2024 U.S. Presidential Election

Ikuko A. Honda

（Professor Emeritus, English）

Introduction

On November 5th, 2024, Americans cast ballots to give birth to another 'naked king' into the chaotic modern world. Donald Trump gained 312 electoral votes, while Kamala Harris secured only 226 votes as reported by BBC on November 10th. The result was astonishing in several meanings on the part of the election analyses.

First, many election forecasters, especially Alan Richtman, using his famous 13 keys, formally proclaimed the victory of Kamala Harris. Their forecasts and their warnings on excessive trust on election polls were also utterly betrayed by overwhelming voter commitments of Republican voters.

Second, pollsters unanimously announced the election polls were so close that it might take a long time to call the winner with possible fear for violent incidents which could lead to a civil war. Actually, all crucial swing states were taken by Trump immediately and he declared his victory the next day without any anticipated riots nor violence.

Third, Hispanic and to some extent, black males did not support Kamala Harris but Donald Trump. Hispanic males chose to better their private financial status than to pave the way for the first black female President. This unpopularity has been widely recognized within Democratic circles and in the last minutes, democrats threw in so many celebrities in their campaigns. However, as later table on exit polls shows 79% of the voters had decided their choice of candidates before September, meaning Democrats' last-minute maneuver almost meaningless.

Finally, 'economy' surely did play a crucial role in this election. However, this 'economy' has been perceived very differently by economists/political scientists and by low/middle income voters.
This paper focuses on the third and final dimensions of the election. These two issues can be well illustrated by Edison Research data [1][2] and NBC exit poll [3].

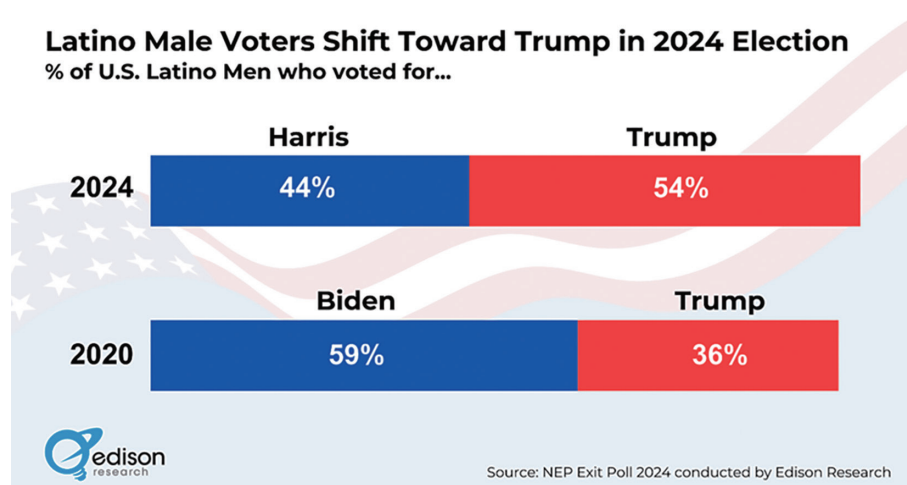### Ethnic, demographic, age ceiling for Harris or personality?

The next demographic breakdown of exit polls by Edison Research shows some of the unexpectedly clear demographic inclination to Donald Trump.

Among Hispanic men, represent 6% of the total U.S. voting population, 54% voted for Trump, in sharp contrast of 36% in 2020. Also, as to voter turnouts, whites increased it in 2024, blacks and Hispanics decreased their numbers. