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Escola de Economia e Gestão

Luís Miguel Moura Costa

**The Wind of Change? An Econometric
Analysis of Donald Trump's Success**

Master's Dissertation in Economics

Work developed under the supervision of
Professor Doutor Luís Aguiar-Conraria

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DECLARAÇÃO

Nome: Luís Miguel Moura Costa

Endereço eletrónico: pg32042@alunos.uminho.pt

Número do Bilhete de Identidade: 14419965

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“the victory has many fathers, but defeat is orphan.”

RESUMO

A nomeação de Donald J. Trump como Presidente dos Estados Unidos da América na Eleição Presidencial de 2016 fez soar os alarmes a nível mundial. Ao antagonizar inúmeras sondagens que previam uma vitória Democrata, o candidato Republicano redefiniu a caracterização política de um “nacionalista com sucesso”. Analisando paralelamente ambos os candidatos, eu deduzo que apesar de Donald Trump merecer mérito pela sua conservação do eleitorado que votara em Romney em 2012, a dimensão da derrota de Hillary Clinton ultrapassou o sucesso do Republicano. O triunfo da Democrata entre o sexo feminino e o enviesamento racial registado por Donald Trump sugerem um papel crítico de “*identity politics*” nesta Eleição. Através da examinação ao percurso eleitoral de Donald Trump, é possível legitimar o Republicano como um candidato sólido e estrategicamente preparado para o confronto com Clinton, contrariando ideais pré-existentes quanto à competência política deste candidato. Tendo em conta o sucesso da estratégia política de Donald Trump, a discussão foca-se na adequação de Clinton como candidata Democrata para as Eleições Presidenciais de 2016.

Palavras-chave: Eleição Presidencial de 2016; Donald J. Trump; Hillary B. Clinton; Estratégia política; Nacionalismo.

ABSTRACT

Donald Trump's nomination for office in the 2016 Presidential Election sounded alarms throughout the world. Contradicting numerous polls that painted the Election with a blue victory, the nominee managed to significantly redefine the political characterization of a "successful nationalist". Employing a dual candidate analysis that magnified the scope of the pre-existing literature on the GOP nominee victory, I find that although Trump must be congratulated for preserving the Republican electorate from the previous Presidential Election, Clinton's defeat surpassed Trump's success on the ballot. Clinton's triumph amongst the female population and Trump's racial resentment suggest that "identity politics" played a major role in this Election. A closer examination to the Republican nominee's campaign legitimized Trump as a strong and strategic candidate, defying the popular linear understandings of an unprepared and unexperienced Republican nominee. As such, the importance of questioning Clinton as the right choice for the Democratic Party surpasses the scrutiny of Trump's electoral success.

Keywords: 2016 Presidential Election; Donald J. Trump; Hillary B. Clinton; Political Strategy; Nationalism.

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“Well behaved women rarely make history.”

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Section 1 - Introduction

“I’ve had to beat 17 very talented people including the Bush Dynasty, then I had to beat the Clinton Dynasty (...)”¹

Donald Trump’s announcement as running for President (July 15, 2016) managed to surprise the political spectrum, sending shockwaves throughout the world. Initially, American and international society sought to handle the former estate mogul’s behaviors with caution: as an unfamiliar presidential candidate, with a non-existent political curriculum (although the magnate had publicly questioned several of Barack Obama’s policies and nationality in the past), a feeling of uncertainty rose amongst a considerable segment of the electorate. Would Trump use his celebrity status to seek investment into his campaign? Or use it to increase the range of his Twitter posts? Nonetheless, as the Trump campaign sought to make its voice heard, disregarding potential controversial interpretations within the *media circus*, American voters began to identify themselves in both sides of the political bridge, thus clarifying their electoral decision.

As a direct consequence of the initial uncertainty felt by the electorate (which was followed by widespread distrust and aversion), the surprise of Donald Trump’s nomination for office contradicted recurring polls that predicted a close defeat for the GOP² in the 2016 Presidential Election. Analogously, a very simple question arises: *how did Trump win?* Despite the simplicity of this interrogation, the answer implies a complex understanding of the Election – wherein this context, this study surfaces as an explanatory research of such unexpected success.

In the Republican race, Donald Trump got public’s attention by using a relatively unused tool to convey his political (and often personal) opinions towards everyday issues: Twitter. This offered Trump the opportunity of quickly reaching the minds of millions of voters endowing the GOP nominee with a pole position in the race – for example, his tweet on Nov. 8 (Election day) “TODAY WE MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!” went viral on the Twittersphere, receiving nearly 352 thousand *retweets*. Since announcing his candidacy, Trump more than quadrupled the number of his followers (from about 3 million to 13 million on Election Day); despite sharing similar starting

¹ Donald J. Trump on Twitter (June 15th, 2018), available at <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1007681553676283904>

² Grand Old Party – an alternative designation for the Republican Party.

numbers with the real-estate mogul, Clinton reached Nov. 8 with an approximately 3 million followers' default.

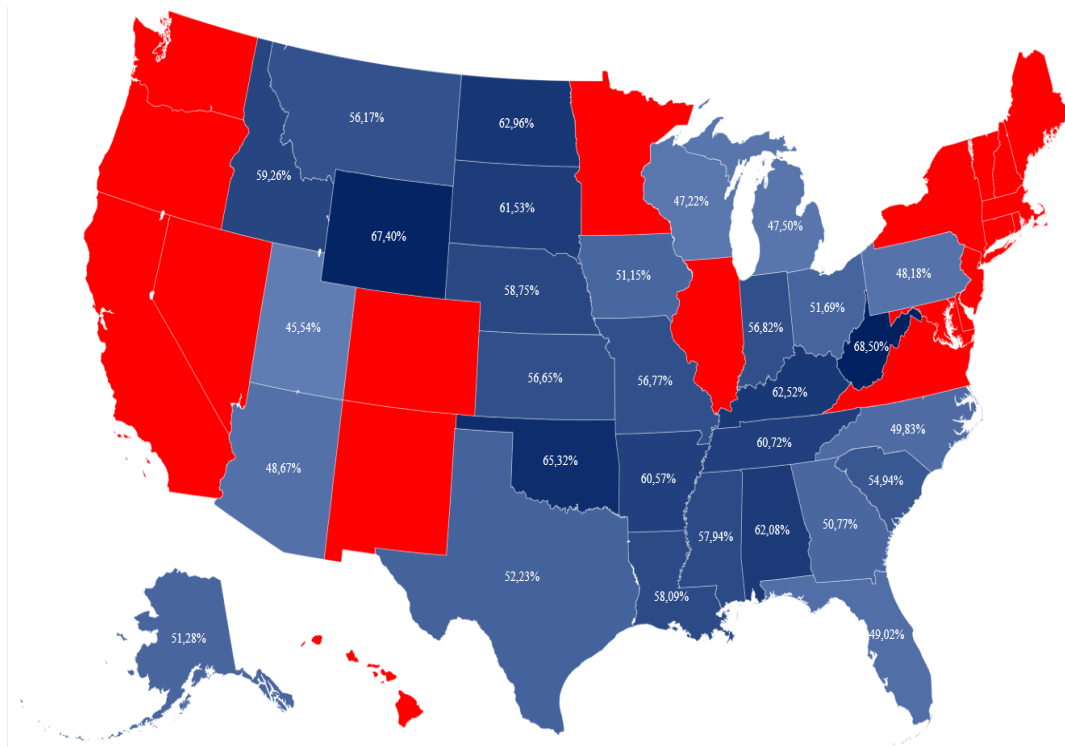
Outside the social atmosphere, it is possible to synthesize Trump's rhetoric in one word: ultra-nationalist. The nominee's electoral victory represents the most successful case in a worldwide scenario of increasingly populist campaigns: not even the most recognizable populist candidates, Marine Le Pen (*Front National*, France) or Geert Wilders (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, Netherlands), achieved nomination, despite registering rising trends of popular vote in more recent years (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The notion of a "charismatic nominee" has been broadly analyzed and often misused, especially amongst journalists. As a result, in this study I suggest a conceptualization of "charisma" as the audience's biased interpretation of the nominee's political statements, different from the Weberian notion (which envelops a more intimate connection created by the leader). The theory behind this differentiation implies that "charisma" portrays an important role in the nominee's campaign, particularly those who rely in speechcraft and elocution (Donald Trump) rather than in political and philanthropic achievements (Hillary Clinton). As such, individuals drawn to a charismatic rhetoric may relegate policy goals to a secondary role – or even dismiss them –, when casting their vote (Brug & Mughan, 2007).

304, 227, and 2868686 – these were the decisive numbers in the 2016 Presidential Election. The first two relate to the electoral seats won by both candidates (304 for Donald Trump and 227 for Hillary Clinton); the latter regards the popular vote difference between the two nominees favoring *Clinton* – the Democratic candidate won the popular vote, however failed to win the electoral seats race. A brief analysis of the geographical map of the Election's results (displayed in Figure 1 below) discloses the considerable differences in state vote distribution between both presidential nominees. For instance, the coastal wave of Democratic support clashes with the "Silent America" (more interior States) endorsement for Donald Trump. Hillary managed to win New England, Far West and Mideast's electoral seats (apart from Alaska in the Far West, and Pennsylvania in the Mideast)³. Nevertheless, Clinton's shoreline triumph is heavily hindered by Trump's performance in the inland States. Surprisingly, the GOP nominee achieved categorical

³Based on the Bureau of Economic Analysis geographical regions. Further information can be consulted at <https://www.bea.gov/regional/docs/regions.cfm>.

success in Southeastern States (with highlight to “decisive” Florida, wherein the difference between both candidates was only 2 percentage points). Additionally, Clinton only managed to grasp the electoral seats of Minnesota, Illinois, New Mexico and Colorado (equivalent to 8% of seats in the Electoral College).

Figure 1 - Vote distribution for Donald Trump (red states represent Clinton Victories)



Controversies are a regular occurrence in the USA Presidential Election. Going from the Iran hostage crisis that marked the 1980 Election, or Willkie’s liberal stances on the Democratic New Deal in 1932, the definition of a “quiet Election” is an ideal that does not suit USA Presidential appointment. However, this was an ethically unusual Election – constant allegations from the GOP candidate regarding his opponent’s corrupt reputation, as well as numerous feminist lawsuits and accusations based on Trump’s highly polemical recordings, and a unique FBI investigation to Clinton’s emails (which reportedly were deleted before the inquiry), decisively shaped the Election as a never-before-seen clash of accusations between nominees.

The thesis proceeds as follows. Section Two presents prior research methods and similar studies, scrutinizing their impact in the innovative selection of methods and variables herein implemented. The absence of analogous approaches is a noteworthy issue

that this study aims to help disperse. Section Three displays the empirical findings for Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's electoral key explanatory variables, with particular consideration for the unforeseen answer to the core question and the "false political inexperience" displayed by the Republican candidate. Section Four depicts the statistically significant control variables and a closer analysis of their impact in both nominees' performances. Including the literature review within this Section allowed a strengthened and more delicate interpretation of the variables' results in both models, and their implications within one of the most crucial Election of the 21st century. Thus, variables such as elderly, rural, non-white and female population, were broadly analyzed by the literature and are generally in agreement with my findings. Other variables such as the state's level of economic welfare and the educational backgrounds did not cope with spotlight attention from the literature and demanded more autonomous interpretations and conjectures. In light of the role of populist rhetoric in this Election, Section Four includes a literature-based analysis of its role in Trump's speech and how it could have influenced the electorate.

