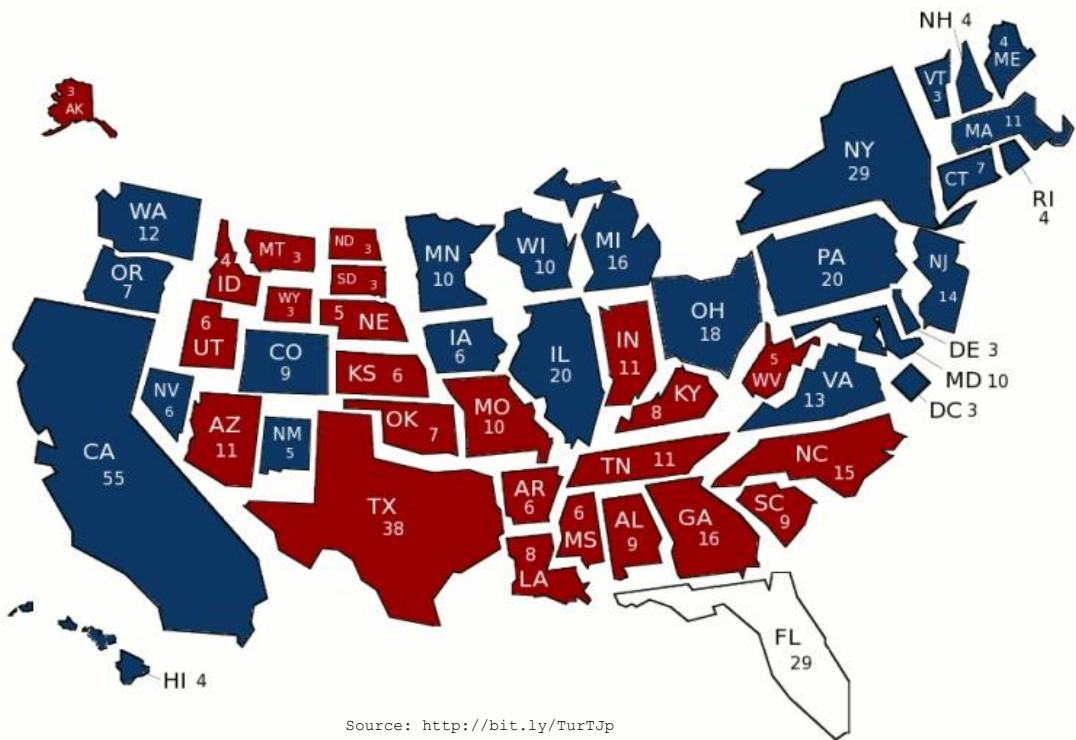


A Change in Washington?

Net result: status quo, no change.

[Johan Galtung](#)

1



From Washington, DC on Election Night

OK, one of them won even if the real winners as usual were the non-voters, for whatever reason; men more than women. About 2315 Obama passed the magic 50 percent mark, not of popular votes but of electoral colleges, with 302-206, well above 270; it turned into a landslide. Net result: status quo, no change.

The media did their best to make the presidential election look important, being the pinnacle, the altar on which democracy is built. Some democracy. Bad enough with a Supreme Court washing the process in six billion dollars as one more freedom of expression like talking words; any kind of words, libelous, often neither true nor relevant. Stupid TV spots. But many issues were somehow articulated, there were real disagreements, there was some kind of rhetorical left-right.

2

However, the real problem lies somewhere else, not in what was said but in what was not said. The list is long. *Washington Post* on election day (Manuel Roig-Fanza): "A tough day for causes without a candidate". The article mentions climate change, gun control, immigration as issues not picked up either by the party conventions or in the debates. But there are many more issues; and they are among the most pressing problems confronting the country. Two major lobbies advocating use of force were left untouched; the National Rifle Associatio-NRA, for violence in the USA, and the American-Israeli Political Action Committee-AIPAC, for violence abroad. They both exercise power through their impact on the media, denying critical politicians access to political power, thereby removing obstacles to violence. Press campaigns and gerrymandering (as in the case of Dennis J. Kucinich) reduce fatally the political spectrum in Congress and elsewhere. Both candidates knew that to take on these two would be as suicidal for themselves as the lobbies are inside the country, through massive murders at home and anti-Muslim wars abroad.

