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US Presidential Election 2016: How Trump Beat Demographics

Abstract

The United States presidential election, the most important political election in the world, resulted in Donald Trump's victory. This year's election was, for many reasons, historical. For the first time ever, one of the major parties' candidates was a woman, and the winner was the person that collected half the funds the other candidate did, and that has almost no political experience whatsoever. It seems that Donald Trump faced more problems and resistance than any other presidential candidate before him, and was basically written off at the very beginning of the election. He took on other candidates, the Republican Party, the media, political analysts, but also his own nature and character. Later on, he faced the Democratic machinery led by Hillary Clinton. It is hard to even list all the challenges he experienced. However, the biggest one seems to be American demographics – the unfavorable demographic trends Republicans have been dealing with for decades. Trump was narrowing his potential electorate by making harsh and offensive statements about women and minorities, and it seemed it was demographics that would stand in the way of his victory. However, come November 9th, these expectations turned out to be unjustified. In this paper, we will try to answer how Donald Trump, despite almost all predictions, managed to overcome the “demographic problem” and win the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and we aim to do this by analyzing social and party line divisions, demographic trends and election strategies.

Key words: presidential election, demographics, demographic trends, Donald Trump, Republican Party.

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Introduction

Every four years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, the most important political process in the world takes place. Some authors even call the event the “reborn of the political system” (Azari and Hetherington 2016). On this day, American citizens go to the voting stations and cast a vote for their future president. It is always hard to label a political process as the most important one, seeing as there are no common criteria for such a statement. Still, the fact remains that on this day Americans vote for the future leader of the most influential military and economic power in the world. Additionally, it is undebatable that election outcomes in one country affect the entire mankind. This year’s presidential election seem to have confirmed this assumption – at least judging by the degree of public interest in the U.S. future role in the world, their trade arrangements with other states and organizations, the future of Euro-Atlantic relations, their relations with Russia, China etc. Due to all the things listed, it makes sense that no other electoral process, apart from each state’s respective domestic elections, receives more attention in all the countries of the world, regardless of their economic, military or political power, or the degree to which they are connected with the United States.

It is no secret that each U.S. presidential election is considered a key determinant of the country’s future, due to the fact that parties and candidates present it as such (Volle 2016). It is also no secret that the 2016 election were historical and specific in many ways. First of all, one of the two major parties had, for the first time in history, a woman win the primaries, thus becoming the first female Democratic presidential candidate ever. After having an African American president, it seemed the electoral process was due for another step forward. Also, the first presidential debate on television was watched by 84 million U.S. citizens, making it the most popular debate in history. Second, United States were facing an ever expanding political and social gap, and they needed candidates that would bring about its reduction. Third, whether we are talking about “the rise of the rest” (Amsden 2001; Zakaria 2009) or the “decline of American power” (Wallerstein 2003; Lachmann 2014), one thing is clear: United States’ position and their ability to influence global processes has, to say the least, been altered. American citizens needed a candidate who would successfully lead the country through global political and economic turbulence, who would maintain American prima-

cy in the world, but would also bring foreign military involvement down to the bare minimum. Today, most citizens think that “it would be better if the U.S. just dealt with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems as best they can” (Pew 2016). We are yet to see whether these expectation will be met, but it is certain that it will be the newly elected president Donald J. Trump dealing with them.

It is hard to explain the disbelief the world was experiencing when the first results came in. One by one, Ohio, North Carolina and Florida were hinting, and then Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan confirmed one of the biggest surprises ever in regards to American presidential elections. Candidates with fewer electoral votes than Donald Trump have won in the past, as have those with popular vote margins of 0.09%, or even those with a lower popular vote³, but there has not been a case in recent history where a candidate who was written off by almost everyone won the election. Twenty out of twenty-four polling results presented on November 7th and 8th said Hillary Clinton was in the lead, while various specialized portals gave her a 60% to 97% chance of her winning. Even the betting odds were off. There are very few analysts such as political historian Allan Lichtman⁴ who accurately predicted Trump’s victory.

Be as it may, Donald Trump was elected president, and the United States and the world are about to learn to “absorb the impossible” (Dowd 2016). Also, political scientists, historians and other social scientists will make effort to explain a victory they were not able to predict. What caused Trump’s sway over Hillary Clinton? Was it her baggage or character, his excellent election strategy, anger towards party establishments, FBI Director James Comey, foreign governments or something else? Seeing as there are no definite answers (yet), further efforts to explain Donald Trump’s success are quite justified.

Trump’s victory came after a long period of battling in the trenches – he took on other candidates, the Republican Party Establishment, media, political analysts, and his own nature and character as well. He was not only an outsider in his race against Hillary Clinton, but in every single “battle” starting from June 15th 2015 when he announced he would run for the Republican nomination, up until November 8th 2016.

3 John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford Hayes (1876), Benjamin Harrison (1888), George W. Bush (2000) and Donald Trump (2016) have won the election despite having a lower popular vote.

