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Statewide Survey on President Donald Trump versus Oprah Winfrey

Dr. Edward Chervenak
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The University of New Orleans Survey Research Center conducted an interactive voice response (IVR) telephone survey on January 11, 2018 on the topic of candidate choice in a hypothetical match-up between President Donald Trump and Oprah Winfrey. Survey respondents were randomly selected from the Louisiana Secretary of State's registered voter file. The sample of 722 respondents yields a margin of error of 3.7% with 95% confidence.¹

¹ IVR surveys, also known as "robo-polls" employ an automated, recorded voice to call respondents who are asked to answer questions by punching telephone keys. Advantages of IVR surveys include their low cost, the almost immediate collection of data, and the simple and convenient processing of data. They also reduce interviewer bias to zero by eliminating the live human interviewer. Every survey respondent hears the same question read the same way. When conducting IVR surveys, pollsters must not rely on all details of a call list. They cannot assume that the details of the person in the file will match the individual who picks up the call. Demographic categories of race, age, gender, and political party identification must be self-reported by the respondent to ensure a valid and accurate analysis. Ideally, the sample of respondents should reflect the population of interest. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. One of the problems with telephone surveys is non-response since some people may screen their calls or hang-up when called. This may cause some groups to be over- or under-represented.

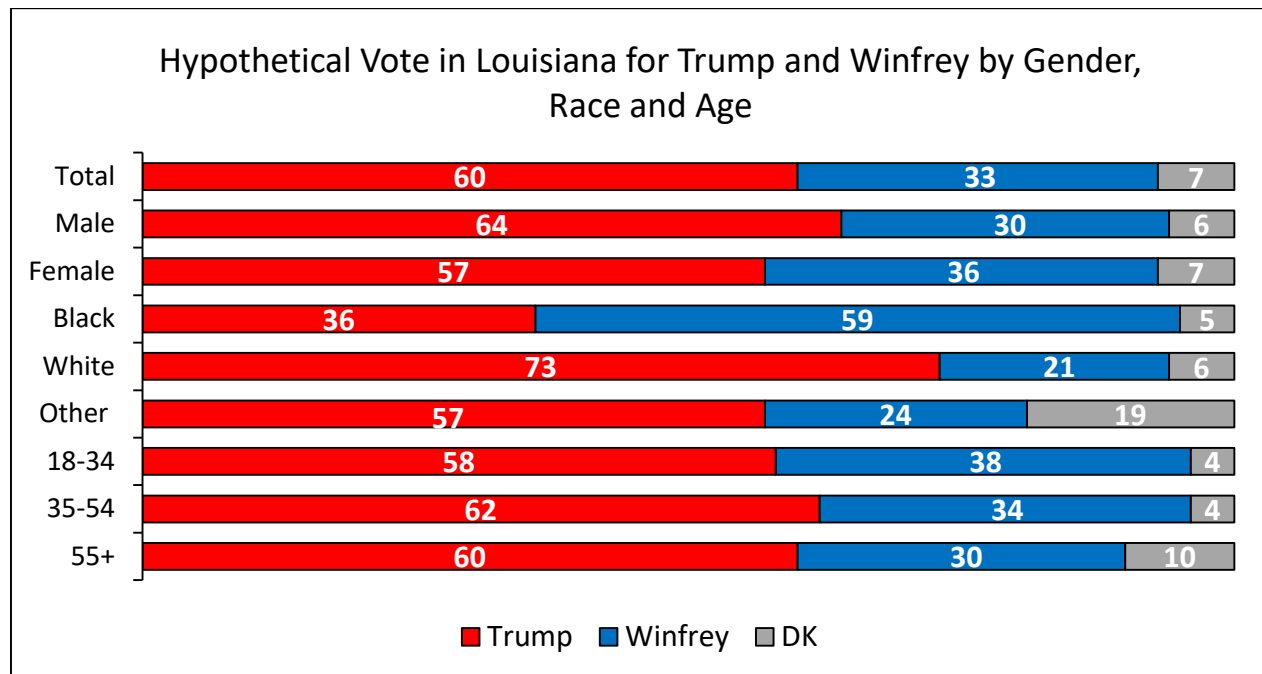
Because IVR surveying is prohibited by FCC rules from calling cell phone numbers, only VOIP and home phone numbers can be called. The growing trend of minority and younger households without land lines can result in a coverage error. Residents who are cell phone only who would be eligible to participate are excluded from IVR polls, unless they answer the survey from a home telephone in another home. As such, no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the observed survey data unless the sample has been post-weighted to correct for the lack of representativeness. It is imperative that survey analysts accurately post weight the cases to reflect the demographics of the population of interest. In this instance this sample was post-weighted to reflect gender, age, race, and congressional district parameters of the population of registered voters in Louisiana.

