

What Will It Take?: Explaining the Factors that Could Lead to Third-Party Support in a Two-Party State

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Abstract

The 2016 Presidential Election saw the rise of two major party candidates that have some of the highest unfavorability ratings ever recorded, and the one with the worse of those ratings is now the President-Elect. Meanwhile, national polls suggest that support for a third major party is surging. The Green and Libertarian Presidential candidates each won millions of votes nationwide, despite having to fight against both stigma and a political structure only conducive to a two-party system. Why do some individuals vote for these third party candidates despite the strategic pressures against doing so? Are there biographical factors that lead an individual to be more likely to vote for a third party candidate? This study works to answer these questions using exit poll data from the 2016 Presidential Election in Oswegatchie, Connecticut. Overall, the results indicate that there is generally a positive relationship between one's level of education and their likelihood of voting for a third party candidate. More important indicators appear to be age, gender, and registered political affiliation. The results also suggest that large proportions of the population would be willing to vote for a third party candidate if they both knew more and did not have to struggle with structural flaws within the American political system, like the spoiler effect derived from our first-past-the-post voting system.

Introduction

The United States of America is one of only a handful of developed countries on Earth that has maintained a stable two-party government for over the past 100 years, and that fact alone begs the question: how has this been possible? This may be a more relevant question to the electorate of the United States in 2016 than it ever has been, following an election cycle that managed to deliver two of the most disliked major party Presidential candidates in American history, Donald Trump (R) and Hillary Clinton (D). Meanwhile, third party candidates like Gary Johnson (L) and Jill Stein (G) gained ground with the vote proportions for their respective parties, with over 5%

of the total voting population casting a ballot against Trump and Clinton. In the early hours of November 9, 2016, millions of Americans asked themselves how it was possible for one of the most disliked candidates in history to win the highest office in the country so easily, and how it was possible that more Americans did not decide to vote for the two minor party candidates, who are, arguably, largely less divisive than either Clinton or Trump. In this paper I will attempt to answer these questions using other studies into the subject and my own findings from an exit poll I fielded on election day, as well as the question of what demographic and social factors are more likely to lead an individual to decide to vote for a third party candidate.

Literature Review

There are a number of theories and observed phenomenon that one must know more about before considering the way in which they relate to the data collected from the exit poll I conducted in Oswegatchie CT on Election Day 2016. While many of these theories have been tested time and time again by political and other social scientists, many studies aiming to confirm or deny them have been inconclusive or have not strictly shown relationships to be anything more than correlational. In short, I will attempt to describe and define each of the theories that I believe play into my findings within this review.

On the subject of risk taking, a multitude of psychological studies have been done on the likelihood of different demographic groups to take risks, and it has been found time and time again that both men and younger individuals are more likely to take risks than women and older individuals. The idea that men are greater risk takers is exemplified in a study by Byrnes, Miller, and Schafer, where men and women were each presented with a hypothetical scenario and asked with what odds of success would they still be willing to go through with the scenario. Men, on the whole, were much more likely to take a chance and claim that they would push on despite low odds, while women were less likely to play the odds (Byrnes 1999, 377). An example of this occurring in real-life is women being less likely to run for office without being asked than men are. It is a well-known fact that men are both more likely to run for and more likely to win public office than a woman is, and it may be explained by the fact that a man is more likely to engage in risky behavior than a woman is. Similarly, a psychological study conducted by Deakin, Aitken, Robbins, and Sahakian in 2004 examined a large cohort of adults at varying ages, which determined that risk-taking decreases in age (Deakin 2004, 590). Real-world implications of this can be seen through one's car insurance policy, where men under 25 years old are required to pay a much higher rate than both women of the same age and other individuals of greater ages. Overall, there is quite a lot of evidence to suggest that both gender and age contribute to one's likelihood of risk-taking.

Shigeo Hirano and James Snyder Jr. hypothesized in their 2007 article "The Decline of Third-Party Voting in the United States" that the left has effectively been co-opted by the Democratic Party, as the far left felt as though they had to support a major party that was willing

to impose leftist economic policy, such as was seen with the New Deal (Hirano and Snyder 2007, 3). Their research found that while there has been a significant drop in third party voting since the mid 1900s, largely due to the fact that various pieces of would-be third parties are quickly co-opted by one of the two major parties the claim that the New Deal solely caused this decline was not found to be entirely accurate (Hirano and Snyder 2007, 12). This study simultaneously offers many answers and leaves behind many questions. The research presented in this article will attempt to further the work by Hirano and Snyder by testing whether or not biographical and structural factors have anything to do with one's likelihood to vote for a third party. If biographical factors are found to have an impact on third party voting, they could then compare identified demographics to historical trends to find out if high-probability populations have declined in size over time, contributing to the decline in votes for third parties. Otherwise, this data may contribute to the idea that there are larger occurrences at work that have led to the decline of third party voting. This is important because there has been a history of discrepancy in the field of political science between whether party politics arises more due to structure of the political system or from public opinion and demographics, and this study aims to examine both to see if either proves to be a determinant in one's likelihood to vote for a third party.

While the amount of data is not overflowing on this subject, Geoff Peterson and Mark Wrighton did, in fact, conduct research on biographical factors that indicate whether or not one is likely to vote for a third party. Their study, however, focuses mostly on the effect that distrust in government has on one's likelihood to vote for a third party (Peterson and Wrighton 1998, 18). In this study, they did find evidence to suggest that distrust lead to third party votes, and they also found evidence that gender, education, and race had some effect, although it was not as statistically significant as the measurement of trust (Peterson and Wrighton 1998, 22). Their article also suggested, however, that individuals not feeling represented by the two major parties are likely to find themselves abstaining from the political process altogether, as the restrictions on third parties are so great that it is almost impossible for such organizations to become a major force in the political arena. Thus, the authors recommended proportional representation voting as a means of restoring the interest of disenfranchised voters (Peterson and Wrighton 1998, 30). The research conducted for this article will expand on their findings by measuring different variables and seek to reaffirm the work they have already completed, and it will continue to elaborate on the idea that alternative voting methods would both increase the population's desire to vote for known third parties and that these alternative voting methods can yield very different electoral results that could benefit all Americans.

Another concept to know of going forward is that of the spoiler effect, where the average voter is so convinced that one of two candidates will win that they believe any vote for a third candidate will help the worse of those two main candidates win. This was an especially large discussion point after the 2000 election, when Al Gore won the popular vote but lost Florida to George W. Bush by a margin of 537 votes (Allen 2005, 636). Ralph Nader, the Green Party presidential candidate that year, has often been blamed for Gore's loss of the state, as it is widely

believed that he “stole” Gore’s votes. One study on this election by Neal Allen and Brian Brox does suggest that approximately 1.8% of voters decided to vote for Nader that they had previously projected would vote for Gore (Allen 2005, 636). This is, by and large, a level of illogical thinking, as using a model to project what kind of person is likely to vote for a specific candidate does not in turn entitle that candidate to those votes. In the end, Nader won more than 537 votes in Florida, and thus many argue that he cost Gore the election, but that same study further suggests that third party and independent voters were more likely to have voted for another third party candidate or to have not voted at all than to show up on Election Day and vote for Gore (Allen 2005, 636). This is important for two reasons: first, because my exit poll seeks to project what kind of person is most likely to vote for a third party candidate, but it must be understood that this is both not an exact science nor do these findings suggest that any specific candidate should be winning the vote of a specific demographic every time. In the end, votes are an individual choice, and individuals have many different ways of logically working through a quandary like their choice in candidates. Second, this is important because the survey collected data on how much the spoiler effect may have affected the presidential election in Oswegatchie, CT, and one must understand going forward that there are many ways in which a vote count could be divided if one candidate was pulled off the ballot.

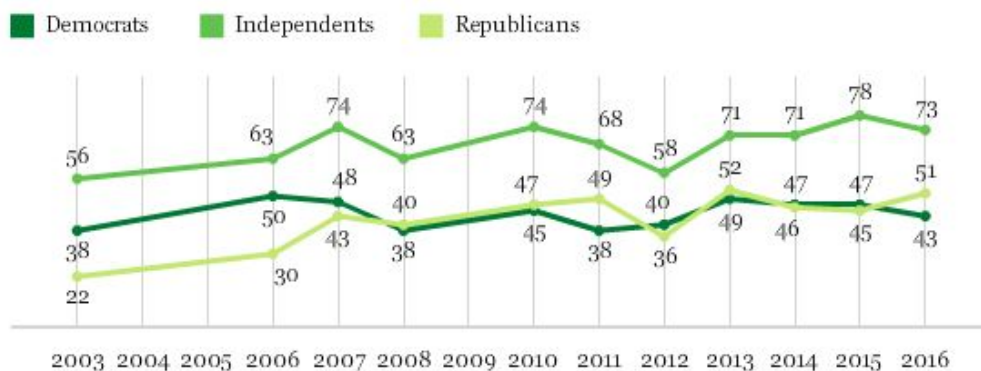
Another theory that is important to know when discussing the system of voting in the United States, as well as third parties in general, is Duverger’s Law. This law suggest that two parties will dominate under a first-past-the-post electoral system, which is what most elections in the United States use (Aldrich 2016, 275). In this system, simply the person with the most number of votes wins the race. Thus, over time, it behooves candidates to adopt more broad platforms to help attract more voters, and voters are enticed to vote for the candidate that both matches their views as closely as possible and has a likelihood of winning. As coalitions form, other candidates with less support will continue to lose support as the two largest coalitions appear to be the only two with a chance of winning. Finally, there are only two individuals running, and any time a third party candidate attempts to run opposed to them, most members of the public either believe that they cannot win or that they will pull votes away from the lesser of two evils if they vote for that third candidate. Duverger suggests that other systems of voting, such as instant-runoff or proportional representation can help do away with the two party system, which is exemplified by a study conducted by John Aldrich and Daniel Lee that examines kinds of voting systems and the effective number of political parties in a given country (Aldrich 2016, 277). This same article proposes that ambition, the presidency, and policy help shape the US political system to have two political parties, while an article by William Riker looks more thoroughly into Duverger’s Law, even going so far as to amend it to say that “plurality election rules bring about and maintain two-party competition except in countries where (1) third parties nationally are continually one of two parties locally, and (2) one party among several is almost