4 Even Lichtman was a little off – he predicted a much higher popular vote for Trump

At first, his candidacy was dubbed a mere insatiable thirst for attention coming from a spoiled billionaire. Truth be told, Trump himself did contribute to such an image. His political views can be labeled as “business pragmatism”. In two previous instances, he was a supporter, even a financier, of the Democratic Party (prior to 1987, and from 2001 to 2009), he also supported the Republicans three times (1987-1989, 2009-2011, 2012 – present), and he ran in the primaries as a Reform Party candidate in 2000. “The Outsider”, however, scored numerous victories in 2016. First, he won the primaries by a landslide, leaving behind Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, John Kasich, Ted Cruz and others, and then he went on to defeat Hillary Clinton in the general election. It should be noted that Trump is the first American presidential candidate ever to be elected without having previous adequate political experience or military service, and the first to win with a significantly smaller amount of funds raised⁵ – almost half as much as Hillary collected during her campaign (Allison 2016). Contrary to most expectations, and in spite of extremely harsh statements during the campaign, according to exit polls, Trump managed to acquire 28-29% of the Latin American votes, more than Mitt Romney in 2012, or Bob Doll in 1996. He managed to get a lot of non-college-educated whites to go out and vote, while Romney failed to attract voters from this category in 2012. Also, despite his billionaire status, a significant number of those with annual incomes below 50.000\$ decided to give him their votes.

Donald Trump was sort of a “black swan” – both for the Republicans and his country’s political system. He did not play by the rules and he tried to, in any way possible, “shake up politics as usual” (Ramakrishan 2016). It seems no other candidate in the past faced that many problems and such strong resistance. He barely had any support from his party during the campaign. Some of the most renowned Republicans, such as John McCain, Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney and Lindsey Graham, publicly declared they would not support Trump. Some went even further, like Colin Powell announcing he would vote for Hillary Clinton. Trump himself made little effort to help his campaign. His stances were often on the verge of discrimination and demagoguery, sometimes even crossing that line. He narrowed down his potential electorate by directing harsh and offensive statements toward women and minorities. He was often

5 Since the 1960 presidential election until today, only two candidates managed to win in spite of raising less money – Kennedy in 1960 (he raised 9.8 million dollars, while Nixon raised 10.1 million), and Carter in 1976 (33.4 million, and Ford raised 35.7 million).

compared to George Wallace and Pat Buchanan regarding the amount of “populist bigotry and xenophobia” (Jacobson 2016: 234). His politics could be defined as “5A”: anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican, anti-Muslim, anti-Obama and anti-globalization (Jacobson 2016).

Truth be told, it was not just Trump causing problems for the Grand Old Party – Republicans have lost four out of the last six presidential elections from 1992 to 2012, and in five of those they had fewer popular votes than the Democrats. After Romney’s defeat in 2012, they sought to, using the Growth & Opportunity Project (Barbour et al 2012) which was an autopsy of some sort, gain a realistic perspective of the current situation, locate the causes of their loss and design recommendations for more successful future actions. One of their main conclusions was that “America looks different”, more precisely, that “The nation’s demographic changes add to the urgency of recognizing how precarious our position has become (...) America is changing demographically, and unless Republicans are able to grow our appeal the way GOP governors have done, the changes tilt the playing field even more in the Democratic direction” (Barbour et al. 2012: 7).

The demographic issue has been properly identified, but not much has been done to address it. It is now a major problem, but not a new one. Ever since the 1970s, United States have had constant, unchanged demographic tendencies, and the lines of political division that we see today were created in that exact time period. Since 1964, when the ultra-conservative Barry Goldwater ran as the Republican presidential candidate, and 1963 when Kennedy presented his Civil Rights Bill (came into force as the Civil Rights Act in 1964), minorities have been supporting and voting for the Democrats much more than the Republicans. The majority of currently present social divisions were created back in the 1970s, and according to them, minorities, women, college-educated, urban population, less religious, and young people tend to vote Democrat, while white males, non-college-educated, rural, more religious, and older people vote Republican. Considering the fact that the minorities’ share in the total U.S. population is growing, and that there are more and more college-educated, urban and young people, it is obvious which side is benefitting from such demographic tendencies.

If the electoral system is still able to “protect” Republicans in Congress and Senate elections, this is no longer true for the presidential ones – as we have seen in the past two decades. Authors believe demographics and demographic tendencies to be one of the main problems Trump

had to go against, and that the answer to how he won the election lies in the answer to how he managed to beat demographics. In the following paper, we will first try to analyze key party division lines and demographic tendencies in the United States of America, proceeding with a research of estimates and expectations prior to the 2016 election, and finally aim to identify the strategy that helped Donald Trump triumph over the existing (for the Republicans – unfavorable) demographic tendencies.

Elections and Social Divisions in the U.S.

Social and political divisions are a component of every political community. They are inseparable from American history and their present. Over time, division lines have changed, and none of the administrations – neither Lincoln’s, nor Wilson’s, Roosevelt’s, Kennedy’s or Obama’s, have remained immune to political or social polarization. Issues like slavery abolition, abandoning the Monroe Doctrine, entering World War Two or racial segregation did not only cause divisions within parties, but within the society as a whole. These divisions are still around today. In fact, the American electorate “has over the past several decades grown increasingly divided along party lines, by political attitudes, social values, basic demographics and even beliefs about reality” (Jacobson 2016: 226). Sometimes, it seems the differences are so big that there is no consensus around a shared founding story and shared values (Woodard 2011). Some authors even point at four (Fisher 1989), nine (Garreau 1981) or even eleven (Woodard 2011) different and nations quite divided in North America.