Analysis

Speculation has recently arisen about celebrity and media mogul Oprah Winfrey as a possible contender for US president in 2020. National polls have tested public opinion on a hypothetical match-up between Winfrey and the current White House occupant, Donald Trump. A poll of registered voters conducted by Public Policy Polling (PPP) reports that Winfrey and Trump are basically tied (44 percent to 43 percent), while a Marist poll shows Winfrey leading Trump 50 percent to 39 percent.

While these polls provide a general sense of where the national electorate is, presidential elections are a state by state contest. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct individual statewide polls of voters to gauge voter opinion in U.S. presidential races.

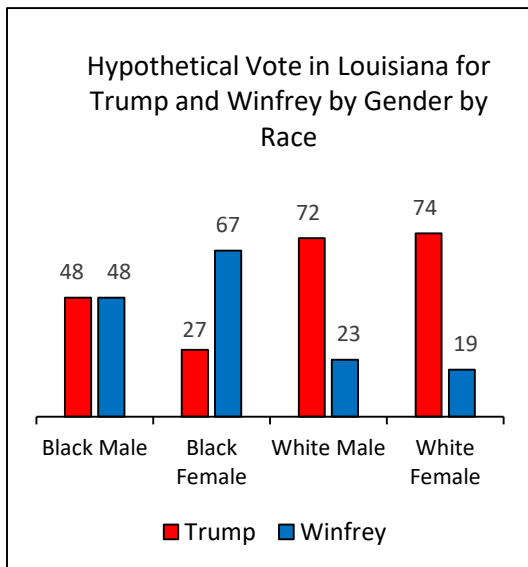
Given the conjecture about Winfrey running against Trump, the UNO Survey Research Center (SRC) conducted a poll to learn how registered voters in Louisiana would react to that potential match-up.



The president enjoys a considerable lead over Winfrey in Louisiana, with 60 percent of registered voters in his corner, while one-third say they support Winfrey. In 2016, Republican Donald Trump won 58 percent of the vote in Louisiana and Democrat Hillary Clinton received 38 percent of the vote. While Winfrey appears to be under-performing Clinton's vote in the 2016 election, we have to be cautious about comparing a poll with a hypothetical candidate against the actual vote in an election with a nominated candidate.

The poll indicates that although Trump enjoys majority support from both men and women in the state, there is a 7 point gender gap. Men are more likely than women to back Trump while women are more likely than men to report they would vote for Winfrey.