always the Condorcet¹ winner in elections” (Riker 1982, 761). These ideas are very important to my study, as they help explain many of the reasons why various individuals choose to either choose to or avoid voting for third party candidates, and notes that there are several major structural issues facing third parties that wish to gain traction in elections in the United States.

Political polls also shed some interesting light on third parties in the 2016 election. Just this past year, Gallup reported that approximately 57% of US citizens believe a third major political party is needed, whereas only 46% of citizens felt the same way in 2012 (Gallup 2016). This may be due to the farcical campaign cycle that just recently concluded, or it may be the result of the gridlock that has been overwhelmingly present in Congress over the past four years. Even more interestingly, 73% of unaffiliated voters and over half of registered Republicans, 51%, feel a need for a third major party. Since 2003, the only time a major party broke 50% in support for a third party was in 2013 with 52% support (Gallup 2016). This suggests that there is a terrible disapproval of what the Republican Party has done over the past four years, even from within their own political party. Democrats are not off the hook, however, with 43% of their own members believing that a third party is necessary, suggesting their discontent with the Democratic Party (Gallup 2016).

Figure 3 Support for a Third Major U.S. Political Party, by Political Party Affiliation

Figures are percentages saying a third party is needed



Note: 2007 and 2011 data represent average of two polls

GALLUP

A Gallup poll taken from July 13-17, 2016 also reflects on the 2016 minor party candidates in detail, with the headline of the article noting that most Americans did not know at the time who Gary Johnson or Jill Stein were, and it is even more likely that of the small percentages that knew of them, even fewer could name specific policies that they promoted (Gallup 2016). 63% of Americans claimed to not be familiar with Johnson when asked, and 68% claimed not to be familiar with Stein (Gallup 2016). This survey also relates directly to a part of

¹ A Condorcet winner in an election is one that would win in a pairwise contest with each and every challenger it faces. A Condorcet winner is generally seen as having a stronger position than merely a plurality winner.

my exit poll by way of asking for favorability levels, revealing that, at the time, Johnson had 19% feeling as though he was favorable and 18% stating he was unfavorable, while Stein only had 13% finding her favorable with 18% finding her unfavorable (Gallup 2016). In a way, these exact results are reflected in the way Oswegatchie voters felt about Stein in comparison to Johnson, and we measured that a sizable portion of the population had no idea who the minor party candidates were or for what they stood. Furthermore, it was interesting to see that Johnson was found less favorable by Republicans and Conservatives than he was by Liberals and Democrats, while the same was true of Stein to a wholly different extent.

Between a likelihood to engage in risky behavior, other studies that have drawn conclusions on the demographics most likely to vote for third party candidates, the spoiler effect, Duverger's Law, and polls about the population in relation to the 2016 third party presidential candidates, it can be seen that an immense amount of work has previously been put into explaining third party votes in the United States. This article will attempt to build on this wealth of knowledge by both working to confirm or deny previously devised theories about third party voting, as well as seeking to understand how the 2016 election fits into the context of the third party narrative of this country.

Theory and Hypotheses

There are a multitude of theories that must be taken into consideration as one hypothesizes on which social and demographic factors are most likely to lead one towards and away from voting for a third party candidate. On the subject of gender, it is well-known in the field of psychology that men are more likely to display high-risk behavior than women, and thus a man may be more willing to take a chance on voting for a third party candidate than a woman is. This same theory can be attributed to individuals that are younger, as those individuals are more likely to take those similar risks and to be less likely to think through the consequences of their choices. These young voters are also less entrenched in a tradition of voting for one specific political party, and thus likely feel less of an allegiance to a major party than their parents do. Millennials are also becoming known for being the generation to challenge traditional social models, and the two-party system may be no exception.

I must also mention that party identification likely serves as a strong indicator of one's vote choice. While it may seem crystal clear to some individuals why this would be true, there are many others that registered to vote several decades ago and have not changed their Party ID since then, and now do not identify with the party to which they technically belong. There are also many who do not strongly identify with a party that decide to register with one so that they may have rights to either vote in primary elections or to run for office. Despite this, I do wish to discuss the fact that individuals who choose to enroll with a minor political party may be even more likely to vote for candidates from that specific party than the population enrolled with a major political party due to the fact that one's devotion to a movement must be quite strong in

order to publicly register as a party of it, and those registering are likely following the party's activity and wishing to vote in that minor party's caucuses or primaries, if the state allows them. When an individual is engaged with a political party in that amount of detail, it becomes quite likely that they will want to reward their efforts on election day with another vote in favor of their candidate of choice.

Furthermore, individuals who are highly interested in the Presidential election may be more likely to vote for a third-party candidate, as they are individuals with curious minds that are likely to conduct their own personalized research on each candidate and political party. There may also be a connection between people that were exceptionally disinterested in the 2016 election due to the fact that they were turned-off to the idea of electing Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, and thus decided to give their vote for a third party candidate. It may be much less likely for someone falling in the middle of the spectrum to vote for a third party candidate, as they have neither the disdain for the major party candidates needed to give the vote to someone else, nor do they have the drive to go above and beyond watching the news to learn more about their voting options. Perhaps most importantly, however, individuals with higher levels of education may be more likely to decide to vote for a third party candidate than their less educated counterparts. Individuals pursuing higher education are those with the combined curiosity to learn more and general knowledge-base needed to excel in an academic setting. Individuals with higher education have the drive needed to further research third party candidates, but also have the training on how to best go about conducting that research into their options on the ballot. So while curiosity for learning alone may greatly impact one's ability to interact with the political sphere, a curious mind with an education is much more likely to successfully find information about third party platforms and candidates than those without that knowledge, ability, and past experience.

While there are many factors that likely influence one's likelihood to vote for or against third parties in politics, in this article I argue that higher education, combined with demographic factors that increase one's likelihood to demonstrate risky behavior, is one of the primary factors that can help shape the ballot selections of a given individual. The basis for this argument is largely based on the results of an exit poll of over 480 that was conducted in the Oswegatchie precinct in Waterford, CT on Election Day 2016 (November 8th). The survey requested that participants anonymously answer questions regarding their party affiliation, level of interest in politics, their vote choices, and other demographic information that was used to draw inferences on the typical kind of individual that chooses to vote for a specific political party's candidate. A similar survey was conducted in Waterford, CT on Election Day 2015 (November 3rd), the results of which are included in Appendix C of this document.

In my 2015 study, I hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of education would be more likely to vote for a third party candidate because they would be more likely to both have curious minds and the ability to conduct the kind of research necessary in order to understand and be knowledgeable of third party platforms. Based on my study, this was found to be correct,

with individuals possessing bachelors degrees and masters degrees being significantly more likely to vote for a third party candidate than someone without those degrees. The 2015 town election, however, had a fairly small voter turnout rate compared to Presidential elections, and thus the next relevant step was to begin the process of confirming my results by seeing if they hold up in a different election or not. Based on past findings and the theories behind those findings, I hypothesize that individuals with a higher level of education will be more likely to vote for third party candidates.

The hypothesis on education was measured with an ordinal scale, with “1” meaning that an individual has had some high school experience, and “5” meaning that they have their doctoral degree. Many of the other questions on the survey were measured in a similar way, which will allow us to better compare results to the 2015 survey and determine what an average voter looked like in the Oswegatchie, CT precinct in 2016.

Data and Research Design

The exit poll I conducted on Election Day, 2016 to support these hypotheses was especially designed and tailored in an effort to collect as much voting and demographic information as possible while also aiming to ensure a high probability of survey completion by each and every respondent, so as to avoid as much response bias as possible. The survey was administered by pen and paper in-person, with 15 out of 16 questions appearing on the front side of that paper. While it would have been preferable to either have a computer available at the polling station to allow for an electronic survey to be taken or for all the questions to be on one side of the paper, a simple lack of space on the paper combined with a lack of electricity made available at the Oswegatchie polling location made these two impossible. Thus, as a result we found that several individuals failed to turn the page over to answer the final question.

