

# The Presidential Election

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# Introduction: Fundamentals of the 2016 Presidential Contests

2016 presidential results with a few states still counting (Table 1)

- Trump won electoral vote majority
  - Trump swept most of “battleground” states, albeit narrowly
  - Clinton wins if 103,000 more votes in MI, PA, and WI
- Clinton won popular vote by 2.6 million

States key constituencies for presidential elections

- Party nominees selected at national conventions, whose delegates chosen in states
- President chosen by Electoral College, electors allocated to states and chosen in states

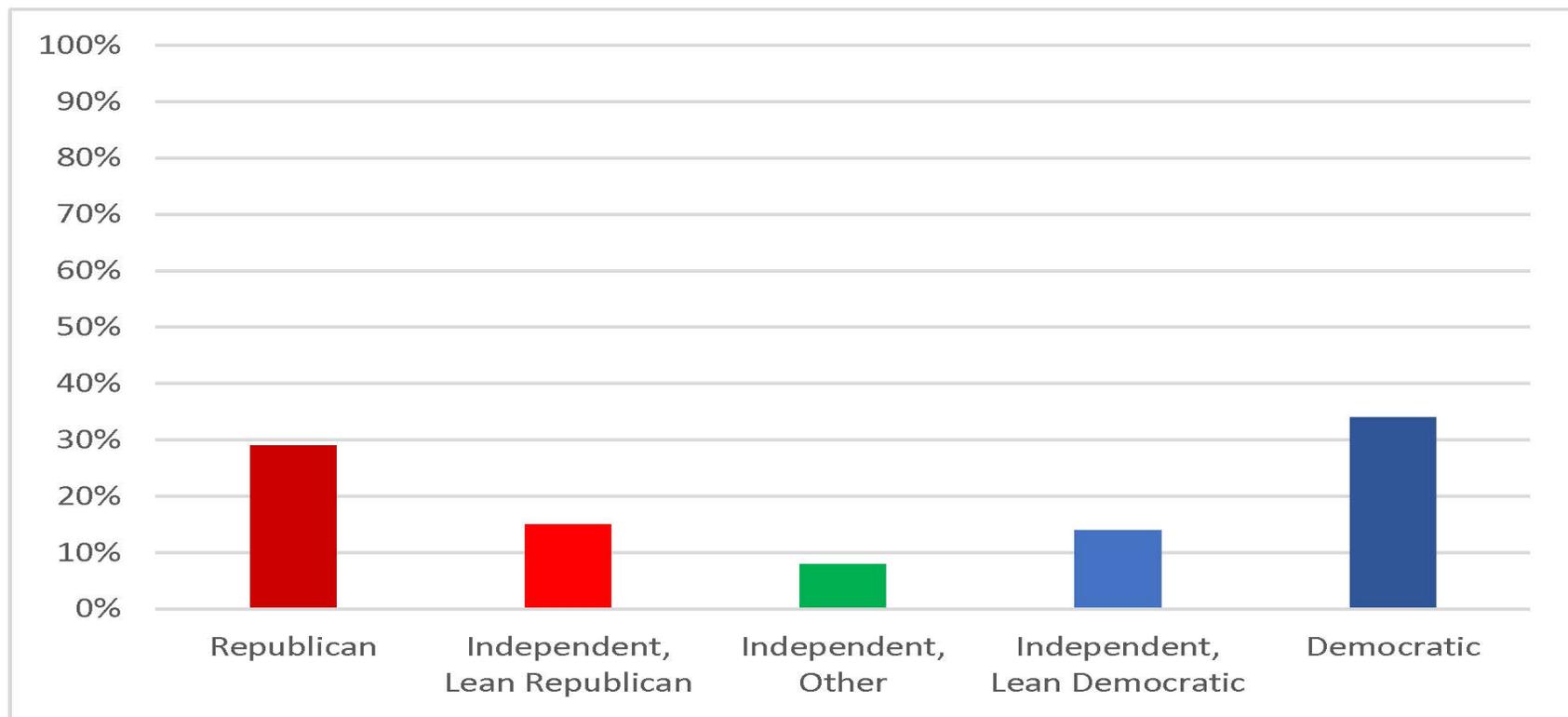
3 prominent features of national politics at start of 2016

1. 50-50 nation
2. Even division of partisans, who are polarized
  - Democrats slightly > Republicans (Figure 1)
  - Why partisanship matters: partisans vote party, polarize in evaluations, engage in “partisan motivated reasoning”
3. Widespread dissatisfaction (Figure 2) → anti-establishment “headwinds” favoring “**change**”
  - Previous satisfaction lows → rejection of incumbent party, except 2012
  - Fueled Sanders and Trump challenges to establishment
  - Put Clinton, epitome of establishment, in difficult position, with 2016 shaping up as GOP year