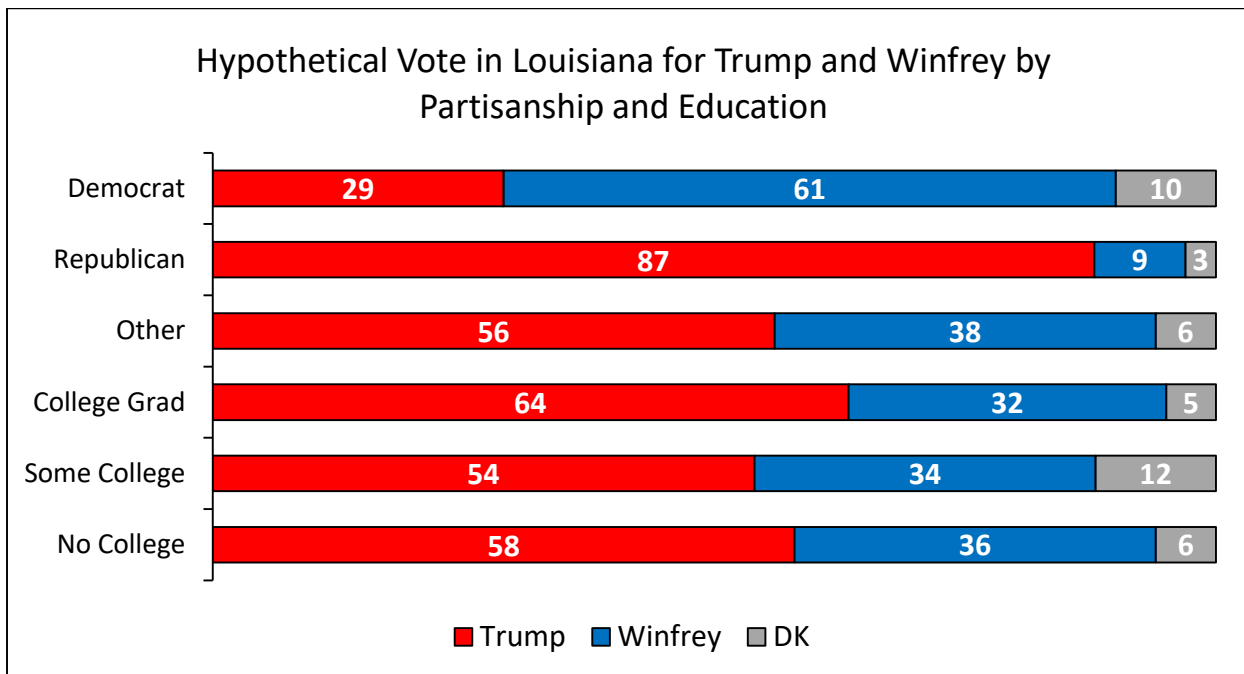
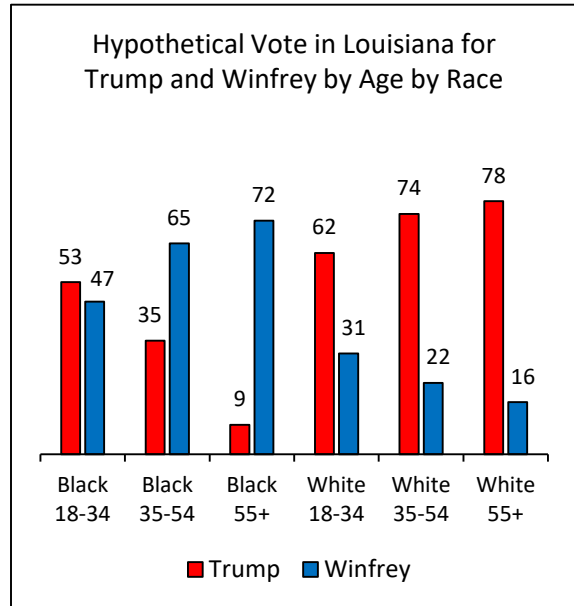
The poll's racial breakdown paints a familiar portrait. Among African-American voters, Winfrey has a considerable lead with 59 percent backing her candidacy. That being said, a sizeable proportion of blacks, 36 percent, say they would vote for Trump. Among whites, the gap in support between Winfrey and Trump is even larger. Whites are over three times more likely to report they will vote for Trump over Winfrey. Non-black minorities are also more likely to be in Trump's camp.



When we intersect gender and race with the theoretical vote for Trump and Winfrey we find a significantly-sized gender gap for African-American voters. Black males are equally divided in their support for the two potential candidates, while African-American women overwhelmingly favor Winfrey against the president. Conversely, white males and females are basically of the same mind when it comes to whom they support in the hypothetical match-up between Winfrey and Trump.

