

RACISM AND THE 2020 USA ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Once again, the world's oldest democracy reverberated with rhetoric speeches and presidential debates. The 2020 elections in the USA started with its age-old notions of racism and white supremacy, showcasing that colour remains a powerful element of American culture. The 2017 election winner and the 45th president of the USA- Donald Trump and his former arch-rival Joe Biden fought for the regal power that will not only decide the future course of America but also a plethora of other nations. The Black Lives Matter movement that initially kickstarted after [the acquittal](#) of [George Zimmerman](#) in [the shooting death](#) of African-American teen Trayvon Martin has proved to be a game-changer in the US presidential elections(Duignan, 2020). The American citizens have been hit hard with worsening economic inequality in the presence of rapidly changing ethnocidal demography and at such a crucial juncture the tension about the US elections got intensified. Yet the harder part seems to be done with and the near future will see Joe Biden hold the rein of the USA. In this paper, I will be dwelling on the rooted history of Racism in the States and how this racist divide had a profound effect on the present elections. Further, the paper will elaborate on the role of deep state politics in the USA and the repercussions of the outcome of these elections for India.

Keywords: Black lives matter, racism, ethnocidal demography

THE STATE AND ITS PLAYERS ON THE POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD

American politics is fundamentally a two-party system however several smaller third parties like the Anti-Masonic Party have also emerged with time(Hanes, 2016). There are separate voting procedures for the Senate, executive officials, etc. However, the limelight rests on the quadrennial presidential elections due to which citizens prefer to vote in this ballot only, a phenomenon known as falloff. The present election is dominated by two major parties- the

Democratic Party (1824, liberal, left-leaning) (Wallenfeldt, 2020) and the Republican Party (1854, conservative, right-leaning) (Wallenfeldt, 2020).

The 2020 election was fought between the undernoted two candidates from the leading political parties -

Joseph R. Biden (77 years), the presidential candidate of the Democratic party had hitherto served as Barack Obama's Vice President for eight years and has run for president twice. Biden to me is what Rawls described as a contemporary liberalist. He not only stands for fundamental liberty and voting rights but insists on ensuring that the least well off (Black people) are given an equally good life. His down to earth personality has made him popular among the working-class voters and his agenda to restore America's standing on the global stage might be his winning card. His running mate is Indian American Kamala Harris.

Donald J. Trump (74 years, incumbent president) runs from the Republican party and is a reality television star and a real estate developer. His main accomplishment as president was a sweeping tax-cut benefiting wealthy investors. His signature issues are restricting immigration from other nations and more particularly from the Mexican borders. With him is his running mate Mike Pence.

BIDEN'S WIN

The incumbent president Donald Trump entered the political arena with his presidential candidacy on June 16, 2015. With his originality and "Make America Great Again" campaign he won the presidential chair with 304 votes as compared to Hilary Clinton with 227 votes (NY Times, 2017).

However, the 2020 US elections brought an end to the Trump regime. Trump had relied on the positive economic growth that the US economy had shown before the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, his achievements were short-lived as the pandemic soon brought the US economy to a standstill and soaring unemployment. Further, the incumbent president's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a failure with the average death toll rising to 2500 per day. His regime was further shaken with the Black Lives Matter movement, an amalgamation of Trump's racist discriminatory statements and his overall attitude of being a controversial racist.

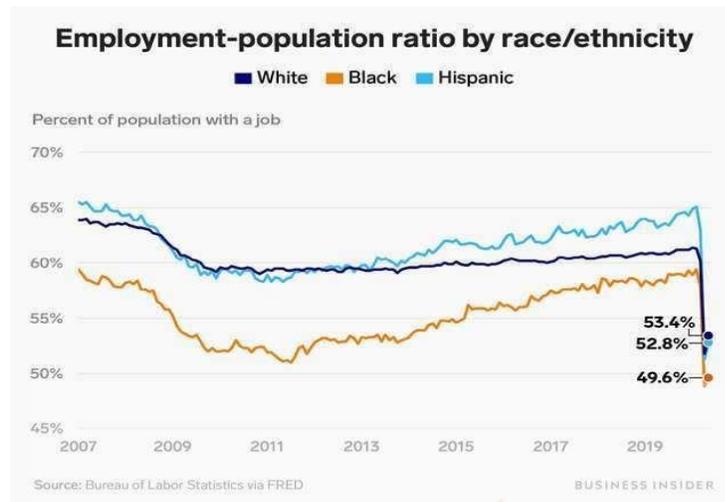


Figure 1: The percentage of unemployed workers in the labour force for whites and Blacks.

Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.in/stock-market/news/12-charts-that-show-how-black-americans-face-alarming-economic-inequality-x2014-and-suggest-it-could-worsen-due-to-the-coronavirus-pandemic/slidelist/76306181.cms#slideid=76306426>

Biden on the other hand has never been in the limelight for controversial statements, maintaining an extremely neutral approach towards both Blacks and Whites. Despite being a White, his association with Barack Obama has helped him legitimize with the Blacks as well. His future policy for tackling the pandemic rests on bedrock science and medical breakthroughs. The citizens sceptical and tired of Trump's instability and racist attitude, partisanship regime, preferred a more responsible and stable leader like Biden. The coronavirus pandemic, economic fallouts and racist policies had proved to be golden chances for Biden to highlight Trump's missteps.

THE EMPLOYMENT-POPULATION RATIO FOR THE BLACKS HAS DIPPED STEEPLY IN COMPARISON TO THAT OF THE WHITES.

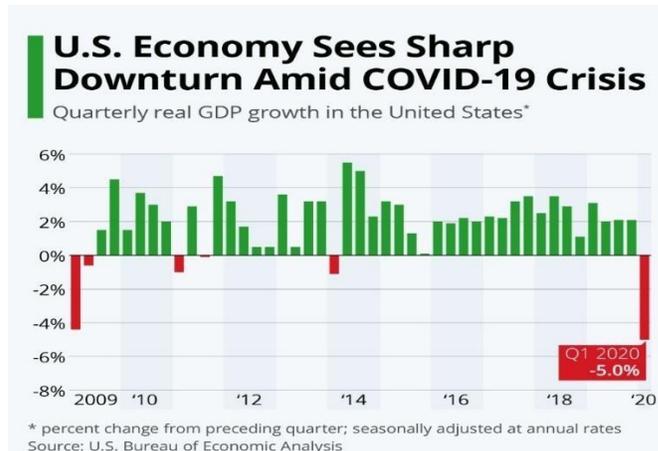


Figure 2: Quarterly Real GDP growth in the United States.

Available at: <https://www.statista.com/chart/18839/quarterly-real-gdp-growth-in-the-united-states/>

RACISM- HOW DEEP IS THE DIVIDE

Racism and black protests against it are not alien to the States. But from where and how did this class and the subsequent divide emerge? Subsequently how this racism divide became deeper during the Trump regime and finally led to its fall?

The U.S.A is an amalgamation of 50 states covering a vast swath of North America, which was first discovered accidentally by Christopher Columbus in 1492. In the 17th and 18th centuries,

Africans were forced into slavery in the American colonies. Blacks were forced to settle and work in factories that were evolving in the States. The tradition of slavery had made the Black suppressed citizens of the States with negligible rights. This class soon began to resist violently and the ruling government was pressurized to mandate provisions for the Black people. Abraham Lincoln in 1861 became the 16th president of the USA with one of his key poll promises being restricting slavery. This led to a civil war between the Northern states loyal to the Union and southern states that had seceded to form the Confederate States of America. In 1865 the Civil War ended and slavery was abolished. The fight for rights continued and finally the 15th Amendment to the U.S.A constitution in 1870 granted Blacks the right to vote. We can say that

these events are history but they have left deep imprints on the psyche of American society whose fault lines still run deep and time and again rear their ugly head.

EVEN IN THE 21ST CENTURY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACKS IN THE STATES CONTINUES WITH OCCASSIONAL INCREASES.

Percent of Black Americans Reporting Various Forms of Individual Discrimination Because of Their Race

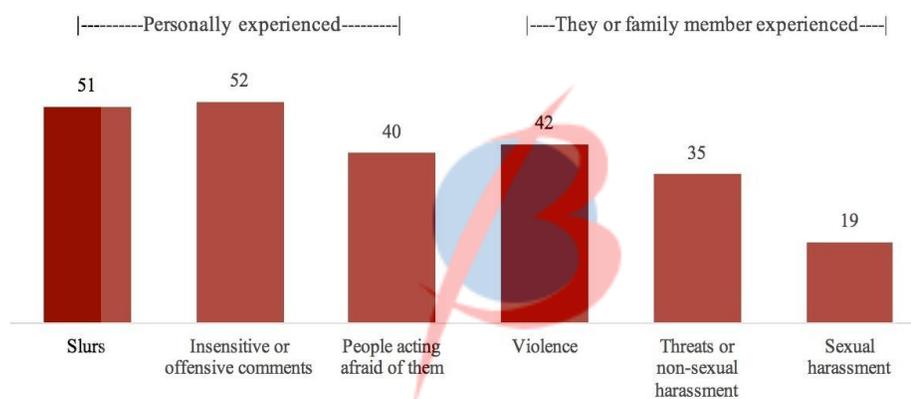


Figure 3: The fear of discrimination in various forms faced by Blacks in USA.

Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/black-americans-discrimination-work-police/>

Time bought Donald Trump as the 45th president of the USA and once again hues and humanity in the States were confronted with challenges. Trump's history with racism dates back to 1973 when his company- Trump Management was sued by the Department of Justice for discriminatory housing policies against African-American renters(Choi, 2017).

During his presidential campaign in 2016, Trump has further retweeted false defamatory claims against illegal Mexican immigrants and African Americans.¹ Once in power, Trump has been propagating the ideology of racism in the States. He has an artificially constructed set of ideas of

¹Trump has also linked Hispanics and Africans with several other violent crimes

white supremacy, that is to some extent far-fetched from the reality of equality. It was the political device of racism that had made him garner the votes of the White community in the 2016 elections. However, in the 2020 elections, this political device has tumbled and instead proved to be a mirror for the Americans by starkly reflecting the way racism continues to forge its way in American society. His racism rhetoric has been a prism that has not only shown the facets of racist attitude but an ultimate denial of its existence.

Donald Trump has often been accused of delivering disrespectful speeches towards women. White women had been extremely supportive of him in the past valuing white privilege over his derogatory and sexist remarks. This time the decks have shifted with 61% of women voters opting to choose Joe Biden with his feminist and respectful attitude towards them (Parpiani, 2020). Trump's regime and governance fit into the authoritarian mantle. Trump has constantly placed his wealthy millennial supporters with almost little or no exposure to top bureaucratic positions at the expense of experience and knowledge (Vigdor, 2020). Trump has undermined the sanctity of democracy in the States and while doing so has bought in much-needed relief to conservatives around the world. These small steps to consolidate power might look small but they might have drastic consequences.

BRILLOPEDIA

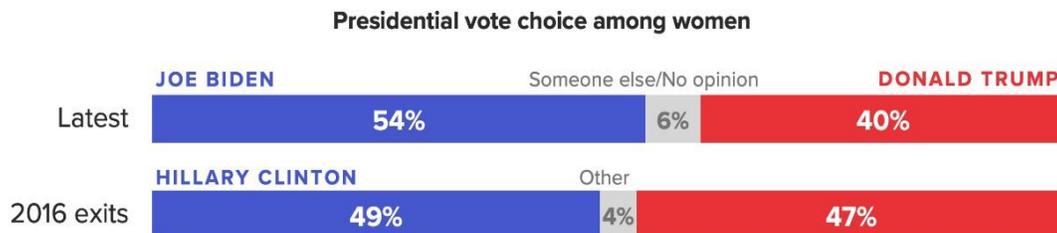
Trump has scratched the wounds of racism and they have bled afresh with the beginning of the Black Lives Movement² dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence. It is a response to the unjust killings of black people by police and demand for giving equal value to the lives of black people as the white.³ There were rallies and campaigns by both blacks and whites throughout the States. An estimated 15 million to 26 million people participated in the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, making it one of the largest movements in U.S. history (Wright, 2020).

²an international social movement that kickstarted in the States in the USA during 2013

³The movement started when George Floyd, an unarmed Black man was pronounced dead after a white Minneapolis officer knelt on Floyd's neck despite his protests.

POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Trump's Lost Ground With Women Since 2016



MORNING CONSULT*

Latest polling conducted Oct. 3-5, 2020, among 8,441 likely female voters, with a margin of error of +/-1%.

Exit polling conducted Oct. 18-Nov. 9, 2016, among 13,534 American women who voted early or on Election Day, with a margin of error of +/-1%.

WOMEN ESPECIALLY BLACK HAVE TURNED AGAINST TRUMP NOT ONLY DUE TO HIS RACIST REMARKS BUT THE DERAGOTARY TERMS HE HAS ASSIGNED TO WOMEN IN THE PAST.