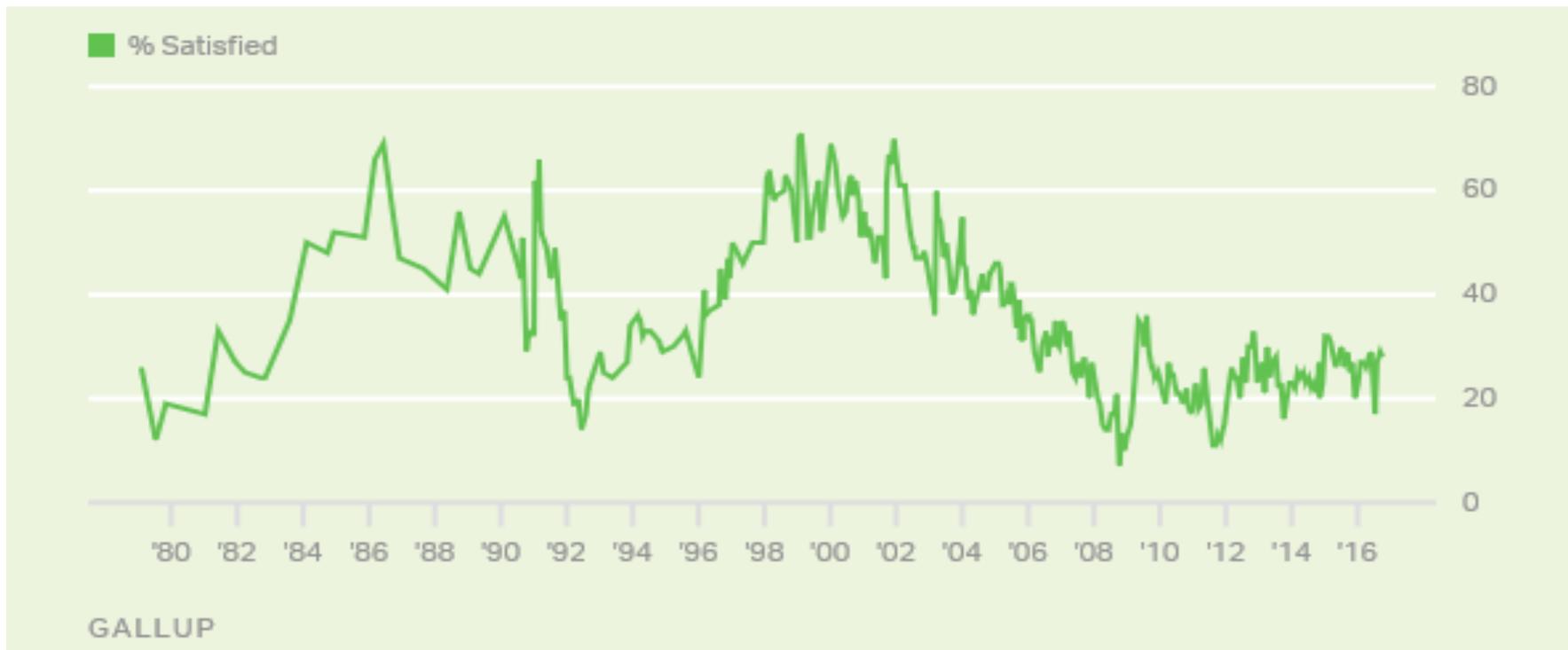
Table 1  
 Presidential Election Results (as of 12/5/16)

	<u>Trump</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Trump- Clinton</u>
Electoral Votes	306	232	0	538	74
Electoral %	56.9%	43.1%	0.0%	100.0%	13.8%
Popular Votes	62,759,366	65,383,628	7,458,058	135,601,052	-2,624,262
Popular %	46.3%	48.2%	5.5%	100.0%	-1.9%

**Figure 1**  
**Party Identifications of Americans, 2016**  
Source: Pew Center for the People and the Press, January to August surveys



**Figure 2**  
**Satisfaction with the Way Things Are Going in the U.S.**  
Source: Gallup Poll: 1989 thru Sept 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1669/general-mood-country.aspx>



### 3 Features of 2016 U.S. Presidential Nominations

#### 1. Conventions nominate, by **majority** vote of delegates

- Delegates elected in primaries/caucuses: selected by candidates and often pledged on 1<sup>st</sup> ballot
- Democratic super-delegates (15% of total) are free agents
- Convention decides rules of convention
- Delegates allocated by formula based on population and party strength (thru' past votes)

#### 2. State rules vary (Table 2)

- Timing of contests
- Type of contest: party caucuses vs. government primaries
- Conversion of votes into delegates: PR vs winner take all (statewide or district)
- Who participates: open vs closed

#### 3. 2016 is year of outsider → non-establishment candidates Trump and Sanders

- Voter dissatisfaction with establishment
- Sources of support for party outsiders
  - Trump drew from most voter groups, especially white working class males
  - Sanders drew best from younger voters
- Trump nomination, Sanders challenge show “permeability” of parties, not “invisible primary”

