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UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 2016

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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ABSTRACT

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The object of this undergraduate thesis is to describe the course of the 2016 presidential election in the United States of America. This work is divided into 5 parts. The introduction provides an overview of the whole thesis, the second part deals with the Democratic and Republican primary elections. The third part highlights the main events, debates, controversies, scandals that happened before and during the general election and lists the factors that influenced the outcome of this election. The fourth part analyses results and puts them in context. It mentions some of the accomplishments of President Trump's half year in office. The last part summarizes the acquired pieces of information on why Donald J. Trump won the election and Hillary Clinton lost.

Keywords: United States, Election, Presidential, America, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton

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INTRODUCTION

The President of the United States of America is the head of the executive branch, who shares powers with Congress and federal courts. The USA is a federal republic in which the presidential election occurs every four years. During these years President's task is to shape and protect the country, furthermore he may determine its course for years to come.

In 2016, the United States held the 58th presidential election. After a long, unpredictable campaign Republican candidate Donald J. Trump defeated Hillary Clinton running for the Democratic party. Donald J. Trump became the 45th President of the United States and together with Vice President Mike Pence took office on January 20, 2017. They inherited the administration after democratic President Barrack Obama, who served two terms in the White House.

This was an election of contrasts. On one side a man without any political experience, on the other side a woman, who was more than qualified. Simple and quick solutions versus long-term, incomprehensible plans, spontaneity against rigid readiness. Donald Trump received most votes from members of the white-working class, while Clinton's voters were people from cities like Los Angeles and New York. She focused her attention on minorities, African-Americans and Hispanics.

Famous businessman Donald Trump was a fresh face in politics, his chief slogan was "Make America Great Again". Trump's impulsive personality, his use of language (often vulgar), with his unconventional methods caught a lot of attention of the media. The media and the press played a significant role in this race. Even though Trump was often criticized on television and in newspapers, the free and constant coverage of his audacious statements, of his tweets and of his past misconducts eclipsed the real issues, which were concerning the

American citizens and the rest of the world. That help him to gain more supporters, especially during the primary season.

Hillary Clinton worked for the country most of her life, however she had problems appealing white-working class and to young voters. Clinton took for granted the Rust Belt states, she lost Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, states, which has not been won by a republican since Ronald Reagan. Numerous scandals followed Clinton during the campaign. The Benghazi Attack, the usage of a private email server while she was a Secretary of State and the fact that she and her husband Bill Clinton, the former president of the USA took money from Wall Street for their speeches and financial donations to the Clinton Foundation from foreign governments. Clinton tried but was unable to convince voters, that Trump was unfit to be the President of the world's biggest superpower. On the other hand, Donald Trump persuaded his voters that Hillary Clinton was a part of a system which was rigged against them, that she is one of the elites and her alleged crimes were never justly investigated.

This election showed wide divide by race, gender and education and left America polarized. What helped to make this race so divisive are undoubtedly social media. According to the Pew Research Centre, majority of voters used social media as a source for following the election process (Barthel, Gottfried, Mitchell & Shearer, 2016). Donald Trump's domain was Twitter, where he shared his thoughts and frequently assaulted not just his opponents. Clinton team often used YouTube, for uploading prepared ads and occasionally attacking Trump.

Consuming news from Facebook showed to be problematic. Facebook offers posts which are predicted to be most interesting for a specific user. As a result, people's range of knowledge narrows. That kind of customization created social bubbles. Equally significant problem with Facebook is that it is an open space, where anyone can post anything, which enables spreading fake news and propaganda.

Hillary Clinton was the front-runner, nonetheless she had to face some unexpected challenges, many of them connected with the Russian influence. The extent and magnitude is still being investigated by the Congress and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Purportedly it was Russian hackers, who stole emails from Clinton's server and released them to the public on Wikileaks. They were behind spreading lies, mostly on the internet, which confused voters and made it harder to distinguish from what is real and what is fake, ultimately damaging the democratic candidate. This thesis also deals with how significant were these influences.

Another reason why there was such a tension between Democrats and Republicans is race. American population is racially more diverse than ever before. Changing racial and ethnic demographics agitated specially Trump's voters. In 2015 and 2016, alarming number of cases of black unarmed men being killed by the police triggered protests, which drew attention on racial profiling and racial discrimination in the US. Donald Trump's use of language to describe minorities deepened the divide even more. He famously labeled immigrants as "rapists" and "criminals", he wanted to build a wall on the border with Mexico and he proposed a ban, which would prevent Muslims from coming to America.

In this thesis, the focus will be on significant factors, that influenced the outcome of this election and which made this race extraordinary. This duel was more dramatic than expected. Although Trump's Electoral College victory was staggering, Clinton received more votes in the popular vote, signifying that each factor could have played the decisive role. Nevertheless, the analysis would not be possible without explaining peculiarities of United States' voting system.

1 PRIMARY ELECTION

The American President has great powers and duties, most of them are written in the Constitution, others evolved over time. Targonski (2000) listed some of these functions: the president can sign or veto bills coming from congress, he can issue executive orders, he manages national affairs and he is the commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States. The president is responsible for appointing members of the Supreme Court and other public officials. He may grant pardons to anyone, who broke a law (p. 45-47). As the head of the world's biggest superpower, the President has a strong political influence.

