The Campaign Decoder

A Weekly Online Magazine to Understand the 2016 US Presidential Elections

Made by 1st Year Students in the English Department at Rouen University

with a little help from Prof. Peter Marquis.

The Super Money Issue

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The editors-in-chief for this issue were Maud LD and Pauline Desjardins.

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Breaking News: Clinton and Trump Have Big Wins on Super Tuesday

By the publisher

NBC News reports (http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/super-tuesday-voters-twelve-states-head-polls-n528356): "Hillary Clinton took a decisive step toward locking down the Democratic presidential nomination on Super Tuesday, winning most of the 11 states up for grabs, including the biggest prize, Texas, and likely racking up enough delegates to greatly foreclose Bernie Sanders' path to the presidential nomination." Mrs Clinton finished first in Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, Texas, and Massachusetts. She now has secured the votes of 1,000 delegates. She needs 1,382 more to be guaranteed to be the Democratic Party's nominee. Bernie Sanders has only 372 and is unlikely to have big wins in the coming primaries.

On the Republican front, Donald Trump won at least 7 states, so he now has 285 delegates, with 1,237 left to win the Republican Party's nomination. Ted Cruz had a good Super Tuesday with 4 wins, in Arkansas, Texas (his home state), Oklahoma and Minnesota. Marco Rubio had a fairly good night too, so he has declared that he will stay in the race. But at this point it is hard to imagine a reasonable scenario whereby Trump would not get the nomination.

Source: http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/super-tuesday-voters-twelve-states-head-polls-n528356 (http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/super-tuesday-voters-twelve-states-head-polls-n528356)

The News These Past Two Weeks

1. Who Are Trump Voters?
By Gwénaëlle Denain, Martin Lerebourg and Ambre Hémoulin (proofreader)

Trump supporters in South Carolina
(REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst)

On February, 23, Donald Trump won the caucuses in Nevada, thanks to 46% of the voters who supported him, followed by Marco Rubio (24%). The question is: who voted for Trump? Exit polls can enlighten us.

Half of Trump's voters were aged 45 or above. 47% were white people but more surprisingly, 44% of the Hispanic community chose him, although they only represented 8% of the whole voters. It may be important to observe that 51% who voted for him have no college degree, against 40% who actually graduated.

The hot topic of immigration gained Trump more votes: 62% of the 20% people who declared they are concerned by this issue chose him. This can convey the idea that Trump's voters are troubled and in favor of taking measures. By the way, 48% voters worrying about the economy and job issues also turned towards the billionaire businessman...

But there is no real surprise - as a matter of fact, Trump's voters made their mind some time ago: almost 40% have been supporting him for more than a month. We can also note that 61% chose him because he was an outsider to the political world. It shows a lot about people's feelings about politics.
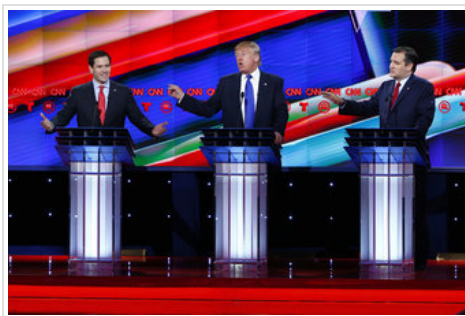
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2. The Playground Debate: Republicans in Houston.
By Gwénaëlle Denain, Martin Lerebourg and Ambre Hémoulin (proofreader)

On February 25th took place the last Republican debate before Super Tuesday. The debate was hosted at Houston University, Texas. Marco Rubio, Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, John Kasich and Ben Carson talked to their supporters a last time before the important voting day which took place on the 1st of March.

Donald Trump dominated the debate, speaking for 32 minutes in all, closely followed by Ted Cruz, hogging the conversation for about 21 minutes. As a matter of fact, Ben Carson even begged for someone to attack him, so that he could speak.

Cruz, Rubio and Trump take on one another during the Houston debate.

Candidates Cruz and Rubio seemed to agree on taking on Donald Trump about several topics such as the fact that he hired illegal workers (for his various real estate projects). Trump responded that at least he was hiring. Concerning Mr. Kasich, he didn't attack the other candidates, but he brought up the Reagan era when immigration was discussed.

Eventually one can wonder if it was more about attacking the other than stating their policy in clear terms. The general feeling was one of a playground squabble.

