

# Election Analysis

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You can't find a way forward if you don't know why you are chained to the past. This means looking at why people voted for Donald Trump, and not for Hillary. And then figuring out how to attract both groups to one political effort.

Why people do things has always intrigued me. I've spent years studying this at a very deep level, and writing a lot about it. I'm generally ahead of government analysis on things like terrorism, and they come to the same conclusions. After Navy technical school, my college majors were psychology and religious studies (later acting), but unfortunately IU was studying behaviorism, which even the founder said was a failure, so I had to strike out on my own... which was much better, because I don't like abnormal psych, clinical psych, or therapy... which I also learned from working in the field in the 1970s.

I have an analytical mind. I like understanding and helping "normal" people. What I work with is Cognitive Behavior and attitude change. These have taught me the valuable lessons that you don't force people to change or use deception. Since I did marketing, I also did a huge number of focus groups, which is very enlightening about personality and differences.

This election was classic for my areas, and was foreshadowed by Brexit. Like others, I thought Trump couldn't possibly win.

## **At the surface level, what you see in this election's results is that:**

1. An overall preference for Trump over Hillary, although Hillary won the popular vote by a very slight margin.
2. A weak turnout for both candidates, neither of whom were popular
3. A disdain for politics as usual, which is a result of the 6 year obstruction of congress, and the survey and results that showed that for decades, what people have wanted has had no influence on legislation.
4. A rural VS city divide.
5. A quandary over candidates ethics and morality, real or imagined, that each side addressed only in the other candidate
6. White, wealthy males went largely for Trump
7. Younger voters went largely for Clinton
8. Minorities backed Clinton
9. Clinton correlated well with the more educated

10. Trump correlated very well with the religious. 81% of those who identified as a white evangelical or white born-again Christians supported Trump

### **City VS Rural**

Looking under the hood at the city VS rural divide, cities are considered 50,000 people and over. They should look at metropolitan areas, but they don't. Our population has made a tremendous shift from rural to city. Agricultural work is only 3% of today's employment, and work has been more and more difficult to find in rural areas, so the population has moved to the cities and suburbs.

Cities have run into problems historically with the middle and upper classes moving out and taking business with them, to avoid city problems (the great white flight). But in recent history, the trend has reversed. Many suburbs are now experiencing problems more like city problems, and many businesses and people are moving back into cities.

Cities are a melting pot of ethnicities, with higher ethnic populations than white. Rural America is 77% white, and 76% Republican, with some areas having no ethnic diversity at all. But cities get the bad rap of enabling diversity and tolerance. Cities tend to be progressive. They get the bad rap of being welfare pits, even though rural America is where most of the people are who live in poverty. They get the bad rap of single women with children living in poverty, but it's actually equal between single and married. The majority is not minorities. Around 30% living in poverty are employed. 40% are retirees, disabled, and children. 51% of rural poverty is in the South. Less than 10% of the US budget goes to safety net programs, compared to 16% for defense, and 7% for the interest on the National Debt.

So if the rural areas are the heavier drain on financial resources, why the rural votes for Republicans, who target these to reduce or stop? If people voted by figures, the vote would go the other way. But it is an irrational vote.

Well, they say it's about jobs. I won't go into all of the whys and wherefores, but every chart and unbiased analysis shows that from Reagan on, the Democrats have consistently done better on jobs, and every other economic measure, than Republicans. Rational decision making doesn't apply. Identity politics is what matters most.

Identity for rural residents is us against the elite. One phrase I saw that resonated was, "They hate us because we act like we think we deserve to rule them." Place identity alters and influences the experience of race, class, gender and ethnicity.

Researcher Katherine Cramer Walsh found in Wisconsin, "...rural residents don't feel represented by government. Many of them want social programs reduced or eliminated as part of a general scaling back of government. Two key related factors, she writes, are "race and rural consciousness."

([host.madison.com/ct/news/local/madison\\_360/madison-race-rural-identity-shape-wisconsin-politics/article\\_b180d732-ee38-11e1-8963-001a4bcf887a](http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/madison_360/madison-race-rural-identity-shape-wisconsin-politics/article_b180d732-ee38-11e1-8963-001a4bcf887a) - dot - html Note: remove - dot - to follow this link.)

