

Naturally, Donald Trump Won!

By

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The Donald Trump election victory was described by House Speaker Paul Ryan as the most incredible political feat in his lifetime, but was it? From the time Donald Trump announced he was running for President, people thought he was an aberration, but he wasn't. His opponents and the media said he was politically and socially incapable to be President and all the pollsters declared he couldn't win the election, but he did. And when, and in spite of the media's continual barrage of Trump's imperfections and indiscretions, he won a clear victory in Electoral College votes, his detractors were in shock.

In asking how so many professionals got it wrong, the answer lies in an appreciation of American history and the very psyche, or soul, that makes America the country it is. The writing was on the wall foretelling of a likely victory for Donald Trump but the lack of appreciation of the very tenets that make up the American psyche gave way to the naivety and cynicism that was witnessed in much of the media.

To understand the Trump phenomena and the tremendous support that gathered behind him, and to understand where America goes next in its domestic and foreign policies, is to take another look at this American 'soul'. There are seven tenets that comprise the American social psyche: Christianity; Patriotism; Egalitarianism; Protestant Work Ethic; Encouragement of Achievement; Isolationism; and Capitalism. These tenets are not exclusive and together constitute what is often referred to as the American dream – the hope and belief of what could be.

Christianity

From the time of the War of Independence from Britain, American federal politics has rested on Scottish Presbyterianism. (The revolt against Britain was essentially a revolt by Scottish merchants against British trade restrictions and taxes.) The First and the Second Great Awakenings in the 18th and 19th Centuries, resulting in the growth of protestant Christianity, confirmed America as a Christian country. The adherence to Christian beliefs is an essential requirement for political office in most places, and certainly a requirement to be President. Of America's 45 Presidents and the President-elect, all but one have been Protestant. Hilary Clinton is a Methodist, and Donald Trump is a Presbyterian, of Scottish ancestry.

Patriotism

Having won the War of Independence, (with the help of the French) American's have remained proud of their country and its achievements. Many Americans firmly believe that it was their Manifest Destiny, and God's will for them, to take possession of the new

land and to develop it. As Americans feel that their country is no longer a great power, and their economy is staggering, it hurts their national pride, and as patriots, they want to see their country redeemed and excel.

Egalitarianism

The concept that “all men are created equal” and have equal opportunities under law and the eyes of God, is fundamental to American society. In rejection of the rule of English aristocracy, the American Scottish Presbyterian Founding Fathers believed that anyone could rise in life by hard work and God’s blessing. That is, anyone can rise up above their lot to become President, so children are still taught.

Protestant Work Ethic

The Calvinist theology of reward for hard work, known as the Protestant Work Ethic, drove the Scottish Presbyterians and American development. If you work hard to achieve your dreams, it is believed, God will reward your efforts. Americans admire ‘a self-made man’ and especially an underdog who rises against the odds. Today, Americans usually only take two weeks annual holiday as ‘work’ is what people do, and defines who they are. This makes for a very energized society but it also brings a sense of depression and even anger when people can’t find, or believe they are prevented from work, such as production going off to China.

Encouragement of Achievement

In the late 17th Century, under King James I of Scotland, the Presbyterians saw five universities established while England had only two. In the 18th Century, Scotland was to take a lead in an European Renaissance with the invention of seemingly everything – from the pound note to the rain coat, from tar on the road, to the telephone. This appreciation for discovery and an enquiring mind transferred to America with Protestant churches across the country establishing schools and universities. Today, America would have more universities per square foot than anywhere else on earth.

Isolationism

America was the New World and people left Europe to find this ‘new world’ with its new hope and opportunity. While a New York merchant elite kept close social contact with Britain and Europe, much of the rest of the population were happy to have left the ‘old world’ behind. American had to dragged into both the First and Second World Wars, because the American people didn’t want to get involved with other people’s conflicts. By the end of the Second World War, and with a perceived threat of anti-Christian communism, America found itself in the somewhat unwanted position of being the ‘leader of the free world’. While this perception has fueled American pride for more than half a century, running as a subterranean stream, there has been the desire to leave others to sought out their own destinies, alone.

Capitalism

Capitalism, defined as the private use of money to make money, free of government involvement, is an American way of life as concepts of production, consumption, investment and profit, permeate private sector logic. (Free trade was originally a term used by the English to describe Scottish merchants who smuggled wine and produce from France to avoid paying English taxes) While the Thirteen Colonies began as agricultural estates, the growth of America occurred during the Industrial Revolution and leading financial and trade cities emerged in New York (NY), Chicago (IL), Boston (MA), Charlotte (NC), San Francisco (CA), Philadelphia (PA), Atlanta (GA), Minneapolis (MN), Miami (FL), Los Angeles (CA) and Dallas (TX). As centres of commerce and pro-Republican capitalism, but they are also large urban, cosmopolitan cities of 'working class' people and social need. Thus, several of these cities and states are now considered 'battleground' states. (This election saw agricultural states vote overwhelmingly for Donald Trump and the key city-states battlegrounds of Illinois, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Texas (6 out of 9) also vote Trump.

