

Presidential Election 2020: Trump - Covid-19 Mirage

2020 年アメリカ大統領選挙：Covid-19 の幻影

Ikuko A. Honda
(English Lab.)

(accepted December 18, 2020)

Introduction: Overview

U.S. Presidential election 2020 brought Democrats a ‘media announced’ victory 4 days after Nov 3, representing typical blue and red election mirages. Mirages in 2020 election mean that early vote counts in the most competitive, battleground states can be particularly misleading in this election because of the huge unprecedented surge in mail-in or absentee ballots, and the different ways that they are processed state by state.

“The states that count mail-in votes before Election Day are likely to give Biden an early lead, the states that do not tally mail-in votes until Nov. 3 will likely swing initially for Trump⁽¹⁾... then again to Biden.

So warned Reuters on Oct. 22. It turned out exactly what they projected. In this paper, the general trend of exit poll will be reviewed and special attention will be given to the effect of Covid-19 as to traits of Trump supporters to see if Trump states have higher Covid-19 susceptibility after the election.

Exit Poll Analysis

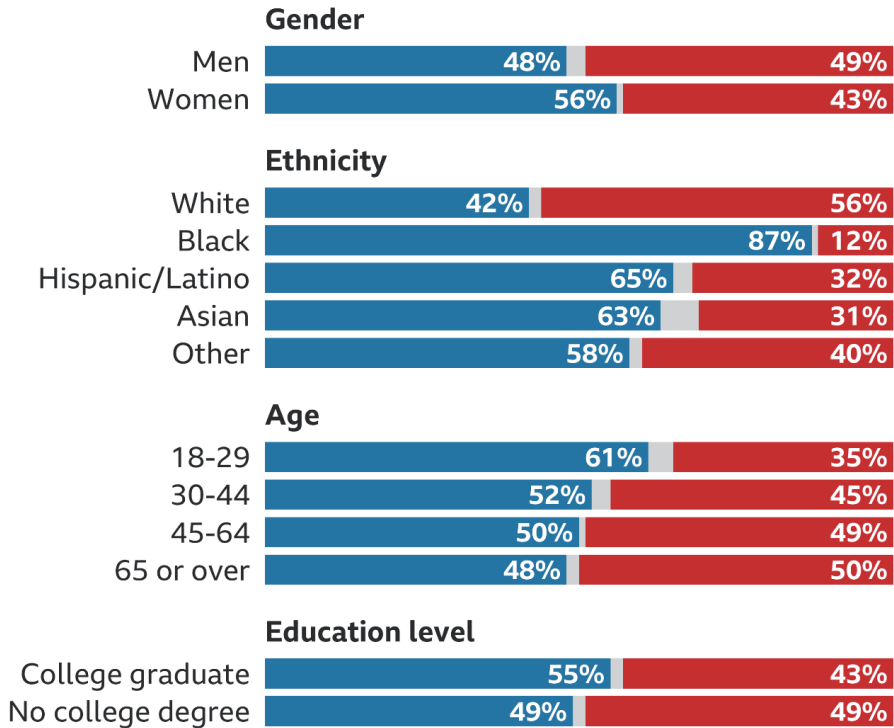
Voter turnout by gender, ethnicity, age and education

The following is the exit poll breakdown of election 2020 by Edison Research/NEP. They were subdivided by gender, ethnicity, age, and educational level. President Trump was favored by white, aged and distanced by other ethnicity and the young. This is fully expected before the election because their preference pattern is close to that of party inclinations. In 2020 elections, it is often emphasized by media that Hispanic population in Florida acted against Biden because of the Democrats’ apparent inclination to socialist orientation represented by Sanders, however, that may be only one episodes among many.

