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01:790:300:02 Intro to Political Science Methods, Professor Pierce, Spring 2022

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The Impact of Racial Diversity on Party Preferences and Ideological Self-Placement

Abstract:

This research paper is about the implications of racial diversities on party preferences and self ideology. In recent years, there has been a clear significance in existing research between how racial identification can affect an individual's political ideological preferences. This study examines this, by assessing the correlation between the diversity of the US population, as per the 2016 ANES survey, and what respondents rank their party preferences on a scale of 1-7. The findings of this study show a negative, weak correlation between these two variables. Future studies could examine the role of local electoral politics in this phenomenon, and study a smaller sample size to assess whether or not the correlation strengthens.

Race and politics are two topics that have always been heavily discussed. The implications that one has on the other is highly prevalent, especially when examining elections and their results. Specifically examining racial diversity, it is curious to see the impact of the racial diversity of where an individual lives on their voting preferences in elections. Many existing studies have concluded that there is a definitive relationship between the two, as race tends to play a significant role in party politics and identification. This research aims to further study this existing phenomenon, but also look closely at specific elections and assess if there is any correlation between the racial diversities of the time and the party voting patterns.

When assessing the nature of elections and politics along with how race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. interact with one another, there is a lot of interesting findings that are to be uncovered. The primary topic of this research paper is to observe how this plays out, looking at race specifically, along with the results of the 2016 Presidential Election. With this research, the main goal is to study data on the racial diversities of the United States population in 2016, and the different voting preferences observed during this election cycle. This is an important correlation to examine, as it can be useful in predicting the outcomes of future elections based on census data of race. Given the developments in the United States regarding race relations over the last ten years, it is even more prevalent now to observe how these developments, along with an individual's exposure to racial diversities have affected the socio-political atmosphere. Elections have always been a signature of a democracy, and living under democratic rule in the United States, elections are results of the national mood and perception of the time.

With this research, as mentioned before, the purpose is to test for a potential correlation between racial makeup of the United States, and the voting preferences during the 2016

presidential election. This field in political science research is constantly growing, and any new research is imperative to furthering the body of knowledge on race and politics.

I. Literature Review

There is a lot of existing research that examines the relationship between race and politics in American society. This is explored broadly in the article titled "Race and Politics in America: Perspectives on Politics" by Micheal Bernhard and Daniel O'Neill. Race relations and politics in America have converged over time, with race becoming a staple in the way our democracy works. White supremacy has rooted itself into American politics, especially with certain events occurring over time, and how this has influenced the voting/political habits of Americans. Bernhard and O'Neill describe this more specifically, by stating, "the practices and ideology of white supremacy were perpetuated formally in the states of the former Confederacy through Jim Crow and more informally in the other states of the Union through practices such as redlining, housing covenants, employment and educational discrimination, and even in the landmark legislation of the New Deal" (Bernhard and O'Neill, 2021). Specifically addressing the practice of redlining, which can have racial motivation behind it, Bernhard and O'Neill discuss how this can lead to altered election patterns, which is directly related to the question of how racial demographics can affect voting patterns.

There are many studies on racial and ethnic diversities and their correlation to voting in elections. This is a phenomenon that has existed for many years, as a 2004 study conducted by Regina P. Branton explores how race plays a role in local initiative elections. Branton's most significant finding is that white voters specifically who live in a district with high racial diversity tend to vote more liberally in "initiative elections," which have a strong impact on policy making

(Branton, 2004). This is critical to understanding the key role of race, as it delineates how race relations and diversity in an area can affect the decisions of the constituents. However, this data is very dated and thus is not fully indicative of what current racial demographics and voting patterns look like. As a result, it is important to gather new data from more specific districts to observe this phenomena. While Branton's study focuses on racial diversity in an area and how that affects voting preferences, research from the Pew Research Center looks at how an individual's own race affects their voting preferences. Examining the 2020 Presidential Election specifically, The study finds that firstly, the percentage of Republican voters has increased since 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2021). The researchers also report that white Americans make up the highest percentage of registered voters in America. However, these voters were found to more likely vote Republican in elections versus their POC counterparts. White people were also more present at the polls in key battleground states that ultimately went red in the 2020 presidential election. Moreover, additional research conducted by the Harvard Kennedy School reiterates how voter turnout and race are intertwined. The main key finding from this study that is relevant to my research is that when minority voters live in a district that has a higher percentage of minorities represented, they are more likely to have a higher voter turnout. For example, Black Americans living in a district with a high percentage of Black American residents would have a high voter turnout (Leatherby, 2016). This research, along with Branton's research on racial diversity provides key information on the connection between race and politics in terms of elections.

