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One-page handout that explains the dataset and summarizes the analysis

For our project, we used data collected in the American National Election Survey (<https://electionstudies.org/>) which purports to supply “high quality” data for social scientists, researchers, and other academics. We used their 2016 study, which includes survey data from respondents taken before and after the presidential election. The survey is extremely broad and includes data on what TV shows respondents watch, demographic data, respondents’ views on certain issues, which candidates the respondents voted for, and much more.

In addition to fulfilling some of the required analysis (for example, the barplots at the beginning of the script), we explored the data through four distinct studies: (1) comparing voter enthusiasm for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, (2) analyzing what factors predict whether a person believes Obama is a Muslim, (3) creating a model based off political and non-political variables that predicts whether a respondent voted for Trump, and (4) analyzing correlations between issue responses.

We found first a statistically significant difference (95% conf: [.800, 4.197]) in respondents’ overall “feeling thermometer” (rated 1 to 100) between Trump and Clinton voters’ feelings about their preferred candidate. We found that Hillary supporters preferred Hillary slightly more than Trump voters supported Trump. We also used quantiles to examine the distributions and found that voters’ opinions were similarly distributed.

We then used contingency tables to determine the relationship between each of three variables (party ID, belief in vaccines, belief that the economy has done better since 2008) and a respondent’s belief in whether Obama is a Muslim. We found statistically significant correlations with all three variables, and of them, belief that the economy has done worse since 2008 best predicts whether a respondent believes that Obama is a Muslim (55% of those who believe the economy is worse off also believe that Obama is a Muslim).

Our third study created a model that predicted whether a respondent voted for Trump based on that respondent’s stances on certain issues and general ideology. It correctly predicted the vote over 90% of the time. We then included non-political variables and found only a modest improvement. Interestingly, it appears that there is a statistically significant relationship between watching Modern Family and not voting for Trump, even when accounting for all of the other variables. While not included in this analysis, we tried a model using only non-political variables and found that it still performed much better than at random (worked for about 80% of respondents).

Lastly, we analyzed the relationship between voters’ responses on four issues: defense spending, government services spending, environmental regulation, and healthcare. With a lower number associated with the more liberal position and a higher associated with the more conservative position (except for the question on services), we found that most of the issues had a correlation of about .35 to .55. All the observed relationships are statistically significant.