Section 2 - Data and Methods

A critical decision regarding which methodology to employ was necessary. Firstly, I considered similar approaches as the ones adopted by authors such as Branton (2003) and Groshek & Koc-Michalska (2017), who based their empirical models on individual-level databases (exit polls surveys and online enquiries). Although sharing comparable methodologies, both studies differ completely in their purpose. The latter study seeks to singularly explain the role of social media in the support for populist candidates, using demographic (age, gender, ethnicity), economic (income) and political (partisan ideology, political knowledge, among others) control variables. Brandon's micro-analysis of individual voting behavior on economic, cultural and financial propositions in the 90s follows a similar pattern, however this author's scope is wider than Groshek & Koc-Michalska's – all control variables are subject of interpretation. As a result, my study tries to breach the gap between both methods and find solid neutral ground through the composition of a detailed list of control variables in order to measure the extent of Donald Trump's unexpected victory.

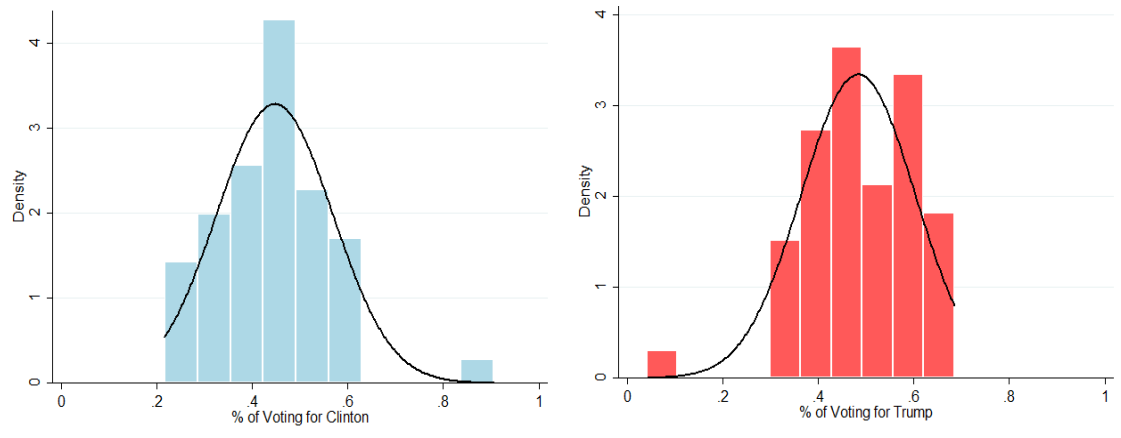
Unfortunately, there is a clear lack of studies using nationwide databases. As displayed above, literature's main interest regarding political outcomes is often fully personified in individual voting behavior – the rationalizing as to why a voter chooses candidate A and disregards the alternative(s). This is where this study significantly distances itself from the preceding, reproducing a nationwide adaptation of Adkisson & Peach (2018) model for Texas in the 2016 Presidential Election. The authors sought to explain Trump's victory in this border state through a *county-by-county* analysis of a simple OLS model with control variables for individual (ethnicity and education), geographic and political characteristics for counties within Texas. Simply, my study proposes to extend Adkisson & Peach's scope to a nationwide explanation of Trump's state performance. Instead of a *county-by-county* scrutiny, I use *statewide* statistics of a solid number of dimensions which could effectively be determinant to the GOP nominee's state results. Additionally, I include an analysis of Hillary Clinton's performance on the ballot, allowing for a more accurately evaluation of the dimension of Trump's success (or Hillary's defeat) and the nominee's appropriateness as the front-runner for the Republican Party.

Two other studies deserve acknowledgment. Firstly, the *ex-ante* prediction of Walker (2018), based on an adaptation of Ray C. Fair's *probit* displays a surprising accuracy regarding estimations of a considerable amount of voting determinants, particularly concerning racial bias, educational attainment and demographic characteristics. Lastly, Rothwell & Diego-Rosell (2016) provide a profile for Trump's supporters based on probabilistic regressions: these authors' remarks frequently fuse with mine's, despite having dissimilar methodologies.

Appendix 2 presents the full list of variables employed in both Models, as well as their sources and extended descriptions. In the start of this study, a total of 35 different control variables, related to areas such as Security, Education, Economic Status, Health and Demographic Characteristics, were involved. Each of the final Models for both candidates depict only a fraction of those variables, keeping only the statistically significant determinants of the nominees performance on the ballot. A vast majority of variables scale from 0 to 1. However, some dimensions could not be rationalized, and had to be represented through *Dummy* variables (such as, for instance, the State's Governor Party). Inversely, data regarding Elderly and Rural population (two common variables in

both models) were normalized by dividing the number of individuals with 65+ years old within a certain State by its total population.

Figure 2 - Distribution of values for both dependent variables.



I formulated two simple cross-sectional OLS regression models for both nominees. Neither of the models displayed heterogeneity. Robust standard errors were used, despite not interfering in the statistical significance of the variables⁴. One opposing argument could be made about the relevance of the OLS estimation, suggesting the GLM (*logit*) models as a viable alternative: as displayed in Figure 2, the values for our dependent variables are highly focused around their averages, with Washington D.C. being the only outlier state (a very protuberant value for Hillary Clinton contrasts with a minimal percentage for Donald Trump). This implies that variables' values are focused within the linear section of the logistic curve: as such, adopting a linear model is acceptable.

Section 3 - Empirical Findings

Donald Trump

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables inserted in Donald Trump's Model. This provides a fresh insight regarding the comparison of both Republican nominees (Donald Trump and Mitt Romney) on the ballot. Albeit the mean value cannot be regarded as particularly relevant due to the statewide geographic

⁴ The VIF (Variance Inflation Factors) are shown in Appendix 1 for both regression models.

distribution of the electoral seats⁵, the closeness between Republican nominees for office is clear.

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics for Donald Trump's Model					
Variables⁶	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Proportion of Voting for D. Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election</i>	51	0.484	0.119	0.041	0.68
<i>Proportion of People 65+ Years Old</i>	51	0.155	0.019	0.102	0.199
<i>Proportion of Rural Population</i>	51	0.259	0.149	0	0.613
<i>Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan</i>	51	0.036	0.014	0.012	0.085
<i>Proportion of Romney Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election</i>	51	0.48	0.117	0.073	0.727
<i>Proportion of Enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions</i>	51	0.065	0.015	0.041	0.132
<i>GDP per capita (logarithmic)</i>	51	10.795	0.247	10.369	11.986
<i>State's Official Trump Campaign's Rallies, Proportion (since June 2015)</i>	51	0.02	0.025	0	0.999
<i>Proportion of Non-White People</i>	51	0.241	0.136	0.056	0.749

⁵ For instance, Mitt Romney's percentage of popular vote in 2012 was 47.2%, inferior to the mean value of 48.99%; Donald Trump gained 46.1%, contrasting to the 48.35% depicted in Table 2.

⁶ Variable descriptions and sources are presented in Appendix 2.

Table 2 displays the results for Donald Trump's estimations. Some variables, such as elderly and rural population, have been broadly analyzed by the literature and follow my *ex ante* expectations. The presence of a variable representative of a pivotal topic for this Election (Health) supports the contemporary setting of this Model since both nominees had very dissimilar views on this healthcare programme. The absence of statistical relevance regarding the racial variable may cause misconceptions regarding the lack of racial resentment towards Donald Trump: as I argue afterwards, that was not the case.

Table 2 - Donald Trump's Model <i>Dependent Variable: "Proportion of Voting for D. Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election"</i>	
Variables	Coefficients
<i>Proportion of People 65+ Years Old</i>	1.542*** (0.328)
<i>Proportion of Rural Population</i>	0.127*** (0.0376)
<i>Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan</i>	-1.867*** (0.434)
<i>Proportion of Romney Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election</i>	1.026*** (0.0562)
<i>Proportion of Enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions</i>	-1.064** (0.403)
<i>GDP per capita (logarithmic)</i>	1.27e-06** (4.81e-07)
<i>State's Official Trump Campaign's Rallies, Proportions (since June 2015)</i>	0.392** (0.198)
<i>Proportion of Non-White People</i>	0.0171 (0.0342)
Intercept	-0.232*** (0.0724)
Observations	51
R-squared	0.958

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The “establishment” candidate

“As I’ve said from the beginning, ours was not a campaign, but rather an incredible and great movement made up of millions of hard-working men and women who love their country and want a better, brighter future for themselves and for their families.”⁷

Even though Ted Cruz was the preferred candidate of the Tea Party, Donald Trump was able to win the Republican primaries against seventeen opponents – later running solely against Kasich and Cruz. Controversial all along, Trump’s campaign received spotlight attention amongst the critics due to his polemical statements and pledges. Matters such as the Mexican border wall (result of his stringent position on illegal immigration), the withdrawal/renegotiation of trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and his protection of the Second Amendment⁸, were widely scrutinized. Former President Bush Jr., though himself a Republican, acknowledged that Trump’s victory would be a “bitter pill to swallow” (Updegrave, 2017, pp. 406). His celebrity status, in addition to his political inexperience – having presented strong points of view about dogmatic affairs in earlier years –, made the Republican party suspicious of his success in the beginning. Tea Party conservative Rick Tyler argued that “[if he] had to bet, I would say that Hillary Clinton would beat Donald Trump” (Riley, 2016), thus presenting a negative outlook on the nominee’s performance on the national ballot. In fact, despite the nationalist campaign of Trump managing to reach some “asleep conservative supporters”, firstly it faced opposition from the organizational elite within the party, particularly the Tea Party (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016). Thus, the question reemerges. If Trump’s political strategy was regarded as unethical and aimed towards defeat both internally and externally, how did he managed to win against an experienced candidate such as the former First-Lady Hillary Clinton?

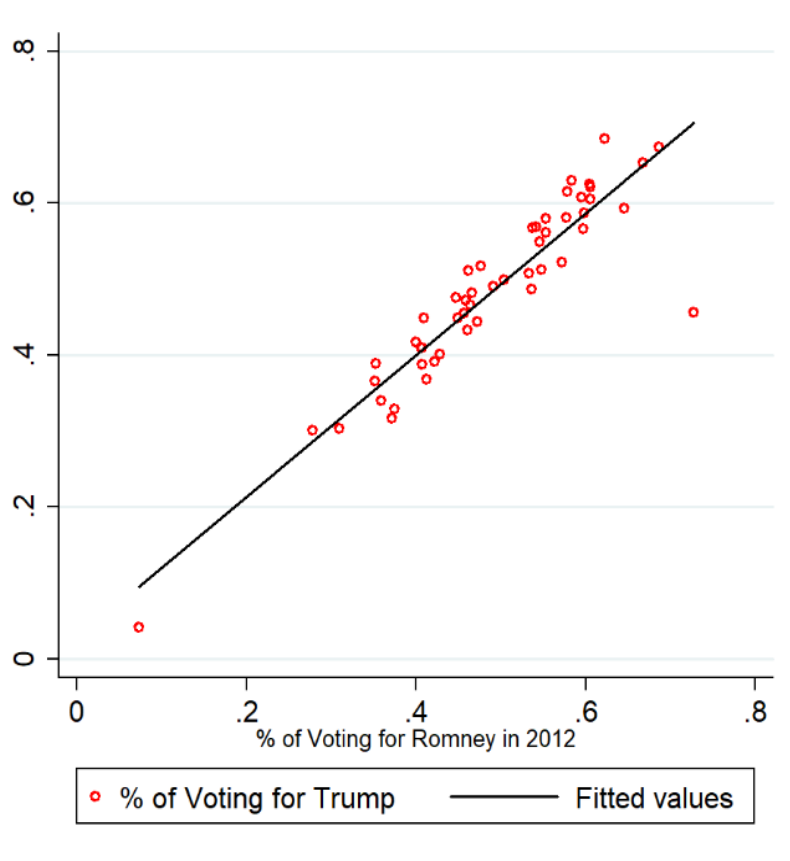
Firstly, the solution of this mystery embodies a closer scrutiny of Trump’s predecessor in the run for presidency. The premise in such analysis is that, if Trump succeeded in matching Mitt Romney’s electoral outcomes (at worst), the former magnate proved himself as a more appropriate nominee for the Republican Party rather than

⁷ Donald Trump’s acceptance speech (Nov. 9, 2016).