In addition to observing how elections and racial diversities are related, another key piece of information from the gathered literature centers on representation and race in politics. This is important to how voting patterns play out as well, and can be indicative of why racial diversity in

an area affects the voting patterns of constituents. The article titled " "Local Elections and Representation in the United States." Annual Reviews" by Christopher Warshaw of the Department of Political Science at George Washington University describes this in further detail. This study, published in 2019 to the Annual Review of Political Science closely examines how representation plays a role in location elections. The main research question is how policymaking and the party of electorates is impacted by racial representation. Some of the main findings show that participation in local elections is not as high as that for national, and that local elections can sharply be divided by race and identity. This research found that there is significant evidence to support that white voters tend to vote for more conservative politics, and non-white POC voters tend to vote the opposite (Warshaw, 2019). It also found that there is a lack of representation for POC in their local elections. The research shows that when there is more diversity on the ballot and more diverse electorates are voted for, the more liberal/progressive policies tend to be passed. This is further exemplified in research that states that "survey-based studies of minority turnout have found significant increases in participation in the presence of minority officeholding" (Fraga, 2015).

Similar sentiments are echoed in Pew Research Center's data on demographics and lifestyle differences among typology groups. The main findings of this research was that GOP-oriented voters were more likely to be white, and Democratically-oriented groups are far more likely to be much more diverse (Pew Research Center, 2022). Considering these findings along with the other bodies of work provided in this literature review, it is clear that there is already supporting evidence that race, politics, and elections all converge. However, it requires additional research to examine current patterns, especially given the key events regarding race that unfolded in the last two years, and detailed observations of local districts to fully understand

this concept. For example, the Pew Research Center also reports that even though turnout rates are affected by racial demographics, this changes all the time. Specifically, it discusses how "the turnout rate among Black Americans, for instance, exceeded the rate among White Americans for the first time in the 2012 presidential election, but that pattern did not hold four years later" (Gramlich, 2020).

The leading research question for my study is what the correlation is between the racial diversity levels of an individual's district in New Jersey and voting pattern in local Congressional elections. I theorize that those living in areas of higher racially diverse areas are more likely to vote for/support liberal/left-leaning politicians in their local elections. My null hypothesis states that in a comparison of the racial diversity in the United States election surveys, there is no effect of the racial diversity on the party preferences of an individual. The alternate hypothesis for this is that in a comparison of the racial diversity of the United States election surveys, the party preferences tend to lean more conservative in an area with low racial diversity versus an area with high racial diversity. Using the existing body of literature that was discussed in this review, there is substantial evidence that supports the idea that racial demographics have a strong impact on elections. However, I aim to examine raw data from the 2016 American National Election Survey to observe the specifics of how racial diversity affected the self-placement of an individual of their party preferences. This raw data provides very specific information on a variety of subjects, and I will focus closely on the racial demographic of the ANES survey, and how this demographic influences their own ideological self-placement.

II. Data/Methods

For this research paper, my null hypothesis is that in a comparison of the racial diversity in the United States, there is no effect of the racial diversity on the party preferences of the individual, based on their ideological self-placement. Conversely, the alternate hypothesis of this study states that in a comparison of the racial diversity in the United States, those living in a district with high racial diversity are more likely to vote liberal in local elections than those living in a district with low racial diversity. The independent variable in this study is the racial diversity in an individual's district. I will operationalize racial diversity by how many different racial groups are represented in this district, and what their percentages are in relation to White. If the percentage of White people is less than 50%, this is operationalized as a moderately diverse area, and vice versa if it is greater than 50%. The dependent variable in this study is the party preferences of individuals, which will be operationalized through a Likert scale ranking from 1-7, from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Racial diversity in this study is a nominal variable, as it has distinct categories of race that cannot be meaningfully ordered in any way, and party preference is an ordinal variable due to the Likert scale ranking that allows the observations to be ordered in a meaningful way. The main control variable in this study is age, as this is a common confounding variable that could potentially skew the results. Age is operationalized as age in the number of years of the respondent. I will also control education, as this is another factor that could potentially affect results, which will be operationalized through an ordinal ranking of education level, with a ranking of 1 designating high school or less, and a ranking of 4 designated graduate school or higher.