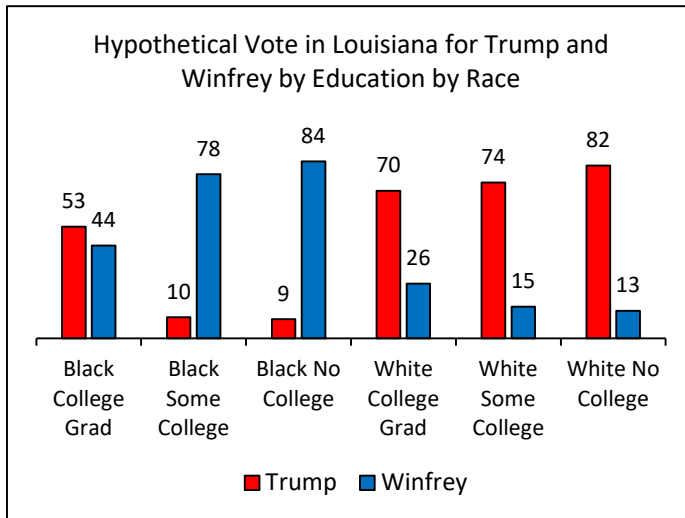
The survey did not find any significant age-based differences in support for the president. Relatively equal proportions opt for Trump, but younger voters are slightly more likely than their older cohorts to back Winfrey in a hypothetical match-up against the president.

An examination of age and candidate preference when controlling for the respondent's race reveals some interesting results. The youngest cohort of blacks are more likely to report they would vote for Trump over Winfrey. However, blacks in the other two age categories are firmly behind Winfrey. Among whites, while the youngest age cohort goes for Trump by a 2 to 1 margin against Winfrey, they are not as enthusiastic about voting for the president as are middle age and older whites.



Vote support for Trump and Winfrey is anchored by the respondent's partisanship. Democrats are twice more likely to report they would vote Winfrey, the prospective Democratic candidate. Republicans overwhelmingly opt for the incumbent Republican president. Third party adherents and Independents also strongly lean toward Trump.

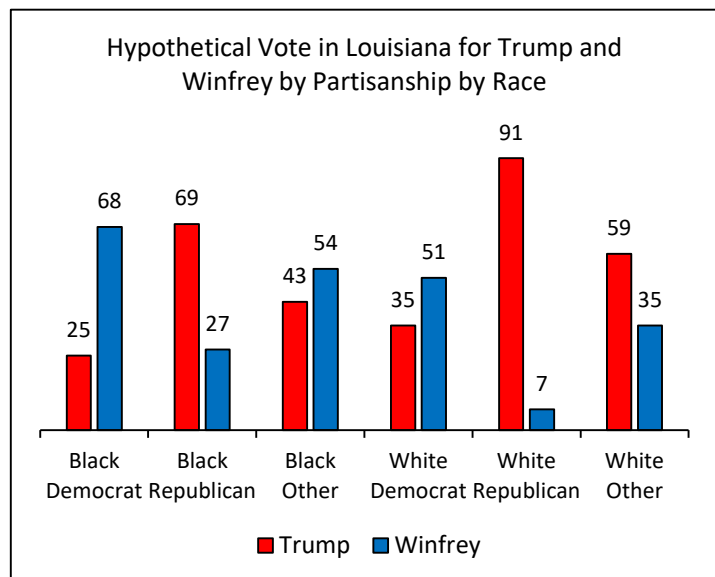
Respondents with a college degree favor Trump over Winfrey by a 2 to 1 margin. A majority of those who have some college also back the president, but 12 percent of them express no opinion on who they would vote for. Non-college educated respondents also clearly prefer President Trump in the hypothetical match-up.