⁸ As written in the Bill of Rights: “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Romney.

Figure 3 - The Presidential Diagonal: Donald Trump vs. Mitt Romney



This study provides the analysis of a comparative proxy variable of Donald Trump’s electoral performance, representative of the voting percentage of the previous GOP Presidential candidate in 2012. As seen, the coefficient of this variable is very close to the unity (1,026); t-testing this coefficient as equal to 1 infers that we *don’t* reject the null hypothesis that this coefficient equals one. Electorally, Trump managed to “grasp” the votes that Mitt Romney registered four years earlier, “holding”⁹ the electorate that voted in the former Governor of Massachusetts. Literally interpreting the results, Trump won a percentage point of every percentage point that went for Mitt Romney in the previous Election, *ceteris paribus*. Nevertheless, Donald Trump’s performance more closely resembles Mitt Romney’s outcomes in 2012 rather than President Bush’s in 2004, as shown in the matrix graph presented in Appendix 3. Donald Trump’s performance failed to equal Bush victory’s proportions, thus categorizing the magnate as a “middle

⁹ My concept of “holding” is directed to Election results, not personal voting. There is no way of knowing if a particular individual voted for both Romney and Trump.

ground nominee” between Mitt Romney and George W. Bush – at least, in terms of electoral results.

Notwithstanding being portrayed as an outsider, simultaneously lacking the conduct and political portfolio of a serious candidate, Donald Trump proved to be an (no less than) equally skilled nominee when compared to his antecedent Mitt Romney. Nevertheless, the latter was able to perform better than Trump in some significant States such as Florida, California, and Texas.¹⁰ This is rather remarkable, as Trump managed to achieve the position that Romney failed to reach. Even so, the overturn of the idea of a “phony, a fraud”¹¹ when describing the *nominee* Donald Trump is achievable – ethical criticism aside, the candidate upheld himself as the *right choice* for the Republican party. However, both campaigns (Romney and Trump) transpired in different political, social, and even historical backgrounds. Recent studies demonstrated that running against an incumbent Democrat president presented a strong positive effect towards the officeholder (Berry & Bickers, 2012; Jacobson, 2015). Nevertheless, Trump’s recurring claims that Hillary would be an extension of the Obama’s tenure can counter such argument: if the electorate effectively regarded Hillary as such, then the Election would have been between “President Obama” and Donald Trump, and “Obama” would have outperformed Clinton.

Rallying for Success

“Mitt Romney, who totally blew an Election that should have been won and whose tax returns made him look like a fool, is now playing tough guy (...) When Mitt Romney asked me for my endorsement last time around, he was so awkward and goofy that we all should have known he could not win!”¹²

How aware was Trump of his predecessor’s defeat? Did Trump manipulate Romney’s fiasco for his own benefit? In total, Trump’s campaign reached 321 rallies nationwide. Table 3 presents a regression model using the Rallies’ Geographic Distribution in Trump’s Campaign as the dependent variable, with a *dummy* variable

¹⁰ In a “winner takes it all” ideology, this is not as relevant as it could be as if it had happened, for example, in Portugal.

¹¹ Mitt Romney’s speech at University of Utah (March 3, 2016).

¹² Donald Trump on Twitter (Feb. 24, 2016), https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/965773283554668544?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw.

(*Competitive States in 2012*¹³) identifying the more competitive States in the 2012 Election (States where the absolute difference between the two candidates, Mitt Romney and Barack Obama, was smaller than 10 percentage points). As the results show, the number of Donald Trump's political interventions were more likely to increase in States who showed more "uncertainty" in their results. Whether this played a causal effect on the geographic distribution of Trump's rallies or not, it is not clear. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that Trump was completely aware of which States provided closer results in 2012, and that he – or at least his campaign strategists, Paul Manafort and Kellyanne Conway – made the strategically effective planning of the locations and frequency of his rallies based on such information.

Table 3 - Rallies Determinants	
Variables	Coefficients
<i>State Distribution regarding Electoral Seats</i>	0.336** (0.140)
<i>Competitive States in 2012</i>	2.694*** (0.674)
<i>State Governor (=1 if Republican)</i>	1.117** (0.493)
Intercept	-17.72*** (5.492)
Observations	51
R-squared	0.387

Robust standard errors in parentheses

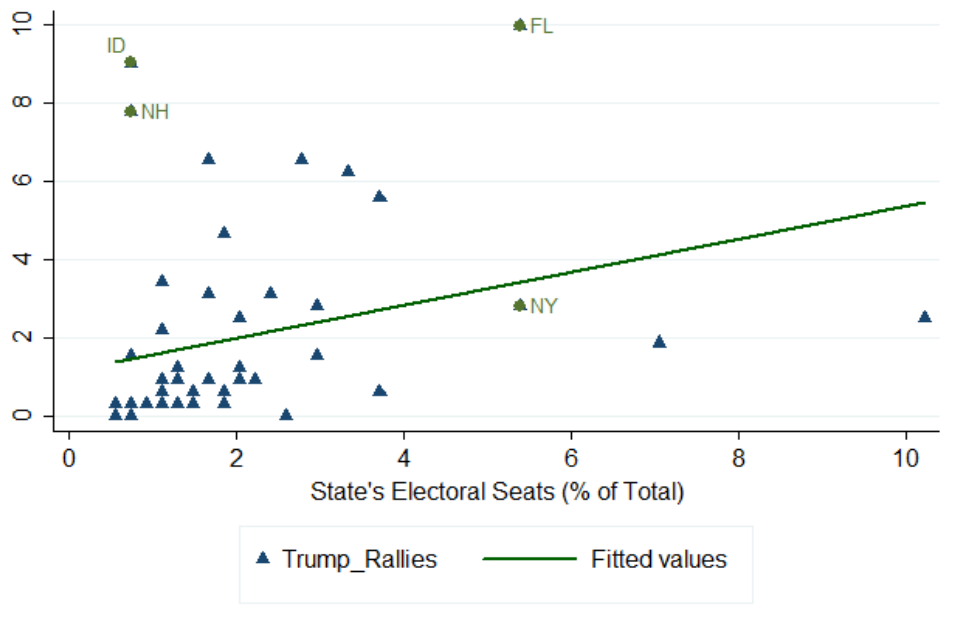
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Firstly, one noticeable inference relates to the relatively insignificant value (0,387) registered for the R-squared: as expected by the low number of determinants included, these three variables, although statistically significant in the present model, only provide with a minor part of the explanation of the Rallies distribution of Donald Trump's campaign. Nevertheless, the ideas here are remarkable. As the American political system is mainly based on the simple "winner takes it all" logic, the nominee only aims to win the popular vote *within* the state to obtain their electoral votes, whom are decisive to the ultimate verdict of the presidential race. Including a variable related to the electoral seats

¹³ Estimated by the author using Federal Election Commission (2013) data.

allows to control a possible correlation between the rallies' distribution and state's population – intrinsically, the statewide distribution of the electoral seats allows the regulation of a potential populational bias. Plausibly, is expected that every presidential candidate takes into consideration each state's share of electoral seats and political relevance. In other words, States who provide with a higher number of seats are more likely to receive more political attention (and therefore, more campaign interventions) from both candidates. As a result, is not at all unforeseen that this variable (*State Distribution regarding Electoral Seats*) embodies a positive influence in the geographic decision of Donald Trump's campaign rallies. Although unexpectedly, Donald Trump failed to gain the popular support, yet successfully outplayed Clinton in the “electoral seats contest”.

Figure 4 – Trump's Gubernatorial Shelter: Campaign Rallies vs. State's Electoral Seats



Lastly, States under Republican governance seemed to have portrayed a central role in the GOP's candidate campaign. Controversial and highly critical of her opponent, Hillary Clinton, the political attrition that the nominee would find in States with a Democratic Governor might have hindered Trump's presidential race. For instance, Gov. Andrew Cuomo (Governor of New York) stated in the 2016 Democratic National Convention that Donald Trump was “using fear and anxiety to drive his ratings”: this could help explain the rather low amount of Trump political interventions there when compared to the considerable number of electoral seats provided by this state (29). On the opposite scenario, the nominee's campaign frequently sought gubernatorial shelter in

Idaho, a state under the governance of Gov. Butch Otter (a close supporter of Trump), regardless of Idaho only providing with 4 electoral seats. A similar situation occurred in South Carolina, with (then incumbent¹⁴) Gov. Nikki Haley, and in Florida, with Gov. Rick Scott (who had publicly endorsed Donald Trump since his victory in the Republican primaries). The results obtained for this variable (and depicted in Figure 4 above) draw attention to Trump's simultaneous race for political and popular support – rallying in “Republican States” provided with a strategic assurance of gubernatorial patronage, as well as with a well-established base of popular support.

Hillary Clinton

Table 4 presents the summary statistics for Hillary Clinton's Model.

<i>Table 4 - Descriptive Statistics for Hillary Clinton's determinants</i>					
Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Proportion of Voting for H. Clinton in the 2016 Presidential Election</i>	51	0.447	0.122	0.216	0.905
<i>Proportion of Rural Population</i>	51	0.259	0.149	0	0.613
<i>Proportion of People 65+ Years Old</i>	51	0.155	0.019	0.102	0.199
<i>Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan</i>	51	0.036	0.014	0.012	0.085
<i>Proportion of Women</i>	51	0.506	0.009	0.474	0.525
<i>Proportion of People with 25+ Years Old with Less than 9th Grade</i>	51	0.041	0.015	0.015	0.09
<i>Proportion of Estimated War Veterans</i>	51	0.063	0.012	0.366	0.089
<i>Proportion of Obama Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election</i>	51	0.49	0.118	0.248	0.909

¹⁴ Despite having initially criticised Donald Trump, Nikki Haley later agreed to join Donald Trump's administration as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Surprisingly, despite Hillary Clinton's Model sharing three significant variables with Donald Trump's (regarding Elderly, Rural Population, and Affordable Care Act registrations), divergent determinants played a decisive role in the Democratic nominee's results, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 - Hillary Clinton's Model	
<i>Dependent Variable: "Proportion of Voting for H. Clinton in the 2016 Presidential Election"</i>	
Variables	Coefficients
<i>Proportion of Rural Population</i>	-0.0827*** (0.0215)
<i>Proportion of People 65+ Years Old</i>	-0.864*** (0.120)
<i>Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan</i>	0.740*** (0.136)
<i>Proportion of Women</i>	1.334*** (0.350)
<i>Proportion of People with 25+ Years Old with Less than 9th Grade</i>	0.584*** (0.136)
<i>Proportion of Estimated War Veterans</i>	0.480** (0.229)
<i>Proportion of Obama Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election</i>	0.950*** (0.0191)
Intercept	-61.92*** (17.593)
Observations	51
R-squared	0.9843