Thus, the first question in understanding the Trump victory is: which candidate in the 2016 presidential election personified the hopes of the American psyche, Hilary Clinton or Donald Trump?

When a person first visits and travels across America, they are struck by the vast differences in the country's social character. Indeed, America remains a country of 'united' states. With continued immigration and an advancing 'global' culture, traditional and rudimentary values have been eroding and affecting the nature of the electoral battlefield.

First, is the issue of the tradition power and finance divisions. Throughout the 20th Century, there were two hidden but fundamental 'alliances' of power across America: The New York-San Francisco connection of stock markets and finance, and the Los Angeles-Dallas-Chicago triangle of oil and military industry money. Reagan emerged on the back of this defence industry-oil money club.

Second, there remains the old divide between north and south: and 'them there southerners have not yet forgot their lickin' in the war'... 'If you want to be president, son, and you come from the north, you'd better get a southerner runnin' mate if ya' want to stand a chance of winnin'". Confederate flags still hang in Congressional and Senate offices. (Bill Clinton broke the rule when he asked Al Gore to be his southern running mate.)

Third is the issue of the changing political party constituencies. Driven by union money and support through the 19th and 20th Centuries, the decline of unionism over the past 50 years has pushed the Democratic Party to build a constituency of assorted interest groups. Walter Mondale, in campaigning against Reagan in 1984, tried to consolidate all sorts of interest groups in an

effort to build his constituency made promises to so many dissociated groups that a cartoonist came up with the phrase 'land rights for gay whales' to describe his liberal election slogan. The Democrats became the big-spender party with a mission to redistributed tax income to the 'deserving' through government services (\$500 bil. Health and Human Services and \$90 bil. welfare services expenditures).

The 2016 presidential election Democratic battle plan run along old and predictable turf with a candidate promoting government welfare spending, supporting minorities, proclaiming feminism, (and denying involvement in conspiracy and crime) with a rally cry of 'Stronger Together' - a cry which hadn't progressed at all since Walter Mondale in 1984.

With industrial cities leaning Democrat, and with the usual Democratic promises to increase welfare, Hillary Clinton then tried to bolster her campaign with a feminist card to create a divide between the male-female vote: "How can an intelligent woman vote for that despicable man?" the chorus ran on. But, this old and simplistic Marxist dichotomy between 'the good guys and the bad guys' had limited effect and generally, women did not walk away from their families and traditional values, as hoped, with more women voting for Trump than not.

As much as Democrats, and even the Republican politicians, wanted the election battle of 2016 to wage along traditional party lines, or the divisions of north vs south, or leading cities vs the agricultural belt, the goal post had shifted and battle was to be fought on the field of values.

Donald Trump, blunder along as he did, was not a 'party' man. He was a northerner but spoke along conservative lines. He was a self-determined capitalist billionaire, who was a very 'basic' guy with a mouth-control problem, who had no experience in politics and dared to call out to 'Make America Great Again'. The people who came out to Trump rallies were not there to support their party; but were there by the tens of thousands with an excitement of re-grasping their patriotic American dream.

There was yet a forth division that cannot go ignored: Between the inside and outside 'the beltway' people. People all across America feel cut off from the decision making process of their country and that career politicians, lawyers and public servants (working inside the beltways of capital cities) they think are out of touch with the rest of America. Hilary Clinton proclaimed that she had been a civil servant for thirty years and that she was an 'inside the beltway kinda' gal'. Donald Trump was perceived as definitely outside the beltway and a 'get it done kinda' guy'. This resentment of Washington was a determining factor in the election and why people called to 'drain the swamp'.

So, which Americans did the candidates speak for, and which American dream, or hope, did they speak to?

The people who came out to Trump rallies were not there to support their party but were there by the tens of thousands with an excitement of re-grasping their patriotic American dream. The media, however, couldn't perceive what they were looking at. A review of the Electoral College voting shows just how the nation divided as Trump finished with 306 to 234 electoral votes.

House Speaker Paul Ryan also said on the day after the election: "Donald Trump heard a voice out in this country that no one else heard. He connected in ways with people no one else did. He turned politics on its head."

Now, Donald Trump's election has a lot of people nervous about what he will do next. He has some big promises to keep which will keep him fairly busy for some time. As for his foreign policies, a review of those seven tenets of the American psyche gives a good estimate of the thinking of this burgeoning new 'leader of the free world', and there is only so much he can do anyway without the US Congress. But, and fundamentally, America's foreign policies are always a reflection of its domestic realities and President Trump will seek to get the American house in order, first, and then deal with everyone else as a patriot, a Christian, and a capitalist.

At this standpoint of the dawn of a new American President, Donald Trump's efforts could turn out to be as significant for world history as the coming down of the Berlin Wall. So, don't leave the theater just yet.