Table 2  
2016 state/DC Primary and Caucus Schedule and Rules

<u>Date</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Formula</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Formula</u>	<u>Participants</u>
2/1	IA	Caucus	PR	Closed	3/15	FL	Primary	D-PR,R-WTA	Closed
2/9	NH	Primary	PR	Mixed		IL	Primary	D-PR,R-WTA	Open
2/20	NV-D	Caucus	PR	Closed		MO	Primary	D=PR,R-WTA	Open
	SC-R	Primary	WTA	Open		NC	Primary	PR	Mixed
2/23	NV-R	Caucus	PR	Closed		OH	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Mixed
									D-Open
2/27	SC-D	Primary	PR	Open	3/22	AZ	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	R-Closed
3/1	AL	Primary	PR	Open		ID-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	AR	Primary	PR	Open		UT	Caucus	PR	Closed
	AK-R	Caucus	PR	Closed	3/26	AK-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	CO	Caucus	PR	Closed		HI-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	GA	Primary	PR	Open		WA-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	MA	Primary	PR	Mixed	4/5	WI	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Open
	MN	Caucus	PR	Open	4/9	WY-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	ND-R	Caucus	PR	Closed	4/19	NY	Primary	PR	Closed
	OK	Primary	PR	Closed	4/26	CT	Primary	-PR,R-WTA/P	Closed
	TN	Primary	PR	Open		DE	Primary	WTA	Closed
	TX	Primary	PR	Open		MD	Primary	WTA	Closed
	VA	Primary	PR	Open		PA	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Closed
	VT	Primary	PR	Open		RI	Primary	PR	Mixed
	WY-R	Caucus	PR	Closed	5/3	IN	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Open
3/5	KS	Caucus	PR	Closed	5/10	NE-R	Primary	WTA	Closed
	KY-R	Caucus	PR	Closed		WV	Primary	WTA	Mixed
	LA	Primary	PR	Closed	5/17	KY-D	Primary	PR	Closed
	ME-R	Caucus	PR	Closed		OR	Primary	PR	Closed
	NE-D	Caucus	PR	Closed	5/24	WA-R	Primary	PR	Closed
									D-Mixed
3/6	ME-D	Caucus	PR	Closed	6/7	CA	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	R-Closed
3/8	ID-R	Primary	PR	Closed		MT	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Open
	HI-R	Caucus	PR	Closed		ND-D	Caucus	PR	Closed
	MI	Primary	PR	Open		NJ	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Mixed
	MS	Primary	PR	Open		NM	Primary	PR	Closed
3/12	DC-R	Convention	PR	Closed		SD	Primary	D-PR R-WTA	Closed
					6/14	DC-D	Primary	PR	Closed

NOTES: Delegates also selected from territories & Puerto Rico

KEY: Formula=translation of votes into delegatges; WTA=winner take all, PR=proportional

SOURCE: [ballotpedia.org/Presidential\\_election,\\_2016](http://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election,_2016)

## 2016 Nominations in Retrospect

Nomination process selects delegates, who nominate by majority vote

- Primaries overlaid on traditional convention/caucus system
  - Delegates selected by old procedures
  - States and state parties decide process within national party guidelines
- National party reforms since 1968 addressed past problems:
  - Moved to primaries in most states
  - Democratic super-delegates to give party establishment more role
  - Democratic PR to give minority candidates greater representation at convention
  - Diminished frontloading: 2016 contests began month later, Republicans forced to use PR before March 15
- **2016 Stress Test:** highlighted difference between delegate selection and popular votes

Results were decisive (Figure 3): Trump and Clinton easily had majority of delegates by convention, Trump without winning majority of popular vote

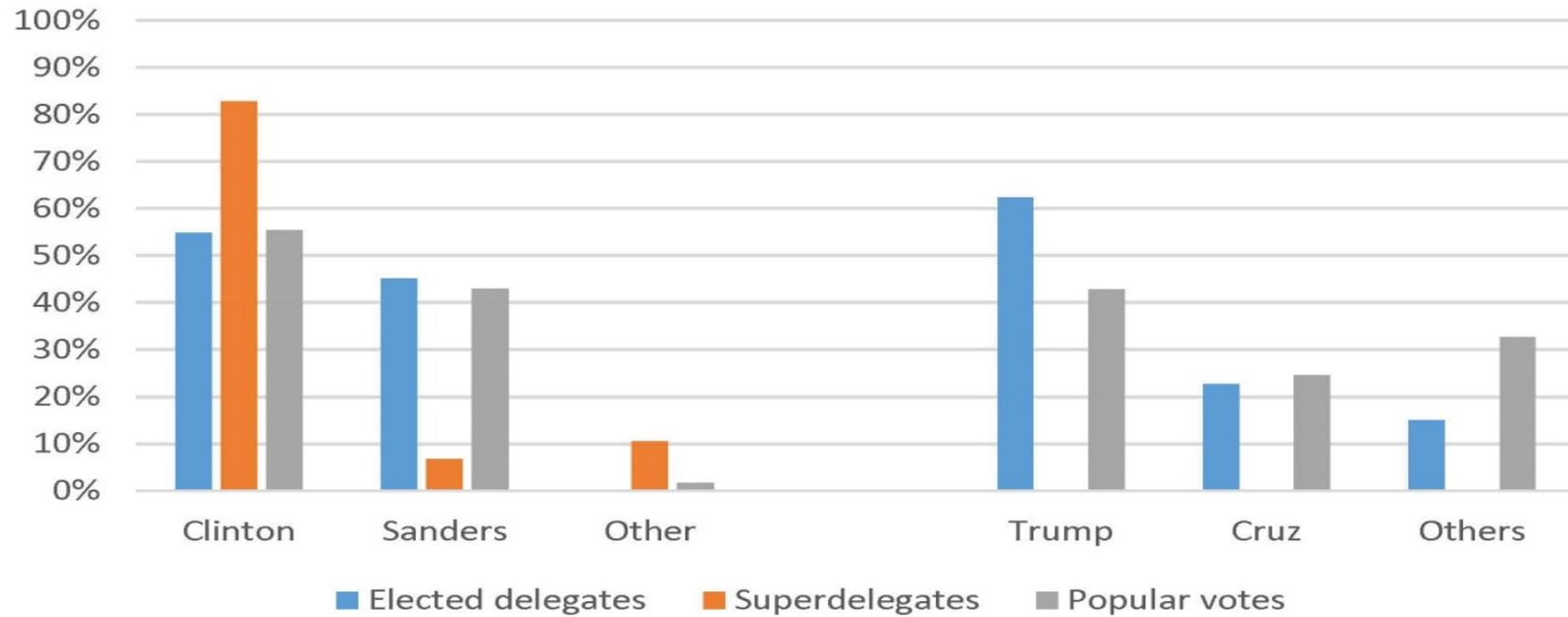
Was process “rigged”? How might it be reformed?