The first two questions, pertaining to Presidential candidate preference and vote respectively, were designed carefully so as to remove as much bias as possible from the potential answers respondents gave. Each of the Presidential candidates were ordered alphabetically by last name, and were listed on a horizontal line as opposed to a vertical list, in case different arrangements may increase primacy bias. The question regarding candidate preference was also strategically placed before the question regarding Presidential vote in an attempt to help respondents be more honest on the questionnaire, as I believed individuals who already stated that they voted for individual X would feel more responsibility to say they preferred individual X than someone who had not previously been asked about their vote choice. Next, the responses to Question 3 were ordered in the same way that the political parties appeared on the ballot in the Oswegatchie, CT precinct, which was a strategic effort on my part to help individuals more easily remember their votes from several minutes before. Questions 3a and 3b were follow-ups regarding why or why not an individual decided to cast a vote for a third party candidate, and were left open-ended to allow for individuals to be able to express their specific rationality for

their decision. In the last part of the political identity segment of the survey, individuals were asked to identify their registered political affiliations, and were given the option of selected any of the parties with Presidential candidates, “Unaffiliated”, and a fill-in-the-blank “Other” selection; and respondents subsequently were asked to rate each of the four main political parties on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being “Most Favorable” and 1 being “Unfavorable”. These questions aimed to get a sense of how devoted an individual was to their presidential candidate’s party, and how they comparatively viewed the other political parties in either a positive or a negative light.

The right-hand side of the questionnaire’s front focused on demographics, or background information that may inform us about their social tendencies, likely behavioral patterns, and more. Individuals were first asked to rate their interest in the 2016 election on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being “Very Interested” and 1 being “Disinterested”. Respondents were then asked to identify their age by selecting one of four cohort groups, with a fifth option being “Prefer Not To Say”. When administering the survey to test subjects before election day, it became apparent that age was a touchy subject for many individuals, and it was found that respondents were more likely to openly identify with an age range over a specific number. Thus, we thought it best to categorize the groups into generational cohort groups. Then, individuals were asked to name the state in which they grew up. Individuals that grew up outside the country were grouped together in the results of this survey due to the fact that their numbers were too few to break them down into further groups and glean any discernable information from them. Next, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and education were discussed, each having an open-ended “Other” option, given that many individuals may not identify with the traditional choices we made available to them. The race/ethnicity responses were listed in the same order and used the precise phrases to describe each group as the U.S. Census uses.

Lastly, on the back of the survey, we asked one final question that asked individuals to rank hypothetical candidates from 1 to 4, with 1 being their most preferred candidate. Each candidate’s political affiliation was identified next to their made-up name, which were all chosen from lists of common first and last names, and had five bullet points outlining the major platform points of their hypothetical campaign. Four different survey variations were given out in equal proportions to respondents. Survey “A” displayed the Democrat and Republican listed above the “Green” and “Libertarian” candidates, and listed five platform points under each candidate that correctly matched the party label. Survey “C” was the same, with the exception that the Libertarian and Republican platform points were switched, as well as the Green and Democratic platform points. Surveys “B” and “D” were identical to “A” and “C” respectively, with the exception that the “Green” and “Libertarian” candidates were listed above the “Democrat” and “Republican” in an effort to eliminate primacy bias. This question was introduced in an effort to learn more about whether individuals consider party platform or party label more often when voting, which was done by comparing the responses between the A/B group and the C/D group. The platform language was either directly taken or derived from their respective official political

party platforms.

The data was collected as an exit poll outside of Oswegatchie Elementary School in Waterford, Connecticut. This mode allowed us to come as close to being completely certain that we were surveying actual voters, as opposed to conducting a poll either before election day or after election day and risking that an individual would lie about their intent to vote or having voted at all. In terms of specific location at each polling place, Connecticut State law dictates that any and all political activity must be conducted beyond 75 feet from the entrance and exit of the polling place. In order to better reach voters at the polling place, I asked high school and college students in the area to join us as volunteers. All volunteers helped with the administration of the survey.

When presenting the opportunity to would-be respondents, volunteers were asked to recite the following statement:

“Good morning/afternoon! Would you be willing to take a two-minute survey to help further a political science research project at Wheaton College in Massachusetts?”

Individuals that did not agree to take the survey after initial contact were told “have a nice day!”, while those agreeing to take the survey were given a clipboard with the survey and pen already attached, and then told that there was a backside and that they were welcome to sit down at a provided table if they wished. Once they completed the survey, they were asked to place it in a closed box and were given well-wishes as they left.

It is important to note why these specific areas were selected as the targets of the exit poll. Oswegatchie is a precinct within the town of Waterford, CT, and is also my hometown. I had the opportunity to field a similar exit poll in 2015 in Oswegatchie, and I have taken advantage of that data in this case and will compare this years results from last to make inferences about how the electorate in Presidential elections compares to the electorate in years when only local officials are selected, as well as to reaffirm and critically analyze the data gathered in 2016. The town of Norton, MA was included in the 2016 data collection so that I may be able to critically evaluate the findings of the Oswegatchie precinct to see whether or not findings in that area may be directly applicable to populations in other precincts, towns, and counties.

Finally, Table 1 in Appendix B displays the exit poll results for Question 2, which asked for whom each respondent voted. Table 2 in that same appendix reports the final tally of official votes cast in the Oswegatchie precinct in-person on that day, meaning that each vote represented in that table is an individual that had a chance of seeing the exit poll’s booth and taking the survey. Table 1, seen below, displays the percentage of votes that each candidate received by respondents in the survey and in the actual vote count, and the final column reveals the difference between these two findings.

Table 1 **Difference Between Survey and Voting Totals**

Candidates	Survey Vote %	Actual Vote %	Difference
Hillary Clinton	52.39%	46.00%	6.39%
Gary Johnson	6.45%	3.89%	2.56%
Jill Stein	3.95%	1.84%	2.11%
Donald Trump	36.38%	47.87%	-11.49%
Other	0.83%	0.40%	0.43%

It can be seen that the difference between the number of reported votes for Donald Trump and the number of actual votes for him differed greatly, far outside of the survey's margin of error (Office of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut 2016). This may have been due to the fact that many Trump supporters were skeptical of the academic nature of the poll. It also may have been due to the fact that most of the volunteers in the Oswegatchie precinct were male and may have deterred a specific kind of voter. This finding may even go so far as to suggest that a proportion of Trump voters are ashamed, or otherwise scared to admit that they voted for him. While it is impossible to know exactly why this came to be, the result calls into question, first and foremost, the validity of many of the findings of this survey. Given the deficit of Trump supporters that are represented in this survey, one must note that each and every correlation found by this study may be either over or understated, and I highly encourage anyone interested in further dissecting the ideas presented beyond this point to replicate this survey in future years or to develop models that would help correct such a wide deficit between the proportions of reported and actual Trump voters.

I must also note at this time the makeup of the Waterford, CT community, as it may help paint a better picture regarding why individuals here vote the way that they do. Waterford is a fairly affluent town and is, at the current time, largely dominated by the Democratic Party. Waterford is a town comprised of approximately 19,427 people, and there were 12,368 active registered voters as of October 27, 2015. The median household income as of 2013, was \$73,156, the per capita annual income was \$39,042, and 5.4% of the town lives in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2015). Waterford could be considered to be suburban, with approximately 595.6 individuals per square mile of land in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2015). More demographic information about Waterford will be discussed as it is compared to the results gathered from the survey.

Analysis

In order to take each of the hypotheses into account, and furthermore to determine whether or not each demographic and societal factor has a major impact on the likelihood of an individual to vote for a third party, this analysis section will examine cross tabulations comparing party ID, gender, age, interest in the election and level of education with one's decision to either include a minor party in their vote or to solely vote for major parties. Beyond this, the results of the exit poll also have serious implications regarding structural voting phenomena like the spoiler effect, strategic voting, and alternative forms of voting, each of which will be addressed in full.

In Tables 2-6, it is important to note that "Mj Pty" rows specifically categorize individuals that only cast ballots for major party candidates. This means they may have only voted Democrat, may have only voted Republican, or may have voted for both, but they specifically did not include a vote for a minor party or a write-in candidate on their ballot. "Mn Pty" categorizes any individual who included a vote for a third party candidate on their ballot. They may have only voted down the Green or Libertarian line, they may have only written-in candidates, or they may have mixed and matched their votes between the major and minor party candidates, but somewhere on their ballot they decided to vote against two major party candidates. The bottom "Total" row combines the previous two categories to provide an average baseline from which the other two categories may be compared.

Table 2 Party ID in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	D	R	G	L	U	Other	Total
Mj Pty	161 (83%)	117 (89%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (13%)	96 (75%)	5 (63%)	380
Mn Pty	32 (17%)	15 (11%)	5 (100%)	7 (88%)	32 (25%)	3 (38%)	94
Total	193 (41%)	132 (28%)	5 (1.1%)	8 (1.7%)	128 (27%)	8 (1.7%)	474

The first relationship examined looks at a comparison between individual political party identification and one's decision to either include or exclude a minor party candidate in their vote total. The data includes the raw numbers as well as percentages, which compares the number of individuals falling within the Major Party, Minor Party, and Total Voters category to the total number of respondents listed at the end of each row. Percentages are rounded simply so that they may fit within the table. I was cautious to not calculate this specific category's percentages by row due to the fact that registered Democrats took my survey at a disproportionately higher rate than registered Republicans and unaffiliated voters, and calculating percentages in that manner would give Democrats an unfair weight in their direction to any results found. Thus, like many of the other data tables you will find in this analysis, the

main body of the table has percentages calculated by column, while the “Total” row still shows the percentage by row.