Every four years, American citizens are given the opportunity to choose the next leader of their country. They must be registered to vote, they must be more than 18 years old and they have to meet their state's residency requirements.

Candidates for the presidency are chosen by political parties several months before the Election Day. The USA has a two-party system, without the support of the Republican party or the Democratic party it is unlikely that a candidate can win the general election. Therefore, candidates seek a presidential nomination of their parties. Schnartz (1996) explained "In order to formally gain the presidential nomination, both major political parties require a candidate to win a majority of the delegate support at the party's national convention" (p. 13). To attract voters, who vote for delegates, candidates within one party take part in televised debates, they each travel the country to meet with the American people.

The method for delegate selection varies state by state. Schnartz (1996) noted that "the states and state parties choose one of the methods: either a local caucus-state convention process or a presidential primary" (p. 16). Primaries and caucuses start in February, traditionally in New Hampshire and Iowa, and continue until early June during the election year.

1.1   Democratic Primaries

It was no surprise when Clinton, former First Lady, senator from New York and Secretary of State, announced her candidacy. From the beginning of the nomination race, Clinton was the front-runner, she had a strong support from the Democratic National Committee, however, Bernie Sanders Senator from Vermont, turned out to be a resilient opponent.

Sanders who described himself as a social democrat received the most support from millennials and independents. In contrast Clinton in large margins obtained votes from African-Americans. After this race Chinni, McGill and Zitner (2016) pointed out that "It's hard to win the Democratic nomination without winning Democrats. Independents accounted for fewer than one-quarter of voters" (para. 4). Sanders was the first candidate, who spoke about the student debt, and believed that climate change is the biggest threat to the planet, even though he did not win, he managed to push some of his agenda into Clinton's program. According to Allen and Parnes (2017) Sanders' secondary motivation was to better his position in Congress which would help him to push the issues important to him (p. 46).

1.2   Republican Primaries

The republican nomination process was on the other hand quite unpredictable. Seventeen candidates in total entered the race, the one that stood out the most was Donald Trump. A successful businessman and a television personality immediately brought attention to him when he announced his candidacy. In his speech, Trump (2015) declared:

> Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time. When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us

economically. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. (3:05)

Trump (2015) continued "We need somebody that literally will take this country and make it great again. So ladies and gentlemen, I am officially running for president of the United States " (15:52).

This text is a typical example of Trump's rhetoric. He used short, easy-to-understand sentence, often with phrases "believe me", "only I can fix it". Despite the economic growth in recent years and the low unemployment, in his speeches Trump described America as a country that is losing on all fronts. In foreign policy, in trade, economically. Jobs are taken by immigrants and the probability of being killed by a terrorist in growing. Furthermore, Trump used numerous unfavorable comparisons throughout the campaign. Cassidy (2016) explained:

there was virtually nothing he wouldn't say to tar his rivals or anyone else who dared to challenge him. This is the candidate who referred to Rick Perry as a dimwit; criticized Carly Fiorina's appearance; claimed that John McCain wasn't a war hero; appeared to suggest, during an interview on CNN, that Megyn Kelly was menstruating. (para. 4)

Moreover, Trump also came up with other nicknames for his opponents. For example, he referred to Texas Senator Ted Cruz as "Lyin' Ted", he labeled Senator from Florida Marco Rubio as "Little Marco", former Florida Governor Jeb Bush was named "Low Energy Bush" and lastly Hillary Clinton was labeled "Crooked Hillary". Interestingly, these unorthodox attacks increased Trump's chances of winning and damaged his rivals, who specially during debates seemed weak in the eyes of some voters, because of their restraint and inability to defend themselves.

What attracted many voters about Trump was the fact that Trump was not a politician, he did not speak like a politician and he offered his own experience and skills he gained from running his businesses. He promised to bring American jobs back, he wanted to build a wall on the border with Mexico, he planned on rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure, furthermore he wanted to ban Muslims from entering the country. However, his plans and suggestions were often vague and provided little or no explanation on how he would keep them and where he would find money for them. "He was also able to tap into many Republicans' anger, some of it tinged with racism, about President Obama and his policies, into broader fears of terrorism and economic decline, and into a general disgust with professional politicians" (Cassidy, 2016, para. 7).

1.3   Running Mates

Both parties' supporters tend to stay loyal to the nominee who represents their party. It is unlikely that voters of one party would switch their allegiance.

Principally, because of their ideological differences, that divide them. Thus, both nominees need to earn voters of undecided voters and independents. This can be tactically challenging since nominees need to keep party base happy and at the same time respond to issues which resonate among fence-sitters (Newman, 2016, p. 11).

One of the means a nominee can extend the base of supporters is by choosing the right running-mate. Both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton chose running-mates, who complemented them. Trump chose Mike Pence, governor of Indiana, who is a Christian and a conservative, Clinton's pick was a Virginia Senator Tim Kaine. Donald Trump pleased mostly the conservative base of his party, when he chose Pence, a member of the Tea Party, whose role was often to defend and moderate Trump's controversial statements. Clinton hoped that by selecting a swing-state politician and man, who is fluent in Spanish will increase her chances of winning more votes of Latin and Hispanic Americans. In the end, she

did win the state of Virginia, but the role of an attack god, which is expected from Vice-presidential candidate, did not suit well to Pence, and it cost him points during the only Vice-presidential debate in which calm and restraint Mike Pence was ready to defend or deflect any of Trump's statements.