Foreign policy regarding economic relations with China was actually twisted in the debates, trying to sound tough. The fact of the matter is that the majority in the US cannot live without affordable Chinese goods with adequate quality/price ratios. Unless--a big unless--the USA restructures its economy from below, with cooperatives and self-employment, activating the countryside and the local communities with numerous small enterprises focused on basic needs, food above all, housing and clothing, health and education; direct from producers to

consumers. Almost no country in the world has a population so creative and cooperative; but the blossoming Occupy Movement has so far limited itself to occupation and critique, not to constructive discourse and action.

They left untouched the basic change happening in the world: the US grip on the elites of other countries is loosening in Latin America and even in Africa following the Arab awakening. Instead, they recite the mantras "the world's largest economy" (EU, not only the euro zone, is larger, and China will overtake the US soon) and "the strongest military power in the world" (losing Vietnam-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iraq-Yemen-Somalia-Sudan is a strange concept of "strongest"). Truth might have liberated the USA rather than catching up in disagreeable, repressive ways.

Climate change: The USA is dragging their feet, delaying action everywhere in international fora. Not the candidates but Nature, in the shape of Sandy, talked; a brutal reminder of climate reality, another one taking shape. How much of it is man-made is uncertain; but the change is certain enough. And the self-proclaimed world leader country does not lead.

3

Then, incredible: the issues of 16 percent of the population being in misery and hunger whereas the 1 percent lives in opulence and feeding on speculation were drowned in glib talk about the "middle class". Yes, they are large; but stagnant. And far from representing 100 percent of the population.

Neither candidate had answers, possibly agreeing to be silent. The USA needs desperately more parties that are less afraid of truths. They will not win anyhow but are indispensable for democratic transparency and open dialogue.

Does the election make a difference? What newness will the second Obama term bring? Obama said in his victory speech that he will focus on the deficit, the taxation system, and immigration. None of the above. In foreign policy Romney, like Bush, might have been more reckless, accelerating the fall of the empire. But Obama, like Clinton, is better informed, more sophisticated, holding up the fall a little longer. And democrats are more inclined to do what Israel wants; Christian Zionists, who wish to accelerate the return of the Messiah, playing a role.

Obamacare will continue whatever its worth, given the rise in costs for any medical care--possibly because "the state will pay".

On January 1, 2013 the budget deficit reduction will strike, according to a Congressional consensus, with major "austerity" for those who can least afford it but touching the military very gently. Misery will accelerate as will too the military deployments and wars the Obama

way, drones and SEALs, extrajudicial executions--Obama repeatedly boasted killing Osama (with no evidence that he masterminded 9/11). Imagine a Politburo committee in China studying portfolios, briefs and photos to decide whom to kill abroad for anti-Chinese activity and/or threat to China's security. Or China's arming Cuba and Haiti to the teeth at the same time that a Chinese fleet cruises the Caribbean, being those countries as close to the US as Taiwan is to China. Too asymmetric to stand.

But Obama will play "I am above the parties, uniting the country". In his first term he was leaning over to the Republicans, backwards, and was badly punished in mid-term elections; this time, that makes Romney a de facto co-president. The Dodd-Frank finance economy reforms will be very bland as Wall Street will by and large continue their credit swaps and other lethal games. The rich may be taxed but may find further loopholes, including settling abroad. Much like the French super-rich in London?

Is the US democracy a two-party system becoming a one-party state? If so, other countries beware! Do not imitate. Democracy is more than just elections. It is also transparency and dialogue. For real change.

4

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