Although U.S. political and party divisions have always followed social ones, it seems the correlation between the two has never been higher. Parties⁶ have begun to, more and more, articulate social divisions and build their ideological stances along their lines. As time passed, the ideological gap was getting deeper and wider in content. For example, in the past few years, the gap among voters with political preferences has increased significantly, and research data shows that “99 percent of politically engaged Republicans are more conservative than the median Democrat, while 98 percent of engaged Democrats are more liberal than the median Republican. That’s up from 88 and 84 percent, respectively, in 2004” (Cohn, 2014). The gap is particularly obvious among

6 By „parties“ we mean two major American parties – the Republican and the Democratic Party.

party elites, but “...ordinary Americans have also become increasingly polarized by party, and the more active they are politically, the more their divisions echo those of elected leaders” (Jacobson 2016: 228). This has especially been clear since the 1970s – that is, since the last major ideological shift in America’s political life occurred – when two main parties gained ideological outlines within which they have, for the most part, remained until today.

The degree of these division is best exemplified by the fact that Republicans and Democrats today disagree even about whether the country is headed in the right direction or not (Sides, Tesler and Vavreck 2016). The discontent with the rival parties is becoming bigger, often even turning into hatred. What is especially alarming is that party differences are spilling over into everyday life. Research has shown that partisans are worried their children might marry an opposing party supporter, and they are prepared to discriminate the other side quite a lot (Sides, Tesler and Vavreck 2016). Another notable indicator of party divisions is the ever growing coherence of each group of voters. The number of voters prepared to vote against their party’s candidate is lower than 10%, which is less than in previous periods of time. Their ideological leanings and party identities “have become more consistent internally and more divergent from those of rival partisans” (Jacobson 2016: 228).

Electoral Demographics in the United States

We have previously stated that the party divisions established in the 1970s are still present today. Alongside said divisions, electoral demographics is starting to gin new outlines. Minorities have, to a great extent, started voting for Democrats, as have women and urban population. Likewise, the demographic structure of the United States themselves has begun changing drastically. In the nineteen seventies, there were large waves of Latino and Asian immigrants, and trends of rural population moving to urban and suburban areas – also, ever since then, less people have been identifying as religious, and there have been more college-educated citizens (Taxeira, 2008).

These changes in the demographic structure have greatly influenced the electoral process. In the following section, we will try to demonstrate the shifts in American demographics between the 1960s and today, as well as point out key demographic tendencies.

Race and ethnicity

Table 1 – Voting structure by race in 1960, 1968, 1988 and 2012 presidential elections

| Election year/ Candidates | 1960 | | 1968 | | 1988 | | 2012 | |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| | Kennedy | Nixon | Humphrey | Nixon | Dukakis | Bush | Obama | Romney |
| Whites | 49% | 51% | 38% | 47% | 41% | 59% | 43% | 57% |
| Non-whites | 68% | 32% | 85% | 12% | 82% | 18% | 82% | 18% |

Source: Gallup, *Election Polls – Presidential Vote by Group*, Gallup.com, available on: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139880/election-polls-presidential-vote-groups.aspx>

Table 2 – Race and ethnicity of the US electorate

| Race/ethnicity | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2016 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Non-Hispanic White | 85,4% | 79,6% | 69,1% | 61% |
| Black | 10,5% | 11,7% | 12,3% | 12% |
| Hispanic | 3,2% | 6,4% | 12,5% | 18% |
| Asian | 0,5% | 1,5% | 3,8% | 6% |

Source: Census.gov, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.pdf>

Minorities voting for Democrats, and whites voting Republican, is a trend that began in the 1960s and as persisted to this very day. The only exception within the white population occurred when Bill Clinton received 46%, and Bob Dole 45% of this group's votes (Gallup 2012). A continuing decline in white population's total share in the electorate represents a problem for Republicans. In 50 years, their percentage in U.S population has dropped by over 25%, and predictions say that by 2040 there will no longer be a majority group in America.

Education

Table 3 – Voting structure by education on presidential elections 1960, 1968, 1988 and 2012

| Election year/ Can- didates | 1960 | | 1968 | | 1988 | | 2012 | |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| | Kennedy | Nixon | Humphrey | Nixon | Dukakis | Bush | Obama | Romney |
| College | 39% | 61% | 37% | 54% | 42% | 58% | 53% | 47% |
| High School | 52% | 48% | 42% | 43% | 46% | 54% | 54% | 45% |
| Grade school | 55% | 45% | 52% | 33% | 55% | 45% | 48% | 52% |
| Post grad | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 62% | 38% |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| College only stuoonly | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 46% | 54% |
| Some college | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 58% | 42% |
| HS or less | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 53% | 47% |

Source: Gallup, *Election Polls – Presidential Vote by Group*, Gallup.com, available on: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139880/election-polls-presidential-vote-groups.aspx>

There are constant changes in regards to education. Non-college-educated people used to predominantly vote for Democrats, but have been supporting Republicans more and more in the last few years. High school-educated or less voted for Trump with a margin higher than 5%. On the other side, highly educated people have recently been voting more for Democrats.