National exit poll

Support by gender, ethnicity, age group and education

■ Biden ■ Other ■ Trump



Sample size: 14,968 respondents

All figures have a margin of error which is wider for smaller sub-groups

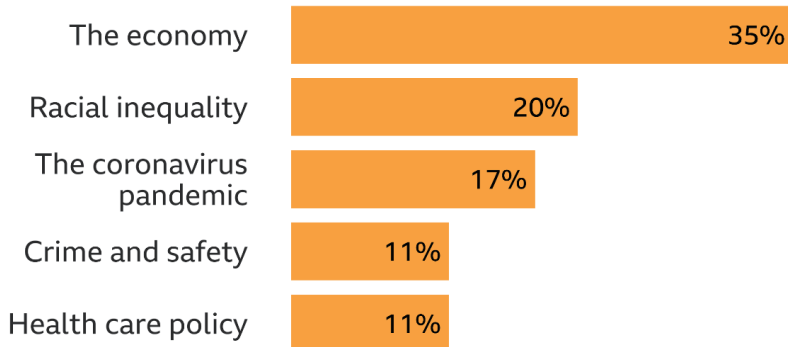
Source: Edison Research/NEP via Reuters, 22.30 EST (03.30 GMT)

BBC

The next chart shows the percentage of issues voters concerned most. The economy came first. The third graph shows the confidence in American economy's status quo. Therefore it is not surprising the strength of the incumbent came from the good faith in economy. And if there were no pandemic stricken depression, the election result might have been otherwise.

National exit poll: Issues

Which one of these five issues mattered most in deciding how you voted for president?



Sample size: 3,755 respondents. All figures have a margin of error

Source: Edison Research/NEP via Reuters, 22.30 EST (03.30 GMT)



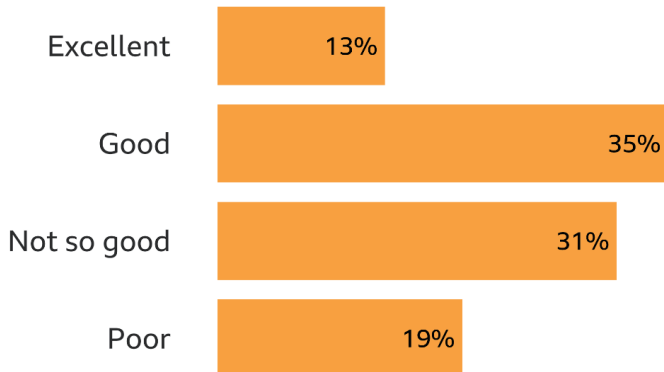
Racial inequality occupies 20%. This is fairly understandable because this is a trendy topic then. 'Black Lives Matter' may have pushed the support for Mr. Biden in urban sectors especially.

Surprisingly small is health care policy concern including Covid-19, occupying only 11% even though as the fourth graph shows, 34% of Americans feel that US effort to contain Corona virus has been unsuccessful.

These apparently unscrupulous data might show the economic condition and the coronavirus pandemic are intermingled so much so that they cannot be treated separately.

National exit poll: Economy

Do you think the condition of the nation's economy is:



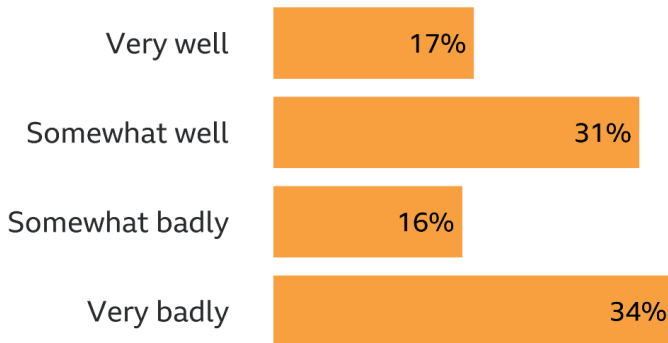
Sample size: 3,795 respondents. All figures have a margin of error

Source: Edison Research/NEP via Reuters, 22.30 EST (03.30 GMT)



National exit poll: Coronavirus

Do you think US efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic are going:



Sample size: 3,648 respondents. All figures have a margin of error

Source: Edison Research/NEP via Reuters, 22.30 EST (03.30 GMT)



Trump supporters and Covid-19: Are they easier to be infected with Covid-19?