1.4   Nominal Conventions

In the second half of July, both candidates accepted their parties' nomination at national conventions. After the Republican National Convention Donald Trump tied Hillary Clinton in most polls, despite some mishaps at the convention. One of the speakers was Donald Trump's wife, Melania Trump, whose speech resembled Michelle Obama's speech presented at the 2008 Democratic convention (Jacobs and McCarthy, 2016, para. 1). Another scandal which was the center of attention in media happened after the Democratic National Convention, where the father of an American-Muslim soldier killed in Iraq, delivered powerful speech. "Mr. Khan gave a voice to Muslim Americans outraged by the anti-Muslim pronouncements of the Republican nominee for President, Donald Trump. In a speech that electrified the convention and turned Mr. Khan into a social media and cable news sensation" (Oppel, 2016, para. 4,5). Donald Trump later criticized Mr. Khan and suggested that his wife, standing by his side, was not allowed to speak.

The fact that Hillary Clinton became the first female presidential nominee for a major political party made this race groundbreaking, particularly for women whose representative has never been so close to the highest office in land.

Donald Trump won the nomination against a long list of experienced governors and senators. To win, Trump needed to secure1,237 delegates. In total, he managed to secure 2,472. After all other candidates have dropped out, the election became a two-men race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

GENERAL ELECTION

Traditionally, American voters are divided according to the party affiliation. People are either Democrats, Republicans or independents. The Pew Research Centre (2015) states that "the share of independents in the public, which long ago surpassed the percentages of either Democrats or Republicans, continues to increase. Based on 2014 data, 39% identify as independents, 32% as Democrats and 23% as Republicans" (para. 3). Nevertheless, most independents tend to lean toward a party.

There are several differences between the two main parties. The philosophy of the Democratic Party is liberal, while The Republican Party is more conservative. Generally, their biggest disagreements were always about economic issues and the role of government. Democrats support progressive taxation, increase of minimal wage, universal healthcare, civilian gun control, legalization of same-sex marriages, less military spending and they are more reluctant, when it comes to using military force. Republicans in contrast oppose big government, raising of taxes, same-sex marriages, universal healthcare and abortions. They put strong emphasis on the Second Amendment rights, on Christianity, they prefer increase in military spending and immigration restriction ("Democratic Party vs. Republican Party", n.d.). Of course, not every member of a party has the same point of view, their opinions may vary.

It is understandable, that when people have to choose between two different options it divides them. Usually when Democrats and Republicans disagreed on some issue, they could find a compromise. Nevertheless, in this election the most discussed topic were about terrorism, immigration, LGBT rights, gun ownership, health, abortions, the Supreme Court etc. Discontent of the working class, anti-establishment moods and race identities dominated the campaign. As a result, it was hard to find a middle ground on these issues and the gap

between voters broaden. In his book Abraham (2016) noted that the character and content of American politics has changed. Throughout the primary and general elections, the political thinking of Americans has shifted (p. 3). He names some unusual trends seen in the race such as "jingoism, personal slandering or scandal mongering, anti-establishment etc." (Abraham, 2016, p. 3). The discontent with the government is what caused harm to Hillary Clinton and gave rise to anti-establishment candidates like Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump.

After nominal conventions it was clear that the two front-runners are the Republican nominee Donald Trump and the Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Trump's chief slogan was "Make America Great Again, furthermore, throughout the campaign he introduced catchy three-syllable phrases such as "Drain the Swamp", "Build a Wall" and "Lock her up", which reflected his campaign promises and strongly resonated among his voters. Clinton's slogans were "Stronger Together", "I'm with Her" and "Love Trumps Hate". The two nominees could not be more different. There was a small number of issues on which they agreed on.

Trump was pro-life, while Clinton was pro-choice, Trump proposed to build a wall on the border with Mexico, Clinton offered a pathway to citizenship, Trump wanted to lower taxes in all brackets and Clinton wanted to raise taxes for people with high income. Trump wanted to repeal and replace Obamacare, while Clinton planned on expanding it. Donald Trump claimed several times that global warming is a hoax "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive" (Trump, 2012). According to Clinton's program climate change is "an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time. It threatens our economy, our national security, and our children's health and futures" ("Hillary on Climate Change", 2016). Centre for Public Policy Research (2016) noted that:

> The divergent positions of the parties and candidates on various issues offer different
> solutions to the problems and visions about the future of America. Economy,

immigration, foreign policy, national security and terrorism, race, trade and gun control constitute the most widely discussed themes of this election. Education, health, environment, abortion, treatment of racial and ethnic minorities and rights of gay and transgender also concern the American public. (p. 13)

In this race, candidates from the Green Party and the Libertarian Party also fought for the presidency. Governor of New Mexico Gary Johnson from the Libertarian Party and the Green Party's nominee Jill Stein became third party nominees. Third parties have minimal chance of winning, nevertheless, they can still influence the outcome of an election. They can take votes from one candidate and tip the balance to the other.

Nominees and the course of their campaigns are carefully watched by millions of Americans, the media and rest of the world. The core of every campaign is travelling around states, where they hold rallies to meet with voters and discuss local issues.