Gender structure

Table 4 – Voting structure by gender on presidential elections
 1960, 1968, 1988 and 2012

| Election year/ Candidates | 1960 | | 1968 | | 1992 | | 2012 | |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| | Kennedy | Nixon | Humphrey | Nixon | Clinton | Bush | Obama | Romney |
| Men | 52% | 48% | 41% | 43% | 44% | 56% | 47% | 53% |
| Women | 49% | 51% | 45% | 43% | 46% | 38% | 57% | 43% |

Source: Gallup, *Election Polls – Presidential Vote by Group*, Gallup.com, available on: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139880/election-polls-presidential-vote-groups.aspx>

Since the before-mentioned 1964 and the Republican turn, women have been supporting Democrats more than they used to. The 1980s were an exception – there was a so-called “mini swing” among women, but they have been voting Democrat from 1992 to today.

Religion

Table 5 – Voting structure by religion on presidential elections
 1960, 1968, 1988 and 2012

| Election year/ Candidates | 1960 | | 1968 | | 1988 | | 2012 | |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| | Kennedy | Nixon | Humphrey | Nixon | Dukakis | Bush | Obama | Romney |
| Protestants | 38% | 62% | 35% | 49% | 42% | 58% | 45% | 55% |
| Catholics | 78% | 22% | 59% | 33% | 51% | 49% | 56% | 44% |

Source: Gallup, *Election Polls – Presidential Vote by Group*, Gallup.com, available on: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139880/election-polls-presidential-vote-groups.aspx>

Table 6 – Religious and Non-religious population in US
in 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

| Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|--------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Religious population | 97% | 92,5% | 86,8% | 82,6% |
| Non-religious population | 3% | 7,5% | 13,2% | 17,4% |

Source: *The Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program / Programa Latinoamericano de Estudios Sociorreligiosos (PROLADES)*, available on: <http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/nam/usa/usa-rel2.htm>

It is an unwritten rule that the more religious population votes for Republican candidates. Another rule, though broken numerous times over the years, says that Protestants support Republicans, while Catholics, other religious groups, atheists, and agnostics support Democrats. Ever since 1952, there was only one case of Protestants voting mostly for Democrats, and this was in (many times mentioned) 1964. On the other hand, Catholics have supported Republicans several times since 1960: in 1972, 1980, 1984, and 2016. It is interesting that Republicans won in every one of these instances when they had the Catholics' support. Their problem in the future may be the continuous trend of a decline in religion practicing population.

Age structure

Table 7 – Voting structure by age on presidential elections 1960, 1968, 1988 and 2012

| Election year/ Candidates | 1960 | | 1968 | | 1992 | | 2012 | |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| | Kennedy | Nixon | Humphrey | Nixon | Clinton | Bush | Obama | Romney |
| Under 30 | 54% | 45% | 47% | 38% | 40% | 37% | 62% | 38% |
| 30 to 49 | 54% | 46% | 44% | 41% | 42% | 37% | 53% | 47% |
| 50 and older | 46% | 54% | 41% | 47% | 46% | 39% | 50% | 50% |

Source: *Gallup, Election Polls – Presidential Vote by Group*, Gallup.com, available on: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139880/election-polls-presidential-vote-groups.aspx>

Young people usually vote for Democratic candidates. Naturally, this rule has had its exceptions, such as Eisenhower beating Stevenson in 1956, Nixon winning against McGovern in 1972, and Reagan's victories over Carter and Mondale in 1980 and 1988 respectively. However, the margin was never as high as it was this year. In 2008, it was 22%, 24% in 2012, and 18% in 2016. Additionally, the last three election cycles saw an increase in older population's support for Republicans.

Urban/rural population

Table 8 – Urban, suburban and rural population of the US in 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

| Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Urban population | 73,7% | 75,3% | 79,1% | 82,3% |
| Rural population | 26,3% | 24,7% | 20,9% | 17,7% |

Source: *Trading Economics*, available on: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/rural-population-percent-of-total-population-wb-data.html>

American rural population has been in a constant decline from the beginning of the 20th century up until today. It is quite likely that this trend will go on, and that more and more people will be moving to urban areas. A decreasing rural America is another problem for the Republican Party, seeing as they mostly lose in urban areas with an average margin of about 10%.

Donald Trump and Demographic Conditions

All indicators regarding current demographics, first of all those decennial tendencies that remain unabated, show that Republicans are not in an enviable position. Despite his victory, Donald Trump failed to bring in more non-white voters, women, those with higher education, urban population, or young people, than John McCain or Mitt Romney managed to. Republican candidates in general have ended up with less popular votes in the last six out of seven election cycles (1992-2016). Trump's victory, as well as their successful Congress and Senate elections, will merely allow the Republicans to catch their breath. Of course, it is far from easy or simple to, all of a sudden, completely change their strategy, seeing as it was based on "...party's emphasis on concern for 'the other' over the past 50 years – whether that 'other' is black, immigrant, gay, Muslim, feminist and so on" (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). However, if they fail to change their strategy, and the demographic tendencies remain the same, we can quite certainly expect an era of Democratic rule.