"When people claimed that government did not represent their concerns, they would argue that it instead was operating to benefit other people: sometimes the wealthy, but also people who were undeserving largely because they did not work hard enough for the government benefits they enjoyed..."

"Examples of such (undeserving) people were often people of color." "Many perceived that their tax dollars were being usurped by urbanites and spent on urbanites, and believed that city dwellers do not face the same challenging conditions that folks in rural areas do." "Even when it is not center stage, many prevailing political arguments make it possible for racial discrimination to enter..."

"While 16 percent of suburban respondents and 25 percent of urban respondents said they do not get a "fair share" of state government resources, 69 percent of rural respondents felt that way in another poll question."

But this shouldn't define rural inhabitants as racist. "Race came up just as often in urban and suburban conversations, she emphasizes. "It's so easy for us urbanites to write off their attitudes as simply racism. That is only part of it. The rural consciousness I describe is about a broader 'us versus them' perspective that is effective for mobilizing opposition to government programs."

I've lived around several cities. I grew up in a very rural area, and I visit there. I live in a rural area now. I would say Walsh's analysis is exactly right. But that isn't all. We'll look at religion later.

So to get rural voters, 20% of the population, to support a candidate, it's necessary to address their issues, and just as importantly be someone they can identify with. Sarah Palin fit this description, which explains her popularity.

### **Wealth White Male Vote**

Wealthy white men voted for Trump. Of those making over \$50,000.00 a year, the majority voted for Trump.

There was speculation that it was to keep immigrants out. For some it was that he is a businessman and will do more for business.

### **Trump correlated very well with the religious.**

Around 50% of the Republican Party identifies as conservative, and take their faith seriously. 64% of those identify as Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which is a national and international group. 81% of those who identified as a white evangelical or white born-again Christians supported Trump.

The official position of the SBC:

The SBC "recognizes the biblical restriction concerning the office of pastor, saying: "... the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."..focus on the assignment of roles.. also passed a resolution in the early 1980s recognizing that offices requiring ordination are restricted to men. "

The SBC believes that women should not be leaders. They don't have that role. The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, has a similar stance, The "Presbyterian Church in America" has mixed feelings, but doesn't ordain women as leaders.

The Human Rights Campaign has this to say: "The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, with over 16 million members, has discriminated against gay and lesbian people for more than a quarter-century. The SBC has passed numerous resolutions on gay and lesbian issues since 1976, repeatedly asserting its commitment to preach, teach and politically organize against gay and lesbian people and their supporters. Unlike many Christian denominations that oppose discrimination against gay and lesbian people in civil society, the SBC has gone on record as supporting it.

"The SBC opposes marriage equality for same-sex couples. It prohibits congregations from blessing same-sex unions or ordaining gay and lesbian clergy. It is even opposed to the establishment of gay-straight alliances in schools and legislation that would ban discrimination in the workplace."

For Catholics, the Pope recently said that he doesn't see the Church changing its position on women in leadership.

The fourth largest group, The Assembly of God, is changing: "After examining the various translations and interpretations of biblical passages relating to the role of women in the first-century church, and desiring to apply biblical principles to contemporary church practice, we conclude that we cannot find convincing evidence that the ministry of women is restricted according to some sacred or immutable principle."

So, among the 3 largest religious affiliations present in the Republican Party, they generally don't believe that women should be leaders. They think that 800 BC should dictate what we think and do today. Will they compromise on issues? No. These people generally don't believe in compromise, believing that it's their way or no way.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/23/u-s-religious-groups-and-their-political-leanings/>

### **Moral Superiority, Facts, and Debate**

Another facet of this election is that people perceive the Democrats and Liberals as having a "Holier than you," position, which is off-putting. Churches have the same problem. People feel like liberals feel like they can only be right, and put others down. People don't necessarily feel they are against gays, and other issues, but they resent being put in their place about it. This is one of the major issues for

churches, and the SBC fans the flames. They set themselves up as holier than thou, and piss everyone off who doesn't acquiesce to their commands.

One important characteristic of many religious people of this persuasion is that they feel they have the only right interpretation of Scripture, can't possibly be wrong, and to even consider other's views, let alone compromise, is a transgression that puts them in eternal danger. Not only that, many of this persuasion have a cynical view of the world, believing that it has always been lost beyond redemption, will soon be destroyed, and they not only won't help it, they feel that helping it is not in God's interests. They see others' beliefs as an attack on their religion. They are locked in. Some members of Congress are in this camp, or locked in with their constituents, so you get the failure to compromise on legislation.