In order to test this hypothesis, I have studied variables from the Phillip Pollock American National Election Survey dataset. This dataset is from the 2016 national census surveys, and contains 4,271 observations and 211 variables. Of these variables, the independent

variable used in this study is “Race_all,” the dependent variable is “libcon7,” and the control variables are “Age” and “educ4.” The independent variable accounts for all races represented in responses from the survey, categorized by White/non-Hispanic, Black\non-Hispanic, Asian or Native Hawaiian/other, Native American or Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and other. The dependent variable is a self-ranking from 1-7, with a ranking of 1equating to extremely liberal, a ranking of 4 equating to moderate, and a ranking of 7 equating to extremely conservative. This sample is widely representative of the United States, and is a large enough sample size with over 4,000 observations.

I will then assess the regression between the self-ranked party preference/ideology and racial identification/diversity and test to see if there is a positive correlation between the percentage of respondents in the survey that rank themselves as moderately to extremely conservative and the racial diversity. I will create a 95% confidence interval and look for a p-value of less than 0.05 to assess the statistical significance of the results of a linear and multivariate regression. If the null hypothesis is true, I would expect that there is no correlation between racial diversity and self-placement of party ideology, meaning that an individual’s exposure to different races in their area does not affect how they formulate political party preferences. This would also mean that the results are not significant and the p-value is greater than the alpha value. If this alternative hypothesis is true, then this would mean that I would reject the null hypothesis, the findings are significant, and the p-value is less than the alpha value. This indicates that there is evidence of a correlation between racial diversity and voting patterns.

III. Results/ Analysis

To begin the analysis, the following graphs were constructed to visually represent the independent and dependent variables.

