

Influence of Newspaper Endorsements in the 2016 Presidential Election



Alexandra Scherb
Advisor: Chad Painter



Purpose

Understand the influence of newspaper endorsements on county voting percentages for the 2016 presidential election.

Unit of Analysis

Endorsements from 346 newspapers in the United States. Researcher compared vote percentages from counties with newspapers that endorsed a candidate with statewide voting percentages.

Literature Review

Joseph C. Pilegge, Jr.: Newspaper endorsements are generally not influenced by their communities.

Howard A. Scarrow & Steven Borman: Newspaper endorsements are influential, but at most at the county level.

Fred Fedler, Time Counts, Lowndes F. Stephans: Citizens reflect competition of newspaper endorsements.

Findings: Influential Endorsements

The following is the number of influential endorsements for each candidate.

- Trump → 10
- Hillary → 97
- Total → 107

Conclusion

Approximately one third of the sampled newspapers had endorsements that were influential on the county level.

Note: The original sample was 346 newspapers, however after removing 3rd party endorsements, non-endorsement papers, split endorsements, and “not Hillary”/“not Trump” endorsements, the sample only contained 263 newspapers.