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The Democratic failure

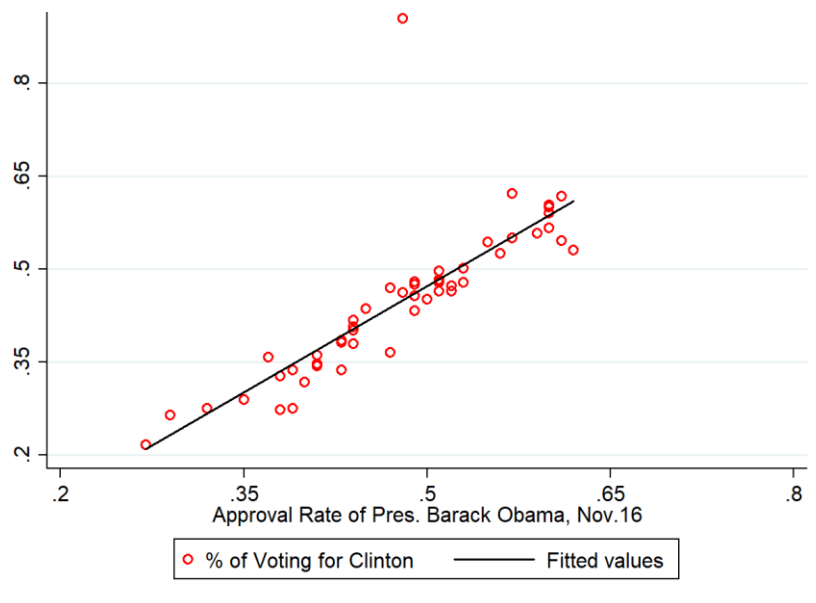
*"We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. But I still believe in America and I always will. And if you do, then we must accept this result and then look to the future. Donald Trump is going to be our president."*¹⁵

As said before, Donald Trump managed to defy all polls and secure the Oval Office for the Republican Party. Similar to Trump's estimations, I included a variable representative of the Democratic Party's candidate outcomes in the 2012 Election in

¹⁵ Hillary Clinton's concession speech (Nov. 9, 2016).

Clinton's regression model¹⁶. However, asymmetrically to Donald Trump's results, the Democratic nominee's performance on the ballot may have been enhanced (or thwarted) by a same-party president in office between 2012 (the variable's year) and 2016 (the Presidential Election). Subsequently, examining a popularity variable for the conceding president in his last year of presidency (Obama's approval rates), allows to control the possible bias created by Obama's four years of policies, pledges, and public support for Hillary Clinton. Regarding this variable as a theoretical outcome for Barack Obama as a "contender" for presidency in 2016 (in other words, the results if he could run for office and effectively did so), the possible same-party bias can be analyzed.

Figure 5 - Higher Approval for Barack Obama, Higher Support for Clinton



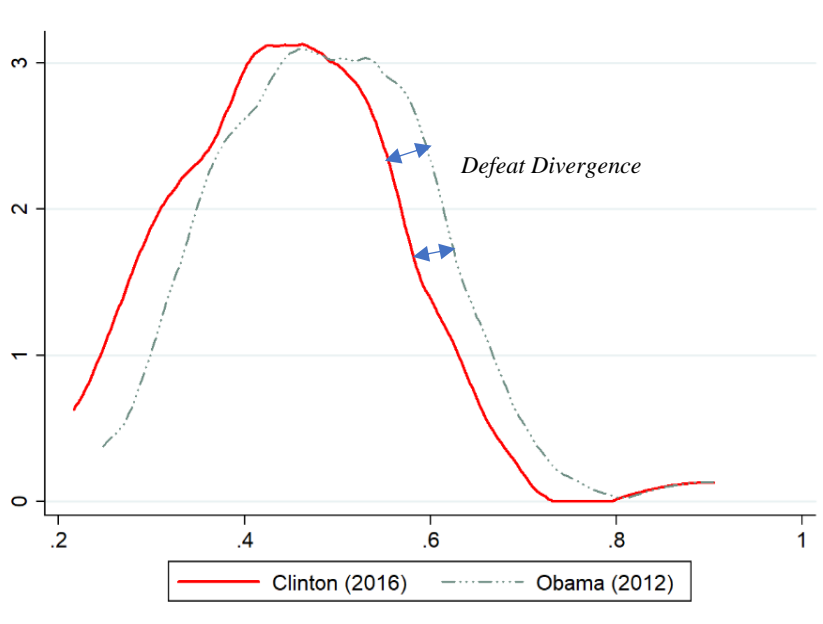
As could be intuitively expected, and similarly confirmed by Figure 5, States with higher approval rates for Barack Obama were more likely to have greater percentages for Clinton. Nevertheless, a larger degree of correspondence between the two statistics was expected (a heightened gradient of the fitted values' slope); this confirms the lack of influence of Barack Obama's optimistic public opinion within Hillary Clinton's electoral outcomes. Additionally, the official stance of support from the Democratic president, despite having indeed a positive sway in Hillary Clinton's results, did not display a degree of decisiveness in the candidate's tally as well as could be expected from a same party nominee. As a result, it is possible to answer to the question as to whether States whom positively regarded President Obama were more likely to support Hillary Clinton:

¹⁶ In this case the incumbent President Barack Obama.

effectively they did, although not in a level that could be decisive in determining the former Secretary of State's victory.

Clinton's results on the ballot were distant from the registered by the former President. In every percentage point that went for Obama in 2012, Clinton only managed to "hold" 0,95 percentage points four years later. When comparing this deduction to Trump and Romney's records, the magnitude of the Democrat's demise was greater than the Republicans' triumph: simply, Hillary failed *more* than Trump succeeded. Testing (and rejecting) the null hypothesis that the coefficient of Obama's outcomes in 2012 equals the unity unveils the dimension of Clinton's electoral letdown. Whereas Donald Trump managed to hold the Republican electorate "captivated" by Romney, Clinton failed to achieve similar accomplishment with Barack Obama's – this setback can be used to ultimately explain the Democratic demise in 2016: as portrayed in Figure 6, there is a significant gap in the vote distribution between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton which represents a "defeat divergence" between the two candidates.

Figure 6 - The gap between the distribution of Obama's and Clinton's percentages



Furthermore, a closer *state-by-state* analysis of both Democratic nominees, as depicted in Appendix 6, offers a noteworthy viewpoint to the electoral divergence between President Obama and Clinton. The latter failed to attain electoral success in six States that, four years earlier, Barack Obama managed to triumph (Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin). Those States correspond to 99 electoral votes (almost 20% of the seats in the electoral college), strengthening their decisive role

in the outcome of the Presidential election. Remarkably, if Clinton managed to safeguard Obama's percentages in only *two* of those "decisive" States, for instance Florida and Wisconsin (where the difference between the former Secretary of State and Donald Trump was fewer than 1,5 percentage points), the Democratic nominee would have achieved nomination for presidency¹⁷. Additionally, Clinton *did not* "convert" a new state to Democratic jurisdiction, having only surpassed Barack Obama's vote percentages in historically Republican States (Texas, Arizona and Utah) or, in case of California, States with a history of supporting Democratic nominees running for office (in the last eight Presidential Election, only once a Republican nominee managed to grasp the Californian electoral votes).

Considering these results, is possible to question the appropriateness of Hillary Clinton as a presidential nominee. In the VOTER Survey (2017), 47,04% of the interviewed reported preferring Republican Marco Rubio to Hillary Clinton in a hypothetical race for office. In another theoretical situation, 50,87% of the surveyed stated they would vote for Bernie Sanders if he was the elected Democratic nominee running against Donald Trump. Unfortunately, the success or failure of Sanders against the Republican nominee cannot be proved. However, it is possible to theorize that Sanders' populist rhetoric, whilst having been subdued by Clinton in the Democratic primaries, could have attracted the electorate that disregarded Hillary as a strong and reliable nominee in the presidential Election.

Section 4 – Control Variables

Repealed and Replaced

*"And one thing we have to do: repeal and replace the disaster known as Obamacare. It's destroying our country. It's destroying our businesses, our small business and our big businesses. We have to repeal and replace Obamacare."*¹⁸

Despite its approval in Congress without any sort of Republican support, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was one of the major priorities and accomplishments of President Obama's incumbency. As a result of conflicting views about the bill, Barack Obama faced numerous challenges since the approval of PPACA.

¹⁷ This would result in a 266/265 division of the electoral votes, with Clinton being the victor.

¹⁸ Presidential Final Debate, Las Vegas, Nevada (October 19, 2016)

The Supreme Court decision in the 2012 *National Federation of Independent Business vs. Sibelius* ruled that the expansion of Medicaid was not mandatory for unwilling States and delegated the decision of expansion to state authority. As expected, several pro-Republican States opted to not expand their Health Portfolios. Clinton & Sances (2018) argue that higher Democratic electoral percentages were more probable amongst States that have chosen to expand Medicaid. Theoretically, if political participation increased with the expansion of Medicaid – as shown by Haselswerdt (2017) –, there is a possibility that PPACA influenced individuals' voting decisions, with the Election serving as a survey on this topic.

PPACA received great consideration and criticism from Donald Trump throughout his campaign. His guarantee of “repealing and replacing” the PPACA accompanied the nominee since the beginning of his run for office. Trump highlighted the costs for the insured, and the indebtedness caused by this policy, whereas Clinton proposed “fixing the Obamacare, not repealing it”, by bringing its costs down. Ultimately, it became a decision between keeping the *status quo* or believing there could be a better alternative to universal healthcare. The conflicting policy stances regarding this issue and its continued public debate and “dramatization” may have triggered a “follow the leader” effect, where Democrats and Republicans followed their party elites' positions, even if they do not benefit from this healthcare plan themselves (Henderson & Hillygus, 2011).

As a quantitative analysis, this study's results only provide with a statewide insight in the influence of Healthcare in the electoral outcomes. As shown, States with higher percentages of PPACA registrations were more likely to vote for Clinton, since this variable is present in both candidates' models. Throughout the campaigns, and particularly seen in the Presidential Debates, both candidates decided to handle Healthcare differently. For instance, Trump's continuous usage of the term “Obamacare” when referring to PPACA, as well as avoiding advancing with a comprehensible substitute to this agenda, seemed that the Republicans focused on processing this subject as criticism to Barack Obama's Administration rather than providing with conventional political attention to a considerably important aspect of American's daily basis. Thus, it is possible – and most certain – that Obamacare's results in both candidates' models convey a referendum regarding individual approval of this policy, result of the large-scale of political attrition between Clinton and Trump towards this subject. Simply, States with

higher percentages of PPACA enrollment responded better to Clinton *and* Obama's stances regarding this issue; understandably, the opposite scenario benefited Trump.

Gender-based Identity Politics

*“Denying or curtailing education and basic education and basic health care for women is a human rights issue. Restricting women’s economic, political and social participation is a human rights issue. For too long, the voices of half the world’s citizens have not been heard by their governments.”*¹⁹

The positive results for the variable representative of the State's female population were consistent with concurrent studies (Ludeke et al., 2018). Theoretically, the recent rise of women's concern towards politics predicted an increased recognition of the importance of this gender's political voice. Arguments may be made about possible cultural and generational effects influencing women's voting behavior. In the last decades, the traditional society of the 70s has slowly dissipated: ideals such as the “stay at home wife” were largely put aside, and topics such as gender pay gap gained societal attention. If said concerns were determinant to women's electoral decision, as Conover (1988) suggests, then Clinton's campaign pledges may have proven decisive to captivate their votes. Inglehart & Norris (2000) argue that women shift more towards left-wing parties due to factors such as child-bearing and maternity leave, their extensive presence among low-income jobs, low health-care conditions and/or educational background. The 21st century brought an extension of this behavior: in the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Election women maintained their preeminence regarding support towards the Democratic Party when compared to men (Kittilson, 2016).