- Bind delegates more tightly to popular vote (greater need for GOP than Dems)?
- Eliminate/add super-delegates (add for GOP, drop for Dems)?
- Low-turnout caucus vs primary (14 Dem, 12 Rep states held caucuses)?
- Open vs closed caucus/primary (25 Dem, 26 Rep states closed)?
- Winner take all (WTA) vs. PR (GOP back to WTA)?

# Figure 3

## 2016 Nomination Process Results before Conventions

(AP Delegate Estimates as of 6/26/16)



## Basic Features of the 2016 General Election

Presidential elections decided in ~dozen battleground states (CO, FL, IA, MI, NC, NH, NV, OH, PA, VA, WI + AZ in 2016)

Fewer voters satisfied with major party candidates than since 1992 (Figure 4)

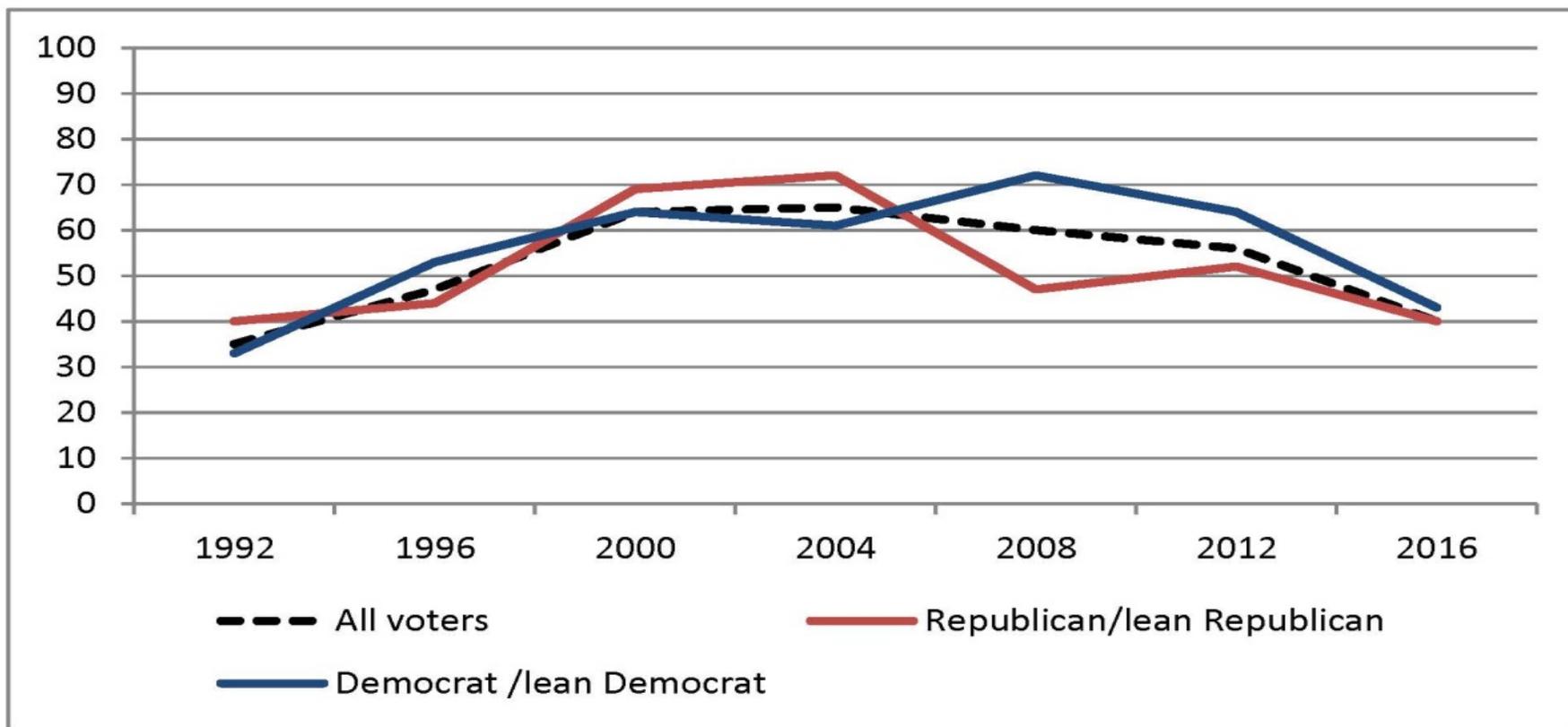
- No attractive third-party “safety valve”; “third-party” type secured GOP nomination
- Difficult choice for many voters, voting against rather than for
- Higher % than before still undecided week before election