We can easily conclude that Trump did not have a favorable demographic basis in the 2016 election. Did he do anything to make it

better? It does not seem so. Although he stated multiple times during the campaign that he would be the kind of president that would make minorities proud, his rather harsh stances on illegal migration distanced him from a large segment of the Hispanic community. Deporting a million people, building a wall on the Mexican border, and calling Mexicans “rapists and criminals” did not sound appealing to Hispanics. His efforts to prove Obama was not a “natural born US citizen”, or that he was the “founder of ISIS”, did not bode well with African American citizens. Most of them stood up for Obama and strove to protect him. If we add that to the fact that, in previous four elections, African Americans – between 93 and 99 percent of them – voted Democrat (Gallup 2012), Trump could not have hoped for their larger support. Additionally, he had a, to say the least, strange attitude towards women, who make 51.6% of the electorate today. According to the Telegraph, Trump has made offensive comments directed at women over 40 times in his life so far (Cohen 2016). He did not hesitate to do so during the campaign, with sexist comments addressed to Carly Fiorina, Megyn Kelly, and Hillary Clinton, to name a few that stood out. Regarding urban population, it appears he did not try hard enough to win their votes, and most of his messages were predominantly aimed at rural areas and the American heartland.

All of the above indicated Trump would not improve upon the Republicans’ “demographic bloodstream”, and that he would, in fact, do much worse than McCain and Romney. Different scenarios predicted Trump would need between 35% and 52% of the Hispanic votes (Damore and Barreto 2015), while research showed a maximum support of 19% (Mascano 2016). Votes within this community are even more relevant if we have in mind that Hispanic Americans mostly inhabit states that traditionally decide the winner. Hispanic Americans make up 24% of Florida’s population, 48% of New Mexico, 29% of Nevada, 21% of Colorado etc.

Trump’s support among African Americans was estimated to be between 0.5% and 6%, and between 14% and 15% among Asian Americans. Having in mind that African Americans make up most of North Carolina’s population, 20% of Virginia, 12% of Ohio, and 11% of Pennsylvania, and that all of these are swing states, it is clear just how important these votes are. Research also showed a considerable advantage that Hillary Clinton had among women. Estimates went so far that some authors even stated “Donald Trump is facing an apocalyptic elec-

tion scenario, thanks to women voters” (Bump 2016), and that he would have less than 30% of all female votes. Just for reference, McCain and Romney, in 2008 and 2012, got 43% of women’s total votes. Similar to all previous demographic categories, Trump failed to improve Republican support in urban areas and among college-educated citizens.

After everything stated above, the question arises: how did Donald Trump, despite all unfavorable circumstances, manage to surpass the demographic problem and win the 2016 presidential election?

How Did Trump Deal with Unfavorable Demographics?

“What I got wrong about the election” (Plouffe 2016) – this is the question David Plouffe, Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign manager, asked himself after the results came in. The same question puzzles numerous political analysts, historians, and citizens around the world. Could the polls have been that wrong? Who is responsible for Hillary Clinton’s defeat? Who voted for Trump? How did he win despite losing Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada? How did he conquer “unbeatable” demographics?

All of these questions are quite justified, they have no obvious answers and demand detailed analyses. The forecasts were not only wrong because of Donald Trump’s silent voters. As much as Democrats tried to make their point, Hillary Clinton did not lose only due to “cyber espionage”, nor did Trump win simply because more white citizens came out to vote. As with other questions, explaining just how Trump managed to surpass the demographic problem and win the election is a complex endeavor. Still, authors of this paper believe that Trump’s success could be explained through a number of different aspects: a) On election day, Trump gained the support of “silent voters” who would not state their preferences prior to that, and this trend was especially present among minorities and women; b) he achieved unprecedented results among rural population, religious, and non-college-educated citizens; c) he took advantage of the American electoral system reducing demographic effects; d) negative demographic effects were reduced by Hillary Clinton herself; and e) most importantly, he managed to “work past” demographics by winning traditionally Democratic states with majority white populations.

Exit polls results show that Trump had much better results with minorities and women than was prognosed before the election.

Table 9: Hispano Americans, Afro Americans, Asian Americans and Woman on US Presidential Election 2016

| Donald Trump polls and exit polls 2016 | Hispano Americans | Afro Americans | Asian Americans | Woman |
|--|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|
| Preelection polls | 19-23% | 0,5 - 6% | 14-15% | 32-34% |
| Exit polls | 28-29% | 8% | 27-29% | 41-42% |

Sources: CNN Politics: available at <http://edition.cnn.com/election/results/exit-polls/>; The New York Times available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html>