1.5   Controversies

Scandals on both sides of the isle dominated this election. The most damaging for Clinton was her email controversy. A Gallup study was tracking the themes of the 2016 election "information about Trump has varied in theme, almost weekly, over the campaign – from Russia, to taxes, to women's issues, etc., information about Clinton has in contrast been focused almost entirely on a single theme, email" (Allan-West, 2016). According to this study, Clinton's emails eclipsed other issues and were the center of attention since the primary season to the election day.

1.5.1   Hillary Clinton's Email Controversy

When Hillary Clinton was the Secretary of State in President's Obama administration, she used a personal email addresses connected to a private server, instead of using government email. Clinton underestimated the seriousness of this issues, later she apologized on her Facebook page "Yes, I should have used two email addresses, one for personal matters

and one for my work at the State Department. Not doing so was a mistake. I'm sorry about it, and I take full responsibility" (Clinton, 2016).

Clinton has been investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by the State Department. After her emails have been studied, director of FBI James Comey did not recommend to prosecute Clinton (Collins and Slack, 2016). James Comey (2016) announced "Although we did not find clear evidence that Secretary Clinton or her colleagues intended to violate laws governing the handling of classified information, there is evidence that they were extremely careless in their handling of very sensitive, highly classified information." Donald Trump used this issue to his advantage. He repeatedly attacked Clinton on her credibility.

Just a week and a half before the election day, the director of Federal Bureau of Investigation James Comey notified Congress that more Clinton's emails from her private server were discovered. Only one day before the election Comey announced that he is not recommending criminal charges against Clinton, which raised even more doubts not just among undecided voters. In the interview for Chritiane Amanpour Clinton (2017) asserted that "I was on the way to winning until a combination of James Comey's letter on October 28th and Russian Wikileaks raised doubts in the minds of people, who were inclined to vote for me, but got scared off" (21:05).

What made this email scandal even worse was the fact, that Clinton's email server was hacked and tens of thousands of emails were uploaded on WikiLeaks. During the campaign Clinton blamed Russia for stealing her emails. Although the emails did not reveal any illegal activity, they provided inside into Clinton's campaign.

1.5.2   Russian Influence

The factor that probably played the most significant role in the outcome of this election is Russia's interference. Frizell, Miller, Rebala & Wilson (2016) stated:

> U.S. law enforcement and intelligence services concluded that Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered an escalating campaign of influence operations targeting the 2016 U.S. election. The goals, according to a January consensus assessment by the intelligence community, were to undermine U.S. democracy, weaken Hillary Clinton and, if possible, help Trump win the White House. The campaign included hacking, fake news and other propaganda. (para. 3)

The Washington Post gathered newest information about the investigation In an article authors illustrate how the investigation developed. President Barack Obama was briefed on Russian meddling in August, 2016. The CIA's report stated that interference was ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin himself. This report came after hackers with ties to Russian intelligence services breached Democratic Party computer networks and released nearly 20,000 emails on Wikileaks and after increasing number of fake news about Hillary Clinton was spread on social media. This was an unprecedented attack on American democracy. The evidence gathered, nevertheless President Obama was hesitant on how to respond. He was concerned that any action would be understood as political interference, while Donald Trump was already claiming that this election is going to be rigged. When 12 key Congress members and the leadership of both parties were informed about this problem, Democrats wanted to share it with the public, but Republicans were against it. President Obama delivered series of warning to President Putin, which prompted him from further aggression, such as sabotage of U.S. voting systems, but it did not stop him from spreading false information damaging Clinton (Entous, Miller and Nakashima, 2017).

This was all happening at the time, when polls predicted that Hillary Clinton will win the election. Instead of stopping Russian meddling President Obama, let it happen. When the election was coming to an end he tried to help Clinton on the campaign trail. He was campaigning for her with his wife Michelle Obama. Shortly before his term ended he posed economic sanctions on Russia, closed two Russian compounds in the US and expelled 35 diplomats from the United States, which was a small punishment for violating country's sovereignty.

At the moment, it is being investigated whether Trump and his team coordinated with Russia. James Comey the former director of the FBI, who was overseeing the investigation was fired by Trump. As a result President Trump is now under an investigation for obstruction of justice.

Putin and Clinton showed dislikes toward each other in the past. He accused her of meddling in Russia's 2012 election. The USA is not the only country dealing with Russian hackers. Similar attempts were reported in many European states including Germany, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and more. The spread of fake news in the Czech Republic is a serious issue influencing growing number of people.

1.5.3 Social Media

Getting information from the internet is quick and accessible. Nevertheless, a lot of information online can be intentionally false. The spread of fake news on Facebook was a phenomenon of this election. News stories and articles, posted on Facebook, often do not provide the name of the author, nor the source. Unlike news on television they don't have to be verified.

According to the Pew Research Center, the most prominent sources for learning about the 2016 presidential election were cable TV news, social media, news websites, local TV and a radio. Social media have been used by people in all age groups, but mostly people between

the age 18 and 29 named social media as the most useful source for following the election (Barthel, Gottfried, Mitchell & Shearer, 2016).

