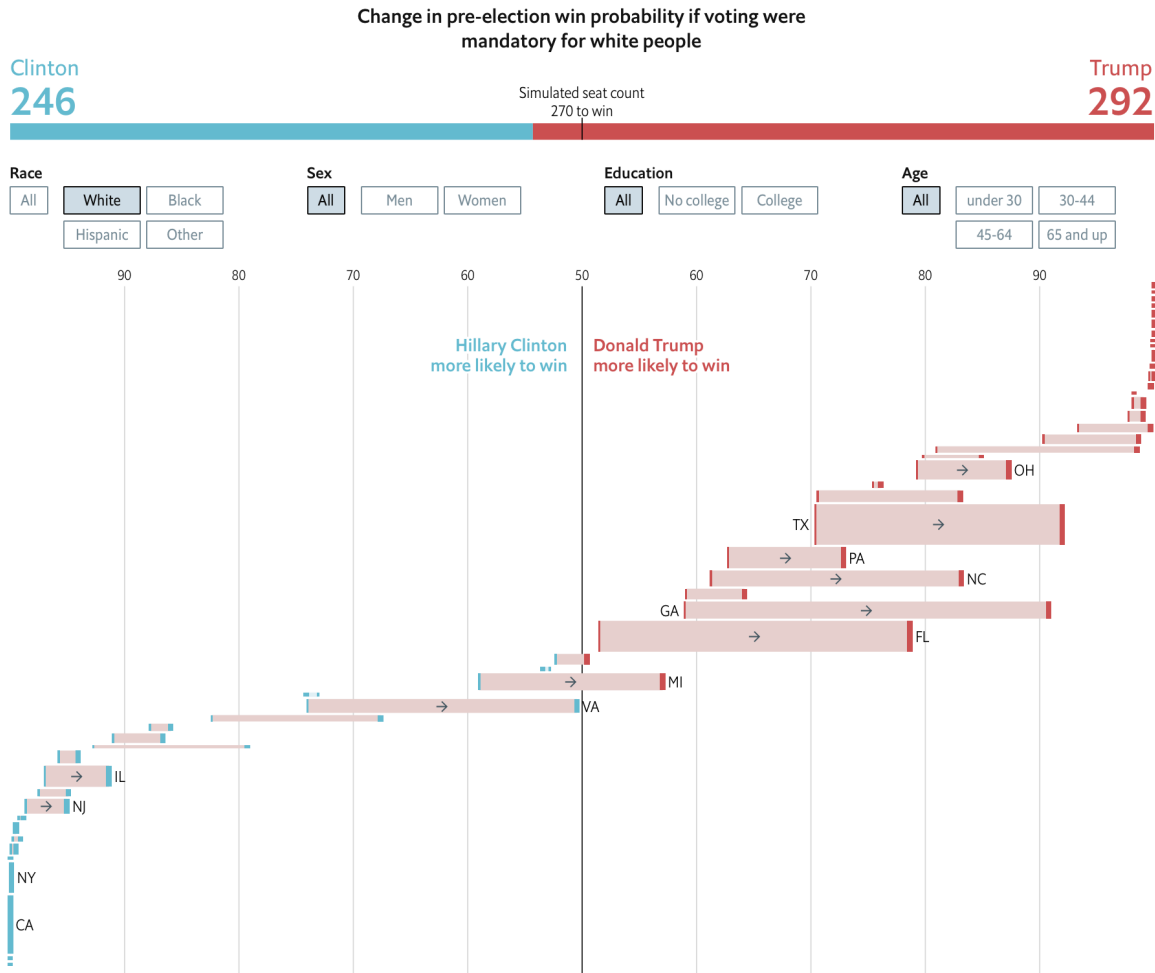
- Especially in southern states with large minority populations
- Their efforts to move voting locations off-campus—TX almost removed the FAC as a precinct after 2018—also have political consequences

Suppression of white votes



*Maine and Nebraska are treated as if they gave all their electoral votes to the state-wide winner

Suppression of non-white votes



*Maine and Nebraska are treated as if they gave all their electoral votes to the state-wide winner

Considerations

What this doesn't tell us:

- That Clinton/Trump/Abrams/etc would have won if certain x, y or z restrictions had been put in place
- Downstream effects (AKA party positions and coalition changes)

The balancing act:

- There are a ton of white, non-college educated voters in the Midwest that tilt national scales if we increase turnout
 - Especially because increases in turnout are not uniform
 - And because of their geographic distribution, small relative increases in white turnout can tip the Electoral College to Republicans (see: 2016)
 - But on the other hand, some organizations are explicitly targeting non-whites and young voters for turnout purposes

Thank you!

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These slides were made with the `xaringan` package for R from Yihui Xie. They are available online at <https://www.thecrosstab.com/slides/2019-09-30-utaustin/>