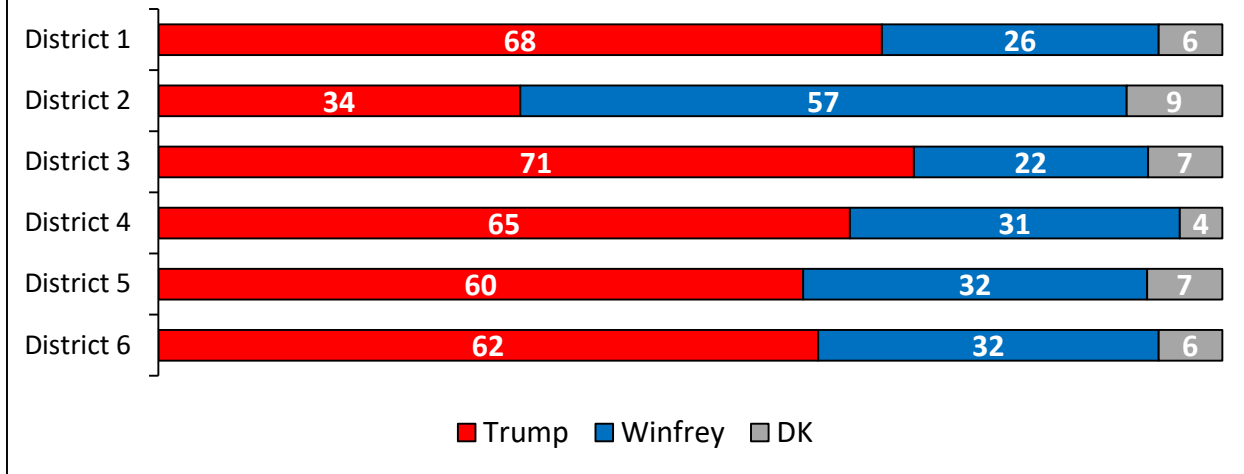
When looking at how education influences candidate preference for blacks and whites, the poll reveals there is an educational divide in candidate preference among blacks in Louisiana. Black college graduates are more supportive of Trump while blacks with some college or no college overwhelmingly favor Winfrey's candidacy. Among whites, the less

educated the respondent, the more support expressed for Trump against Winfrey.

The poll shows that partisanship continues to influence vote choice even after controlling for the respondent's race. For instance, both black and white Democrats say they would support Winfrey against Trump. Additionally, both white and black Republicans report they are more likely to vote for Trump. White Republicans, however, are more loyal to Trump than are black Republicans. The only racial divide was in the category of independents and third party members. Blacks in this category say they would go with Winfrey, while whites are in Trump's corner.

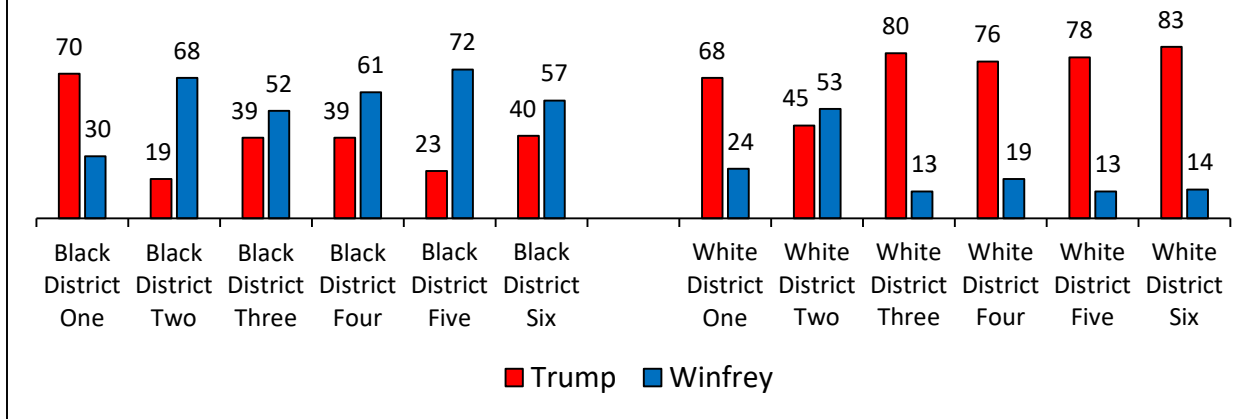


Hypothetical Vote in Louisiana for Trump and Winfrey by Congressional District



There is not a great deal of regional variation in Louisiana on vote choice in the hypothetical match-up between Donald Trump and Oprah Winfrey. Congressional District Two is the outlier as voters there support Winfrey over Trump by a wide margin. The district is the most African-American and Democratic in the state and so the results should not be surprising. Outside of District Two, however, Donald Trump enjoys a high level of vote support. In four of the six districts at least a 62 percent of respondents indicate they would vote for Trump, while District Five is not far behind with 60 percent of respondents saying they support the president.