Silverman's analysis (2017) showed that during the last three months of the presidential race, the top-performing fake stories posted on Facebook outperformed major news outlets such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, NBC News, Vox, Fox News, Politico, The Guardian, CBS News and others. This analysis compared 20 top-performing false election stories from hoax sites and 20 best-performing election stories from 19 major news websites. Fake stories gained over one million more shares, likes and comments on Facebook than stories from established media houses (para. 1-3). "Of the 20 top-performing false election stories, all but three were overtly pro-Donald Trump or anti-Hillary Clinton. Two of the biggest false hits were a story claiming Clinton sold weapons to ISIS and a hoax claiming the pope endorsed Trump" (Silverman, 2017, para. 9). Facebook is customized in a way that it provides information, which is expected to be the most interesting for a specific user. This means, that if someone likes to read about conspiratorial theories, Facebook will offer them to that user.

1.5.4   Trump's Comments about Women

In October, The Washington Post obtained a video in which Trump talked about sexually assaulting women. Fahrenthold (2016) pointed out that "Donald Trump bragged in vulgar terms about kissing, groping and trying to have sex with women during a 2005 conversation caught on a hot microphone" (para. 1). In 2005, Trump (as cited in Fahrenthold, 2016) said:

> You know I'm automatically attracted to beautiful - I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything. Grab them by the p---y. You can do anything. (para. 14)

Even republican party members condemned his statements and some of them withdrew their support. Trump apologized and turned the attention to the former president Bill Clinton and accused him of doing worse things (Fahrenthold, 2016).

After the video was released people were shocked. It was speculated whether Trump will suspend his campaign or not. At this point, it was hard to believe that a nominee, who uses this kind of language to describe women, still has a chance of winning.

1.5.5   Tax Returns

Last forty years every major candidate for the presidency showed his tax returns to the public. Donald Trump was the first candidate who refused to show how much he paid in taxes. Trump's excuse was that he can't release his taxes, because he is being audited by the Internal Revenue Service. Nevertheless, according to the IRS, this did not keep Trump releasing his tax returns.

Trump is famous for his bragging about how successful and rich he is, how much money he donated to charity. In his newest book Crippled America Trump (2015) estimated that his "net worth is more than ten billion dollars" (p.129), however, this amount is not verified. It was being speculated whether Trump was as rich as he said, but the biggest concerns were about his connections in the financial world. After the election Waldman (2017) emphasized that:

> it's critical to understand that there has never in American history been a president for whom it was more important that the public see his tax returns. No president has had the kind of complex web of financial interests that Trump does, a network of companies and arrangements and partnerships that provide extraordinary opportunities to essentially sell the presidency. Yet he declined to divest from his company, maintains ongoing business enterprises that allow money to be funneled to him by both domestic

and foreign sources, and refuses to tell the public exactly what those enterprises are or how much money he takes in from them. (para. 6)

1.6 Debates

Debates are essential in American elections. The nominees meet on a stage and discuss current issues concerning voters. Debates are televised, they are carefully watched by millions of Americans. Debates have a strong influence to the outcome of the election, both candidates have an opportunity to reach undecided voters. After a debate is finished, media analyze it and determine the winner. Debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. Below are mentioned some of the highlights of one vice presidential and three presidential debates. Even though Clinton won all three debates, Trump did better than expected.

1.6.1 The First Presidential Debate

The First Presidential Debate was hosted by Lester Holt anchor of "NBC Nightly News. The 90-minute debate explored three topic areas: Achieving prosperity; America's direction; and securing America.

Donald trump's goal, was to show that he can be more restraint, that he can be "presidential". Clinton stepped onto the debate stage perfectly prepared. She was clearly ready for any question and any attack. Trump on the other had was spontaneous and moderate, but only at the beginning. Later he interrupted Clinton numerous time. Bradner (2016) notices that "he couldn't resist attacks, even when it was obvious they would backfire - such as his criticism of Clinton for dropping off the campaign trail ahead of the debate to prepare" (para. 3). Clinton was ready for this attack "Yes, I did. And you know what else I prepared for?" Clinton shot back. "I prepared to be presiden" Clinton (as cited in Bradner, 2016, para. 4).

There was only one Vice-Presidential debate between Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia and Gov. Mike Pence of Indiana. Most of the time Kaine was on the attack, while Pence had

to defend or deflect Donald Trump's statements. The role of the attack dog didn't suit Kaine well. Pence's restraint, poise and the overall tone brought more points to him.

1.6.2 The Second Presidential Debate

The second presidential debate was a town hall format, members of the audience gave direct questions to nominees, co-hosts Martha Raddatz and Anderson Cooper asked additional question.

This debate came right after the Access Hollywood tape, in which Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women, was released. When entering the stage Trump and Clinton did not shake hands. Trump was forced at the opening of the debate to address the controversy, he tried to diminish it by suggesting that it was just a "locker room talk".

Clinton showed hardly any emotions, Trump was more energetic in this debate. He was able to drive messages on controversies surrounding Clinton. The debate ended on a positive note, when candidates complimented each other on a request from an audience member.

