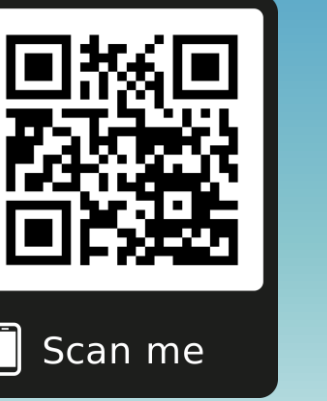


Trade Rhetoric Geography in the US Presidential Election Speeches

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Research Question

- Voters suffering from job insecurity due to international trade are known to punish the incumbent president by choosing the presidential candidate from the other political party (Jensen et al 2017; Margalit 2011).
- Then, how would presidential candidates *ex-ante* respond to expected voter punishment in their presidential campaign speeches?

Theory

- Presidential candidates make campaign speeches considering the regional characteristics of the location where they delivery speech.

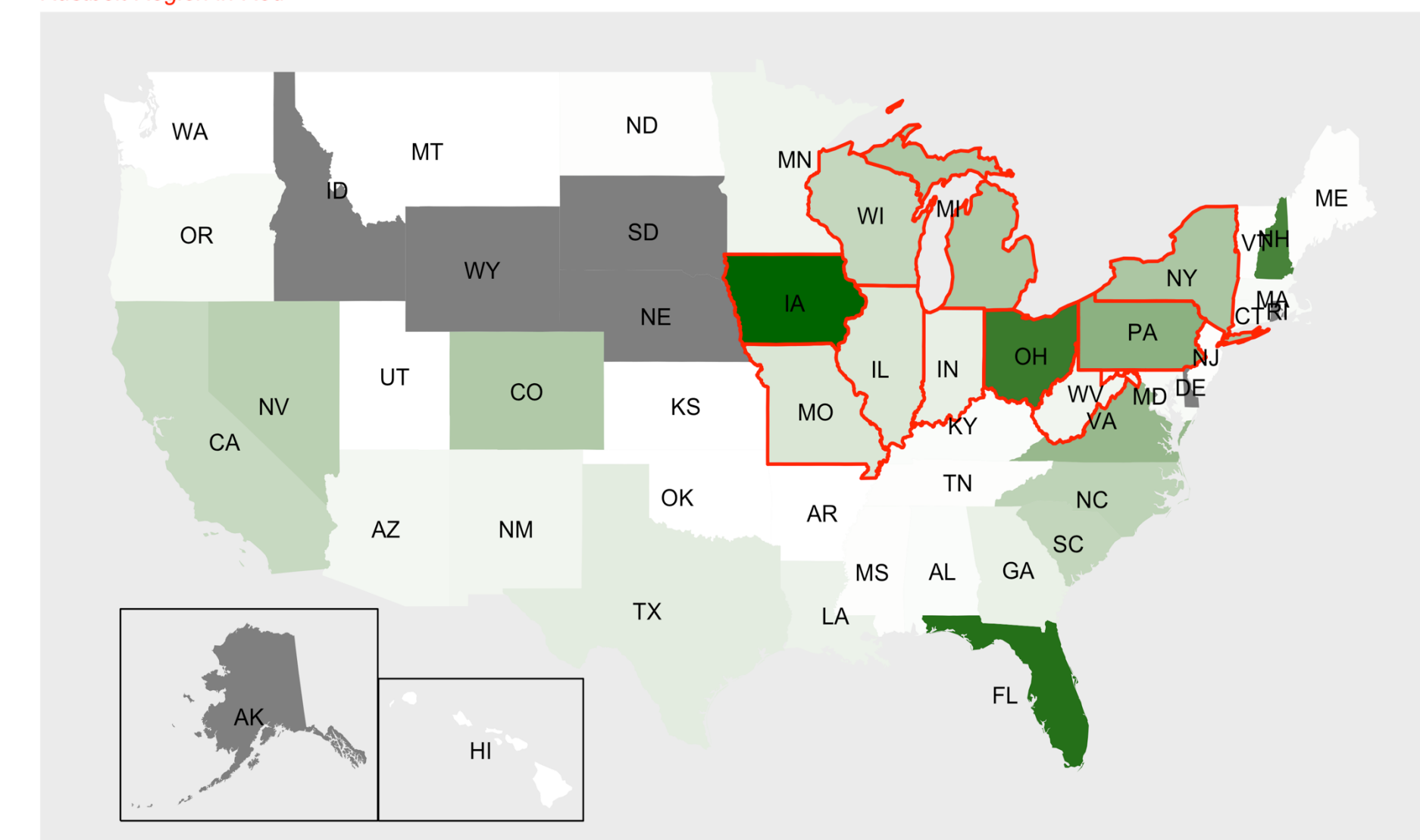
Hypothesis

- H1: Presidential candidates frame trade as an economic activity in speeches of rust belt regions.
- H2: Presidential candidates link trade with national security in speeches of non-rustbelt regions.
- H3: Within rust belt regions, if the regions are swing states, presidential candidates frame trade as special interest by linking trade with job security.