The table above shows one phenomenon very clearly: if an individual identifies enough with a political party to officially register with them, it is quite likely that they will end up voting for that party in the election. With well over 80% of all registered Democrats and Republicans voting specifically for major party candidates, and over 85% of registered Greens and Libertarians including minor party candidates in their vote, it can be seen that there is a strong relationship between party identification and one’s vote choice in the general election. This idea is fleshed out further in Appendix B Table 4, which articulates how Party ID related just as strongly to one’s presidential vote, which suggests that this bond is, on the whole, so strong for the vast majority of voters that it affects even the absolute top of the ballot.

Another interesting thing to note is the fact that unaffiliated voters and individuals identifying with other minor parties, while still more likely to include minor party candidates in their ballots than either registered Democrats or Republicans, mostly decided to cast their ballots for major party candidates only. Despite having an allegiance to a smaller party or no registered allegiance whatsoever, the tide of the two-party system pulled on these individuals with more force than those identifying with the Green or Libertarian parties. This may occur for a number of different reasons. First, it is wholly possible that Greens and Libertarians were much more self-assured in this election, with each of their presidential candidates gaining a plethora of national coverage and national polls suggesting that each candidate would be winning millions of other votes. This, coupled with the fact that the Green and Libertarians have a greater infrastructure to utilize, may have led the Green and Libertarian populations out of a spiral of silence, while members of even smaller political parties may have felt politically isolated enough to not act on their ideas, and rather to fall in line behind a major party candidate that they view as the lesser evil. “Unaffiliated” in Connecticut, on the other hand, is the default outcome when an individual either refuses or fails to label themselves on a voter registration form. Thus, there may in fact be a large portion of this group that specifically identifies with one of the two major parties despite not being registered with them, and this fact may have led to the outcome we see within the exit poll results. In short, this exit poll suggests that party affiliation is a significant indicator of vote choice on election day.

Table 3 Gender in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Male	Female	Other	Total
Maj Pty	149 (78.0%)	235 (81.9%)	1 (50.0%)	385
Min Pty	42 (22.0%)	52 (18.1%)	1 (50.0%)	94
Total	191 (39.8%)	287 (59.8%)	2 (0.4%)	480

The next two tables examine the hypothesis that some demographic groups are more likely to engage in risky behavior, specifically the likelihood that male and younger voters will include third party candidates in their vote. As of 2014, the US Census Bureau estimated that population of Waterford was comprised of 51.5% females (US Census Bureau 2015). This number may differ slightly in the Oswegatchie Precinct, which only makes up approximately 25% of the town's population, but it is the best estimate that can be found regarding the gender breakdown of this region. In Table 3, it can be seen that many more females took this survey than males, which likely means one of two things: either females are much more likely to vote in Waterford, or females were much more likely to want to take our exit poll, and there are numerous reasons why each of these possibilities has a likelihood of being true.

Based on our sample, however, we can see that there was a larger percentage of men who voted for minor party candidates than there were women. This may be explained by the fact that men are more likely to make decisions that are commonly thought of as risky, but the difference between the two totals is enough to be caused by a sampling error.

Table 4 **Age in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)**

Votes	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Prefer Not to Say	Total
Maj Pty	68 (68.7%)	64 (75.3%)	177 (83.1%)	72 (91.1%)	4 (100%)	385
Min Pty	31 (31.3%)	21 (24.7%)	36 (16.9%)	7 (8.9%)	0 (0.0%)	95
Total	99 (20.6%)	85 (17.7%)	213 (44.4%)	79 (16.5%)	4 (0.8%)	480

Table 4 looks at the relationship between age and vote choice, and there are several interesting statistics found within it. First, more than twice as many individuals that were polled fell within the range of 45-64 years old as fell into any of the other categories. The only census data provided on this subject suggests that individuals over 65 years of age comprise approximately 20% of the town's population, which means our polling sample did a fairly good job of capturing this group of respondents. We do not know, however, how many individuals are between 45-64 years old, 30-44 years old, or 18-29 years old. It is quite possible that our 18-29 sample was smaller than the proportion of voters falling within that age range in Waterford because this is the age range most likely to take advantage of early voting and absentee ballots due to being in college, graduate school, or deployed overseas in the military. One reason our sample might have been a bit small for individuals over 65 years old is due to the fact that the exit to the polling place was far enough away from our booth, due to state law, that individuals with more limited mobility may have been less likely to trek back to take our survey outside of the 75 foot line. Similarly, individuals with limited mobility due to injury or other disability may

be undersampled as a result of Connecticut state law, but our survey did not examine individual abilities, and it is thus impossible to know how many respondents were lost this way.

When looking at the difference between the age groups in Table 4, however, it is extremely clear that the likelihood of including minor party candidates in one's vote decreases dramatically with each category, with 31.3% of 18-29 year olds including a third party candidate in their vote, and only 8.9% of individuals aged 65 and over voting for minor party candidates, with major drop-offs along the way. This supports the idea that one's likelihood to take risks decreases with age, but it is also possible that personal ideology may be the factor affected by one's age.

Table 5 Election Interest in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Maj Pty	28 (71.8%)	18 (72.0%)	31 (72.1%)	56 (81.2%)	253 (83.0%)	386
Min Pty	11 (28.2%)	7 (28.0%)	12 (27.9%)	13 (18.8%)	52 (17.0%)	95
Total	39 (8.1%)	25 (5.2%)	43 (8.9%)	69 (14.3%)	305 (63.4%)	481

Tables 5 and 6 examine the individual's interest and level of education, both of which play a large role in understanding whether or not a person's overall intellect plays a role in their vote choice on election day. Table 5 begins with interest, which was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being disinterested and 5 being extremely interested in the 2016 election. It can clearly be seen that the vast majority of respondents stated that they were extremely interested in the election, which may have occurred for one of several reasons. One likely scenario is that interest in matters of politics is an issue of social desirability, and many respondents felt as though stating that they were very interested in the election would make them look more informed and well-suited to vote in the election. Another variable to consider is the variety of different ways in which someone could define their level of interest. Some individuals may feel as though an interest of "5" means that they watched one or more of the debates put on by the Commission on Presidential Debates, while a smaller population may feel as though they would have had to do more in order to rank their interest at a "5" level. Lastly, one has to account for the theatrics of this election cycle. It was very difficult for most individuals to escape the news headlines regarding the election that surfaced almost every day. Thus, many individuals who may otherwise have not been interested in the politics and policy discussion surrounding the election cycle now find themselves reporting that they were extremely interested in keeping up with what was happening.

While I hypothesized that individuals at the extreme ends of the interest spectrum would be the most likely to vote for third party candidates, it appears that the respondents in this study did not fit this model. I had guessed that individuals with little interest in the election would in

turn likely have less interest in the two major party candidates and may be more likely to include a minor party candidate, while I assumed that individuals with a greater interest may be more likely to do extra research into the election, and thus would know more about minor parties and may want to vote for them as a result of that fact. The results, however, show that as interest increases, the proportion of the population willing to vote for minor party candidates decreases with each passing category, with a distinct divide between the “3” and “4” groups, with 27.9% and 18.8% voting for minor party candidates respectively. Based on these results, I now hypothesize that those most disinterested with Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton were more likely to label themselves in lower categories of interest (from 1-3) regardless of whether or not they were well versed on the politics of it all. Thus, while I cannot dispel the idea that those feeling disinterested were merely more likely to make a decision to cast what many would call a “throw away vote”, I believe that this data also reflects that people who were less likely to vote for Trump or Clinton were also less likely to report being interested in the election cycle in 2016.

Table 6 Education Level in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Some HS	HS	Bach.	Masters	Doct.	Other	Total
Mj Pty	5 (83.3%)	121 (83.4%)	143 (79.4%)	71 (78.0%)	20 (80.0%)	23 (74.2%)	383
Mn Pty	1 (16.7%)	24 (16.6%)	37 (20.6%)	20 (22.0%)	5 (20.0%)	8 (25.8%)	95
Total	6 (1.2%)	145 (30.3%)	180 (37.7%)	91 (19.0%)	25 (5.2%)	31 (6.5%)	478

I previously hypothesized that the results from the 2016 exit poll in Oswegatchie would largely follow the results found in the 2015 exit poll results, which concluded with statistical significance that those with at least a 4-year college degree were more likely to vote for a minor party candidate than those lacking the same educational background. I previously concluded that this was due to the fact that individuals with a college education have more training in critical thinking and research skills, both of which are necessary in order to successfully research political candidates outside the two-party system with the amount of false information and special attention that mainstream media outlets lend to the major party candidates. These survey results for the most part line up with this theory, as an individual with a masters degree is almost 6% more likely to vote for a minor party candidate than someone with only a high school diploma, likely enough of a difference that the phenomenon could not be explained away by sample bias alone. Considering the findings of this exit poll, the 2015 Oswegatchie exit poll, and

other writings outlined in the literature review, there seems to be conclusive evidence that education plays a role in one's likelihood to vote for a third party candidate.

