

# With the conventions now over, we can look forward to a very closely fought presidential election.

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**Peter Trubowitz**, Director of the LSE's US Centre, writes that with the Democrats offering optimism and the Republicans doom and gloom, this year's conventions were a study in role reversals. Despite the Democrats' positive narrative, however, 70 percent of voters feel that the country is on the wrong track. To win in November, he writes, Clinton will need to gain the support of disgruntled Sanders voters, while Trump will be looking for the votes of non-college educated whites in key battleground states.



The conventions are now in the rear view mirror. But who benefited the most — Clinton or Trump? Both candidates helped themselves shore up the support of core constituencies: Trump with white working class men; Clinton with women and minorities. Trump got a [bump in the polls](#) for his effort; Clinton will almost certainly get the same. Will it be enough to change the fundamentals of the race? Maybe. The key demographic that is still up for grabs is college-educated whites. Traditionally, they break Republican, but they have misgivings about Trump's views about race and immigration, his refusal to disclose his tax returns, and now his relationship with Vladimir Putin. My guess is that they moved slightly closer to Clinton and the Democrats last week.

How did the conventions themselves compare? They were a study in contrasts. Republicans pointed to an America that they claim is divided and lawless. Democrats described a nation full of hope and opportunity. The conventions were also a study in role reversals. Traditionally, Democrats are the ones offering 'doom and gloom'; Republicans, 'optimism and patriotism.' Not this year, and it was enough to lead some Republican commentators to see defeat ahead and call it 'game, set, and match.' Yet, for all the hope and optimism Democrats evoked in Philadelphia, [70 percent of likely voters](#) think the country is on the wrong track. This election is going to be a dog fight.

What should we expect from Clinton and Trump going forward? At the end of the day, the election is going to be determined by who can get their base out. For Trump, the big question is whether there are enough non-college educated white voters to win key battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, which together with the Republican states Mitt Romney won in 2012, would give him the 270 electoral college votes needed to win the presidency. For Clinton, the key question is whether those Bernie Sanders voters will put aside their heartache and rally behind her and whether the kind of voter suppression that we've seen in Republican governed states in the past is kept in check.

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USAPP – American Politics and Policy, nor the London School of Economics.*

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Peter Trubowitz is Professor of International Relations, and Director of the LSE's US Centre. His main research interests are in the fields of international security and comparative foreign policy, with special focus on American grand strategy and foreign policy. He also writes and comments frequently on U.S. party politics and elections and how they shape and are shaped by America's changing place in the world.



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