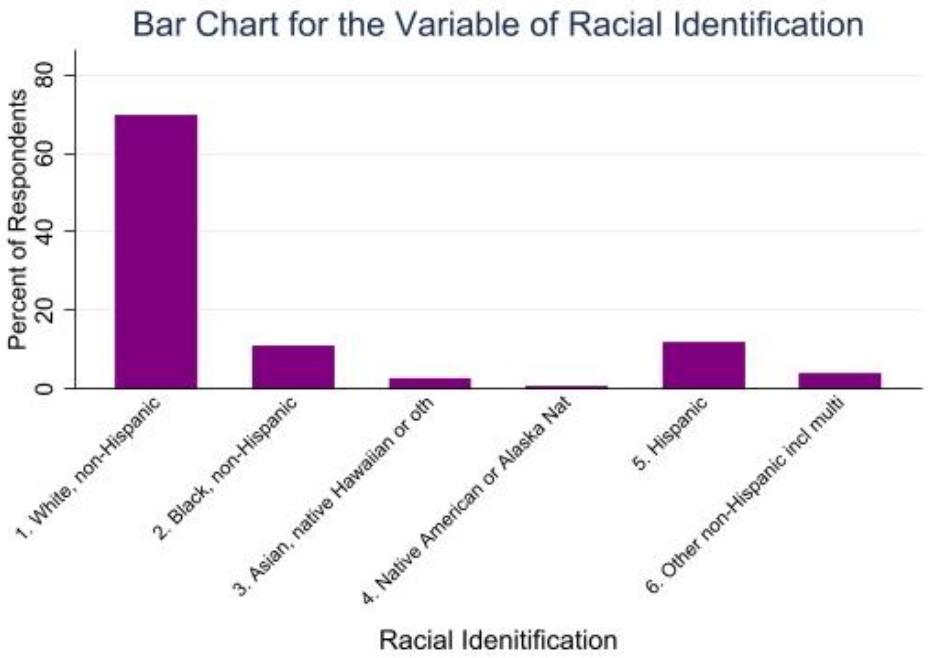


Figure 1: IV Graph

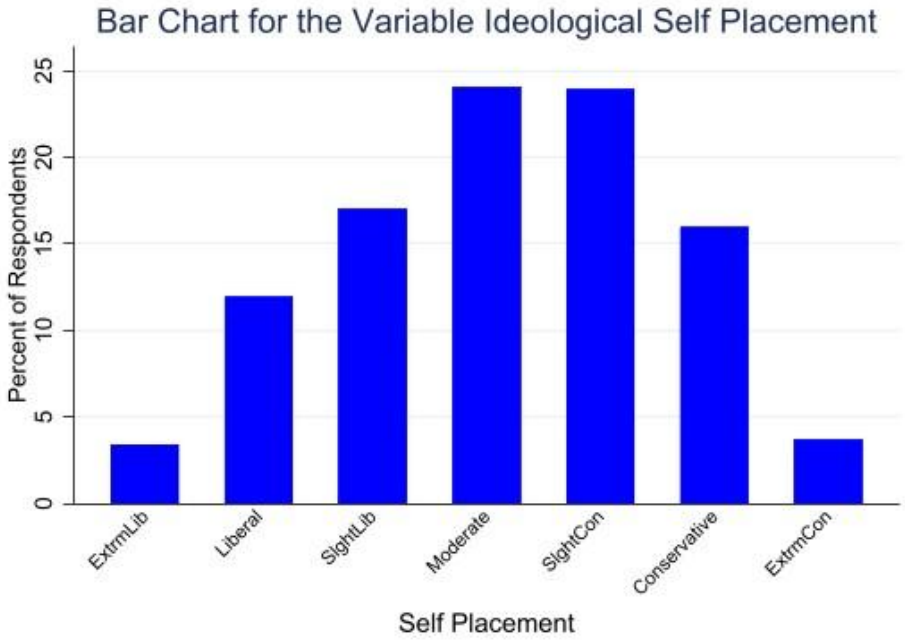


Figure 2: DV Graph

As seen by Figure 1, there is low dispersion for the independent variable, as most observations are clustered around "White, non-Hispanic. The dependent variable also has moderately low dispersion, as seen by Figure 2, but is more varied than the independent variable. Most observations are clustered near "moderate" and "slightly conservative."

The mode of the independent variable is White, non-Hispanic, as this category accounts for 71.68% of observations (See Appendix A). Since the percentage of White respondents is greater than 50%, as per the operationalization of the independent variable, there is low racial diversity present. The median of the independent variable is "Moderate," and the mode is "Slightly Conservative" (See Appendix A).

For the control variables, a histogram representation of "Age" and a bar graph representation of "educ4" are both displayed below. The mean Age is 47.37 years, with a standard deviation of 17.8 and a median of 48 (See Appendix B). As for the second control variable, education, the mode is 2, meaning that the majority of respondents have completed an associates degree. The median is also an associate degree (See Appendix B).

Figure 3: Control #1 Graph

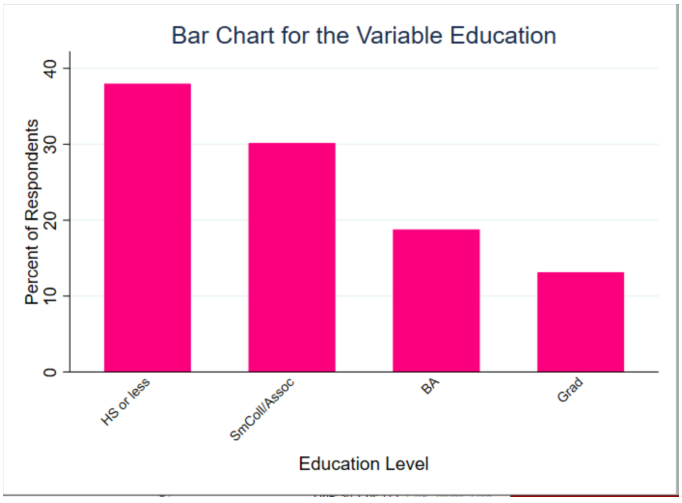
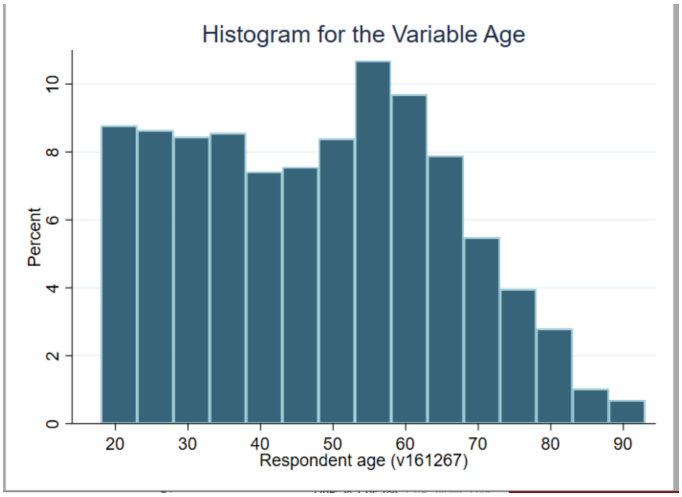