1.6.3 The Third Presidential Debate

The host of the third debate was Chris Wallace of Fox News, the format was identical to the first presidential debate. Wallace focused on issues, which distinguished the candidates the most - Supreme Court, gun rights, abortion and immigration. Concerning the Supreme Court Clinton declared:

> The Supreme Court needs to stand on the side of the American people. Not on the side of the powerful corporations and the wealthy. For me, that means that we need a Supreme Court that will stand up on behalf of women's rights, on behalf of the rights of the LGBT community, that will stand up and say no to Citizens United, a decision that has undermined the election system in our country because of the way it permits dark, unaccountable money to come into our electoral system. (Clinton, 2016, 5:01)

Trump argued "We need a Supreme Court that is going to uphold the second amendment and

all amendments, but the second amendment which is under absolute siege" (Trump, 2016, 7:27). In the end Trump refused to say that he will accept the outcome of the election. Prior to this debate, Trump claimed that the election is going to be rigged.

1.6.4 Battleground States

Nominees pay special attention to swing states – states where both candidates have similar chances of winning. Mahtesian (2016) predicted these states will play a key role in determining the winner: "Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin" (para. 4). In his article, he wrote that the pathway to the White House for Donald Trump leads through Rust Belt states.

Donald Trump knew that in order to win, he had to win the Rust Belt. He managed to win Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. Trump. Longworth (2016) explained that "It's impossible to overstate the alienation between the two Americas, between the global citizens and the global left-behinds, between the great cities that run the nation's economy and media, and the hinterland that feels not only cheated but, worse, disrespected" (para. 9). Clinton's main promises were about expanding healthcare, equal rights and equal pay for women and the LGBT people. She crafted long and detailed description of her policies, while Trump bet on simple solutions, catchy slogans and easy-to-grasp language. Longworth (2016) noted:

> In the swing counties of the mid-west, voters cared about none of this. They just wanted to be noticed. They didn't care about equal pay for women: they wanted jobs and, with luck, rising salaries for everyone. In traditional towns that are just getting used to the idea of same-sex marriage, the right to choose one's bathroom was simply frivolous. Trade was a huge issue. Democratic and Republican administrations both hew to the mantra of trade economists: that free trade may cause some local pain but boosts society

as a whole. This teaching simply doesn't jibe with the lived reality of workers who have

seen imports replace the things they used to make. (para. 12)

Trump knew what to offer – bringing jobs back, saving coal miming job and punishing

companies that shipped jobs abroad. Unlike Clinton, Trump campaigned in these states

heavily. By voting for Trump these countries showed discontent with Washington and with

elites.

1.7 The Method of Electing

The method of electing the president of the United States is quite unusual. Unlike the

Czech Republic, where we vote for a nominee directly, American system is indirect.

Targonski (2000) explains this peculiar method in her book:

Although the names of the candidates appear on the ballots, the people technically do

not vote directly for the president (and the vice president). Instead, the voters of each

state select a slate of presidential "electors", equal to the number of senators and

representatives that state has in Congress. The candidate with the highest number of

votes in each state wins all the "electoral votes" of that state. The electors of all 50

states and the District of Columbia, a total of 538 persons, make up what is known as

the electoral college. The electors in each state gather in their state capital shortly after

the election and cast their votes for the candidate with the largest number of popular

votes in their state. To be successful, a candidate for the presidency must receive 270

electoral votes out of the possible 538. (p. 43)

Four times in the history of the United States, a nominee who received more votes in the

popular vote lost the electoral college. This happens when a candidate obtains a lot of

electoral votes with small pluralities. Last year Hillary Clinton in fact received nearly 2.9

million more votes than Donald Trump ("2016 Election Results", 2016). One of the reasons

this happened, is because many democrats are now centered in big cities and in this winner-takes-it-all system it is disregarded whether a candidate wins in big or small margins.

Last time this paradox occurred was in 2000, when Al Gore gathered half a million more votes than his opponent George W. Bush. The use of this method can make a significant difference in the outcome of an election. If the American voting system had been indirect, the last two republican presidents would have never taken the office.

2   RESULTS

As the election was coming to an end polls tightened. But none of them predicted the stunning take over. Trump told his followers not to believe the polls and he was right. On November 8, 2016, Americans elected Donald J. Trump the President of the United States.

It can be said that almost everyone was surprised, including me and probably even Donald Trump himself. Polls, experts, journalists all claimed that Hillary Clinton will sit in the White House the next four year.

One of the reasons that the polls were wrong is that many of Trumps supporters felt alienated by the other group. They were often unfairly labeled as racist, sexist and narrow-minded. The social pressure caused that they kept it to themselves and then voted for Trump in secret. During the campaign Clinton declared that half of Trump's supporters belong in a "basket of deplorables". As cited in Holan (2016) Clinton said that Trump's supporters were "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic" (para. 2). This statement deepened the polarization of American society.

Clinton lost many potential votes because of the controversies that surrounded her. Most of them she has been carrying since she served as Secretary of State. For instance her private email server and the Benghazi attack. During this time, she made a powerful enemy of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, who undoubtedly damaged her during the campaign. The number of people, who might have changed their minds about voting for her is unknown.

In my opinion many people did not want to vote for Hillary Clinton, because of her pandering. At the beginning of the race, she visited many talk shows, including Ellen DeGeneres Show, Jimmy Kimmel Live!, The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, where she tried to appeal to young votes, but she seemed unauthentic and stiff. Millennials rather appreciated candidate's like Bernie Sanders, who was being himself.