Data / Data Structure

- Web scraping the presidential election speech of every candidates in 2008, 2012, and 2016 from The American Presidency Project(APP).
- Descriptive Statistics
 - 1) Total 1,247 speeches
 - 2) 676 from Democratic Party, 571 from Republican Party
 - 3) 685, 282, 280 speeches in each year

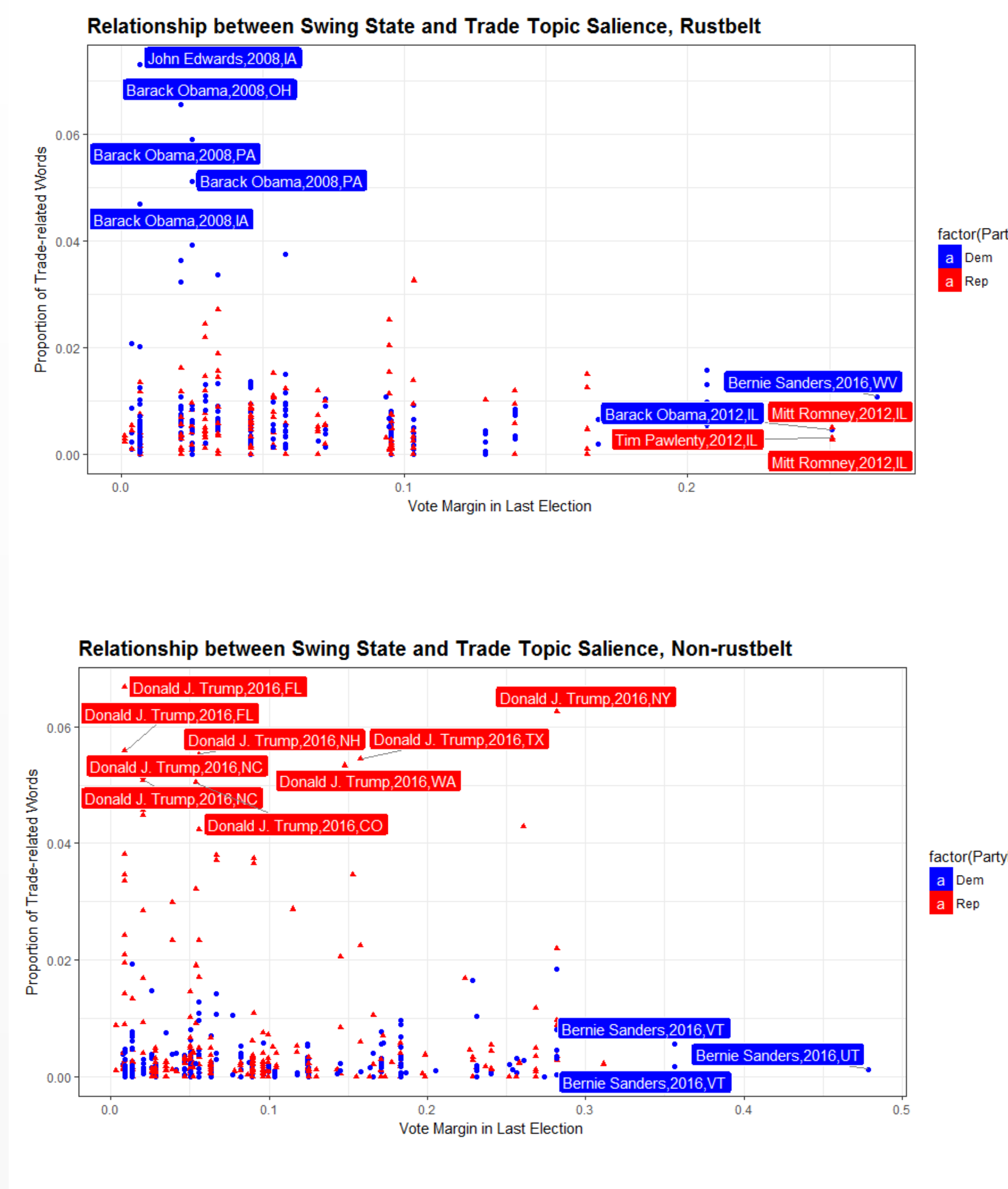
Frequency map of the US Presidential Election Speeches, 2008 - 2016