Table 7² Binary Logistic Regression on Votes for Third Parties

Variables	B	S.E
Major Party ID	-.769***	.257
High Interest 2016 Election	-.243	.257
Age	-.549***	.135
Raised Outside New England	-.140	.571
Raised in CT	-.283	.531
Minority Race	-.973*	.503
Male	.136	.255
Not Straight	.299	.485
Education	.150	.104
Constant	.394	.699
R2	.135	
N	451	

Table 7 serves as the conclusion to my analysis about the influence of demographic factors on the third party vote. From this binary logistic regression, we can see that registering with a major party, having high interest in the 2016 election, being older, being raised anywhere outside of New England or in Connecticut, and belonging to a minority race generally serves as an indication that an individual is less likely to vote for a minor party, while being male, a sexual orientation other than straight, and having higher levels of education are all indicative of being more partial to third party candidates. Out of these demographic areas, however, only Party ID, race, and age appear to have correlations with minority party vote that are statistically significant, although education comes close to being significant at a 90% confidence level. This model both goes to show that the data collected in 2016 has a level of significance to it, while also suggesting that more data must be collected in order to ensure that correlations found are statistically significant. The logistic regression for the 2015 exit poll data, as well as the raw data for 2015, can be found under Appendix C. There are also, however, a number of structural issues

² Note: Coefficients are standardized coefficients and numbers in parentheses are standard errors.
*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

to account for before conclusions are made.

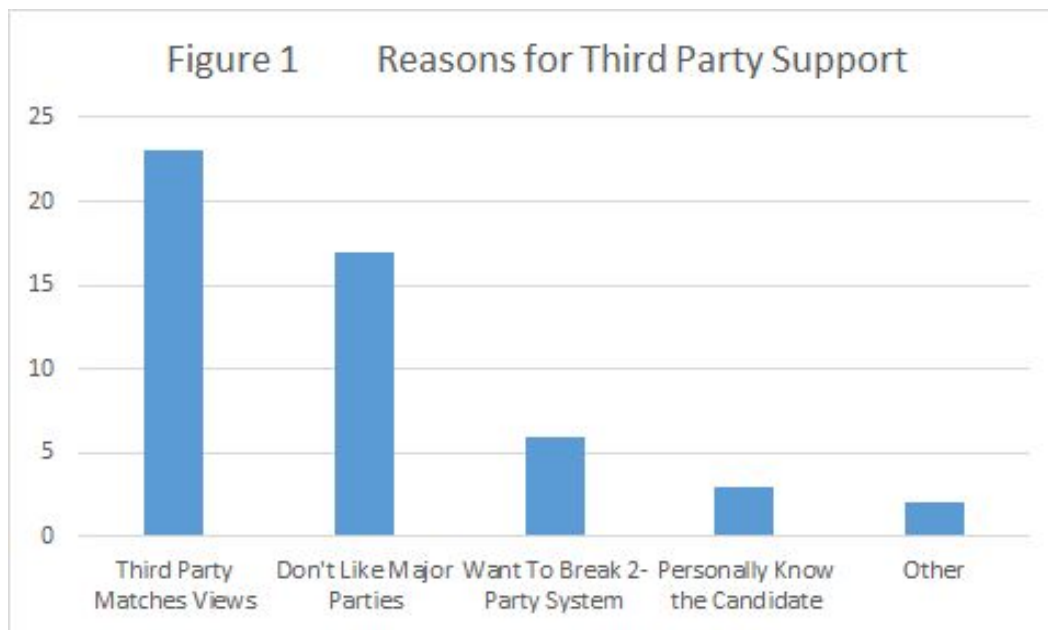
Table 8 Measuring the Proportion of Strategic Voting (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Wants Clinton	Wants Johnson	Wants Stein	Wants Trump	Wants Other	Total
Clinton	232 (99.6%)	6 (15.4%)	9 (29.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	247 (52.44%)
Johnson	0 (0.0%)	30 (76.9%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31 (6.58%)
Stein	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (61.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (4.03%)
Trump	1 (0.4%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (6.5%)	168 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	172 (36.52%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.13%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.43%)
Total	233 (49.5%)	39 (8.3%)	31 (6.6%)	168 (35.7%)	0 (0.0%)	471

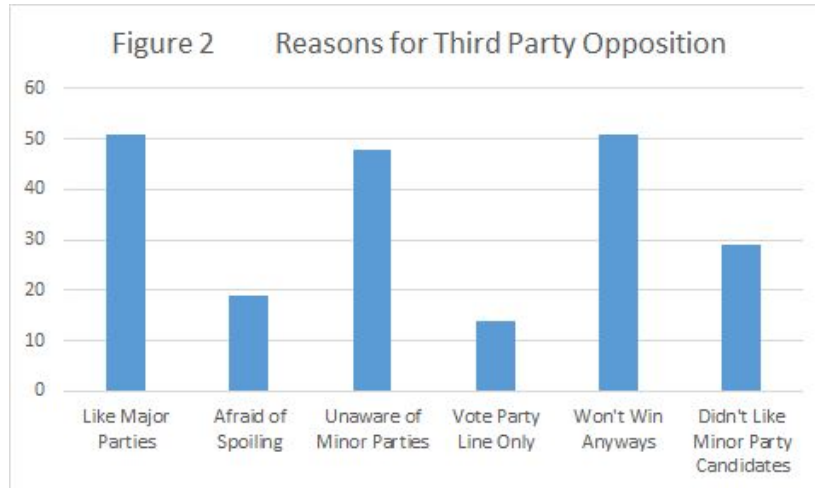
The next several tables examine the structural aspects of third party voting over the role of individual identities, which helps shed more light on both the causes of third party voting in a two-party system and the cause of the persistence of a two-party system in the United States. This begins with Table 8, which compares each individual's vote for President with the individual they reportedly wanted to vote for in the first place. For example, out of the total number of individuals who wanted to vote for Gary Johnson, over 15% of them ended up voting for Clinton, 2.56% voted for Donald Trump, 5.13% voted for a write-in candidate, and 76.92% voted for Johnson himself. Another interesting statistic from this table is that only 61.3% of individuals that wanted to vote for Jill Stein ended up voting for her, with 29% deciding to vote for Hillary Clinton, 6.5% voting for Trump, and even 3.2% voting for Johnson instead, citing the fact that they would have preferred Stein, but noting that Johnson had the better chance to exceed the 5% threshold he needed to gain minor party status for the Libertarian Party on the national level and earn millions of dollars in public campaign money. Meanwhile, over 99.5% of both Clinton and Trump supporters decided to vote for their first-choice candidate. This perfectly exemplifies the phenomenon of strategic voting, where would-be third party voters become so nervous about the idea of ruining a major party candidate's chance of winning due to fear-mongering from the major parties and the media that they decide to vote for their more preferred choice out of the two major party candidates. Thus, this shows that while the two major parties and proponents of major parties will often claim that third parties steal votes from the two major parties, it is often the other way around. According to these results, 28.6% of would-be votes for Gary Johnson and Jill Stein were given to Clinton or Trump out of fear that a vote for a third party may ruin their candidate's chances. 75% of the lost votes were given to Clinton, and

only 15% ended up going to Trump, suggesting that either the Clinton campaign ran a better fear-mongering campaign against third party opposition, or that individuals were not as afraid of spoiling Donald Trump's chances of winning the election as they were of spoiling Clinton's.

It is fascinating to see this occur within this population, given the fact that Connecticut was projected to grant all of its electoral votes to Clinton long before November rolled around. Its occurrence may suggest a lack of understanding of the electoral system, a distrust in large polling firms by a portion of the public, or a true level of terror felt by many respondents at the idea that the other major party candidate may win. While this result may have come to fruition due to a mix of these three factors, given some of the polls that were conducted regarding reactions to a Trump presidency, fear likely played a large role in the level of strategic voting that occurred in the 2016 elections.



One question in the survey that was posed to each individual that included a minor party candidate asked about why they decided to make this decision. The results are listed in Figure 1, with the plurality of third party voters feeling that their selection best matched their views, one third stating that they do not like the two major parties, over 11% saying they want to help break the two-party system, and the rest either did so because they personally know the candidate or for unspecified reasons. This describes several powerful motivators for individuals choosing to cast their ballot for a third-party candidate, and it suggests that more people could be persuaded to vote for such candidates if they could be convinced that they clearly fall within one or more of these categories.