Many members of Congress have gerrymandered districts, populations chosen by them with whom they are in rapport. If they vote the wrong way, they will be replaced. So it is not an option for them to even consider another way of looking at things.

One of the things you see repeatedly in focus groups, is that men really resent others telling them what to think, how to behave, etc. It's one of the earliest lessons I learned in one of my college psychology labs. Telling someone "the facts," and endorsing a related behavior, no matter how authoritative, doesn't mean that they will do it at all, or even consider it. This has been borne out for me over time in real life as well. Men, and many women, must always feel that they have freedom of choice. If they feel pressured, manipulated, or deceit is used, they simply rebel.

Another curious phenomenon that I have observed over time, and has recently been studied, is that the effects of polarization in our society are to create unbreakable bonds. Like the tree that grew larger with every whack of the woodcutter's axe, debating with people about a treasured belief, threatens their identity, and they are forced to defend their belief with statements that are totally ridiculous, no matter how intelligent they are. Debate is a belief hardener.

People's identity is often more important to them than life. Belittling, pounding people with facts, debating them, is a threat to their identity. What they are most likely to do is refuse your facts, turn away from you, and storm off more settled than ever.

So from this collection of thoughts about perceived moral superiority, facts, and debate, there is little to be gained, and much to lose, from direct confrontation with people who have different beliefs.

Since around 1900, Christian church affiliation has been on a steady decline. It picked up some around the times of depression, war, and Century marks, but continued downward. In about another 50 years or less, it will be down to around 10% of where it was in 1900. This is attrition of resistance by death. Nothing lasts forever. The Churches are being replaced by spirituality. One of the main reasons is because people like Christ and spirituality, but dislike Christians. Faith and religious affiliation are different things.

## **Another Party?**

I asked a few people what another, more acceptable and relatable party should form around?

Answer: "Socially liberal and financially conservative, populist." Millennials fit very well in this category. They reflect somewhat the political makeup of the US. "A plurality of Millennials (39%) are moderates, with another 31% describing their political views as liberal, and 26% as conservative." These are about the same percentages for other Democrats, Republicans, and 52% Independents.

What is more characteristic of Millennials is that they tend to volunteer more, and believe in the power of the people to make change. They want to make life better for all. And they don't trust government to do it. They want better government, not more or less. And they want transparency in government. These are the people who are likely to be the backbone of any new party.

No matter how we position a party, it isn't going to satisfy everyone. The 20% rural population is likely to see it in "us against them" terms, unless it's a relatable rural candidate who offers them jobs, and not an elite who they won't believe. Religious fundamentalists and evangelicals, which are very big in the South, and good size in the Midwest and West, aren't going to budge. They are a permanent force against anything they oppose. White wealthy men are always likely to vote for Republicans who say they are for business.

Apathy, especially for two unpopular political candidates, kills elections. Who knows who might have won. But as one of the framers of our Declaration of Independence noted, people don't do anything about anything unless they are in sufficient pain. "*...all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.*"

The bomb. Who knows where the bomb will strike next. You can invite the bomb by declaring "not business as usual, full transparency," but it may not work.

What is the wedge issue that would attract others? Probably the economy and jobs, same as this election. The economy will start sagging, and likely then be sinking at the end of Trump's four year term if the Trump and Republican agendas are followed. Jobs and economy are the issues that can potentially capture Millennials, the 52% independents, the 32% Democrats, and some of the 26% Republicans," and some of the rural voters.

Millennials, who are financially conservative, are unlikely to go for huge spending programs. They, like many people including Republicans, want programs that are proven (evidence based), and are small, targeted programs, more likely operated at State level (local control) with some Federal funding.

- <http://www.urban.org/2016-analysis>
- <http://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/allstate/when-it-comes-to-politics-do-millennials-care-about-anything/255/>
- [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ryan-scott/new-report-millennials-po\\_b\\_10764426.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ryan-scott/new-report-millennials-po_b_10764426.html)

## **Forward**

I started a new group for people who want to talk about a new way forward.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1591794004461390/?ref=bookmarks>