

Are Registered Voters Discouraged from Voting due to Unlikable Candidates or Campaign Issues?

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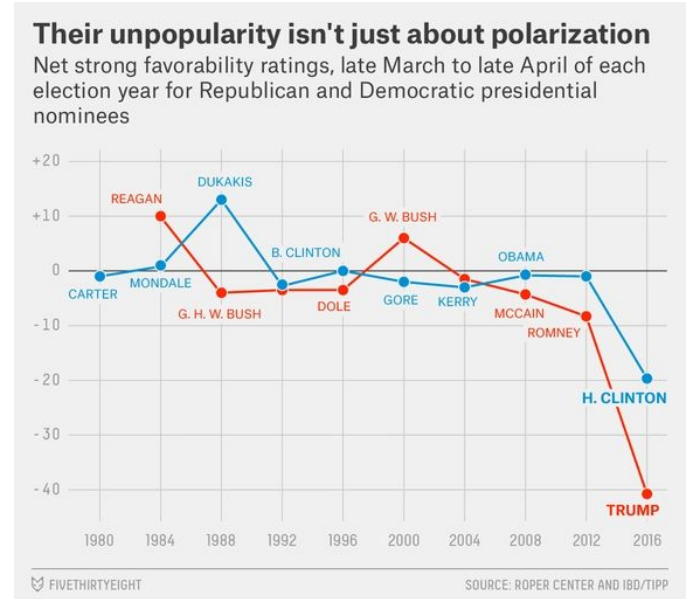


Background

The 2016 presidential election was a historical one, although not for all of the right reasons. The two major party candidates were the most disliked in US history and partisan voters' views toward the opposing party hadn't been as negative since 1992. Where does this leave the rest of America's voters?

➤ Research Question:

- Is there an increase in the proportion of registered voters who abstained from voting due to a dislike of either candidate or their campaign issues in U.S. presidential elections?
 - How does the increase in four swing states (Ohio, Florida, Nevada, and North Carolina) compare to the national average?
 - Which factors best explain this proportion?



Data Analysis/Methods

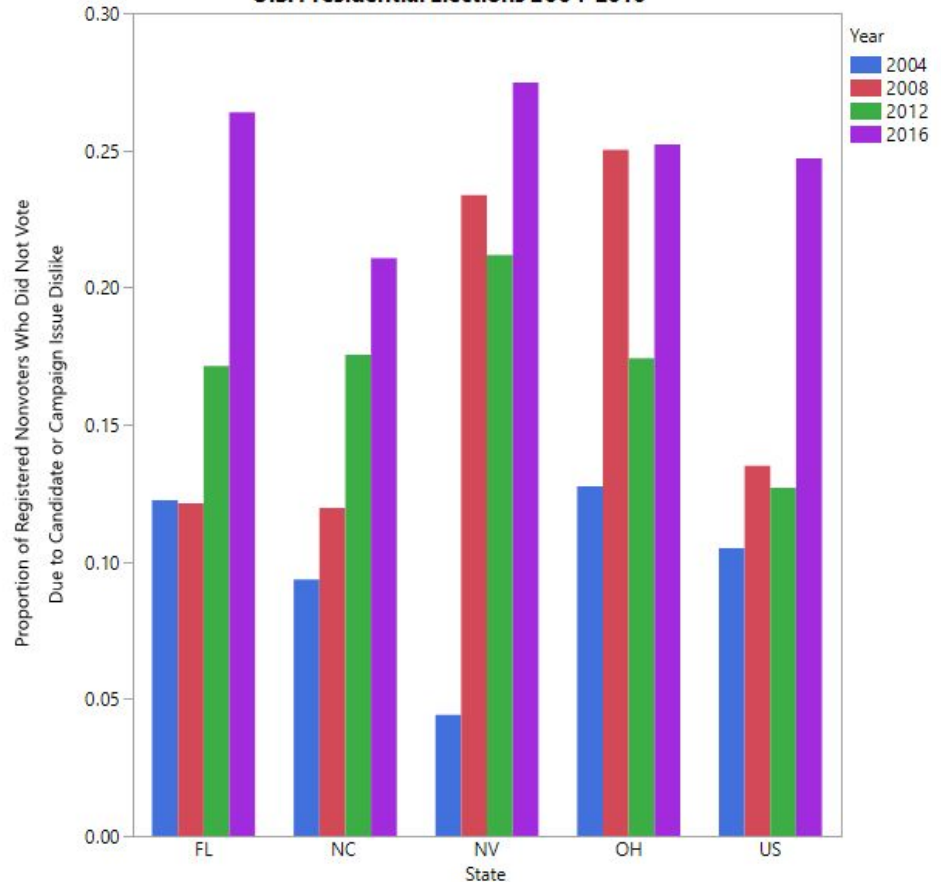
- Compared demographics from our sample data to Exit poll data for each election year to confirm it was extrapolatable to our population(after weighting our data via the Voter supplement variable).
- Selected 4 states on the basis of regional variation as well as 'competitiveness' in order to have swing states that were from diverse regional settings.
- Calculated Registered Voter Turnout as well as the percent of Registered individuals who abstained from voting due to dislike of candidate or campaign issues.
- Performed a logistic regression to look at the relationship between dislike of candidates and different demographic variables.
- Generated two main graphs: a clustered bar chart (made in JMP) comparing the proportion mentioned above for each year studied among the U.S. overall and the four selected states; also made a micromap (in R) showing the same information for every U.S. state (and D.C.) as well as a subset of this map with only five states.