To go further: short clips summarizing the debate (https://www.youtube.com /watch?v=DQ6lCBe6Kig)

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What to Look At in the Coming Weeks

Predictions for Super Tuesday

By Myriam Ben Othman

As our magazine is published on Wednesdays, this article is not an ordinary "What to Look At in the Coming Week" because Super Tuesday took place yesterday – a day after we wrote this publication, on March 1st, 2016. Consequently, we are waiting for the results, but we can try to give some predictions and guess what the consequences will be .

As we explained last week (/issue-4.html), Super Tuesday takes place the first Tuesday of March and is a day where a big number of state vote together in primaries to know which candidate will represent them in the presidential elections.

For the Democratic party, Hillary Clinton seems to be the potential winner, as she won the primaries in South Carolina with 73,5% votes last Saturday. She owes her victory to African American voters - they represented more than a half of the electorate. For the Republican party, Trump is likely to be the winner. John Kasich, also from the Republican party stated, "I think Trump's probably going to win all of them." Trump also won 82 delegates from South Carolina.

If these predictions are true, it means that Trump will face Clinton in the (general) election in November. (However), the results will be very tight and the statistics will certainly not reflect the real votes for Trump and Clinton since they had approximately similar results for some states such as South Carolina. Nevertheless, Super Tuesday will be a major issue for the presidential candidates and they will certainly adapt their program for the states that did not vote for them and keep the votes in the conquered states. This 2016 presidential election still holds many surprises.

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Background Check

#5. Campaign Financing

by Sarah de Barbeyrac and Anicée Renouf (proofreader). The publisher added content.

Campaign financing is the way of financing electoral campaigns on different levels such as federal, state and local. In the USA, campaign financing is almost exclusively provided by private funds, whereas in France there is a state fund for running campaigns. The issue is crucial for democracy. As the website WhichWayNC reports (http://whichwaync.com/2012/07/25/campaign-finance-interactive-desktop/), "The success of a campaign is almost exclusively linked to the candidate's balance sheet. The more a candidate spends, the more likely he or she will win."

source: The New Yorker

Federal law restricts how much individuals and organizations can contribute to political campaigns (Wikipedia). For example, big companies (i.e., corporations) and unions are forbidden from donating money directly to candidates. Individuals and organizations contribute the most to campaign financing, by donating money and also spending money directly to influence elections, like targeting a candidate to defeat them.

Since 1944, federal laws have allowed Political Action Committees (PACs). They are political committees owning a lot of money, deciding to give it to a candidate of their choice or to others PACs. PACs hope in the end to have something in return if their favorite candidate is elected. PACs represent labor, business or ideological interests. Here are a few examples of PAC contributors to candidates: Honeywell International, AT&T Inc, or Lockheed Martin, according to Opensecrets.org (https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/toppacs.php) and based on data released by the FEC on February 22, 2016.

Since the 21st of January, 2010, the Supreme Court in the landmark ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* has allowed organizations to spend money on campaigns without limits through the creation of allegedly independent advocacy groups called Super PACs. The issue is complex (http://whichwaync.com/2012/07/25/campaign-finance-interactive-desktop/), but here some of the Super Pacs: America Leads (https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indexpend.php?strID=C00573055&cycle=2016) - which mostly supports Christie -, Priorities USA Action (https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indexpend.php?strID=C00495861&cycle=2016) - which mostly supports Clinton, New Day For America (https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indexpend.php?strID=C00581868&cycle=2016) - which mostly supports Kasich. This 2010 ruling raises questions about democracy and the fact that there is less fairness: is the candidate who has more money sure to win the election?

How much money is used and to what ends?
The money raised for the campaign is used for campaign materials, transportation, media advertisements or salaries of non-volunteers in the campaign. All donations should be made public.

Candidates are more dependent on PACs and Super PACS than other candidates who can afford financing their own. In fact, the Democrat Hillary Clinton raised 57.5 million dollars from PACs and Super PACs. On the other hand, the Republican, Donald Trump raised only 1.8 million dollars from Super PACs. Indeed, he is a billionaire and finances his own campaign. He wants to have the image of a self-made man.

(As of March 1st), in total, $242.8 million were donated to support Democratic candidates whereas $554.9 million were donated to support Republican candidates, Hillary Clinton and Ben Carson being the top campaign fundraisers for each party. To compare, the 2012 French campaign cost 21.8 million euros to François Hollande and 21.3 million euros to Nicolas Sarkozy. In fact (French law set) limits so candidates are not supposed to overstep 22.5 million euros on the second round.