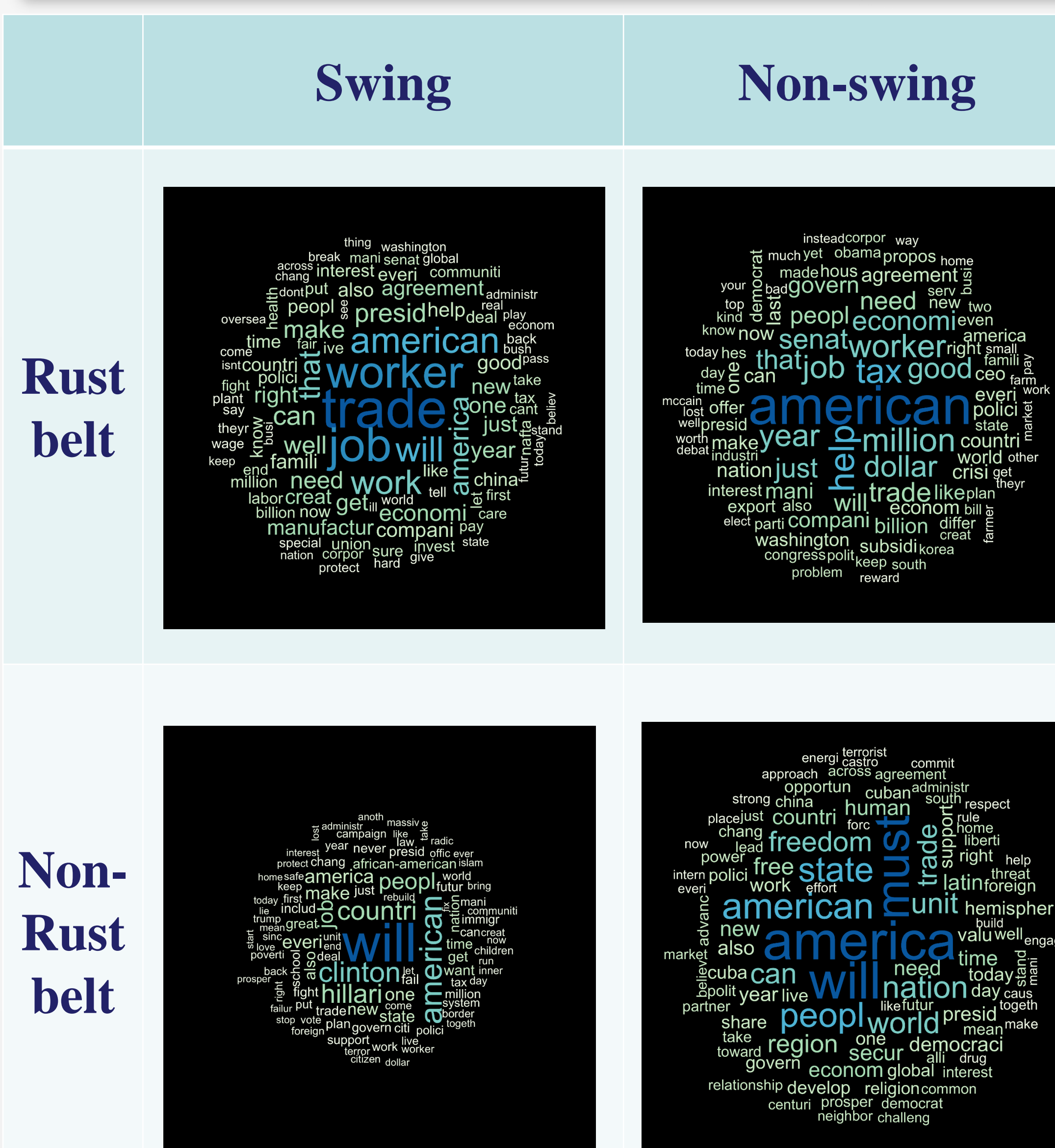
Methods

- STM (Structural Topic modelling)
 - K= 45 topics and extract 15 FREX words
- DTM (Document Term Matrix)
 - With 15 FREX words for each dimension, counted the frequencies and scaled by each document length
- OLS Regression
 - DV: Trade topic related 15 FREX words frequencies (Subset on rust belt and non-rust belt region)
 - IV: Political Party of the speaker
 - Controls: Year-fixed, state-level annual unemployment, speaker's party status as a challenger, partisan similarity between the speaker and the local governor.