Figure 4: Control #2 Graph



The first step

The first step of the statistical analysis was to conduct a pairwise correlation analysis, depicted below:

Table 1

```
. pwcorr Race_all libcon7, sig

             | Race_all  libcon7
-------------+------------------
    Race_all |   1.0000
             |
             |
     libcon7 |  -0.0633   1.0000
             |   0.0000
```

The correlation coefficient is -0.063, delineating a weak, negative correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

The second step to the statistical analysis was to conduct a simple bivariate regression, using the independent and dependent variable. Because the independent variable is categorical, the category “White/non-Hispanics” was designated as the reference category, with the remaining five categories being the dummy variables.

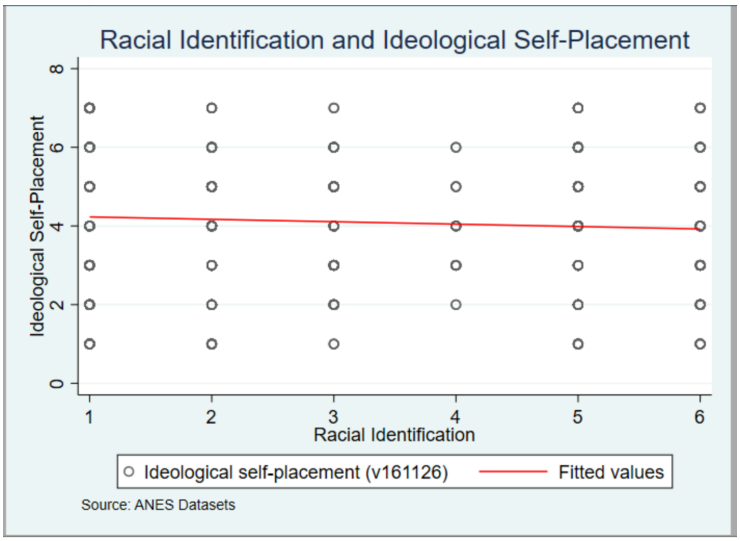
Figure 7: Bivariate Regression

libcon7	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Race_all						
2. Black, ..	-.5431178	.079689	-6.82	0.000	-.6993508	-.3868847
3. Asian, ..	-.1865442	.1247393	-1.50	0.135	-.4311	.0580116
4. Native ..	-.3525084	.2898816	-1.22	0.224	-.9208315	.2158148
5. Hispanic	-.2619179	.0752217	-3.48	0.001	-.4093927	-.114443
6. Other n..	-.1932323	.1160408	-1.67	0.096	-.4207345	.0342698
_cons	4.275585	.0269148	158.86	0.000	4.222818	4.328353

The number of observations recorded for this variable is 4,156. Based on the table above, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient for the independent variable is -0.543 when going from White respondents to Black respondents, and the coefficient for the intercept is 4.27. Plugging these values into the regression line model, the equation is as follows:

$$libcon7 = 4.27 + -.543 * Race_all$$

The scatter plot and linear regression line is shown below as well:

Figure 8: 

Scatterplot

To interpret this regression equation, it can be stated that the average self-ideological ranking decreases by -0.54 when moving from White respondents to Black respondents. In other words, on average, Black respondents tend to shift politically left of White respondents by -.543 points on

the Likert scale of self-ideology. The R^2 adjusted value is equal to 0.035, meaning that 3.5% of the variation in self-ideological ranking is explained by racial identification. This is a very low percentage, thus much of the variation cannot be explained by the independent variable. The confidence interval does not contain zero, meaning that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. The t-value is -6.82, and the p-value is 0.00 when observing the difference between White respondents and Black respondents. Therefore, I can reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between racial diversity and self-ideology.