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Media Watch: How Did the Media Cover the Campaign This Week?

Christie Endorses Donald Trump

By Theo Poutrain and Amélie Desombre

(Armstrong Economics)

Last week, after repeated attacks from Marco Rubio towards Donald Trump, a particular public statement managed to stand out in the media: former candidate to the republican primary Chris Christie, also Governor of New Jersey, announced his support for Trump. He also called Rubio "desperate". (Let's take a look at how the US media covered what may be a turning point in the Republican nomination, as Christie's support for Trump weakens Rubio, a moderate Republican who has the backing of the GOP Establishment).

According to the New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/02/26/chris-christie-endorses-donald-trump/), Governor Chris Christie declared that he supported the candidate Trump and therefore "declared war on Marco Rubio," who he described as "unfit for the presidency."

The Washington Post (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/rubio-and-trump-now-at-war-for-the-gops-future/2016/02/26/af02f72c-dcac-11e5-891a-4ed04f4213e8_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_rubiotrump-930pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory) found at least four reasons why Christie changed his mind about the controversial candidate. Among others, Christie "wants to be in the vice presidential mix." Because his mandate as Governor of the Garden State will end in 2017, he wants to "keep up a profile on the national stage." Moreover, he can't simply stand Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. Supporting Trump might be a way for him to show his resentment towards them and the GOP.

As far as Politico (http://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/christ-christie-donald-trump-gop-establishment-219878) is concerned, Trump is more shown as someone who is ready to do whatever he has to being talked about in the press. For instance, Politico explains that Trump has always been against endorsements, whereas he has always been endorsed by the former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin and "he has touted the endorsement from evangelical leader Jerry Falwell." Christie's endorsement of Trump is "another curveball in a wildly unpredictable presidential race," as they "hurled insults at each other throughout last year."

What can do we conclude from all this?
American newspapers tend to give the same vision of this major event of the presidential race, so the Americans can't really make their own opinion about it. Only Politico really (took a stand) in saying that Trump is a kind of hypocrite, using the means he was against and moreover to find allies in his former foes – another eccentricity of the most controversial candidate for the presidential election.

To go further: watch a clip of Christie's endorsement speech below (caution: the clip may continue on to other subjects).

▶ By REUTERS   00:53
Gov. Christie Endorses Donald Trump

𝕋   Watch in Times Video »   f   🐦   ✉   </>

Cartoon of the Week: Clinton's E-Mail Scandal Resurfaces

By Océane Quibel and Emma Audinot (proofreader)

Nate Beeler, July 27, 2015.

Why is Bernie Sanders more trusted than Hillary Clinton within the Democratic party?

More than half of the Americans doubt Hillary Clinton's honesty, based on a December 2015 YouGov poll (https://today.yougov.com /news/2015/12/15/clintons-persistent-honesty-problem/). (Her "persistent honesty problem" is mainly due to a scandal about hers using her personal email account to deal with government communication when she was Secretary of state, thus violating rules of transparency). She is the most distrusted candidate in the 2016 campaign, followed by Donald Trump. In fact, numerous media outlets paint her as dishonest (see souces below).

This cartoon shows Hillary Clinton in the foreground deleting some emails, while in the right-hand background there are two inspectors who denounce the fact that she used her own email account for political issues.

In this cartoon published on July 27, 2015 the cartoonist refers to the email scandal concerning Hillary Clinton and which affects the Clinton campaign. Indeed, when she was Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton did not use her official government email address. She did not even possess one. All her correspondences were made with a private email.

As the *New York Times* reveals, her counselors did nothing to preserve her personal emails on the servers of the department at that time, as required by the *Federal Records Act.* Acccording to Vox.com (http://www.vox.com/cards/hillary-clinton-email-scandal/hillary-clinton-email-facts), on July 23, Inspectors General told Congress they had notified the FBI that they had found four emails, out of 40 sampled, containing information deemed to be classified. Two of the four emails contained "top secret" information.

This aversion to disclosure leads her political opponents, government investigators and the media to assume that she's acting in bad faith. Despite her decline in popularity following the scandal, Hillary Clinton still won the Democratic primary in South Carolina on February 27 against Bernie Sanders.

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- http://www.cagle.com/tag/delete (http://www.cagle.com/tag/delete/)(cartoon)

End of Issue #5. Thanks for reading. See you very soon for a surprise...