Overall turnout (as % of VEP) for president

- 58.6% in 2016 vs 61.6% in 2008, and 58.0% in 2012
- 1.17 million did not vote for president, slightly less dropoff than in 2008 and 2012

Figure 4  
% Very/fairly Satisfied with Presidential Candidates

source: Pew Research Center, July 7, 2016



## Who Voted for Which Candidate: A View from the Exit Polls

### Major 2016 stories (Figure 5):

1. Class-vote relationship upside down
  - Majority of college educated white women for Clinton
  - Gender gap between men and women, both college educated and not
2. Urban-rural divide: Trump won most counties nationwide

### Demographic comparisons, 2016 vs. 2012 (Figure 6)

- Dems lost ground to Reps: men, minorities, non-college grads, union HHs
- Both parties lost ground (to 3<sup>rd</sup>-party candidates) among women and all ages
- Dems up, Reps down among college grads

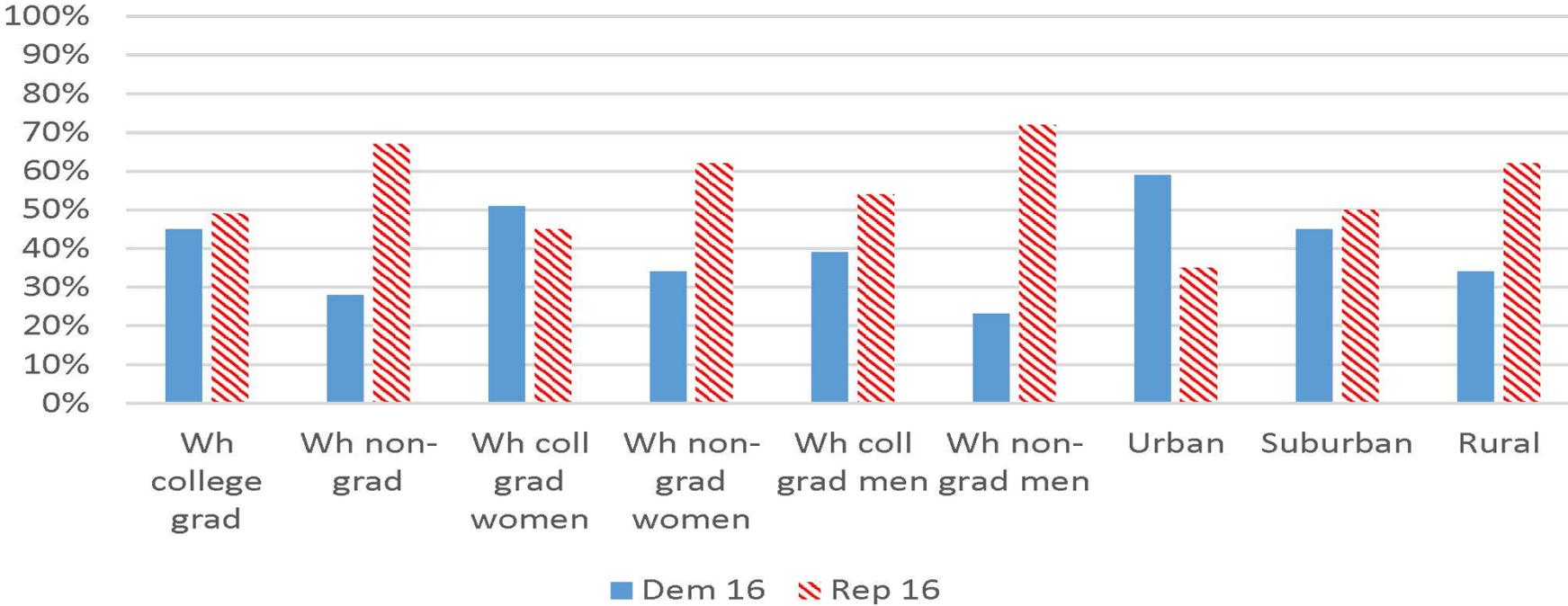
### Political orientation comparisons, 2016 vs 2012 (Figure 7)

- Republicans (and Democrats) came home, though not as much as in 2012
- Republicans did better among evangelicals and (slightly overall) late deciders
- Republican advantage re dissatisfaction:
  - more saw US on wrong track (62% vs 52% in 2012), even if did not vote as heavily for Trump
  - slightly fewer more saw personal finances worse (27% vs 33%), but voted just as heavily for Trump