The other side of this questioned asked individuals who only voted for major party candidates to explain why they decided to do so. The most frequent responses suggested that some individuals truly prefer the politics and policy presented by the major party candidates over that presented by minor party candidates, but it also suggests that as much as 69.5% of the population currently voting only for major party candidates would be willing to vote for third party candidates conditionally. 8.9% state that they may be willing to vote for a third party if they could be assured that they would not spoil the election for a major party candidate. 22.5% state that they did not vote for minor party candidates because they did not know enough about them, and thus felt that they needed to be educated more thoroughly on the subject. 23.9% of respondents stated that they felt the candidate would not win, but may otherwise have voted for different parties. Lastly, 13.6% of respondents said that they did not like the current minor party candidates. In short, there are a number of factors that could be changed that may help convince traditionally major party voters to turn their attention to other candidates.

Table 9 The Spoiler Effect - Where Would the Votes Go?

1st Choice	2nd Clinton	2nd Johnson	2nd Stein	2nd Trump	2nd None	Total
Clinton	N/A	67 (28.8%)	76 (32.6%)	16 (6.9%)	74 (31.8%)	233 (49.5%)
Johnson	10 (25.6%)	N/A	15 (38.5%)	10 (25.6%)	4 (10.3%)	39 (8.3%)
Stein	12 (38.7%)	12 (38.7%)	N/A	2 (6.5%)	5 (16.1%)	31 (6.6%)
Trump	25 (14.9%)	56 (33.3%)	29 (17.3%)	N/A	58 (34.5%)	168 (35.7%)
Total	47 (10.0%)	135 (28.7%)	120 (25.5%)	28 (6.0%)	141 (29.9%)	471

Table 9 looks at the idea of the “spoiler effect” in more detail, in an attempt to figure out where the votes would likely go if minor party candidates did not run in the presidential election. Each row identifies which presidential candidate each individual desired to win as their first choice, and each column divided individuals by whom their second choice is after that. Thus, if you follow each candidate’s row from left to right, you can see the percentage of votes that would most likely be redistributed from that candidate to the others. For example, if Johnson decided not to run, approximately 25% of the people who voted for him would have otherwise decided to vote for Hillary Clinton. Over 38% would have gone to Stein, 25% to Trump, and 10% of his supporters either had no second choice or would not have voted if he had not been on the ballot. Similarly, over 38% of Stein’s votes likely would have gone to Clinton if she had not appeared on the ballot, about the same amount would have gone to Johnson, over 6% would have gone to Trump, and over 16% either had to second choice or would not have voted if she had not been on the ballot. These are extremely important statistics to note because of the fact that so many people use the spoiler effect either to scare individuals away from voting for third parties or as an explanation of why their party did not win that the reality of the situation often escapes people. First and foremost, it is wholly incorrect to assume that votes for the Green Party would have all otherwise gone to Clinton, or that votes for Johnson would have otherwise been given to Trump. In fact, according to this data, in both cases over 50% of the total vote given to the third party candidates did not go to any one major party candidate, and there is a sizeable portion of the population that would rather not vote at all than vote for a major party candidate. Furthermore, the idea that the major party candidates are entitled to all votes, and that any vote for a third party candidate is “stolen” from a major party is an affront to democracy as an institution, and should not be tolerated as a concept by true democrats or patriots. Overall, the spoiler effect, although misnomer in and of itself for a multitude of reasons, should not be used in this or any election to claim that one candidate “stole” votes from another, as individual decisions made by tens of millions of people will never be the same, and such broad statements rarely if ever are able to accurately describe a phenomenon in the realm of political science.

Table 10 Alternative Voting - Borda Count Total (Scored Points, N=321)

Candidates	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Vote Total
Clinton	155	46	28	93	935
Johnson	33	132	138	16	820
Stein	24	116	143	36	766
Trump	109	27	12	173	714
Point Total	1,284	963	642	321	3,235

As another means of addressing issues facing third party candidates, I took the rankings from the first question of the poll and used it to simulate another form of vote. Table 10 shows the results of a borda count vote run with the data provided by respondents. This method of voting aims to elect the most preferred candidate by all voters rather than simply the candidate that the most number of people like. In order to do this, respondents rank their choices from 1 to 4, with 1 being their most preferred and 4 being their least preferred candidate. Then, all first-place votes are given four points (given that it is a four-way election; increase by one for every additional competitor), second-place votes are given three points, and so on until the last choice is given one point. At the end, add all the points up and the person with the most points wins the election, as they have garnered the highest level of support out of each of the candidates. When tabulated this way, even though our survey suggests that Donald Trump should have received 36.38% of the vote in Oswegatchie, it becomes apparent when viewing the results of a ranked-choice vote that Trump was actually the least preferred candidate, with both Gary Johnson and Jill Stein garnering more support than he did. The data from this survey shows that voting structure plays just as much, if not more of a role in affecting vote choice in U.S. elections as one's demographics and upbringing.

Table 11 Thought Experiment - 1st Place Votes by Party Label

Cnddt	A	B	C	D	A/B	C/D	Total
Dem	36	29	24	31	65	55	120 (38.17%)
GOP	17	16	32	30	33	62	95 (30.26%)
Grn	12	21	11	17	33	28	61 (19.43%)
Lib	12	14	8	4	26	12	38 (12.10%)
Total	77	80	75	82	157	157	314

The last question asked on the survey was a hypothetical experiment, where individuals were asked to rank four made-up candidates from 1-4, with 1 being their most preferred candidate and 4 being their least preferred candidate. The mechanics of the experiment were outlined in more detail on page 5 of this work. In Table 12 we see the first-place votes from the experiment laid out as if they were specifically attributed to the party label of the candidates rather than the party platform. This means that despite the party platform being changed in the C/D forms, Table 12 reports the votes from the point of view that they were meant to be cast towards that specific party platform.

It can be seen, within the table, that the vast majority of the “B” and “D” Green Party and Libertarian Party values are greater than their “A” and “C” counterparts, which does suggest that

there was a primacy bias at play with the order in which the parties were listed on the page, and it is quite possible that these two parties struggle with losing votes simply because they are routinely placed farther down the ballot than the Democrats and Republicans are. Furthermore, when placed in a hypothetical election rather than an election that has real-life consequences, it can be seen that voters are more willing to vote for third party candidates that match their views, with over 30% of the total populace voting for either the Green or the Libertarian.

Table 12 Thought Experiment - 1st Place Votes by Party Platform

Cnddt	A	B	C	D	A/B	C/D	Total
Dem	36	29	11	17	65	28	93 (29.62%)
GOP	17	16	8	4	33	12	45 (14.33%)
Grn	12	21	24	31	33	55	88 (28.03%)
Lib	12	14	32	30	26	62	88 (28.03%)
Total	77	80	75	82	157	157	314

Alternatively to Table 11, Table 12 reveals how the vote totals would look if you attributed the votes to the correct party platform even after switching them on the C/D test sheets. Now the Green and Libertarian candidates do much better, earning only about 1.5% less of the vote than the Democrat with the plurality. Interestingly, the Republican candidate earns the least votes in this hypothetical election, with only about half the number of votes that the other candidates earned. This experiment suggests that there is much more approval of alternative party platforms than the major parties would like to admit, but the idea that a candidate cannot win in a real election stops people from converting their ideal vote into a real act at the ballot box. Furthermore, this experiment reveals that there are many individuals who only vote for a political party because of its name and perceived reputation and take little else into account at the ballot box. This kind of voter helps perpetuate the two-party system by refusing to research alternatives. Despite a third party's best efforts, it may prove to be impossible to reach the type of voter that is entrenched in tradition.

Conclusions and Directions for Further Research

First, it must be mentioned that the findings of this research are primarily attributable to the Oswegatchie CT area, and are not necessarily attributable to other regions throughout the country. By examining and comparing demographics to one's vote choice, however, I hope that the data is transferrable enough that researchers building on this work can use it to help

determine what factors lead one to be more likely to vote for minor party candidates.

It is a long, uphill battle for each and every third party candidate that seeks to run for office. From the petitioning process for ballot access to convincing just one individual to vote for them, the effort and energy that each and every third party candidate has to contribute to their campaign and local community is astoundingly greater than what must be done by major party candidates, and regardless of the outcome of those elections, that effort must be recognized. We have built a political system that requires these individuals to prove their validity by collecting signatures to appear on the ballot, their personal wealth by setting public campaign financing standards too high for the average third party candidate to meet, and their exceptional dedication to their cause by forcing them down-ballot, excluding them from debates, and igniting terror in the hearts of those who fear the greater of two evils winning in a two-party race. All the while society expects these candidates to raise enough money to be visible on the political stage and to appear as prepared and organized as the major party candidates that have been handed most of the money they need to win any campaign they wanted to. This unrealistic expectation becomes a positive feedback loop, where individuals do not wish to participate in or contribute to third party politics unless it looks realistic that the candidate will win, which results in the parties having fewer resources with which to prepare for elections, and the cycle repeats itself. All of this together leads to a very difficult trap to escape from for third parties in American politics, but there are several steps that should be taken by these organizations to try and break the trap.

First, one must understand the kind of audience that will be most receptive to a third party's message. While this survey does not provide nearly all the answers, I hope that it will provide a baseline for parties that wish to identify the groups that vote for them. It is clear from the 2016 exit poll that younger, more highly educated individuals are more likely to vote for third party candidates, but how can you reach a wider audience within this demographic to drum up more support? Furthermore, how can you encourage the people that are already voting for you to register with your political party, attend meetings, and possibly run for office themselves? These are questions whose answers will differ greatly from state to state and even town to town, and will have to be resolved by the parties of that area who presumably know the individuals they seek to represent better than I do.