Trump was more successful among Hispanic Americans than Bob Dole who, in 1996, had 21% of their votes, or Mitt Romney with 27% in 2012. At first, such results do seem surprising, especially having in mind Trump's stances on immigration – regarding Mexicans in particular, who make up about 63% of all Hispanics in U.S.A. The reasons behind this outcome are numerous. First of all, the Hispanic American community is not a monolithic one – within it are different interests, preferences, and expectations. Just like other communities, they have felt the consequences of both the economic and the political crises in the United States. Perhaps the best explanation for Trump's success are the following factors: a) Hispanics did not trust Hillary, with 61% of the electorate stating she was not “honest and trustworthy” (CNN 2016); b) they had a sort of disdain and resentment towards the party establishment, and perceived Hillary as key representative of the establishment elite; c) not all of Trump's ideas were distant to them – the Hispanic community also deals with immigration issues, specifically regarding jobs; d) most of them did not identify with the “Mexican criminal portrait” that Trump pointed out on various occasions (Navarrette 2016). Hispanics did, however, help Hillary win in New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada, but that was not enough for a total victory, seeing as Trump had won in Florida and Arizona where Hispanics make up 24% and 31% of the entire population, respectively. A significant imbalance between election results and almost all polls indicates that a lot of Trump's silent voters came from this specific group. He did not manage to achieve a “mini swing” like Bush Jr. in 2004⁷, but he did win a lot more Latin

7 George W. Bush won 41% of Hispanic American votes in 2004 – the most any Republican has ever won. This migration of Hispanic votes is referred to as the ‘mini swing’ because it only lasted one election cycle. In the following election, a significantly smaller percentage of this community voted for Republicans.

American votes than was predicted. It should also be noted that the voter turnout was quite lower within this population than, for example, African Americans or white citizens.

African Americans voting for Democrats in numbers as high as over 90% is a trend that continued on in 2016. Truth be told, Trump did end up with much better results than was originally expected, but voter turnout was 58% - almost nine percent lower than in 2012. A lower turnout was not favorable for Clinton who failed to follow in Obama's footsteps and get more African Americans to go out and vote. She did not do well with Asian Americans either - they gave her 65% of their votes, which is 9% less than with Obama in 2012.

Elizabeth Warren, Democratic senator from Massachusetts, predicted "nasty women" would be the end of Trump in terms of ending his political career. She was wrong. It is well known that women have, with the exception of Ronald Reagan's terms, generally always voted Democrat. Donald Trump collected 41% of total women votes (CNN 2016), only 2% less than McCain and Romney and 2% more than Bob Dole (Gallup 2012). Exit polls have shown that he even got more white women votes than Hillary Clinton (CNN 2016). Also, it appears estimates and predictions were far from precise, and that Trump had silent voters within this group as well, those that did not state their preferences prior to Election Day.

Even though the trend of a declining rural population in the United States continues on, Trump had some unprecedented results - he collected 62% of this category's total vote, which is 3% more than Romney and 9% more than McCain (Kurtzleben 2016). Regarding urban and suburban population, he maintained the Republican constant of 35% and 50% respectively. The example of the urban/suburban/rural divisions shows us just how successful Trump's campaign really was. He accomplished historical results within rural population, which was key target group during most campaign speeches. Rural residents in America identified most with his campaign slogan "Make America Great Again", and Trump precisely targeted them during presidential debates by labeling them as "the biggest losers to democratic rule". As was the case with Brexit, the periphery came out as the ultimate winner.

Over time, there has been a gradual decline in American residents who practice religion. In early 1960s, atheists, agnostics, and people that do not practice any form of religion amounted to less than 2% of the total population, while today, that number has gone up to about 20%. During this time period, the number of Christians in America has de-

creased from 93% to 77% - this being mostly Protestants, seeing as the number of Catholics has pretty much remained the same. Having in mind that most Republican voters are predominantly religious Protestants, it is easy to tell that their electorate has drastically decreased in this way as well. However, Trump managed to gather a large amount of Protestant and Catholic votes. As many as 56% American Protestants cast their votes for Trump, which is significantly more than Romney got in 2012, McCain in 2008, Bush Jr. in 2000, Dole in 1996, or Bush Sr. in 1992. Only Bush Jr. was more successful in this regard in 2004 (Gallup 2012; CNN 2016). It should be noted that Trump won 81% of white born-again or evangelical Christians (Huang et al. 2016). This was also the first time after Reagan that a Republican has won more Catholic votes than the Democratic candidate – 50% compared to Hillary Clinton’s 46%. Most of the Christians that voted for Trump regularly attend religious ceremonies. Seeing as they overlooked his three marriages and rare religious service attendance, they must have perceived him as the only acceptable option in 2016 election.

Voters with only a high school education or less, and those with some college education, mostly voted for Trump, while Hillary gained the support of college graduate and postgraduate voters (CNN 2016). Trump achieved better results than Romney or McCain in all four categories, and he was more successful with high school educated voters than Bush Junior. He did not reverse demographic trends – college-educated people still vote for Democrats as they did in 2008 and 2012 – but he did significantly decrease the margin within this group, and he increased the level of support for Republicans among less educated citizens. Due to his “bringing business back into the U.S.” policy, creating new jobs, repealing environmental measures that were inhibiting business, a kind of a reindustrialization, plans to renew the infrastructure, and, most importantly, bringing back the “American Dream” – blue collar workers gave him his undivided support. The margin between blue collar white workers was almost 40%. Many believe that Trump’s victory was made possible by the very coalition between blue collar workers (mostly high school-educated or less) and college-educated citizens, which is quite a difficult alliance to make.