The duel between Clinton and Sanders was so escalated that some of the democratic voters, who voted for Sanders in the primary election, chose to vote for a third party candidate rather than for Clinton in the general election. Third party candidates could have cost the election to Clinton, but only on the assumption that their second choice would be Hillary Clinton. In this election, the third-party nominees gained enough votes to tip the balance from one nominee to the other. Chalabi (2016) commented:

> Nationally, third-party candidates did relatively well in this election. With most of the ballots now counted, Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson gained over 3% of the popular vote, and the Green party's Jill Stein got 1%. Altogether, candidates who did not represent either of the two main parties got around 4.9% of the popular vote (in 2012, third-party candidates only managed 1.7%, and in 2008, 1.4%). (para. 3)

The fact that many people decided to vote for a candidate that has virtually no chance of getting elected suggests that the choice between Trump and Clinton was unpalatable.

Nevertheless, approximately 138.8 million of Americans voted in this election. Donald J. Trump won 306 Electoral Votes and Hillary Clinton only received 232 Electoral Votes. However it is estimated that 48.5% of voters cast their ballot for Hillary Clinton, whereas 46% voted for Donald Trump ("2016 Election Results", 2017).

Based on the CNN's national exit polls, a majority of men (52%) voted for Donald Trump, compared to 41% who voted for Hillary Clinton. In contrast, most women (54%) voted for Clinton, while 41% cast their vote for Trump. Bigger proportion of voters aged 18 to 44 voted for Clinton, compared with voters 45 and older, who were more likely to vote for Trump. Approximately 55% of young voters voted for Clinton, as well as around 9 % voted for the third party candidates. The biggest divide in support was in terms of race - 57% of white voters cast their vote for Donald Trump, while 89% of African-Americans, 66% of Latinos, 65% of Asian voted for Clinton. Overall, white men and women voted more for

Trump than Clinton. College graduates and post graduates were more likely to vote for the democratic nominee, in contrast to people with high school diploma or less, that voted for the republican nominee. Low and high income households voted for Hillary Clinton, while Trump received more votes from middle-income people as well as from those who earn $250,000 or more. Trump also outpaced Clinton in earning independent votes. Independents gave him 46% of the vote. Over a half of Christians chose to vote for Trump. Another split was between rural areas, which voted in large numbers (64%) for Trump. In contrast people from urban areas voted for Clinton (61%). Suburbs divided their vote between both candidates ("2016 Election Results: Exit Polls", 2016).

To sum up, Trump's demographics was much larger than Clinton's. The overwhelming majority of Americans are white. Even though Clinton won by large margins votes from minorities, including LGBT people, it was not enough.

"Trump won convincingly in 26 states, collecting 227 electoral votes. Most of these states usually vote Republican, except Iowa and Ohio, which voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012" (Gamio, Meko and Lu, 2016, para. 3). Next to republican strongholds such as Texas, Alabama, Alaska and more Trump managed to win most of the battleground states – Florida, Ohio, Iowa, Michigan and North Carolina. Gamio et al. (2016) concluded that Clinton decisively won in 18 states and in Washington, D.C., most of them are blue states, and major cities located along the coasts. In addition, in some states the race was extremely close. In these states, the difference in margins was less than 2 percent: New Hampshire and Minnesota, which were won by Hillary Clinton and Florida, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, which were won by democratic nominee in the last election and won the republican nominee in 2016. Six states were won by less than two percent. Unexpectedly, Clinton lost Wisconsin and Pennsylvania - states, where Barack Obama won in 2012. These states "had not voted for a Republican president since voting for George H.W. Bush in 1988.

Wisconsin had not gone Republican since 1984" (Gamio et al., 2016, para. 5). Clinton took these states for granted, in the end she lost them.

What decided the race were Rust Belt states such as Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. Trump was the first candidate, who addressed issues concerning people of these states. He promised to bring jobs back, to punish companies which shifted jobs abroad and he promised he will save coal mining jobs. The economy in Rust Belt started declining decades ago. Many factories closed and shifted jobs overseas or to Mexico, unemployment rose due to new trends such as automatization or clean energy and consequently a lot of people moved to state's capitals, while the use of drugs increased among those who were left behind. McQuarrie (2016) commented: "These are communities that have been suffering from neglect and decline for decades. Families have gotten poorer and there are few opportunities for people who stay" (para. 47).

People from the Rust Belt who voted for Trump were willing to overlook Trump's comments about women and minorities. They wanted change and that's what Donald Trump promised to them.

Change is a factor that plays a significant role in every election. It is what got President Obama elected for the first time and it is what helped Donald Trump in beating Hillary Clinton. Trump's supporters wanted something that will directly help them. They saw Clinton as a continuation of Obama's governance. The discontent white-working class, did not want "four more years of Obama". That is also the reason why it is hard for a party in the United States, to win presidential elections three times in a row.