Intertwined with the Democratic party's ideals in recent years – especially regarding minorities' rights –, Hillary Clinton fiercely defended women's rights in her campaign, and was consequently reflected within the candidate's campaign pledges. Clinton's policies reached out to most of these components: for example, the creation of the “Paycheck Fairness Act” aimed directly to fight gender income inequality, whereas supporting Planned Parenthood and payed maternity leave intended to provide quality childcare. Despite the feminine electorate's probable positive response regarding Clinton's policies towards an issue that affects them directly, or at least they sympathize

¹⁹ (Clinton H. R., 2003).

with, the possibility of women recognizing Hillary as a powerful gender representative, based on same gender similarities, cannot be overlooked. For instance, Plutzer & Zipp (1996) and Wang et al. (2016) present the idea of “group solidarity”, where women tend to vote for female candidates. Although the present study recognizes such effect, the amplitude of its strength in this election remains unclear.

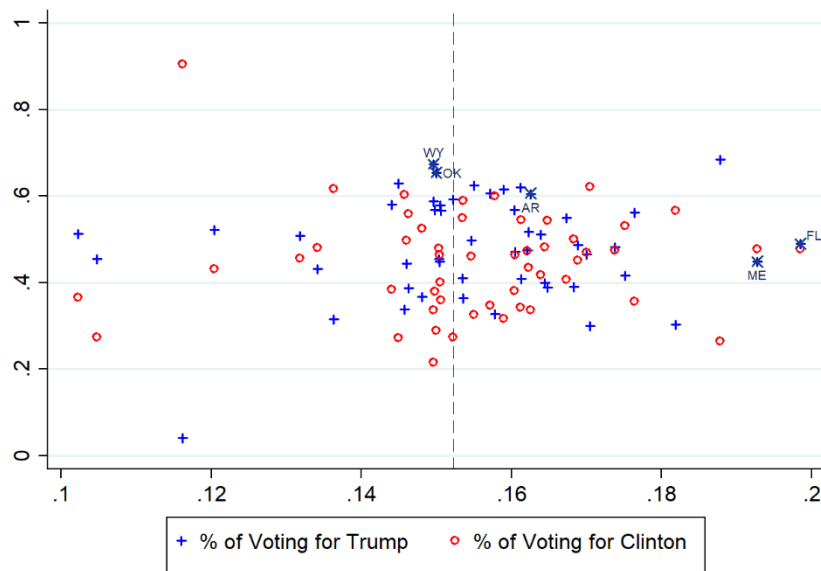
As previously argued, both candidates campaign experiences were considerably different. Regarding women’s rights, that gap was as large as it could be. Trump had to face nine sexual harassment accusations, in addition to managing the public reveal of a tape where the GOP nominee is heard belittling women. As a result, Clinton sought to promote an “ideological alliance” with the women electorate against Trump, gaining their support even further. Expectedly, Bock et al. (2017)’s regression models show that individuals who reported higher levels of hostile sexism were significantly more likely to vote for Trump – an effect comparable to racism in the 2008 Election.

Old(er)...

The fact that elderly tended to be more sympathetic to conventional ideals is a common point of view in the literature. Older people have experienced different political contexts and are clearer regarding partisanship, preferring conservative nominees (Norris, 2003; Johnston, Jones, & Manley, 2018). Traditional approaches to subjects that distress elderly, in particular regarding Social Security, have positive effects on older people’s voting decisions. On the other hand, campaign pledges that support increases in Education are more popular among the young people and lose approval slowly throughout the age groups (Erkulwater, 2012). Education received rigorous attention from Clinton, as part of a “trade deal” with Sanders: the latter highlighted the youth needs in this sector, particularly amongst the indebted college students. Presumably, the negative response of the elderly to Clinton may embody an antagonistic response to this issue: the senior population may see the investments in this area an inadequate investment, supporting the reallocation of those resources towards an area that affects them directly, such as Healthcare or pension funds. On Trump’s side, for instance, the major pledge of the former business mogul within the Education portfolio regards the elimination of the Department of Education – although one might see this as possible criticism to a measure adopted by the Obama’s Administration.

Figure 7's caption ("The Elderly Siphon") is explainable due to the unusual behavior (funnel-like) shown by this variable within both candidate's results. At a first glance, it does not seem to exist a clear positive correlation between senior population and Trump's results, which could lead us to question the variable's results for this nominee. However, a closer examination of the graph displays a rather noteworthy idea: the presidential race within States with the highest percentages of elderly population was almost deadlocked, with Trump achieving victory in Florida and Clinton in Maine, as depicted below. Trump triumphed in States with percentages regarding senior citizens *very close* to the national average (15,23%), such as Wyoming (14,95%), Oklahoma (14,99%) or Arkansas (16,25%) – remarkably, a clear majority of Clinton's victories *also* occurred within States with elderly percentages close to the national average (take, for instance, Connecticut, with an elderly state population of 16,12%, and Illinois, with 14,63%). Given that a large extent of States' percentages regarding this demographic characteristic are located very close to the national number, it is possible to theorize (and consequently corroborate the positive effect of this variable for the GOP nominee) that Trump bested Clinton concerning elderly electoral decision – however such is not surprising, particularly when recollecting the historical Republican trends shown by "older States" which can justify such inclinations.

Figure 7 - The Elderly Siphon (Blue depicts Republican Voting, Red regards Democratic rates)



There seems to exist an intriguing "generational breach" concerning voting decisions. Although the young people confer greater importance to the nations' state of affairs than the elderly, they seem to favor alternative channels to make their political

voice heard, whilst the senior prefer the ballot to convey their viewpoints: that is reflected in their political participation levels (Goodman, 2017; Ansolabehere & Hersh, 2013; Esser & Vreese, 2007). This is a considerable issue in the electoral outcomes and may be seen as hypocritical or cynic (Goldstein & Shem-Tov, 2017) – young people often opt to politically intervene through more radical means, rather than using the appropriate ways of doing so (voting). This disagreement between age groups seems to affect other areas of political intervention. Contrary to young electors, elderly individuals may undergo through *comparative voting bias* when reflecting in their political preference. In short, derivative of their life experience and having witnessed different political systems throughout their lifespan, the elderly voters may unintentionally establish “before and now” comparisons. Consequently, an ideological cultural backlash arises as a possible determinant of voting behavior amongst older individuals.

Even though not being able to reminisce their life experience, the younger generations are also affected with a distinctive comparative voting bias, wherein their political insights shift according to their futuristic conceptions. Moreover, in a selfish scenario where the voting decision is only related to their personal life status, a younger individual may opt to vote in a candidate that they associate with a brighter future to their generation – via increases in Education or job insertion, for instance. To put it simply, different generations are likely to convey divergent party identification, mainly due to intrinsic characteristics within both party and individuals.

In an increasingly technological world, the importance of a nominee's social incidence undertakes augmented proportions in the political spectrum, having unique weight within younger generations, leaders in social networks' usage (Lenhart et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2013). Both candidates resorted to Twitter to criticize each other's positions (although Trump more actively sought to employ this network as the official channel for his campaign), provide with electoral promises and their viewpoint concerning national and international state of affairs. In Trump's words, “it's like having your own newspaper”: millions of users react, whether negatively or positively, to 140 characters or less. Measuring Twitter's impact in determining young voters' electoral decisions may prove difficult due to the scarce statewide data regarding Twitter; nevertheless, as the younger individuals are increasingly social web-active, the impact of Trump's controversial statements, “Twitter wars”, and his ability for fashioning *hashtags*

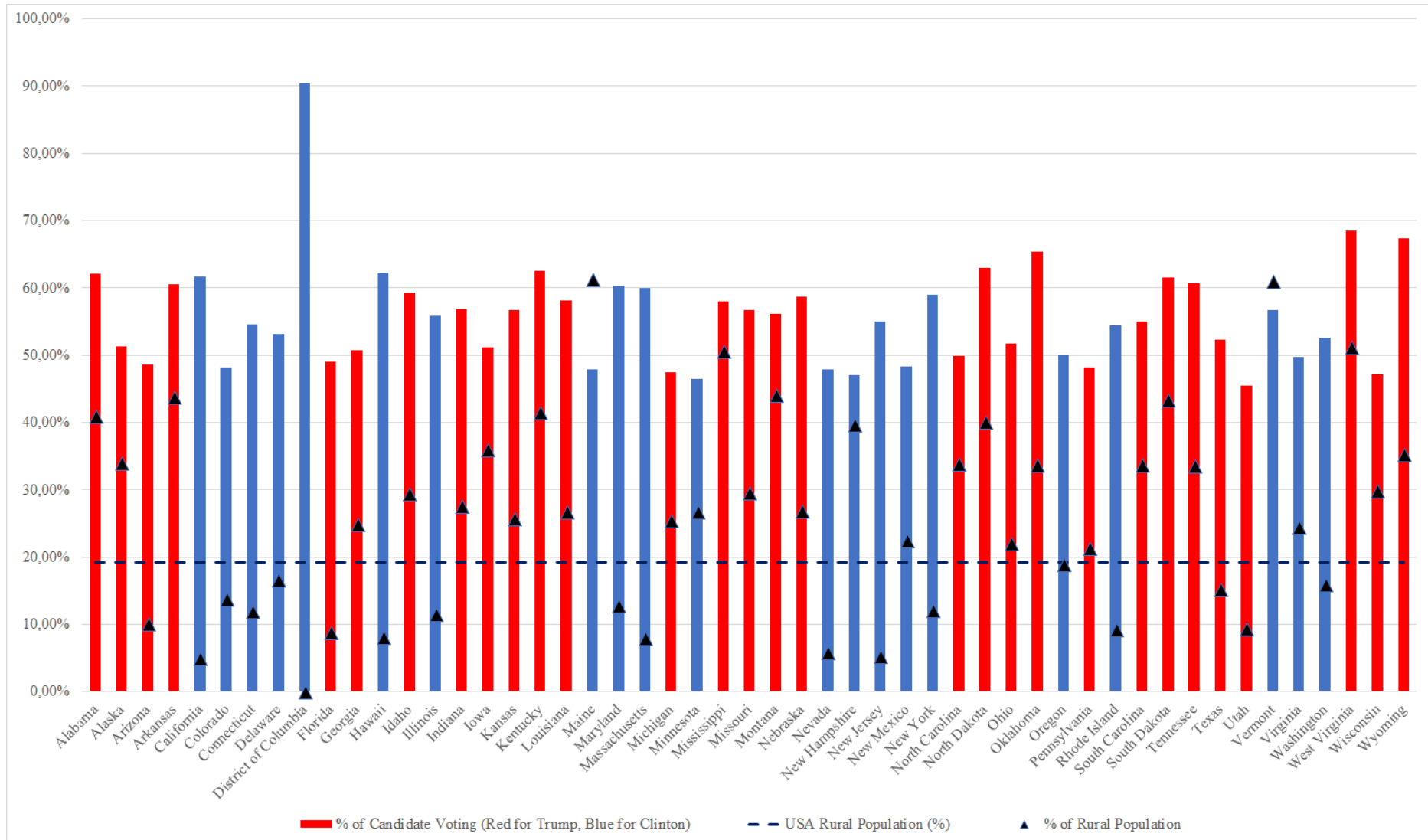
such as “#AmericaFirst”, “#fakenews”, or “#MAGA” in this generation’s political insights is undeniable.

Rural...