Dislike of Candidates or Campaign Issues Among Registered Voters

Notes:

- General upward trend in dislike over the four years in these states and nationally.
- Stable low-teen dislike of candidates on the National level until 2016 when it doubled to 24.7%.

Candidate or Campaign Issue Dislike as Registered Nonvoting Motivation
U.S. Presidential Elections 2004-2016

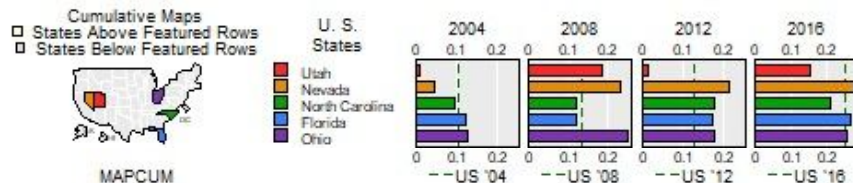


Interesting Finds

- Turnout amongst registered voters was highest at the national level in 2008
- Trends in Utah (2012 vs. 2016):
 - State with lowest dislike of major candidates in 2012
 - Mitt Romney was the first Mormon presidential candidate, Utah is 61.5% Mormon
 - Significantly higher dislike of major candidates in 2016
 - Donald Trump had lowest share of Republican vote since Barry Goldwater in 1964 (who lost to Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson)
- High proportion of dislike in Ohio for 2008 almost equivalent to 2016
- High proportion of dislike in Nevada since 2008 (consistently in the 20s).

Year	National	Florida	Ohio	North Carolina	Nevada
2004	89.10%	90.20%	89.00%	90.80%	87.50%
2008	90.00%	91.00%	90.20%	89.20%	89.60%
2012	87.40%	89.50%	89.40%	88.30%	89.50%
2016	87.90%	90.20%	89.00%	90.80%	87.40%
Registered Voter Turnout					

Candidate or Campaign Issue Dislike Among Registered Nonvoters
Selected U.S. States, Presidential Elections 2004-2016



Demographics breakdown

- Significant demographic variables:
AGE, SEX, and RACE
- All of which had negative coefficients
- An electorate which was younger and more male was more likely to abstain due to dislike candidates or their platforms

```
Call:
glm(formula = candidatedislike ~ AGE + RACE + SEX + EDCYC + VETSTAT +
     METRO, family = binomial, data = reg)
```

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Deviance Residuals:
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      Min       1Q   Median       3Q      Max
-0.2267 -0.2030 -0.1922 -0.1819  3.0079
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Coefficients:
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              Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept) -3.358e+00  6.903e-02 -48.644 < 2e-16 ***
AGE          -7.511e-03  6.259e-04 -12.000 < 2e-16 ***
RACE         -3.349e-04  8.738e-05  -3.833 0.000126 ***
SEX          -1.030e-01  2.177e-02  -4.732 2.22e-06 ***
EDCYC        -1.551e-04  2.323e-04  -0.667 0.504525
VETSTAT      -3.395e-02  3.641e-02  -0.932 0.351099
METRO         3.782e-03  9.792e-03   0.386 0.699337
```

```
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```

```
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
```

```
(Dispersion parameter for binomial family taken to be 1)
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```
Null deviance: 95885  on 519193  degrees of freedom
Residual deviance: 95682  on 519187  degrees of freedom
AIC: 95696
```

```
Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 7
```

Survey Limitations

➤ Survey (Data) Limitations

- Our research question is not as specific as we would like due to the nature of the data: the response option we studied is “dislike of candidates **or** campaign issues” (emphasis added). These may be two very different factors, but the data do not allow for them to be isolated.
- Possible influence of social desirability bias: some registered nonvoters may have reported that they voted when they did not, which could affect our proportion estimate.

➤ Study Limitations

- The small number of election years studied limits the scope of our analyses.
- Voter turnout was only calculated for registered voters (due to the ambiguity around how to best measure voter turnout), so we did not study the relationship between the prevalence of candidate or campaign issue dislike among registered voters and overall voter turnout.

Recommendations: Ranked-Choice Voting

- **What** is Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)?
 - A candidate needs a majority, **50% of the votes**
 - Voters choose their candidates by preference
 - If no one gets a majority then the last choice is disqualified and the votes are transferred to the voters second choice
- **How** would it help?
 - More people would be inclined to voting since voters would have more options for candidates and campaign issues
- **Where** is it being implemented?
 - 8 states have implemented RCV for some state and local level elections
 - 2020 was the first time RCV was used for a presidential race. In the future it would be beneficial to do this study again but focus on Maine before and after RCV was implemented.

City Council						
Rank up to 6 candidates. Mark no more than 1 oval in each column.	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Fourth choice	Fifth choice	Sixth choice
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Valarie Altman Orange Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
George Hovis Yellow Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Althea Sharp Purple Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mary Tawa Lime Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joe Li Tan Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phil Wilkie Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

https://www.fairvote.org/rcv_ballot_design