Next, I completed a multivariate regression analysis that accounts for the two control variables, pictured below:

Table : Multivariate Regression

libcon7	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Race_all						
2. Black, ..	-.5617156	.0791681	-7.10	0.000	-.7169289	-.4065023
3. Asian, ..	-.073453	.1274567	-0.58	0.564	-.3233389	.1764329
4. Native ..	-.6091912	.3016234	-2.02	0.043	-1.20054	-.017842
5. Hispanic	-.2906457	.0764113	-3.80	0.000	-.4404542	-.1408372
6. Other n..	-.137452	.1161842	-1.18	0.237	-.3652375	.0903335
Age	.0129895	.0013067	9.94	0.000	.0104278	.0155513
educ4	-.2233843	.0226156	-9.88	0.000	-.2677234	-.1790452
_cons	4.135909	.0891945	46.37	0.000	3.961038	4.31078

The number of observations for these variables is 4,025. Following the same steps to analysis as the bivariate regression, it can be concluded that that the regression equation is:

$$libcon7 = 4.14 + -.561 * Race_all$$

When controlling for age and education, it can be seen that there is a small increase in the correlation coefficient when going from White respondents to Black respondents. The R^2 value also shows an increase, as the new adjusted R^2 value is equal to 0.058. Once again, the

confidence interval does not contain zero, meaning that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. The t-value is -7.10 and the p-value is 0.00, once again resulting in a rejection of the null hypothesis.

IV. Conclusion

The overall findings of this paper are that there is a statistically significant correlation between racial diversity and party preferences/self-ideology. In other words, party preferences are influenced by racial diversity. My hypotheses were supported, with the findings being statistically significant. This is an important finding, as race and politics are intertwined, as political agendas and goals can be greatly influenced by racial identification and representation. Especially given the major events that have occurred in recent years regarding race relations, such as the murder of George Floyd and protests that followed in the summer of 2020, race is more prevalent now than ever. The 2020 Election corroborated this, as Joe Biden's 2020 victory relied heavily on race (Pew Research Center, 2022).

However, there are many limitations to this specific study. The raw datasets are representative of the entire American population, which is a substantial sample size, but may be too broad. A future study could break data down into smaller sections, perhaps focusing on specific states or local districts. Local elections are a subtopic of political research that is growing, as seen in the literature review which discusses the current body of knowledge regarding local elections. Another limitation of this study is the dated nature of the datasets. Phillip Pollock's ANES Datasets are from 2016, and since 2016, there has been a notable shift in the national mood and the socio-political climate. More recent data from the 2020 Presidential Election and beyond could provide a more nuanced insight into how race relations in the last few

years have changed the political landscape. Future studies could examine this phenomenon, and also account for the rise of social media, which has been instrumental in spreading news and information quickly.

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Appendix A

Table A1.

Summary: Racial self-ID (v161310x)	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1. White, non-Hispanic	3,038	71.68	71.68
2. Black, non-Hispanic	398	9.39	81.08
3. Asian, native Hawaiian or other Paci	148	3.49	84.57
4. Native American or Alaska Native, no	27	0.64	85.21
5. Hispanic	450	10.62	95.82
6. Other non-Hispanic incl multiple rac	177	4.18	100.00
Total	4,238	100.00	

Table A2.

Ideological self-placement (v161126)	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
ExtrmLib	146	3.49	3.49
Liberal	506	12.09	15.58
SlghtLib	691	16.51	32.09
Moderate	986	23.56	55.65
SlghtCon	987	23.58	79.24
Conservative	703	16.80	96.03
ExtrmCon	166	3.97	100.00
Total	4,185	100.00	

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Appendix B

Table B1.

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. sum Age [aw=nesw], detail
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Respondent age (v161267)

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	18	18		
5%	20	18		
10%	23	18	Obs	3,553
25%	32	18	Sum of wgt.	3,573.6286
50%	48		Mean	47.37432
		Largest	Std. dev.	17.69932
75%	60	90		
90%	71	90	Variance	313.266
95%	77	90	Skewness	.1370782
99%	86	90	Kurtosis	2.089022

Table B2.

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. tab educ4
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Education (v161270 collapsed)	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
HS or less	1,092	25.83	25.83
SmColl/Assoc	1,500	35.49	61.32
BA	955	22.59	83.91
Grad	680	16.09	100.00
Total	4,227	100.00	