Graphs



Word Cloud



Regression

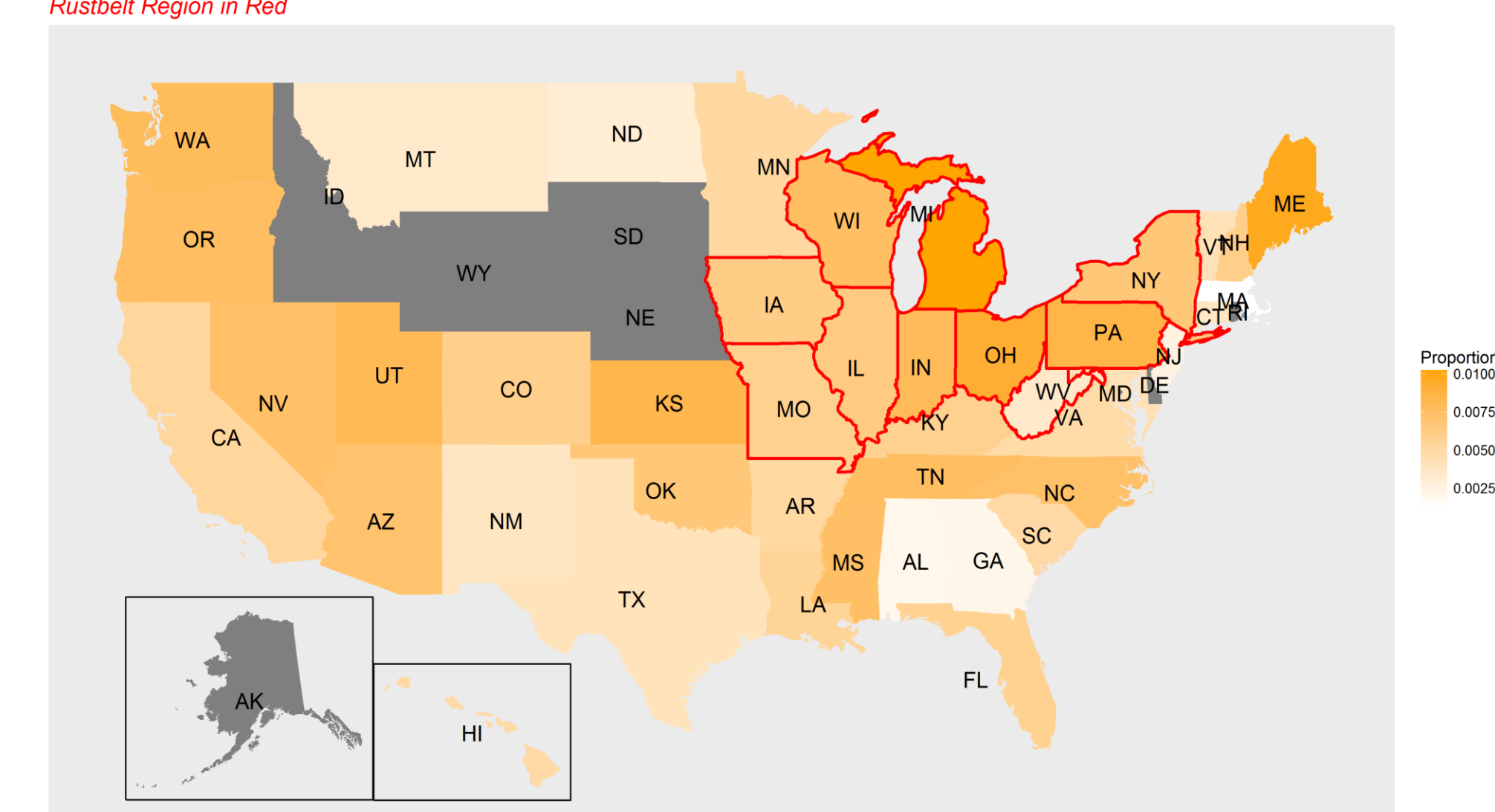
Table 1: OLS Regression on Trade Topic Salience

	Dependent Variable: Frequency of Trade-related Words	
	Rustbelt	Non-rust
republican president	-7.07*** (2.16)	6.68*** (1.24)
swing state	4.47* (2.46)	-0.17 (1.37)
unemployment (lagged)	1.27 (0.93)	0.07 (0.42)
challenger party	1.81 (3.10)	9.94*** (1.26)
partisan unity with governor	2.11 (3.02)	2.86** (1.24)
primary	2.04 (2.25)	-9.63*** (1.26)
year2012	-0.79 (3.81)	-4.33* (2.36)
year2016	7.21** (3.07)	22.13*** (1.57)
Constant	1.86 (5.22)	-1.15 (2.26)
Observations	354	497
R ²	0.06	0.46
Adjusted R ²	0.03	0.45
Residual Std. Error	19.54 (df = 345)	13.54 (df = 488)
F Statistic	2.55** (df = 8; 345)	51.33*** (df = 8; 488)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Trade Topic Salience Map

Trade Salience Map in the US Presidential Election Speeches, 2008 - 2016



Conclusion

- Presidential candidates *ex-ante* respond to expected voter punishment on trade through customizing different rhetoric by region.
- The rhetoric varies by political party, with higher intensity in swing states.
- While Democrats target rustbelt voters, Republicans target non-rustbelt voters in their usage of trade rhetoric.