Next, I would recommend that third parties work together in an effort to overcome some of the major structural obstacles that face them, as the ramifications of these barriers are too large for small groups to overcome on their own. Coming together to advocate for public campaign finance and other campaign finance reform, alternative voting methods like rank choice voting that recently passed in Maine, and to guard against attacks that use the "spoiler effect" argument can only help each minor party, and it is time for these minor parties to come together to overthrow what has been a two-party system for far too long. The key to overthrowing the system, however, is not being elected to office, but rather remembering to dissolve the barriers you faced in your climb once you are the one on top. Too often do those on top forget their humble beginnings, and it is this act that continues the cycle of two-party

tyranny.

Further research must be done in order to find the evidence presented by this study correct, and I highly encourage that this study be conducted, whether in an identical manner or with improvements on the idea, several times over in different locations to thoroughly examine the support this exit poll demonstrates towards specific trends.

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Appendix A: 2016 Survey Results (N=483)

1. Please rank the 2016 Presidential Candidates from 1-4, with 1 being your most preferred candidate:

- a. Clinton
 - 1. 233
 - 2. 47
 - 3. 28
 - 4. 93
- b. Johnson
 - 1. 39
 - 2. 135
 - 3. 138
 - 4. 16
- c. Stein
 - 1. 31
 - 2. 120
 - 3. 143
 - 4. 39
- d. Trump
 - 1. 168
 - 2. 28
 - 3. 13
 - 4. 173

2. Which Presidential Candidate did you cast your vote for today?

- a. Clinton: 252
- b. Johnson: 31
- c. Stein: 19
- d. Trump: 175
- e. Write-In: 4

3. Which political parties did you cast a vote for today?

- a. Democratic: 316
- b. Republican: 268
- c. Green: 55
- d. Libertarian: 42
- e. Write-In: 10

3a. Why did you choose to vote for third party candidates?

- a. Third Party Matches Views: 23
- b. Don't Like Major Parties: 17
- c. Want to Break 2-Party System: 6
- d. Personally Know Candidate: 3
- e. Other: 2

3b. Why did you not choose to vote for third party candidates?

- a. Like Major Parties: 51
- b. Afraid of Spoiling: 19
- c. Unaware of Minor Parties: 48
- d. Vote Party Line Only: 14
- e. Won't Win Anyways: 51
- f. Didn't Like Min Pty Candidates: 29

4. With which political party are you registered?

- a. Democratic: 193
- b. Republican: 132
- c. Green: 5
- d. Libertarian: 8
- e. Unaffiliated: 129
- f. Other: 8

5. On a scale of 1-5, how favorably do you view the Democratic Party?

- 1. 116
- 2. 67
- 3. 110
- 4. 98
- 5. 72

6. On a scale of 1-5, how favorably do you view the Republican Party?

1. 150
2. 89
3. 95
4. 57
5. 77

7. On a scale of 1-5, how favorably do you view the Green Party?

1. 67
2. 52
3. 140
4. 48
5. 31

8. On a scale of 1-5, how favorably do you view the Libertarian Party?

1. 84
2. 58
3. 117
4. 40
5. 25

9. On a scale from 1-5, how interested were you in this year's Presidential Election?

1. 40
2. 25
3. 43
4. 69
5. 305

10. What is your current age?

- a. 18-29: 99
- b. 30-44: 86
- c. 45-64: 213
- d. Over 65: 79
- e. Prefer not to say: 4

11. In which state were you born?

1. Abroad: 5
2. AZ: 1
3. CA: 3
4. CO: 3
5. CT: 330
6. DE: 1
7. FL: 3
8. IA: 1
9. IL: 4
10. KY: 1
11. LA: 2
12. MA: 18
13. MD: 3
14. ME: 1
15. MI: 2
16. MN: 3
17. MO: 2
18. NC: 2
19. NH: 3
20. NJ: 8
21. NY: 38
22. OH: 6
23. PA: 15
24. RI: 5
25. SC: 1
26. SD: 1
27. TX: 4
28. VA: 3
29. WA: 2
30. WI: 3

12. With which ethnicity do you identify?

- a. White: 419
- b. Black: 12
- c. Hispanic: 21
- d. American Native: 7
- e. Asian: 9
- f. Pacific Islander: 1
- g. Other: 4

13. What is your gender?

- a. Male: 191
- b. Female: 288
- c. Other: 2

14. What is your sexual orientation?

- a. Straight: 477
- b. Gay/Lesbian: 8
- c. Bisexual: 13
- d. Other: 4

15. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- a. Some High School: 6
- b. High School: 145
- c. Bachelors: 180
- d. Masters: 92
- e. Doctoral: 25
- f. Other: 31

16. Please rank the following hypothetical candidates from 1-4, with 1 being your most preferred candidate:

- a. Democrat A/B
 - 1. 64
 - 2. 38
 - 3. 30
 - 4. 24

b. Republican A/B

- 1. 33
- 2. 23
- 3. 11
- 4. 89

c. Green A/B

- 1. 33
- 2. 45
- 3. 54
- 4. 24

d. Libertarian A/B

- 1. 26
- 2. 51
- 3. 60
- 4. 19

e. Democrat C/D

- 1. 54
- 2. 39
- 3. 31
- 4. 33

f. Republican C/D

- 1. 65
- 2. 28
- 3. 45
- 4. 21

g. Green C/D

- 1. 28
- 2. 66
- 3. 51
- 4. 11

h. Libertarian C/D

- 1. 12
- 2. 24
- 3. 27
- 4. 92

Appendix B: Further 2016 Statistics

Table 1 Voting Reported by Exit Poll

Candidates	Reported Votes	Percentage
Hillary Clinton	252	52.39%
Gary Johnson	31	6.45%
Jill Stein	19	3.95%
Donald Trump	175	36.38%
Other	4	0.83%
Total	481	100.00%

Table 2 Actual Voting Totals in Oswegatchie Precinct

Candidates	Reported Votes	Percentage
Hillary Clinton	1,276	46.00%
Gary Johnson	108	3.89%
Jill Stein	51	1.84%
Donald Trump	1,328	47.87%
Other	11	0.40%
Total	2,774	100.00%

Table 3 Gender in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Male	Female	Other	Total
Clinton	79 (41.36%)	171 (59.58%)	1 (50%)	251
Johnson	15 (7.85%)	15 (5.23%)	1 (50%)	31
Stein	9 (4.71%)	10 (3.48%)	0	19
Trump	85 (44.50%)	90 (31.36%)	0	175
Other	3 (1.57%)	1 (0.35%)	0	4
Total	191 (39.79%)	287 (59.79%)	2 (0.42%)	480

Table 4 Party ID in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	D	R	G	L	U	Other	Total
Clinton	159 (83%)	22 (17%)	1 (20%)	1 (13%)	62 (48%)	1 (13%)	246
Johnson	7 (3.6%)	7 (5.3%)	0	6 (75%)	8 (6.2%)	3 (38%)	31
Stein	7 (3.6%)	2 (1.5%)	4 (80%)	0	6 (4.7%)	0	19
Trump	18 (9.4%)	101 (76%)	0	1 (13%)	50 (39%)	4 (50%)	174
Other	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.8%)	0	0	3 (2.3%)	0	5
Total	192 (40%)	133 (28%)	5 (1.1%)	8 (1.7%)	129 (27%)	8 (1.7%)	475

Table 5 Election Interest in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Clinton	23 (5.8%)	11 (44%)	16 (37.2%)	34 (49.3%)	168 (55.3%)	252
Johnson	7 (17.5%)	3 (12%)	4 (9.3%)	6 (8.7%)	11 (3.6%)	31
Stein	1 (2.5%)	2 (8%)	3 (6.9%)	3 (4.3%)	10 (3.3%)	19
Trump	9 (22.5%)	9 (36%)	19 (44.2%)	25 (36.2%)	113 (37.2%)	175
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (0.7%)	4
Total	40 (8.3%)	25 (5.20%)	43 (8.94%)	69 (14.35%)	304 (63.20%)	481

Table 6 Age in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Prefer Not To Say	Total
Clinton	49 (49.49%)	48 (55.81%)	109 (51.66%)	41 (51.90%)	4 (100%)	251
Johnson	9 (9.09%)	7 (81.40%)	14 (6.64%)	1 (1.27%)	0	31
Stein	9 (9.09%)	3 (3.49%)	5 (2.37%)	2 (2.53%)	0	19
Trump	30 (30.30%)	28 (32.59%)	83 (39.34%)	34 (43.04%)	0	175
Other	2 (2.02%)	0	1 (0.47%)	1 (1.27%)	0	4
Total	99 (20.67%)	86 (17.95%)	211 (44.05%)	79 (16.49%)	4 (0.84%)	479