States with higher percentages of rural voters show historical shifts towards the Republican Party since the 60s, when the “Southern Democratic base” was overturned in favor of the GOP (Mckee, 2008). Currently, the Democrats rely in “large metropolitan cores”, more likely to identify with the party ideals and cast their vote accordingly, while the Republican find themselves more welcome in rural areas, more open-minded towards moral conservatism (Scala & Johnson, 2017). Understanding this Republican preference implies focusing in the fundamental characteristics of Rural population. The difference between the rural and urban viewpoints regarding critical topics such as pro-life decisions, immigration, warfare and gun control, has been intensively studied and could help explain this variable behavior in Donald Trump’s Model (Dillon & Savage, 2006). Monnat & Brown’s (2017) findings seem to partially agree with mine’s. The authors argue that, notwithstanding Trump’s prevail amongst States with higher percentages of rural population, the relatively slender percentage of national rural population (19,27%) does not support the theory of a “rural uprising” – whereas the new-found subjugation of the “Silent America” (with higher industrial levels) arose as a key contributor for Trump’s success. Such is presented by Figure 8: Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio (States with slightly above national average percentages of rural population) were won by Barack Obama in 2012 and now preferred Donald Trump on the ballot.

Nonetheless, the “rural revolt” suggested by the authors may be beneficial towards the explanation of how Donald Trump achieved victory in some States within the “Silent America”. Concerns regarding economic, health and political issues, in addition to skeptical public views of Hillary Clinton and a nationalist rhetoric from the Republican nominee, may have been favorably determinant in Donald Trump’s triumph in these States, reaching the aforementioned “sleeping conservatives” and confirming the theory that some of the “key rural pockets” (Scala, Johnson, & Rogers, 2015), recently converted by the Democratic Party in the last years, have returned to Republican sovereignty in the 2016 Election.

Figure 8 - Maintaining Rural Support: The Red Victory



... and White(r)

“The fact that half of all voters supported an openly and aggressively racist and sexist candidate is something in itself to take stock of”²⁰

The literature has a well-established point of view towards the effect of this variable in the previous Election, especially during President Obama's mandate (Tesler, 2013). In 2008, the election of the first African-American president increased voting participation across the United States, even though the influence of racial effects was only felt in States where the number of non-white people was significantly higher (Uyar & Abraham, 2015). As well as having registered considerable success among the African-Americans across the country, Barack Obama was able to win over white votes in non-southern States (Ansolabehere et al., 2010).

The roots for a possible role of race in the 2016 presidential Election detour from the racial bias registered in the previous years, in President Obama's incumbency. In 2014 mid-term Election, negative racial perceptions against Barack Obama, particularly among the Whites, had a “spillover effect” in the voting, stimulating Republican vote (Luttig & Motta, 2017). The possible explanation that could erroneously be provided for the fact that ethnic differences in the electorate did not seem to shift voting decision towards a specific nominee (due to lack of statistical significance for the variable regarding racial percentages in Trump's model) regards the inexistence of a racial minority representative as a presidential candidate. However, and in consensus to what was mentioned regarding women voting and Hillary Clinton, the ideal of “identity politics” can similarly be idealized for Donald Trump. The nominee's self-portrayal of a traditional white American, who loves his family and his nation above all, may have possibly touched directly the dreams and ambitions of the average American worker. Thus, one could expect that Black people could vote more on Clinton, as she was pictured as the successor of Obama's ideals²¹, or that Latinos would be displeased of Donald Trump's pledge of building a Southern border wall (one of his major campaign promises).

It would seem that the null effects shown for “Race” are inconsistent with Harnish (2017) and Rothwell & Diego-Rosell's (2016) findings: both authors argue that white people do tend to vote more for Republicans, and racial minorities for Democrats. The

²⁰ (Wells, 2017).

²¹ Something argued by Donald Trump himself. He described Clinton as “four more years of Obama”.

fact that the racial bias is highly correlated with Romney's electoral outcomes (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is -0,4595) may provide a possible explanation for the null effects of the model. In fact, the variable related to Mitt Romney's results in 2012 totally embodied the racial effects in Trump's model; in other words, there *was* racial bias in the 2016 Presidential Election, where non-white people tended to move away from Trump. Although dropping Mitt Romney's bias decreases the R-Squared of the model, the racial variable obtains statistical relevance, negatively correlated to Trump's voting performance (see Appendix 5). The latter's controversial statements regarding Muslims (take, for instance, "There were people [Muslims] over in New Jersey that were watching it (...) that were cheering as the buildings [World Trade Center] came down"²²) and Latino-Americans, as well as very conservative pledges such as building a wall on the Southern border, or mass deportation of illegal immigrants, caused a feeling of distrust amongst the minorities which was reflected on the election results. Wells (2017), for example, points out that the nomination of Jeff Sessions to Attorney General highlighted the nominee's contempt towards the African-Americans.

Figure 9 - Racial Resentment against Donald Trump

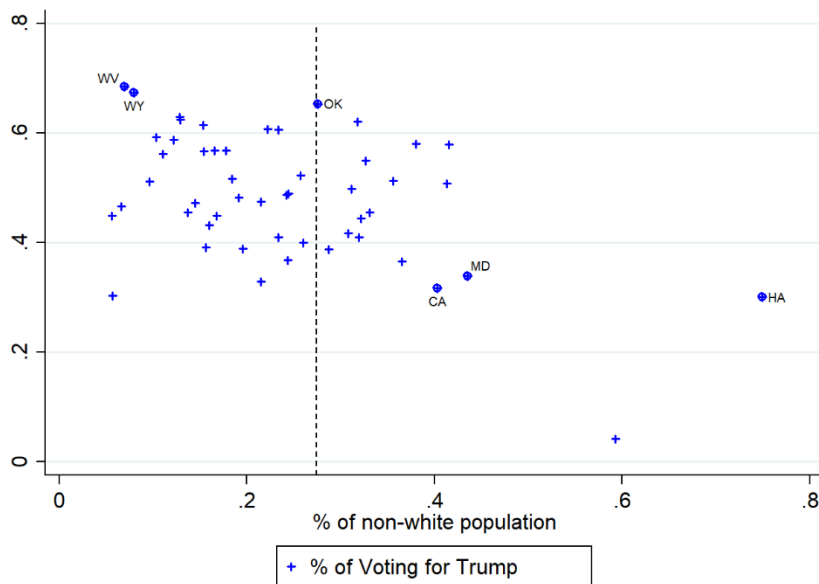


Figure 9 illustrates the racial antipathy created by Donald Trump amongst the electorate. The two States where the Republican candidate achieved better results, West Virginia and Wyoming, are among States with the lowest percentages of non-white population (6,93% and 7,97%, respectively). On the Democratic point of view, three of

²² Donald Trump's campaign rally in Birmingham, Alabama (Nov 21st, 2015).

States with the most ethnically diverse population were won by Clinton (Hawaii, California and Maryland).

Richer for the Rich

*“Yet with respect to governance, these groups have almost never focused their attention on the economic issues that most powerfully affect the working and middle classes. Their concerns, such as environmentalism, women’s rights, and civil liberties, are instead largely those of the most affluent members of the Democratic Party.”*²³

As could be expected, States with higher values for GDP per capita showed positive trends to vote for Donald Trump, agreeing with the historical values and policies that each party adopted as their dogmatic definition. Nevertheless, a decisive difference between “richer States” and “States with richer individuals” must be highlighted. The literature has shown great concern regarding the way citizens with higher incomes decide their electoral preferences: Gelman, Kenworthy, & Su (2010) demonstrate that Americans with superior levels of income are more likely to vote Republican, particularly due to their economic differences regarding policies. Inversely, the relation between GDP *per capita* and Republican voting is still somewhat unexplored. For instance, Gelman et. al (2007) demonstrate that “richer States” are increasingly shifting towards the Democratic party, despite having favored the Republicans in recent Election. This could explain the relatively inferior coefficient for our variable regarding GDP *per capita* – an extension of a rising Democratic trend amongst richer States.

War Controversies

*“The social situation of the draftee could be described as one of forcible removal from his previous social environment, an environment in which the youth develops independence and feelings of self-worth even in conflict with general patterns of behavior.”*²⁴

Conscription grants individuals with a sense of altruism, where they see their moral horizons significantly lengthened (“little fish in a big pond”). Firstly, the interaction with other soldiers highlights their comradeship, which promotes the idea of group empathy (where veterans are available to fight for former trooper’s rights). Secondly,

²³ (Hacker & Pierson, 210).

²⁴ (Lippert, Schneider, Zoll, & Shirer, 1978).

derivative of the individual's identification with the country's causes, soldiers may simply "fight for nation" (Osiel, 1998), which points to the future possibility of seeking to safeguard the country's interests internally – a sense of responsibility for America. Although both nominees agreed in the importance of the war veterans to the nation, this segment of population seemed to prefer Clinton rather than Trump, confirming the eroding of Republican veteran disposition registered after the Bush Administration (Teigen, 2007). Both Presidential candidates pledged to reform veterans' healthcare, tackle their employment status (particularly work discrimination and poverty), and address existing complaints regarding Veterans Affairs. So, what drove the veterans towards Clinton, even though Trump showed them significant consideration?

The response may lie in the electorate's responsiveness towards both nominees' positions regarding war affairs and, if existent, the mistreatment of this segment's integrity and moral code. As stated above, both parties seemed to be in agreement concerning electoral policy promises, targeting the main contemporaneous issues that distress war veterans. Consequently, and withdrawing the possible party identification bias, it is possible that their electoral support for Clinton may be summed up to Trump's controversial statements regarding veterans (and Clinton's absence of) and the GOP nominee's aggressive war stance against ISIS. Regarding the former, two particular polemics heated Trump's campaign: firstly, the GOP nominee's bout with the grieving Khan family, in which Donald compared the loss of a son to the "sacrifice" of employing thousands of people; secondly, the infamous quote regarding war hero Senator John McCain - "He's not a war hero. (...) I like people that weren't captured"²⁵. Despite publicly claiming to stand for veterans' civil rights, Trump's image may have not been portrayed as the nominee expected amongst the former militaries – his mistreatment of veterans and war heroes may have interfered with their group identification, triggering their sense of companionship. Involving war policies, both nominees conveyed their parties' positions regarding ISIS and the requirement of ground troops to facilitate conflict solving. As expected of a Democratic candidate (and an ethos of the Obama's Administration), Clinton sustained her dismissal of ground troops, guaranteeing to "not putting ground troops into Iraq ever again and (...) not putting ground troops into Syria". Divergently, Trump advocated the deployment of up to thirty thousand soldiers in the

²⁵ Trump's campaign event in Iowa (available at <http://www.businessinsider.com/donald-trump-john-mccain-war-hero-2015-7>).

Middle Eastern area as fundamental to defeating ISIS. Public opinion's regarding warfare, particularly after the turn of the century and the start of the Iraq War, has been predominantly "mind our own business" mindset (Mueller & Stewart, 2016). Ideologically, veterans would seek to provide the best scenario to incoming draftees, avoiding the idea of troop deployment for conflict solving (and thus increased numbers of significant losses within the armed forces) and promoting the "war from home" approach backed by Clinton.

The (un)surprising role of Education

*"(...) Education increases citizens' ability to select able leaders, understand the issues upon which they will vote, act as a check on the potential excesses of the government, and recognize corruption in leaders. (...) Education improves citizens' interest and knowledge of political issues, their involvement in the political process and, ultimately, the effectiveness of their political participation."*²⁶

Higher education plays a critical part in an individual's life. Within those years of educational development, the student is presented with different lines of thought about current events, acquiring new perceptions regarding his political surroundings – for instance, the real extent of policies adopted by nominees (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). However, the relevance of such degree can be determinant to a voter's political decisions: a degree related to social fields of study offer critical understandings about government affairs and are more useful towards electoral participation and the upbringing of Democratic ideals (Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Berry, 1996; Hillygus, 2005; Gallego, 2010).