Trump’s campaign team understood the American electoral system very well, with all of its advantages and disadvantages. Since 2005, there have been more citizens identifying as Democrats than as Republicans. Today, 29% of the voters lean towards the Democratic Party, while 26% feel closer to the Republicans. Thanks to their larger share in the elector-

ate, along with other factors, Democrats have been winning more popular votes in the last six out of seven presidential elections from 1992 to 2016. However, despite the popular vote statistics, they won “only” four election cycles in that period. Why is that? When the American political and electoral system was originally established, the idea was to not allow for a few strong states to dominate the rest. Republicans greatly benefit from such a system in the last decades, and we can easily say that they have enough space to catch their breath every once in a while as they go up against unfavorable demographic trends.

The ever growing ethnic homogeneity in congressional districts, and the fact that “heartland” areas are still primarily rural and settled with white population, make it easier for Republicans to assure victories in states “from the Appalachian ridges to the Rocky Mountains” (Barone 2016). Having in mind that most states are located right in this area, Democrats are “left” with just the coasts. Surely, a large percentage of Americans do live on the coast – but that is not where most states are. We will use the example of California and New York to demonstrate how the electoral system currently works in favor of the Republican Party. California is the first, and New York the fourth most populated state, and both have continuously been voting for Democrats in the past few decades. Combined, they have about 60 million citizens which makes up 20% of the entire U.S. population. On the other hand, together these two have only 84 electoral votes, which amounts to 15.6% of the Electoral College. If we add this to the fact that Hillary Clinton won California with a 30.1% margin and 4 million more votes than Donald Trump, and that she won New York with a 16.5% margin and something under 2 million more votes, it is clear that Democrats do not exactly benefit from a system that wastes votes in this manner. Just like Bush Junior in 2000, Trump made sure to make the most of all the benefits this system carries, and win the presidential election.

“Why, oh why, did it have to be Hillary Clinton” (Frank 2016). This question was publicly raised by Thomas Frank, American political analysts and a major critic of the Republican Party. This, however, was a question that most Democrats asked as well, both before and after the election. Whether it is true or not, most believed her candidacy to be a result of a deal and a show of gratitude from President Obama who received a lot of support from her husband while he was not doing so well during the 2012 campaign. There is not enough space in this paper to analyze, or even mention, every single scandal Hillary’s team had to

cover up. We will only deal with affairs concerning her private email server, unreported money that the Clinton Foundation received while Hillary was State Secretary, and mocking women who were victims of abuse. While some criticized her politics, other believed her character to be a bigger issue than ideology (Jacobson 2016: 234). Mentioned affairs were one of the major causes of her poor results in the 2016 election, but they are definitely not the only one. Hillary Clinton failed to repeat Barack Obama's results in all categories – whether we look at women, minorities, or people under 40 years old. We previously pointed out that 61% of the electorate did not see her as trustworthy – she simply was not a candidate whom people could have faith in. In 2008 and 2012, Americans voted for Obama because they wanted a change. They wanted a change this year as well, but Hillary Clinton had nothing to offer. While America was changing, Hillary was a person of continuity – and continuity of the party establishment, corporative America and an elite that awoke anger and rage among citizens. It was this very sentiment that brought forth a candidate like Donald Trump.

The last, and probably the crucial piece of the puzzle that was conquering demographics, was Trump's strategy. Often during the campaign, both he and his team were highly underestimated. Surely, Trump had an unusual political style, many outbursts, and frequently displayed ungentlemanly (to say the least) manners, patience of a five-year-old, and the temperament of a teenager. Many failed to understand that he was coming from the world of business where he had to solve problems using his negotiating skills, persuasion and money. Trump's main issue was that, in the political process, he was met by actors trying to spoil his negotiations; he did not have enough time for persuading, and he had significantly smaller amounts of money than the other side.

We already listed projections made by political analysts regarding results Trump would have to achieve within various groups, primarily Hispanic Americans, in order to win the election. He was far from winning 35-52% of Hispanic votes, and he lost Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico – states he needed, according to all analyses, in order to attain the 270 electoral votes. His strategy was flawed, but it brought forth the biggest surprise in contemporary American presidential election history. How did he do it? Trump did not have any illusions that he would accomplish a “mini swing” with Hispanic Americans like George W. Bush did in 2004. He also did not believe he would have anything special to offer to African Americans who have been voting Democrat (over 90%

of them) since 2000, nor to Asian Americans, seeing as half of them live in California or New York. Naturally, he wanted to score well among all racial and ethnic groups, but his strategy was not primarily targeted at them. He knew very well he could not beat negative demographic conditions by competing a Democrat. Rather than that, he decided to apply the only strategy possible – going around the demographic statistics, and he did that in two ways: first of all, by focusing on disappointed voters, predominantly whites that McCain and Romney failed to attract in 2008 and 2012, and second, by targeting white Democrats, precisely blue collar voters and union members from the rust belt states.

