

The Italian-American Vote

Jerry Krase (October 13, 2016)



Who will New York City's Italian-American voters favor in the upcoming presidential election in November? Based on statistical analyses and past voting performance, it will be the Republican Party candidate Donald Trump. However, because of the growing number of more liberal Italian-American New Yorkers, especially among the young and women, the margin might not be as HUGE as expected.

A crude analysis of the New York City presidential vote by borough since 1992 shows that the voters in Counties with the highest proportion of Italian Americans have tended to lean rightward (see table above). Note that Richmond County, which has the most Americans of Italian descent and the greatest rightward tilt, is better known as the Borough of [Staten Island](#) [2](l'Isola Bella). Kings County is better known as the Borough of Brooklyn, and New York County is Manhattan.



There are many different ways of measuring potential support for candidates and parties. For example, although registered Republicans are a distinct minority in the City, they tend to be concentrated in the white ethnic neighborhoods of the “outer” boroughs such as Staten Island and Queens—which is also where you find the highest concentration of Italian Americans. We therefore would expect greater support for Donald Trump in those places.

Further support for this view comes from the [NYC Election Atlas](#) [3] compiled by the City University of New York’s [Graduate Center for Urban Research](#) [4], Graduate School of Journalism, and [Center for Community and Ethnic Media](#) [5]. Although losing in Manhattan, Trump received 63% of the total votes cast in the NYC Republican Presidential Primary. He did well all other boroughs most notably Staten Island where he got almost 82% of the vote. His most solid support came from predominantly white, conservative-leaning communities in Queens: such as Middle Village, Howard Beach, College Point, and Douglaston and Bayside.

On the other hand, [Hillary Clinton](#) [6] received 64% of the vote in the Democratic Party Presidential Primary. She did best in African American and Afro-Caribbean communities in southeast Queens, the Rockaways, central Brooklyn and the north Bronx. She also got 70% or more of the vote in predominantly white, liberal Manhattan and Brooklyn neighborhoods. Clinton won a million+ votes, and 58% of all votes, while Trump got about half as many votes or 60% of all votes. One visible indication of support for candidates for public office are campaign signs placed in street-facing windows or planted on front yards. For example, in my gentrified window was a modest Bernie Sanders’ “A Future to Believe In.”

In the case of Trump, evidently, size does matter. In The New York Daily News there was a story by Chelsia Rose Marcius and Stephen Rex Brown about a Staten Island Trump supporter who constructed a HUGE sign for the GOP candidate after a large, but smaller, previous version was torched. The new (16 X 12 feet) wooden “T” simulation of the American flag was built by Italian fellow [Scott LoBaido](#) [7] on [Sam Pirozzolo](#) [8]’s front lawn in Castleton Corners. LoBaido christened his creation “Freedom of Speech.” In appreciation they got a phone call from The Donald himself. The News also reported, “As the new letter was completed, drivers honked their horns in approval. A handful of supporters sported “Make America Great Again” hats and chanted “USA!” While a hundred or so Trump supporters cheered, several women in the crowd, referring to Hillary Clinton, yelled “Lock her up!” I assume they have been added to Hillary’s collection of “Deplorables.”

Of course lots of Italian Americans (virtually all of my Italian American friends, neighbors, and relatives) support Hillary Clinton (Hillary for America). Some intend to vote for Green Party Candidate Jill Stein (#It’s in Our Hands). A few might even vote for the Libertarian Party’s Gary Johnson (Live Free). But their proportion and signs tend to be smaller than Donald Trump’s “Make American Great Again.”

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[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/scottlobaidojpg.jpg>

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staten_Island

[3] <http://www.electionatlas.nyc>

[4] <http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUR>

[5] <http://ccem.journalism.cuny.edu>

[6] <https://www.hillaryclinton.com>

[7] <http://scottlobaido.com>

[8] <http://sigop.com/sam-pirozzolo/>