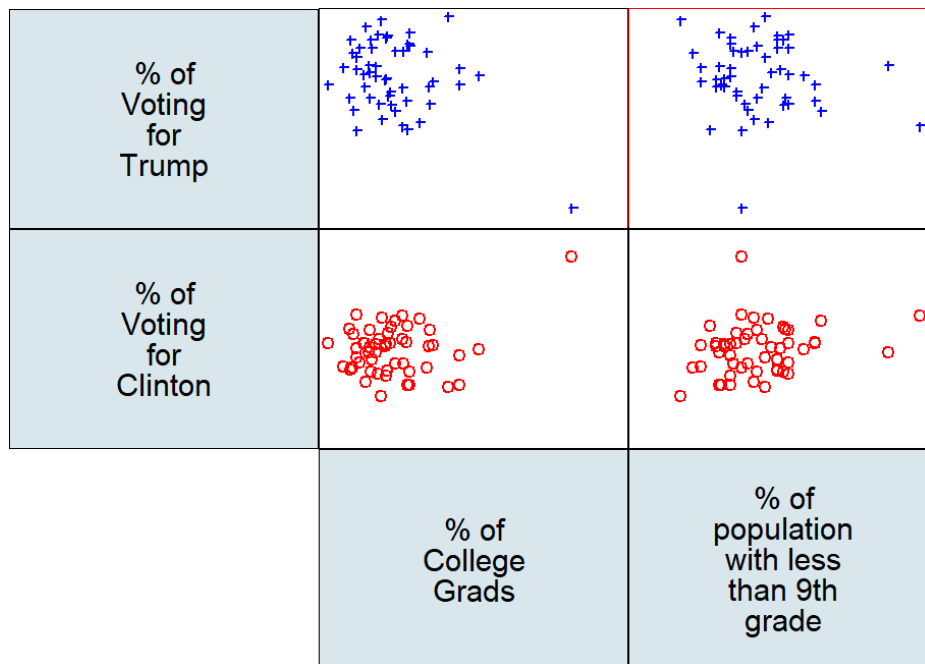
As presented by Table 2, I deduce that States with higher percentages of university graduates were more likely to display resentment against Donald Trump on the ballot. Similar studies have found identical deductions regarding the role of higher education levels in the 2016 Presidential Election. For instance, Walker (2018) predicted prior to the election a negative coefficient for States with superior percentages of individuals with bachelor's degrees, proving the adverse effect of higher education in this nominee's outcomes. Nevertheless, the author does not clarify if the graduates shifted towards Clinton: as presented in the Democratic nominee's Model, the lack of statistical significance of the variable regarding higher education may be representative of a

²⁶ (Milligan, Moretti, & Oreopoulos, 2004).

remarkable singularity, wherein the state with higher percentages of degree holders have negative viewpoints of Trump but *do not seem to trust* Clinton as the righteous alternative. Rothwell & Diego-Rosell (2016) argue that individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher attainment favored Sanders *more* than Clinton, whilst *John Kasich* was the preferred Republican nominee. Such concept would imply that *neither* of the nominees on the final race for office were the desirable by individuals with better educational curriculums and, irrevocably, provide a valid reason for the absence of Democratic echo in Clinton's Model.

Differently to what could be expected, States with higher percentages of individuals with lesser educational levels (percentage of citizens with less than 9th grade) displayed higher preference for the Democratic nominee. As argued before, pursuing additional educational levels are associated with a better understanding of the political world. Such would imply that there would be a significant electoral divergence between the two groups studied in both models. As presented in Figure 10, different educational effects influence both nominee's results, reassuring our deductions. Nevertheless, such results agree with Rothwell & Diego-Rosell's. The authors argue that lower education links with higher support for Hillary Clinton: despite that, controlling for age and ethnicity the scenario is different, where individuals with lower educational levels are more probable to support Trump.

Figure 10 - The Educational Differential



The Right-Wing Populism behind it all

“(...) his supporters combine the distinct traits of a strong nationalist and ethnocentric identity with a deep suspicion of elites and cultural pretenses.”²⁷

Donald Trump's bellicose stance against elitism and corruption defined him as an unconventional populist since the start of his campaign. Unlike Bernie Sanders, described as a populist as well (Coleman, 2016), his charismatic and capricious rhetoric was especially aimed to deteriorate the incumbent political system, as well as his opponents, while boosting the self-image of a “Great America”. The candidate's allegations of “rigged” political and economic systems – tightly linked with extremely conservative ideals –, may have been decisive in converting individuals with pre-existing conspiracy mindsets (Democracy Fund Study Group, 2017; Lamberty et al. 2018). Through this, he managed to incite possible feelings of distrust or anger towards the Government: as studied before, conservatives are more doubtful of existing political establishments or elites. That “skirmished speech” fared better amongst Trump and Sanders supporters (due to their anti-elitist stance), creating the possibility of a gender-based conflict advantage for male candidates: simply, the “angered” voters didn't behold Clinton as a rightful mediator for their intrinsic dissatisfaction (Han & Calfano, 2017).

Nevertheless, Hillary Clinton supporters were more authoritarian than the average among left-wing cohorts (Ludeke et al., 2018), but significantly less than Trump's followers – individuals with authoritarian ideologies were more likely to favor the GOP candidate (Choma & Hanoch, 2016; Muirhead & Rosenblum, 2018). Trump's controversial oratory clashed with the somewhat lassitude from Clinton, who arduously sought to keep integrity and civility not only within the extent of her campaign, but furthermore during the Presidential debates. As argued by Galam (2016), Trump's eloquence is intrinsically related to the very existence of a clear majority who disapproves his controversial statements and racial preconceptions, thus “defrosting frozen prejudices” frequently found within both parties' supporters. The Presidential candidate rose as a conservative nationalist in an era where fighting for women and LGBT rights – linked to liberal ideals – were under spotlight. Whilst the Republican nominee aimed to illustrate his adversary as a formulaic contender, an epigone of the Obama Administration, Clinton played the “harbinger” role: the candidate repeatedly denounced

²⁷ (Oliver & Rahn, 2016).

the magnate as an illicit and iscariotic candidate, seeking to antagonize Trump's self-promotion as an American panacea. Ultimately, the Presidential public race came down to the collision between the sustenance of eight years of Democratic hegemony (although having decayed in the final years of Barack Obama's tenure), and Trump's psittacism and his upholding of the revival of "buried American ancestry".

Trump transmitted a large amount of confidence in himself as a candidate and future President of the USA (even arguing that he could "stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and (...) wouldn't lose any voters"). The GOP candidate's idealization of a "savior" of American traditional views such as family, gun control, and immigration, affected the electorate who thought such ideals had been lost with eight years of Democratic presidency. By pledging to stand for those epitomes of America, Trump managed to reach the already Republican white men, discontent with the liberal values of the previous Administration. In result, as pointed out by Inglehart & Norris (2016), the psychological dimension of populism embodies an increased significance in the individual voting decision. Aspects such as age, educational level, or skin colour, seem to have a decisive impact in their responsiveness towards a nationalist speech. For example, Trump's pro-life position regarding the premature termination of pregnancy, despite having found resistance amongst women, matched the nominee's ambition to reach more conservative, close-minded individuals, particularly older and less educated men.

Identifying a populist candidate is simpler than measuring the degree of such anti-elitist trends within him. For instance, the statistical relevance of a variable related to political interventions in Trump's Model (see Table 2 and 3) points to an inherent ability to captivate the voters and sway their viewpoints on themselves, the nominee, and primarily, the (shunned) Government – one of the possible determinants for recognizing a populist candidate. Donald Trump's insight for America lacked the economic and cultural range of Clinton; nevertheless, his echoing of simple ideals such as "bring jobs back" or "repealing and replacing [Obamacare]" had a tremendous positive impact on the public's opinions of his fitness for office, particularly amongst the middle-class families, who sought to improve their financial conditions. In a plain and well-defined way, the GOP nominee successfully exploited his capability of causing shock, as well as his renowned celebrity background, to gain the electorate or, at least, obtain a reaction from it.

Certainly, credibility of Donald Trump as a Presidential nominee could be judged as advantageous and harmful for his campaign, simultaneously. The uncertainty regarding the fulfillment of his campaign pledges caused turmoil amongst the electorate, and had a determinant impact on his results, as my deductions point out. How would the public – in particular, the Latino-American population – react on the ballot if one of Donald Trump's major political stances did not consist of building a southern-border wall? The charismatic speech from Donald Trump may reason with Thomson's findings (2011): the author states that individuals may distrust the fulfillment of nominee's pledges. If so, would a compelling candidate such as Trump convey the idea of the execution of a doubtful (or even unethical) policy? If to believe in Thomson et al. (2017) and Bischof (2018), who argue that parties *do* seek to accomplish the campaign promises when elected, avoiding the strategical mistake of inconsequential pledges, then it is possible to assume a critical role of Trump's positions in his electoral outcome.

The sturdiest argument involves the electorate's perception of the sustainability of Trump's policies – in other words, whether voters regarded Trump's campaign promises as reliable or not. For instance, the magnate's position regarding the economical negligence suffered by middle-class workers, whilst seen as hypocritical by the Democrats, approached directly the contempt felt by the "Silent Americans" towards an untrustworthy political system. As Fukuyama (2016) argues, Trump's rhetoric, synthesized by his campaign slogan ("Make America Great Again"), brought real meaning to the white working-class, historically leaned towards more nationalist economic policies.

In fact, Trump rallied the neglected and discontent Americans against the corrupted Obama's Administration and "crooked Hillary". The antagonistic positions of both nominees provide us with the possibility of an interesting insight on their charisma. While Trump relayed on his anti-elitist positions to reach the electorate, Hillary sought to base her arguments on her long office tenure (Eatwell, 2017). Nonetheless, her experience received heavy criticism by Trump as leverage for his ambition to distrust the Government – in the Final Presidential Debate in Las Vegas, Nevada, Trump questioned "She's been doing this for 30 years. Why the hell didn't you do it [pull the country together] over the last 15, 20 years?". Serra (2018) argues that, in a *ceteris paribus* situation, candidates with more office-holding experience were more likely to perform better in the ballot. Thus, it's possible to theorize that if the Republican Party matched

the Democratic Party's strategy of nominating a candidate based on his office background, the long tenure of Hillary as Secretary of State and Senator, as well as the Former First Lady, would become a decisive factor in people's voting behavior (Jacobson, 2017). As argued previously, Bernie Sanders shares some populist characteristics with Donald Trump, particularly regarding economic portfolios. A hypothetical scenario where the Democratic Party would nominate a candidate with similar personality traces as Trump rises the doubt regarding the result of a "populist race for office". If both parties were equally populist (or at least, with very similar levels of charismatic rhetoric), would the voting decision still be based in the political experience? If so, the U.S. Senator for Vermont would be in an advantageous position in the Presidential race.

Section 5 - Conclusions

How did Donald Trump win the Presidential Race in the 2016 Presidential Election, even though the majority of polls presented him as the "underdog" since the Republic primaries? Albeit the literature has pressed to find the answer to this question, the main focus of researchers' attention is directed towards specific topics of discussion, where Healthcare or Racial Bias obtain fundamental roles in the electoral spectrum. The lack of a multidimensional study, whom seeks to find a broader answer to the aforementioned question, present with a "sweet-and-sour" situation: on the positive side, this facilitates the discussion and interpretation of the individual effect of voting behavior determinants; on the negative view, the unavoidably innovative insight in the Election may struggle seeking to explain the answer to the initial question due to the shortage of similar studies. Assuming the difficult task of comprehensively analyzing and explaining the electoral outcomes of the 2016 Presidential Election, this study provides with groundbreaking elucidations to a broadly studied moment of world history.