Hypothetical Vote in Louisiana for Trump and Winfrey by Congressional District by Race



When we breakdown the congressional districts by race, the poll reveals that blacks in five out six districts are most likely to say they would vote for Winfrey against Trump. The exception is found in District One, the most Republican and conservative district in the state where 7 in 10 blacks express support for the president. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of blacks (40 percent) in District Three, District Four, and District Six state they would vote for Trump. As for white respondents, large majorities in five of the six districts chose Trump over Winfrey. District Two, anchored by New Orleans, is the only area of the state where a majority of whites declared they would support Winfrey for president against Trump.

Conclusion

Although nationwide surveys paint a mixed picture of how voters would react to a potential match-up between Oprah Winfrey and Donald Trump, the president is the clear choice of voters in Louisiana. Winfrey does enjoy considerable support among African-Americans, particularly with females, older voters, non-college educated, and Democrats.

Appendix

Survey Script-

This is a 60 second confidential university survey of Louisiana voters. If the election for U.S. President was today, would you vote for Donald Trump or Oprah Winfrey? Press 1 for Donald Trump. Press 2 for Oprah Winfrey. Press 3 for don't know.

-If you have graduated from a 4-year college press 1. If you have some college education but have not graduated press 2. If you have not attended college press 3.

-If you identify as a Democrat press 1, a Republican press 2, something else press 3.

-If you are male press 1. If you are female press 2.

-If you are 18 to 34 years old press 1. If you are 35 to 54 press 2. If you are older than 54 press 3.

-If you are black press 1. If you are white press 2. If you are something else press 3.

Thank you for taking the survey.

Frequencies

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	329	45.6	45.6	45.6
	Female	392	54.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	231	32.1	32.1	32.1
	White	453	62.8	62.8	94.8
	Other Race	37	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Age Category

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 34 Years Old	193	26.7	26.7	26.7
	35 to 54 Years Old	244	33.7	33.7	60.5
	Older than 54	284	39.4	39.4	99.9
	Unknown	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Political Party Identification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Democrat	264	36.6	36.6	36.6
	Republican	330	45.7	45.7	82.3
	Other Pty	127	17.6	17.6	99.9
	Unknown	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4-Year College Graduate	400	55.5	55.5	55.5
	Some College	170	23.5	23.5	79.0
	No College	148	20.5	20.5	99.5
	Unknown	4	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Congressional District

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	118	16.3	16.3	16.3
	2	117	16.2	16.2	32.5
	3	123	17.1	17.1	49.6
	4	120	16.6	16.6	66.2
	5	120	16.7	16.7	82.9
	6	124	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	722	100.0	100.0	

Crosstabs

Vote Support	Gender			Race/Ethnicity			Age Category		
	Total	Men	Women	Black	White	Other	18-34	35-54	55+
Trump	60%	64%	57%	36%	73%	57%	58%	62%	60%
Winfrey	33%	30%	36%	59%	21%	24%	38%	34%	30%
Don't Know	7%	6%	7%	5%	6%	19%	4%	4%	10%
(N)	722	329	393	231	454	37	193	244	285

Vote Support	Partisanship			Education			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Other	College Graduate	Some College	No College
Trump	60%	29%	87%	56%	64%	54%	58%
Winfrey	33%	61%	9%	38%	32%	34%	36%
Don't Know	7%	10%	3%	6%	5%	12%	6%
(N)	722	264	329	127	400	170	149

Vote Support							
	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Trump	60%	68%	34%	71%	65%	60%	62%
Winfrey	33%	26%	57%	22%	31%	32%	32%
Don't Know	7%	6%	8%	7%	4%	7%	6%
(N)	722	117	117	123	120	121	124