Table 7 Education Level in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Some HS	High Sch.	Bachelors	Masters	Doctoral	Other	Total
Clinton	3 (60%)	63 (43.5%)	94 (52.5%)	56 (60.9%)	14 (56%)	18 (58.1%)	248
Johnson	0	8 (5.5%)	15 (8.4%)	5 (5.4%)	1 (4.0%)	2 (6.5%)	31
Stein	0	6 (4.1%)	6 (3.4%)	5 (5.4%)	2 (8.0%)	0	19
Trump	2 (40%)	67 (46.2%)	63 (35.2%)	25 (27.2%)	8 (32.0%)	10 (32.3%)	175
Other	0	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (1.1%)	0	1 (3.2%)	4
Total	5 (1.05%)	145 (30.40%)	179 (37.53%)	92 (19.29%)	25 (5.24%)	31 (6.50%)	477

Table 8 Region in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	New England	North East	Mid-West	West Coast	South West	South East	Abroad	Total
Clinton	185	37	9	2	5	5	4	247
Johnson	21	6	1	1	2	0	0	31
Stein	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	19
Trump	134	28	3	1	1	4	1	172
Other	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total	356 (75.4%)	76 (16.1%)	14 (3.0%)	4 (0.9%)	8 (1.7%)	9 (1.9%)	5 (1.1%)	472

Table 9 Racial Identity in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	W	B	His	NA	As	PI	Other	Total
Clinton	208 (49%)	11 (92%)	15 (71%)	3 (43%)	8 (89%)	0	4 (100%)	249
Johnson	29 (6.9%)	0	0	1 (14%)	0	1 (100%)	0	31
Stein	16 (3.8%)	1 (8%)	0	0	0	0	0	17
Trump	162 (39%)	0	6 (29%)	3 (43%)	1 (11%)	0	0	172
Other	3 (0.7%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	418 (88.56%)	12 (2.54%)	21 (4.45%)	7 (1.48%)	9 (1.91%)	1 (0.21%)	4 (0.85%)	472

Table 10 Sexual Orientation in Vote Choice (Oswegatchie)

Votes	Straight	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Other	Total
Clinton	228	5	8	4	245
Johnson	29	0	1	0	30
Stein	18	0	1	0	19
Trump	169	2	3	0	174
Other	2	1	0	0	3
Total	446 (94.69%)	8 (1.70%)	13 (2.76%)	4 (0.85%)	471

Table 11 Party Favorability Averages, 5-Point Scale (Oswegatchie)

Democratic Party	Republican Party	Green Party	Libertarian Party
2.88	2.62	2.78	2.59

Appendix C: 2015 Survey Results (N=496)

1. What is your registered political affiliation?

- Democratic: 196
- Republican: 142
- Green: 9
- Unaffiliated: 133
- Other: 8

2. Where were you born (City/State/Country)?

- Northeast US: 430
- Southeast US: 18
- Northwest US: 2
- Southwest US: 17
- Canada: 2
- Europe: 9
- Middle East: 1
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 2
- Latin America: 7
- Oceania: 1

3. With which ethnicity, if any, do you identify?

- White: 403
- Hispanic: 14
- Western Europe: 22
- Northern Europe: 5
- Eastern Europe: 12
- Mediterranean: 21
- Arabic: 2
- African: 3
- Pacific Islander: 1
- Other: 2

4. What is your gender?

- Male: 210
- Female: 285
- Other: 1

5. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual: 459
- Bisexual: 10
- Lesbian/Gay: 5
- Other: 7

6. What is your current age?

- Average: 55.63

7. What are your religious views?

- Protestant: 149
- Catholic: 201
- Jewish: 21
- Islam: 2
- Atheism: 51
- Other: 61

7a. On a scale from 1-10, how active are you in your religious community?

- Average: 4.64

8. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- High School: 114
- Associates: 82
- Bachelors: 159
- Masters: 109
- Doctoral: 22
- Other: 7

9. What is your family income in a typical year?

- Less than \$20k: 25
- \$20k-\$50k: 62
- \$50k-\$80k: 89
- \$80k-\$100k: 83
- \$100k-\$150k: 101
- Over \$150k: 85

10. Have you seen advertisements for third parties or third party candidates?

- Yes: 293
- No: 124
- Unsure: 78

10a. If so, where did you see the advertisement?

- Online: 90
- Street Sign: 195
- Brochure: 72
- Other: 56

11. In which past November elections have you voted?

- 2012: 438
- 2013: 396
- 2014: 441

12. On a scale of 1-10, how favorably do you view the Democratic Party?

- Average: 5.49

13. On a scale of 1-10, how favorably do you view the Republican Party?

- Average: 4.88

14. On a scale of 1-10, how favorably do you view the Green Party?

- Average: 5.26

15. Which political parties did you vote for today?

- Democratic: 351
- Republican: 362
- Green: 186
- Write-In: 8

15a. Why did you choose to vote for third party candidates?

- Best Represents Values: 57
- Know Candidates Personally: 66
- Add New Perspective: 144
- Vote for any candidate that's not a Democrat: 8
- Vote for any candidate that's not a Republican: 17

15b. Why did you not choose to vote for a third party candidate?

- Do Not Represent Values: 57
- Know Candidates Personally: 8
- Do Not Believe We Need New Perspective: 9
- Did Not Want to Take from Major Party: 44
- Did Not Know of Third Parties: 110

Table 8 Binary Logistic Regression on Votes for Specific Parties

	Votes for Green Party	Votes for Democrats	Votes for GOP
Reg. Republican	-.673** (2.91)	-3.895*** (-3.895)	2.627*** (.514)
Reg. Green	37.988 (17581.422)	-.618 (-.618)	-.634 (1.012)
Reg. Unaffiliated	.009 (.286)	-1.956*** (-1.956)	.751** (.341)
Reg. Other Party	-.342 (1.015)	-1.860 (-1.860)	-.161 (.949)
Age	-.006 (.009)	.009 (.011)	-.008 (.010)
Female	.056 (.237)	.559* (.304)	.189 (.295)
Bisexual	-.923 (1.325)	20.366 (16131.920)	-.023 (1.324)
Lesbian/Gay	1.298 (1.251)	19.308 (18170.126)	.297 (1.281)
Other Sexuality	.568 (.923)	.653 (1.219)	.771 (1.276)
Ad for Third Party	.486** (.235)	.223 (.292)	-.244 (.298)
Associates Deg.	3.83 (3.86)	-.165 (.451)	.278 (.496)
Bachelors Deg.	.576* (.335)	.282 (.397)	-.467 (.404)
Masters Deg.	1.053*** (.368)	.365 (.462)	.028 (.452)
Doctoral Deg.	.794 (.579)	1.305 (1.027)	-1.093* (.640)
Certificates	-.945 (1.322)	20.389 (17285.238)	-.517 (1.141)
Religious Activity	0.11 (.042)	.010 (.053)	.011 (.053)
Atheist	-20.418 (40192.970)	22.162 (40192.969)	18.291 (40192.969)
Protestant	-.047 (.267)	-2.86 (.332)	.552 (.353)
Jewish	-.006 (.549)	.827 (.900)	1.029 (.825)
Muslim	.980 (1.914)	1.642 (30558.642)	21.092 (26683.247)
Other Religion	.416 (.361)	-1.106 (17.398)	.237 (.439)
Income <\$20k	.743 (.610)	-.143 (.814)	-1.160 (.717)
Income \$20-50k	-.093 (.415)	-.402 (.549)	-.602 (.482)
Income \$50-80k	.200 (.346)	.520 (.460)	.181 (.470)
Income \$80-100k	-.532 (.379)	.642 (.458)	-.307 (.448)
Income \$100-150k	-.078 (.336)	.333 (.414)	.324 (.485)
SE USA Birth	1.079 (.667)	.184 (1.086)	.147 (.729)
NW USA Birth	1.393 (1.674)	-.677 (1.555)	18.656 (26528.024)
SW USA Birth	.209 (.655)	1.065 (1.339)	-1.625** (.729)
Canada Birth	-20.145 (27982.575)	20.973 (26853.030)	19.155 (27371.558)
Europe Birth	.002 (.989)	21.081 (14405.631)	-1.600 (1.242)
Middle East Birth	21.676 (40192.969)	19.115 (40192.969)	20.156 (40192.969)
Latin America Birth	-1.075 (1.239)	3.523** (1.779)	-1.597 (1.139)
Oceania Birth	-21.428 (40192.970)	17.652 (40192.969)	-20.774 (40192.970)
Hispanic	-.568 (.890)	-2.155* (1.191)	-.032 (.908)
Western European	.218 (.523)	-1.894*** (.700)	-.200 (.626)
Northern European	.210 (.979)	1.090 (1.317)	20.676 (15431.248)
Eastern European	.800 (.738)	-1.813* (.993)	-.674 (.818)
Mediterranean	-.634 (.590)	.129 (.760)	-.696 (.622)
African	-17.627 (12431.943)	-2.949* (1.706)	-22.834 (27938.472)
Other Ethnicity	21.110 (28416.311)	17.398 (27033.238)	20.123 (28085.509)
Constant	-.959 (.616)	2.120** (.825)	1.270* (.746)
R ²	.223	.492	.353
N	496	496	496

Note: Coefficients are standardized coefficients and numbers in parentheses are standard errors.
*p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01.