# Figure 5

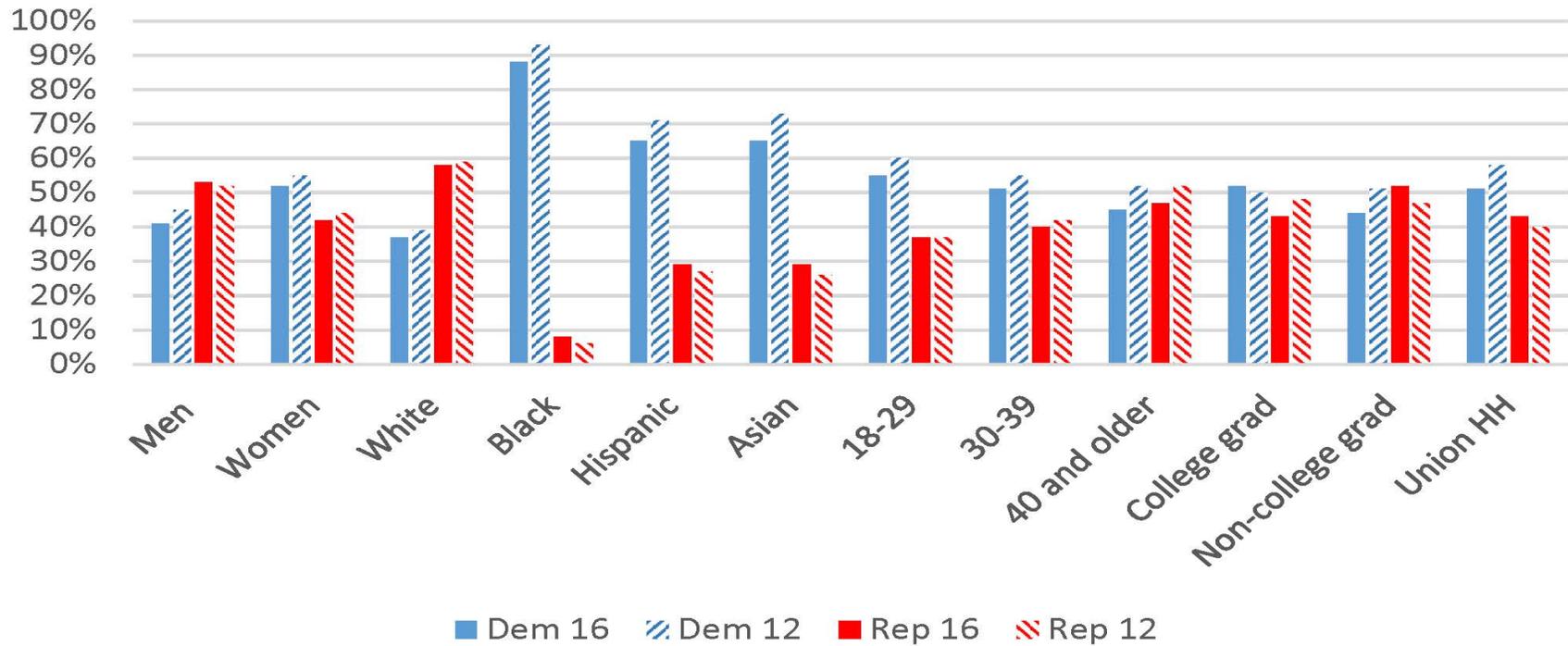
## 2016 Vote by Key Demographics

Source: Exit Polls, 2016



## Figure 6 Vote by Demographics, 2016 vs 2012

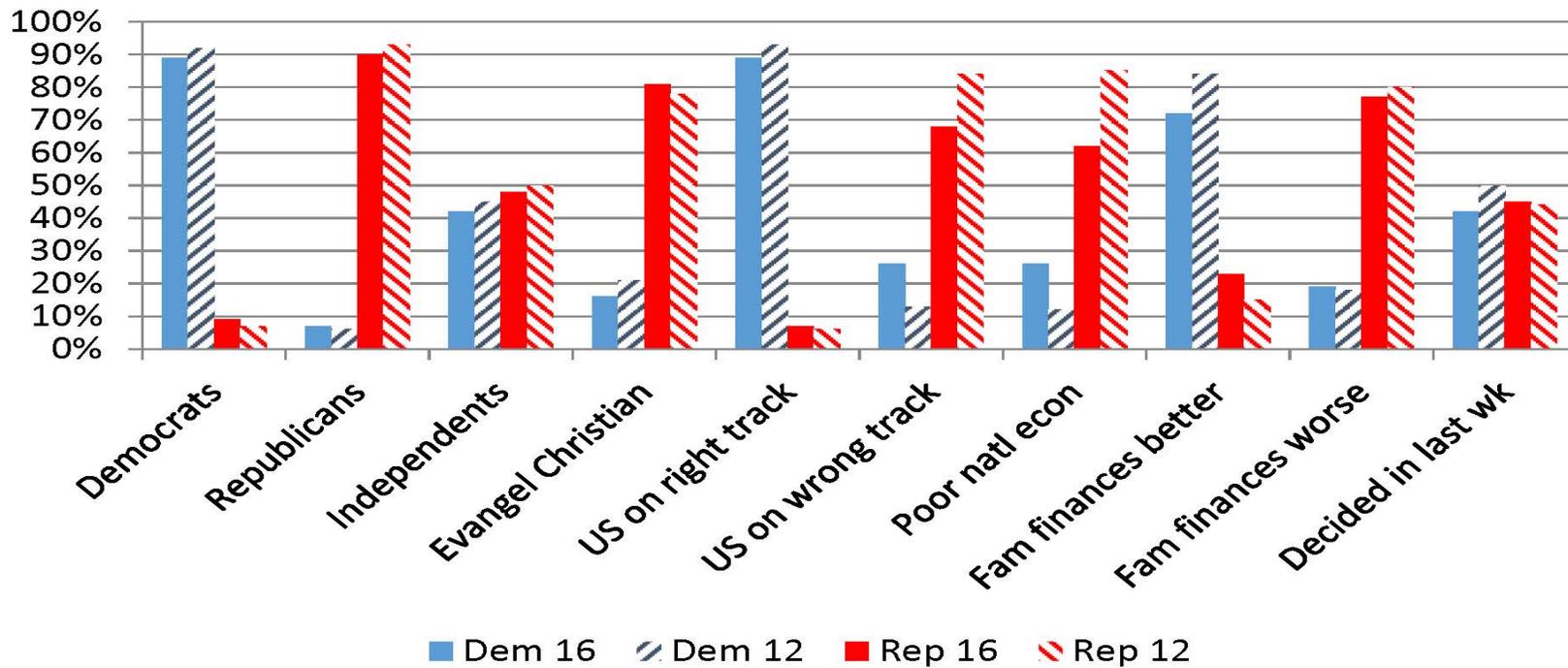
Source: Exit Polls, 2012 and 2016



# Figure 7

## Vote by Political Orientations, 2016 vs 2012

Source: Exit Polls, 2012 and 2016



## Voting Patterns Beyond Exit Polls: Turnout and Comey

Turnout = f [motivation, cost]

- Turnout decline due to higher costs in some states (NC, WI)
- But apparently lower Democratic motivation in others (e.g., OH)

### Ohio patterns provide “window” into what happened (Figure 8)

- Democratic collapse: Clinton fell to 43.6% from 51.5%/50.7% in 2008/2012.
  - Clinton < Obama in 2012 (and especially 2008) in 85/88 counties (not Delaware, Franklin and Warren)
  - Democratic collapse especially great in Appalachian counties (down 17% from 44% in 2012), rural/small town counties (down 12% from lower base of 36% in 2012) vs. only 5-6% in metropolitan counties
- Trump gains widespread, but less than Clinton losses
  - Trump > Romney 2012 in 82/88 counties (not Cuyahoga, Delaware, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery)
  - Clinton lost 1,000 votes more than Trump gained in 36/88 counties, often much more
  - Both dropped compared to 2012 in 4 counties (Cuyahoga, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery)

### Undecided voters moved heavily to Trump in most battlegrounds (Figure 9)

- Unusually high % of undecideds in week before election day: 13% vs. 9% in 2012
- Possible effect of Comey letters via “priming” may have been important there on eve of election

Figure 8  
Democratic and Republican Presidential Votes in 88 Ohio  
Counties, 2016 vs 2012