After the election night Clinton conceded to her republican rival. In the early morning the President-elect Donald J. Trump made his victory speech in New York. Trump (2016) declared:

Now it's time for America to bind the wounds of division, have to get together. To all Republicans and Democrats and independents across this nation, I say it is time for us to come together as one united people. It's time. I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be president for all Americans, and this is so important to me. For those who have chosen not to support me in the past, of which there were a few people, I'm reaching out to you for your guidance and your help so that we can work together and unify our great country. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer (Trump, 2016, 6:59)

After the election, there has been an attempt to recount the votes. The recount was carried out by a partisan group, their goal was to study the strength of America's system. There were several reasons why this year it was important to check whether Trump's victory was legitimate. Fries (2017) noted that "after all, Trump himself had warned that the election was "rigged" and the FBI later uncovered evidence that Russian hackers had launched a coordinated effort to defeat Clinton" (para. 6). According to this article They wanted to conduct recount Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan. Only a presidential candidate could call for a recount, therefore Jill Stein joined the team. The way Stein handled her fund-raising efforts destroyed the attempt. On November 23, she told supporters that she needed to raise $2.5 million to cover the initial filing fees for recounts. After the initial goal was reached in less than 12 hours, the figure rose to $4.5 million, then to $7 million, later to$9.5 million. Each time, Stein cited unexpected expenses. After spending $7 million to force hundreds of county officials across three states to inspect millions of ballots, recount advocates could not provide a single piece of evidence that the election results had been manipulated or miscounted. Judge dismissed Stein's lawsuit and ended the recount.

January 20, on the Inauguration Day Donald J. Trump became the 45th president of the United States, swearing that he will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

So far, after five months in office Trump was able to appoint Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, he signed an executive order temporarily banning citizens of six predominantly Muslim countries Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from coming to America. It sparked immediate outrage and confusion as many people were detained in airports. Later federal judge blocked the government from carrying out the ban. After a third attempt the ban is now in effect. President Trump demonstrated the strength of the American military, when he dropped "the mother of all bombs" on ISIS terrorists in Afghanistan. With Tomahawks he destroyed a Syrian airport, from which Assad's airplanes took off to drop chemical weapons on Syrian civilians. The Republican party proposed a new tax reform, which would cut the corporate tax from 35% to 15% resulting in boosting the economy. Government refused to fund the wall on the border with Mexico, thus Trump recently suggested that the wall should have solar panels on it, to create energy. One of the Trump's main promises was to repeal and replace Obamacare. Republicans introduced a new healthcare, which is being criticized even by members of his party. So far they do not have enough votes to pass it in the Senate.

CONCLUSION

If everything above is to be taken into consideration, it can be said that the year 2016 was a year of change. Not just in the United States, but also around the world – 2016 was also the year, when people voted for Brexit. Americans said no to elites and voted for an outsider. Mostly the dissatisfied white working-class chose Donald Trump, a man who has been rich from the day he was born, to be their champion.

There has never been a candidate with less experience in politics than Donald Trump. That was not an obstacle for him, in contrast it earned him votes. Trump offered his own experience and skills he gained from running his businesses. He made a promise to bring American jobs back, he wanted to build a wall on the border with Mexico and he promised to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure. Even though his plans and suggestions were often vague and provided little or no explanation on how he would keep them, people cast their votes with hope that he will keep them. He promised to bring change into the Washington. People were tired with political correctness, the way Trump spoke was understandable to every voter. His short sentences and slogans like "Build a Wall" and "Lock her up" resonated among voters more than Clinton's prepared speeches. In 2016, people were willing to overlook Trump's scandalous statement about women, and minorities in exchange for better prospects.

Clinton thought that by earning votes of minorities, she will win. These are the loudest groups of people, but they are small groups. Majority of American are white and white people overwhelmingly voted for Donald Trump. Trump won all republicans strongholds and he managed to win most of the battle ground swing states. Most importantly he won the majority of Rust Belt states, which in the past elections voted for democrats.

Clinton was a not a perfect candidate, she made a lot of mistakes during the campaign. For instance calling Trump's supporters a basket of deplorables. She did not pay enough

attention to Rust Belt states, and she lost most of them. Many controversies which were connected with her name eclipsed issues, about which she wanted to talk about. She was not able to lay out a positive message about herself. She spent too much time on warning Americans against how Trump would govern. But she was not able to convince enough of voters that Trump has a bad temperament to be the leader of the world's biggest superpower, who is in charge of the nuclear codes.

Hillary Clinton was responsible for the campaign. She was the candidate and she lost. On the other hand the race was so close, that every small influencing factor, including Russian meddling and Comey's statement just a few days before the election day most probably influenced the outcome. The spread of fake news was so vast in the last three months of the election that it surpassed real news on social media.

According to the exit polls, this election split Americans by race, education, sexual orientation and faith. White people outvoted African-Americans and other race minorities. Many of Clinton's supports still find it hard to believe that Donald Trump was the one who took the highest office in land.

Trump's rise was remarkable, confirming a trend seen in Europe where nationalists and populists were gaining more power. President Donald J. Trump already expressed that he wants to run for the office again in 2020. He has four years to fulfil his promises. The next four years will show, whether he was a demagogue and a populist or whether he can really change the system, drain the swamp and make America great again.

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Shrnutí

Tématem této bakalářské práce je volba amerického prezidenta v roce 2016. Práce je rozdělena do 5 částí. V úvodu je přehled celé bakalářské práce. V druhé části je popsán průběh primárních voleb, včetně výběru vicepresidentů. Třetí část se zabývá generálními volbami a zmiňuje hlavní události, skandály a kontroverze, které se před a v průběhu voleb událi. Čtvrtá část analyzuje výsledky voleb, shrnuje získané poznatky, dává je kontextu a uvádí dosavadní výsledky vlády prezidenta Trumpa. Poslední část této práce shrnuje získané informace o tom proč Donald Trump vyhrál a Hillary Clintonová prohrála.