

Why Trump won, and why that requires that the rules be ...

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Why did Trump win?

I keep reading commentary asking why it was that Trump won the US presidential election, and by corollary, why Harris lost?

Lots of answers are being provided by those making comment, and I am well aware that I am simply contributing to that heap of analysis by writing this post. But, what I want to do is to reduce this to its most basic elements, which I think to be really important, because as far as I can see the explanation for what happened is really quite straightforward.

Let's start with Harris, because there is no doubt that the Democrats lost this election. It is almost always the case that incumbents lose elections, and the oppositions do not win them, and the polling data in this election makes that look likely. So, what was it that made Harris lose?

The simplest, and therefore I think best, explanation is that Harris had no compelling story to tell. There was no narrative that could justify the continuation of neoliberal power in the USA.

It has obviously failed to deliver for the majority of American people. As such it could never have provided her with a narrative to justify support for its continuing power, which is what she was offering. This became very obvious during the campaign, when she would do anything but explain just what it was that she was offering the electorate.

The simple fact is that you cannot win in an election without a story, and that which Harris had to offer was too uncomfortable for her to relate it, and the consequence was inevitable. The neoliberal story is over.

In contrast, Trump did have a story. It might have been riddled with lies. Large parts of it were unpalatable. It might have glossed over the reality of the man he is, and what he wishes to do, and the consequences of those actions. But he did, nonetheless have a story to tell.

What is more, he had the support of a media who were more than willing to relay what he said without critical analysis being applied to it. The consequence was that his tropes became accepted as if they might become policy. Perhaps most worryingly of all, even Trump now believes his claims, and he will try to deliver policy based on them. That's the power of a story.

What I have done by reducing my explanation to something so basic is to cut my analysis right back to the bone. That, however, is what I think needs to be done. There was a fundamental story failure on the part of Harris, and a fundamental tale of successful storytelling by Trump. That was the difference between the two. Well, that plus the fact that Harris knew that her story was unpalatable, and so did not tell it, whilst Trump, also knowing that his story was unpalatable, lied about it, creating a more palatable fiction as his story, instead.

So why is it that I am interested in relating the story in this way? That is because unless I can make things this basic, I will struggle to work out how I can create a better narrative, which is what we undoubtedly need.

The story of neoliberalism is all about providing power under the guise of liberal freedom to a few in a way that denies most the opportunity to partake in society in the way that they would wish. It is designed to ensure that wealth shoots upwards whilst denying those responsible for creating most of that wealth any of the gains over periods of decades. Of course no honest politician can now say that. No wonder Harris (and Starmer) prevaricated. A story where the inevitable winner pre-ordinates that outcome by dealing themselves all the cards is never going to work with the electorate.

Trump's story is that he will restore the power of America to deliver that wealth to those who want to claim it, which he represents to be the American people, although there is no chance that they will participate in the way that he claims.

He conned them once, and they became disenchanted. Now he is conning them again. The reality is that in his game the wealthy won't even deal the cards. They've cancelled the game. His politics is all about perpetuating the gains they have already got.

So what's the story got to be? It's in three parts.

First, everyone has to be in the game. The table has to be open to all.

Second, everyone must get a return from the game. The returns might not be equal,

but they must always be sufficient, with a differential on regard that is never going to be disruptive.

Third, no one should have the right to either fix or rewrite the rules. Checks, balances and limits must be unalterable so that even if minor nuance might need to change as society develops, the stability of opportunity for all to partake in what that society has to offer, without fear, has to exist.

Neither Harris or Trump offered this version of the game of life. Nor have Labour, the Tories or any other major party here. This game is not on their agenda, apparently. They'd almost prefer the impression be given that the game is cancelled - being unaffordable according to fiscal rules to which no one consented - than talk about what might be possible.

And that's why the rules need rewriting, so that everyone can take part without fear of losing, wherever and whoever they are.