On November 2, 2020, *Nature Human Behavior* carried the article titled [Human Behavior: Pro-Trump areas physically distanced less during the COVID-19 pandemic, predicting health outcomes:](#)

People in counties in the United States that voted for Donald Trump (Republican) in the 2016 presidential election tended to physically distance 14% less than those in counties that voted for Hillary Clinton (Democrat) from March to May 2020. This study, published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, analyzed daily geotracking data from 15 million people and found that partisan differences in distancing were associated with higher COVID-19 infection growth rates in pro-Trump regions.⁽²⁾

This article itself based on the comparative study between 2016 voter behavior, however Trump supporters behavior did not seem to change much in 2020. Therefore, relatively high risk of exposure to Covid-19 among Trump voters can be easily foreseen. The main part of the paper is to see if Trump supporters (or states) show higher vulnerability to Covid-19. Actually, after 10-14 days of election fever, the U.S. had experienced untold increase in Covis-19 cases and the sharp increase in the number of related deaths soon after.

	TOTAL REPORTED	ON NOV. 14	14-DAY CHANGE
Cases	10.9 million	159,021	+80%
Deaths	245,460	1,210	+38%
Hospitalized		69,455	+43%

New York Times November 14, 2020

As to the final outcome of the Presidential election, on November 13, CNN projects that Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes put native son Joe Biden above the 270 votes needed to become the 46th president of the United States. Born in Scranton, the former vice president and longtime Delaware senator defeated Donald Trump, the first president to lose a reelection bid since George H.W. Bush in 1992.

Next are the results of 'swing vote' states, most highly contested states.⁽³⁾

November 13 is also about the day the infection of the Covid-19 during the heated election campaigns will emerge in the actual number. To see the trend between Covid-19 cases and Trump supporters, first, take a look at the states where the number of new cases are rapidly increasing.

According to the update of New York Times report on the 14th of November, they are

surprisingly many:

North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, Montana, Utah, Kansas, Indiana, Missouri, Colorado, Alaska, Idaho, Guam, Rhode Island, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Nevada, Connecticut, West Virginia, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Arizona, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Washington, New York, Oregon, New Hampshire, California, Washington D.C., Virginia

And following is the list of most contested states and vote percentages as of November 14, 2000 by CNN.

Arizona 11 Electoral Vote

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	49.4%	1,672,054
Trump	49.1%	1,661,677

Colorado 9 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	52.3%	1,803,873
Trump	39.5%	1,364,160

Florida 29 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Trump	51.2%	5,667,474
Biden	47.8%	5,294,767

Georgia 16 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	49.5%	2,472,182
Trump	49.2%	2,458,010

Iowa 6 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Trump	53.2%	897,149
Biden	44.9%	758,416

Michigan 16 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	50.5%	2,795,975
Trump	47.9%	2,648,577

Minnesota 10 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	52.5%	1,718,739
Trump	45.4%	1,485,345

Nevada 6 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	50.1%	703,486
Trump	47.7%	669,890

New Hampshire 4 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	52.8%	424,937
Trump	45.5%	365,660

North Carolina 15 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Trump	50.0%	2,754,822
Biden	48.6%	2,681,124

Ohio 18 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Trump	53.3%	3,074,400
Biden	45.2%	2,603,677

Pennsylvania 20 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	49.8%	3,417,479
Trump	48.9%	3,351,976

Texas 38 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Trump	52.1%	5,866,019
Biden	46.4%	5,218,943

Virginia 13 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	54.3%	2,413,317
Trump	44.2%	1,962,708

Wisconsin 10 Electoral Votes

Candidate	%	Votes
Biden	49.4%	1,630,619
Trump	48.8%	1,610,073

These 15 most-contested states are all included in the first 50 electorates showing remarkable increase in the Covid-19 cases.

Interestingly, Trump ended up gaining only five states among these 15: Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas. To see if Trump votes have any correlation between new Covid-19 cases. The calculation was conducted among these 15 most contested states where Presidential campaigns were most rigorous in last 10 to 14 days. The result:

	Trump Vote	New Cases Rise
Arizona	49.1	31.4
Colorado	39.5	79
Florida	51.2	25.3
Georgia	49.2	24.7
Iowa	53.2	149
Michigan	47.9	66.8
Minnesota	45.4	104
Nevada	47.7	45.9
New Hampshire	45.5	21.7
North Carolina	50	24.7
Ohio	53.3	54.4
Pennsylvania	48.9	35.5
Texas	52.1	35.9
Virginia	44.2	16.6
Wisconsin	48.8	113
	Correlation	0.057261

Compiled by the author⁽⁴⁾

Interestingly, contrary to the expectation, there is no correlation among Trump vote and new Covid-cases' rise in highly contested states.