Trump's victory presents with an unexpected reasoning regarding the nominee's political groundings. As proved, Trump's campaign sought to secure the more competitive States from the previous Presidential Election – contrary of to what could be expected from an unexperienced nominee, Donald Trump exhibited a noteworthy political awareness and planned his campaign accordingly, outsmarting Clinton in the bureaucratic scenario. These results are rather unexpected and provide with new insights to the public-political disparity of Donald Trump's behavior. Whilst the Republican

nominee was concerned about being the highly broadcasted “hot topic” in the media, his electioneer staff surreptitiously planned a strategical route to his political campaign. Aggregating both dimensions, it would be expected (as it would eventually come to be) that large amounts of voters flocked to the GOP nominee’s rallies. Also, it may be possible that Donald Trump purposely showed himself as an inexperienced candidate, in order to be an undervalued option for the Presidential race (at least in its initial period), additionally obtaining leverage to criticize his opponent’s political curriculum. The Republican nominee sought to generate public distrust towards Hillary Clinton, displaying her as an unmotivated and passive candidate. As a result, Trump managed to repeatedly question Clinton’s capability to hold the Presidential vacancy – as a former Secretary of State, the Democrat had opportunities to solve the crises that troubled the country, whereas Trump, as never having held a critical governmental office, did not share those opportunities to “Make America Great Again”.

When Hillary Clinton ceased considering Trump only for his “celebrity” status and viewed the nominee as a serious threat to what could possibly be a serene election for the Democratic party, the electoral scale was already championing Donald J. Trump, thus restarting a Republican ethos in the nation. And my results support such inferences: whereas Clinton gained the popular vote (with her more ethical, civilized, and often passionate approach to contemporary issues), Trump achieved victory in the only election that mattered to his nomination – the electoral votes.

How different will the Democratic Party’s approach be in the 2020 Presidential Race? Will another minority candidate contend against Donald Trump (expectedly), following Obama and Clinton? Or will their strategy change due to lessons learned from the 2016 Election? Many questions still obscure the 2020 Presidential Election. Nevertheless, it would be useful to ascertain if the defeated party in the previous Election will adapt their strategy and bring forth a nominee able to withstand and counter President Trump’s aggressive stances and accusations, whilst simultaneously besting the incumbent in the strategic electoral race, decisive to Trump’s nomination for office. In the meanwhile, the 2018 mid-term Election will be the first election moment since Trump’s nomination for office – providing an imperative first update on the President’s public opinion, whilst simultaneously determining the House of Representatives’ dominating party and the continuity of 35 State Senators.

The eight-year political cycles between Republican and Democratic presidents that disturb the Presidential vacancy, particularly since the last decade of the 20th century, are a disquieting reality for United States' general state of affairs and reveal the considerable flaws in a two-party system in act for almost two hundred years. Only the future years will determine whether the “wind of change” will still blow in America's politics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – VIF estimations for multicollinearity²⁸

<i>VIF for Model A (Trump)</i>		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>
GDP per capita (logarithmic)	3.29	0.303552
Proportion of Romney Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election	3.28	0.305075
Proportion of Non-White People	2.67	0.375223
Proportion of People 65+ Years Old	2.38	0.419817
Proportion of Rural Population	1.91	0.523931
Proportion of Enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions	1.63	0.613350
State's Official Trump Campaign's Rallies, Proportion (since June 2015)	1.44	0.692061
Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan	1.37	0.730514
Mean VIF	2.18	

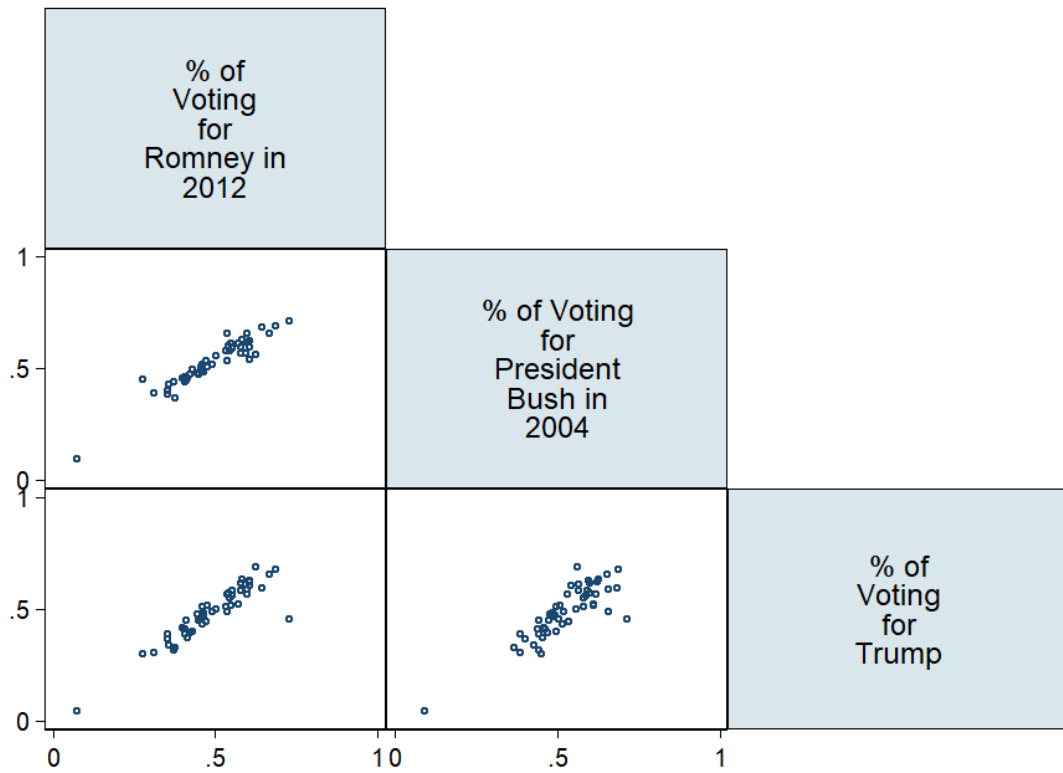
<i>VIF for Model B (Clinton)</i>		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>
Proportion of Estimated War Veterans	1.97	0.507900
Proportion of Women	1.94	0.514775
Proportion of Rural Population	1.90	0.526588
Proportion of Obama Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election	1.78	0.561995
Proportion of People 65+ Years Old	1.64	0.609734
Proportion of People with 25+ Years Old with Less than 9th Grade	1.44	0.695170
Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan	1.11	0.902096
Mean VIF	1.68	

²⁸ As the value of which VIF would represent problematic estimations is somewhat arbitrary, I pre-established a limit for this value of 10 (Wooldridge, 2012).

Appendix 2 – Variable Description and Sources

<i>Description</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Source</i>
Proportion of Enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions	2014	Digest of Education Statistics 2015, U.S. Department of Education
Proportion of People with 25+ Years Old with Less than 9th Grade	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
State's Official Trump Campaign's Rallies, Proportion (since June 2015)	2016	Donald Trump Campaign's Website
Proportion of Romney Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election	2013	Federal Election Commission
GDP per capita (logarithmic)	2016	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, author's calculations
Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan	2017	The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017
Proportion of People 65+ Years Old	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Proportion of Rural Population	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population
Proportion of Women	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Proportion of Non-White People	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Proportion of Estimated War Veterans	2016	U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Proportion of Obama Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election	2013	Federal Election Commission
Electoral Seats Distribution per state (proportion)	2016	U.S. Electoral College Website (https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html)
Proportion of Voting for D. Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election	2017	Federal Election Commission
Proportion of Voting for H. Clinton in the 2016 Presidential Election	2017	Federal Election Commission

Appendix 3 - The tri-candidate scenario



Appendix 4 – Significance test for *Romney=1* & *Obama=1*

(A) *test* ROMNEY - 1=0

$$F(1, 42) = 0.21$$

$$\text{Prob} > F = 0.6475$$

(B) *test* OBAMA - 1 =0

$$F(1, 43) = 6.77$$

$$\text{Prob} > F = 0.0126$$

(obtained using STATA software)

Appendix 5 – Racial Effects in Trump's Model

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>
Proportion of People 65+ Years Old	-1.773*** (0.725)
Proportion of Rural Population	0.292*** (0.127)
Proportion of Individuals Who Have Selected a Marketplace Plan	-0.986 (0.939)
Proportion of Enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions	-0.757 (0.768)
GDP per capita (logarithmic)	-3.11e-06*** (6.268)
State's Official Trump Campaign's Rallies, Proportion (since June 2015)	0.393 (0.129)
Proportion of Non-White People	-0.198*** (0.103)
Intercept	0.965*** (70.17)
Observations	51
R-squared	0.616

Appendix 6 – Disparity between Democratic nominees (Barack Obama vs. Hillary Clinton)

States	Barack Obama (2012)	Hillary Clinton (2016)
<i>Alabama</i>	38,36%	34,36%
<i>Alaska</i>	40,81%	36,55%
<i>Arizona*</i>	44,59%	45,13%
<i>Arkansas</i>	36,88%	33,65%
<i>California*</i>	60,24%	61,73%
<i>Colorado</i>	51,49%	48,16%
<i>Connecticut</i>	58,06%	54,57%
<i>Delaware</i>	58,61%	53,09%
<i>District of Columbia</i>	90,91%	90,48%
Florida	50,01%	47,82%
<i>Georgia</i>	45,48%	45,64%
<i>Hawaii</i>	70,55%	62,22%
<i>Idaho</i>	32,62%	27,49%
<i>Illinois</i>	57,60%	55,83%
<i>Indiana</i>	43,93%	37,91%
<i>Iowa</i>	51,99%	41,74%
<i>Kansas</i>	37,99%	36,05%
<i>Kentucky</i>	37,80%	32,68%
<i>Louisiana</i>	40,58%	38,45%
<i>Maine</i>	56,27%	47,83%
<i>Maryland</i>	61,97%	60,33%
<i>Massachusetts</i>	60,65%	60,01%
Michigan	54,21%	47,27%
<i>Minnesota</i>	52,65%	46,44%
<i>Mississippi</i>	43,79%	40,11%
<i>Missouri</i>	44,38%	38,14%
<i>Montana</i>	41,70%	35,75%
<i>Nebraska</i>	38,03%	33,70%
<i>Nevada</i>	52,36%	47,92%
<i>New Hampshire</i>	51,98%	46,98%
<i>New Jersey</i>	58,38%	54,99%
<i>New Mexico</i>	52,99%	48,26%
<i>New York</i>	63,35%	59,01%
<i>North Carolina</i>	48,35%	46,17%
<i>North Dakota</i>	38,69%	27,23%
Ohio	50,67%	43,56%
<i>Oklahoma</i>	33,23%	28,93%
<i>Oregon</i>	54,24%	50,07%
Pennsylvania	51,97%	47,46%

<i>Rhode Island</i>	62,70%	54,41%
<i>South Carolina</i>	44,09%	40,67%
<i>South Dakota</i>	39,87%	31,74%
<i>Tennessee</i>	39,08%	34,72%
<i>Texas*</i>	41,38%	43,24%
<i>Utah*</i>	24,75%	27,46%
<i>Vermont</i>	66,57%	56,68%
<i>Virginia</i>	51,16%	49,73%
<i>Washington</i>	56,16%	52,54%
<i>West Virginia</i>	35,54%	26,43%
Wisconsin	52,83%	46,45%
<i>Wyoming</i>	27,82%	21,63%