Trump fulfilled his intentions. According to exit polls, he acquired a total of 58% of all votes within white population, the same percentage as Mitt Romney in 2012, but this year, the margin between top two candidates was 7% bigger because Hillary won a mere 37% of votes in this category (Huang et al. 2016). He managed to find the “missing white voters” (Trende 2016), disappointed and angry with the establishment and the elite, voters who were ambivalent in the past regarding Democrats or Republicans they did not prefer winning.

Like most political parties, Republicans have various fractions: moderate conservatives (25-30%), somewhat conservative (35-40%), evangelist (20%), and very conservative secular voters (5-10%) (Olsen and Scala 2016). Despite all his troubles during the campaign⁸, Trump managed to build a solid coalition between these fractions, offering each of them a reason to support him, even though they are on different points of the ideological scale. For example, he won over evangelicals by having firm stances on abortion, gay marriage and opposing the NAFTA agreement, while he sided with moderates by proposing lower taxes policies, a balanced budget and deregulation. Also, regardless of expectations, there were no major republican migrations to the opposing Democratic side. A mere 8% of Republicans that voted decided to give their support to Hillary Clinton – which is the same percentage of Democrats that voted for Trump (CNN 2016).

Other than successfully building a republican coalition, Trump also acquired a significant amount of support from the independents. Almost one third of all voters in the 2016 presidential election were independents, and exit polls show that Trump won in this category with a

⁸ A large percentage of the Republican establishment decided not to support Trump – some abandoned him during the campaign, and some publicly stated they would vote for Hillary Clinton.

6-8% margin (CNN 2016; Huang et al. 2016). Considering the decreasing trend of partisan commitment, and the earlier mentioned “negative” demographics, this very category – the independents – will be of great, if not crucial, importance for the Republican Party in the future.

The election outcome was ultimately decided by states in the north: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan. They gave Trump 46 electoral votes out of the total 306 that he won. They are, at the same time, the biggest surprise of this election, and probably the most brilliant part of his campaign. Trump’s promises to tear down the “blue Democratic wall”, much like political analyst warning that Hillary Clinton “focused her time and money primarily on swing and Republican-leaning states” (Brownstein, 2016), were not taken seriously. It seems, however, that Donald Trump’s campaign team understood that a Republican candidate has “potential to attract parts of the Democratic coalition, including manual laborers and union members in the all-important Rust belt states” (Azari and Hetherington 2016: 106) such as Pennsylvania and Michigan, that have not voted Republican since the 1988 presidential election, or Wisconsin, that has not been “red” since 1984.

Campaigning in these three states may have been the biggest mistake Hillary and her campaign team made in the 2016 election. They were so sure of winning that Hillary did not visit Wisconsin once during the campaign. Trump, on the other hand, spent four days there, working with Republican Governor Scott Walker, and ended up winning in Wisconsin. Hillary did not go to Michigan until the last Friday before Election Day, while Trump dedicated a lot of his time and resources to this state. For example, Mike Pence spent an entire day visiting Macomb County, the third biggest county in Michigan, famous for its “Reagan Democrats”. In the end, Trump won not only in this county, but Michigan as a whole by a little over 20.000 votes (for reference, about 5 million people voted in Michigan). There is a famous saying that “The devil is in the details”. It seems that Hillary Clinton is not a person of detail, contrary to the billionaire from New York. This is another thing that should be added to the “Why Hillary Clinton lost the already won 2016 election” list.

Conclusion

Election results were followed by a series of violent and non-violent protests and accusations of Russian hackers influencing the final outcome. Electors were pressured to not vote for Trump and give the Electoral College its original purpose – one that Alexander Hamilton initially had in mind – which is now being interpreted as preventing “incompetent and unqualified people from leading the White House”, or responding to “Russia’s influence in the election”. Still, the chances of electors changing the election outcome and the will of U.S. citizens are quite low, and would probably lead to some form of a civil war. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which Donald Trump would not, come January 20th 2017, become the 45th President of the United States.

Even though Donald Trump won in the 2016 presidential election, demographic trends in America have not changed drastically, and neither has vote structure within demographic groups. There are more and more minorities and those living in urban areas, while the number of religious people is decreasing. Minorities, urban population, less religious people, college-educated, women and young people still predominantly vote for Democrats, while Republicans can count on the support of white voters, rural population, highly religious, male and older people. It does not take a lot of wisdom to conclude that “as the proportions of racial and ethnic minorities in population and in electorate grow, the competitive balance between an increasingly diverse Democratic Party and an aging, mostly white Republican Party, will inevitably shift in favor of the former” (Bartels 2016: 41). Unless Republicans manage to change their voter structure, they are in for years of uncertainty, and eventually – quite certain defeat.

Donald Trump managed to “go around” unfavorable demographics and catch one of the last trains to Republican victory with the existing voter structure. His ally in this process was the electoral system – one that allows for a candidate with almost 3 million popular votes less to win the election. The strategy of taking down the “blue Democratic wall”, something not even Bush Jr. could do in 2000 or 2004, proved to be extraordinary, for it was that very “wall” coming down that won the election for Trump. Many saw his strategy as insane and impossible to achieve, but the results speak for themselves – and they say that Donald Trump became president by going around American demographics.

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