To see if shorter social distancing among Trump supporters has any relations with Covid-19, the death rates and supporting ratio have been also dealt.

	Trump Vote (%)	Death per 100.000
Arizona	49.1	0.3
Colorado	39.5	0.7
Florida	51.2	0.3
Georgia	49.2	0.4
Iowa	53.2	0.8
Michigan	47.9	0.9
Minnesota	45.4	0.8
Nevada	47.7	0.6
New Hampshire	45.5	0.2
North Carolina	50	0.3
Ohio	53.3	0.5
Pennsylvania	48.9	0.7
Texas	52.1	0.4
Virginia	44.2	0.2
Wisconsin	48.8	0.8
	Correlation	-0.0505

Compiled by the author ⁽⁵⁾

Unfortunately, the relation is again meaningless among trump supporters and Covid-19 death number about a month later. This may be because the calculation was done by only with small number of highly contested states where supporting ratio did not show much differences. Therefore another approach was taken. Instead of small number of swing states, all state data were calculated. Average Covid-19 cases per 100,000 data were taken from CDC. ⁽⁶⁾

The next data table was average daily cases for 7 days announced December 6, 2020. Presidential voting percentage was the figures provided by BBC. ⁽⁷⁾

Interestingly, as the next table shows, Trump's voting percentage and Covid-19 daily average cases are showing some relations. The correlation coefficient is 0.50. This means there are at least some mutual directions between the two variables.

Conclusion

This paper provided double meanings in Trump Voters election behavior and the rise of Covid-19 cases thereafter.

One is in much contested 15 swing states, Trumps voter behavior would not make any remarkable differences in the Covid-19 new cases surge. Second, in all state level analysis, pro Trump states show remarkably higher increase in daily Covid-19 cases. This is also ironical, because many of the Trump states are referred as 'rural' where social distancing is much easier to be obtained. Therefore the proposition Trump supporters are more liable to Covid-19 cases cannot be denied but reasonably supported only in aggregated scale.

State	Average Daily Cases per 100k in Last 7 Days	Trump Votes(%)
Rhode Island	110.6	39
Minnesota	105	45
South Dakota	100.5	62
Wyoming	99.2	70
Indiana	98.2	57
Nebraska	98.1	59
Utah	93.8	58
Alaska	92.2	62
New Mexico	87.8	44
Montana	83.7	57
Idaho	81.8	64
North Dakota	81.3	65
Wisconsin	80.9	49
Colorado	80.4	42
Nevada	77.2	48
Kentucky	76.4	62
Kansas	75.4	56
Illinois	75.2	41
Ohio	74.2	53
Iowa	72.2	53
Arizona	72	49
Oklahoma	72	65
Tennessee	71.9	61
Michigan	69.3	48

Arkansas	68.1	62
Pennsylvania	66.7	49
Alabama	66	62
Mississippi	62.9	57
West Virginia	61.1	69
Connecticut	60.5	39
Missouri	59.9	57
Massachusetts	58.3	32
Delaware	56.8	40
New York*	52.6	38
New Jersey	52	41
Louisiana	50.8	59
California	46.3	34
Texas	44.6	52
Maryland	43.9	32
New Hampshire	43.6	46
Georgia	43.2	49
Florida	42.1	51
North Carolina	42.1	50
South Carolina	40.3	55
New York City*	38.8	38
District of Columbia	37.3	5
Oregon	36.6	40
Virginia	32.1	44
Washington	28.7	39
Maine	19.7	44
Vermont	19.6	31
Hawaii	6	34

Correlation 0.50642

References:

- (1) <https://jp.reuters.com/article/usa-election-mirage/explainer-red-mirage-blue-mirage-beware-of-early-u-s-election-wins-idINKBN2771BL>
- (2) <https://www.natureasia.com/en/research/highlight/13508>
- (3) <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2020/results/president>
- (4) Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>
- (5) <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>
- (6) https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days
- (7) <https://www.bbc.com/news/election/us2020/results>