Source: Official vote results, 11/30/16

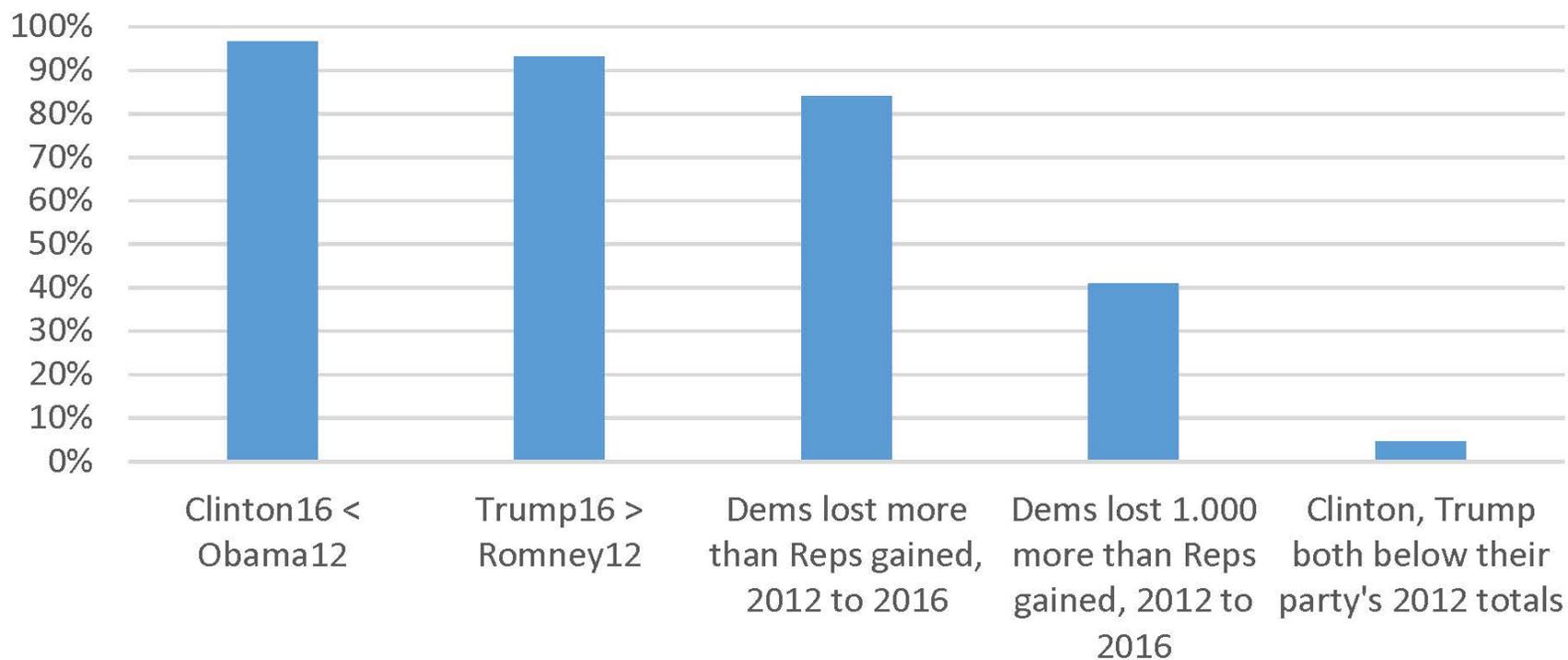
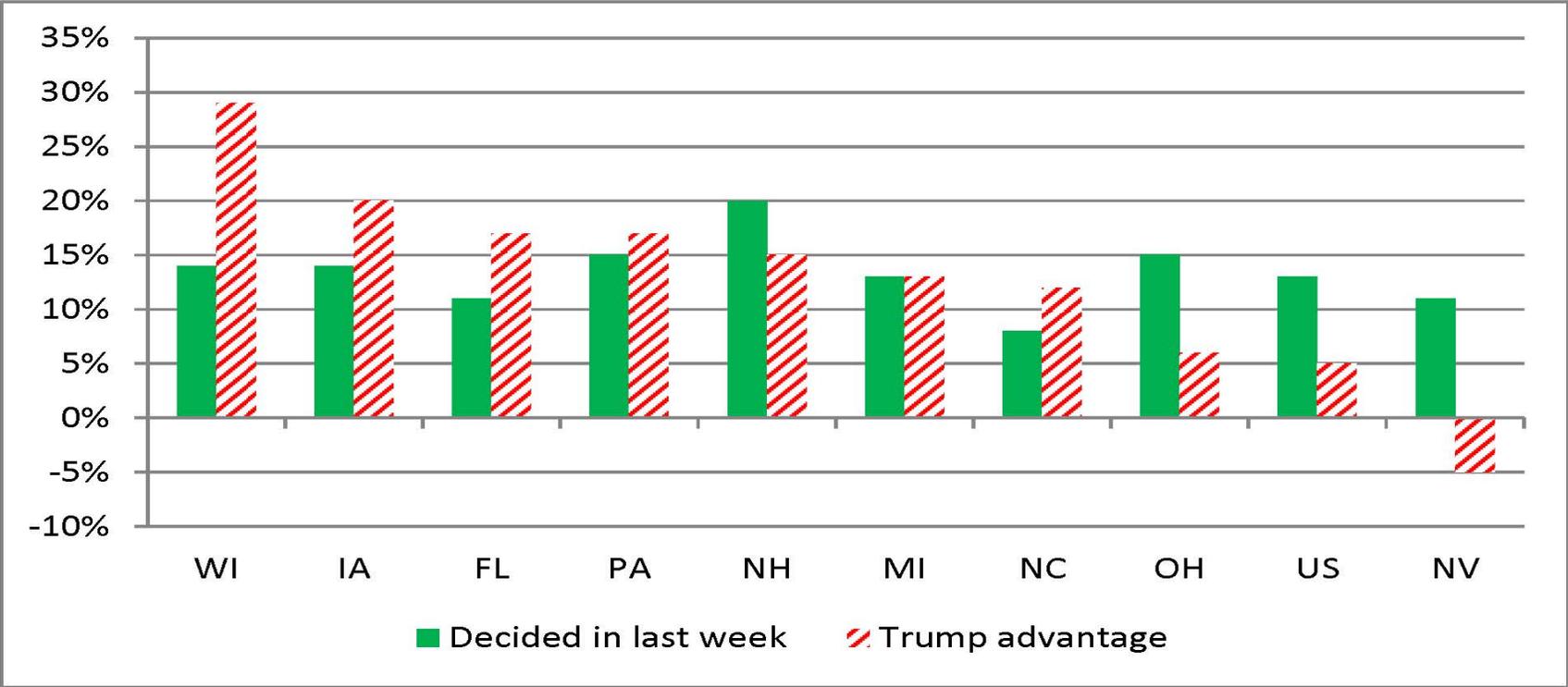


Figure 9  
Late Deciding Voters Favored Trump, 2016

Source: Exit Polls, 2016



## Conclusion: Looking Beyond November 8

Still 50/50 nation: Clinton won popular vote by 2.5M; switch of 103K (MI, PA, WI) votes nationwide would have given her Electoral College win

OH still battleground -- and bellwether (“canary in coal mine”)

Full GOP control of government → accountability for policy

- Will Congress or White House drive agenda?
- Questionable mandate, but (as with Bush and Obama Admins) major policy changes likely

Questions about post-election politics going forward

- Was 2016 “one off” or will it bring lasting realignment of party coalitions?
- Republican party: Whose party is it?
  - How much Congress-Executive conflict?
  - Can it keep white working class voters?
- Democratic party at lowest point since 1920s: Will it recover? Will Sanders movement challenge?
- What damage has been done to political system and legitimacy of elections?