

The Analyst: Results of presidential election show America voted for constancy

As economic change occurs, it brings with it social upheavals, which, in turn, results in political change.

According to some political scientists, there are three kinds of elections: maintaining, deviating, and realigning. The election that has just passed appeared to be a realigning or critical election as a result of its characteristics. In a critical election, the majority party status changes and The White House is won by the minority party, which becomes the majority. As you know, the election did not result with a realignment, where the democrats would now hold the majority status; this election turned out to be a maintaining election, where the majority party status stays the same and the white house is won by the majority party.

Many felt this election would turn out to be a critical election, a type of election that occurs every 36 years, or every three generations, and is defined by high ideological content, high intensity, a viable third party candidate and a high voter turnout. The election that just took place seemed to constitute these various elements, so why is it that the election resulted in being a maintaining election as opposed to a critical election?

It seems that our country is divided in their thoughts on the president's re-election: half of the voting populous was more than content as they found out that Bush had maintained his position, and the other half stood in awe, shocked that the candidate they opposed had not lost. The main reason the country is so divided is that the major issues have caused the United States voting populous to be split. Issues such as the war in Iraq, homeland security, foreign policy and gay marriage have created sharp divisions within our country.

Some reasons for why the election resulted in becoming a maintaining election are the cognitive dissonance that shaped people's decisions, the media's negativity and the theatrical elements that cause elections to seem like something Hollywood has created.

Cognitive dissonance occurs when one idea conflicts with another, but the conflicting idea

is ignored to allow the favored idea to be credible. One example of this is how both candidates proposed that they would bring the United States out of its deficit, while, at the same time, suggesting ideas that would clearly not result in rising out of this debt.

The media, at first, began to expose the deceit and lies in the political spectrum, and what began as the idea to shed light on the evils of politics became a conflict between the politicians and the sheer negativity reflected by the media. Bush and Kerry both had negative media coverage in the form of their war records and this simply took attention away from the more important issues at hand.

Finally, due to the elections becoming more and more influenced by Hollywood values, national scandals overshadowed the important issues, how the candidates presented themselves was more important than what they said, and everything each candidate stood for could've been summed up in a sound bite of fifteen seconds.

It appears that the "war is peace" mentality has superseded the "make love, not war" mentality and most people cannot even explain why they voted the way they did. Filmmakers and actors are distorting the truth and allowing for people to support their decision with Hollywood propaganda as opposed to statistics and factual evidence. People are ignoring political scientists and listening to talk show hosts for facts, and until people realize that candidates are not people but representations of the ideals of one of the two parties, the media is going to be able to monopolize on their stupidity. A change is needed, just not where most people are looking.



Christian
Duncan

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— Christian Duncan

Letter to the Editor: Rider News editorial spurns diversity

I was disconcerted to see the editorial written for the Nov. 5, 2004 issue of *The Rider News*. I agree there are many valid reasons to vote for your candidate of choice, and these candidates offered many reasons to vote for and against them. However, the line in the sixth paragraph that generalizes anyone that lives in the south as being able to be "swayed by a local accent" is unacceptable.

The level of integrity in an editorial board that would allow such a generalization goes beyond political debate. I have the privilege to be born and raised in New Jersey, and have visited

other parts of the country. I know that the need for diversity is important. Unfortunately, the students involved with *The Rider News* believe that it is appropriate to stereotype and denigrate those with whom they disagree.

I think a lesson in cultural sensitivity may be in order for these young people. Thank you for your attention in this matter. Have a good day.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY ...

Nov. 12, 1956

The U.S. Supreme Court rules against segregation on public buses on the grounds that it is unconstitutional.

Nov. 15, 1777

The U.S. Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation.

Nov. 16, 1532

Francisco Pizarro captures the Incan empire for Spain.

Nov. 17, 1558

Elizabeth I ascends to the British throne.

'DEMOCRACY' FROM PAGE 8

On election night, I read that 1.6 million absentee ballots in Florida were not counted, yet they called the state for Bush. Should our elections occur on one day as opposed to a few? Some people can't make it to the polls due to illness and other factors. These are all questions that remain unanswered.

Republican poll challengers were stationed in Ohio and they were challenging certain voters' eligibility to cast their ballots. Many were forced to fill out provisional ballots. On Election Day, it was reported that GOP poll challengers forced two Indian families out of polling places in Ohio. The Supreme Court deemed these poll challengers legal. Is this fair?

Is this truly a Democracy when you have volunteers, Republican and Democrat with their own personal agendas counting votes and watching polls? Is there any other way to hold an election and count votes fairly? Is it fair when Waldan O'Dell, the Republican who's company manufactures the voting machines in Ohio, states that he will "deliver Ohio's 20 electoral votes to George W. Bush?" Should he be trusted to manufacturer legitimate machines that will contribute to a fair election? It's not a true reflection of how the counties voted when all these negative aspects of an election are factored in.

The results of this year may have remained the same if none of these negative things happened, but that is not an excuse for things not to be conducted in a "fair" manor. Every last

vote should be counted before the winner is announced and the challenger concedes.

On Thursday, Ralph Nader called for recounts in Ohio, Florida and New Hampshire and said the results shouldn't be based on an informal "concession."

Bush called his projected win a mandate, but analysts like Tim Russert, after gathering data explain it isn't really a mandate because if Kerry won either Ohio or Florida, he would have been President. Also, Bush got the most votes out of any president in U.S. history. On the other hand, Kerry got more votes than any challenger in U.S. History and more than 75 percent of the election winners in U.S. history.

Analysts have also been pin-pointing something interesting after critiquing how states voted. The states hit with the highest casualties from 9/11 like New York and New Jersey went for Kerry yet National Security was projected to be the issue that swayed voters to Bush. During the pre-Civil war era, all the states that were Confederate states voted for Bush and all of the Union states voted for Kerry with the exception of Ohio and Iowa. The country is divided almost like it was in the time right before the Civil War.

Bush was given his first chance to unite the U.S. and the world after 9/11. However, we are still divided. Will George W. Bush be able to unite us in the next four years? Only time will tell.