Figure 4: Women vote choices to presidential candidates

Available at: <https://morningconsult.com/2020/10/07/women-voters-poll-presidential-election/>

The after-effects of Trump's racist policies were reflected in the national polls with 61% of the masses favouring Joe Biden due to his party agenda focusing on equal concern over black lives⁴. Biden gained a political advantage over Trump amid protests from voters of all races who support the movement. Biden has supported the movement's goals without embracing activists' more controversial demands. Biden has astutely converted these protests to his advantage as is clearly indicated by his current win.

AMERICA'S CHOICE, INDIA'S OPTIONS

Will a Trump or Biden victory work better for India?

While the world's oldest democracy stood at a crucial quadrennial juncture of heading into the presidential elections, the world's largest democracy- India prepares for continuity or change in Washington.

⁴George Mason University Research

For the past four years, India has struggled to keep up with Trump's transactional diplomacy and of viewing through his lenses of America First. Trump has craft ily used India's PM Narendra Modi's face to garner the votes of the Indian community by inviting him to a grand event called Howdy Modi in Houston(Radhakrishnan, 2019). Further, the Trump administration has hardly ever backlashed on India's recent constrained democracy and human right violation issues.

With Biden taking up the chair India would lack the military and trade support against China as US would be attacking China on issues such as human rights and liberal values.However, Biden would be extremely critical of the illiberal and intolerant attitude that India has taken up towards religious minorities. Albeit belated, Biden in order to woo IndianAmericans in the USA have played the identity card of Kamla Harris.

With Biden taking up the presidential seat, the political and economic cooperation between the two nations is likely to strengthen and will be built on finer grounds that cater to the interests of both. However, issues of Jammu and Kashmir pertaining to human rights violations might occasionally blur the horizon of building a strategic logical relationship.

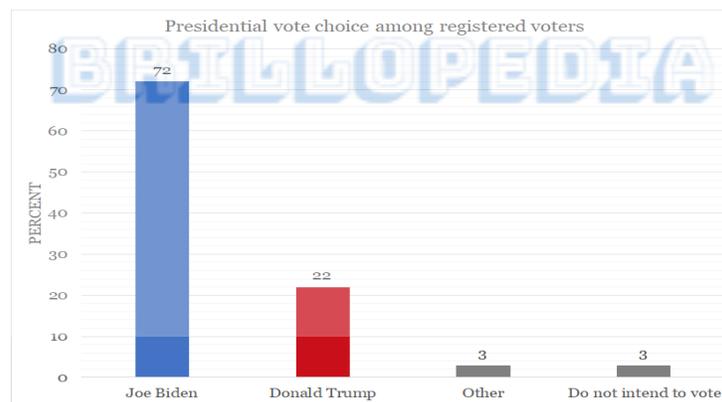


Figure 5: Do close ties between Modi and Trump have an effect on Indian American voters

Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/data/can-howdy-modi-impact-indian-origin-votes-in-the-us/article29520753.ece>

DEEPER STATE- DARK POLITICS

America as a progressive democracy for ages is suddenly caught in an existential crisis fissured by deep state politics.

Trump's political agenda has solely focused on nationalist narratives as a vote bank factor. He has been continuously trying to create a political wing of right-wing nativists against global trade and international engagements (Rajghatta, 2020).

He has been seen as a political insurgent who has regarded each of his decision as a commercial Transaction and enhanced the role of deep state politics in his reign. I believe these deep states function like hegemonies i.e. people who have power assert control over society through cultural means, a concept developed by Antonio Gramsci. Dark politics consist of traditional yet legally established institutions that have a vested interest in ensuring that the majority populace thinks in a certain way. These invisible state apparatuses are not in actual power, yet they are the invisible hands that puppeteer those in real power.

While Biden is ready to occupy the White House, he might put up a cap on these deep state institutions or use them for his advantage. It is yet to unfold whether America would continue on its development as an imperfect nation or embark on a new journey with deeper state politics in hand.

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AMERICA EMBARKS UPON A NEW JOURNEY

Today America is one of the world's largest trading partners - it has learned from its mistakes and moved ahead. Even though internally it lies entangled with colour culture and politics the American spirit keeps fighting and surviving.

I believe the States has opted for a rational-legal authority this time, to ensure their bureaucratic structure does not crumble by the whims and fancies of people in power. They have made a choice which they deem to be more responsible for his words, comments, and most importantly for what the world sees America like.

Whether Biden is the right man to pull up the USA from the deep state politics, downward economic growth and the culture of racism remains a mystery to be unravelled in the future.

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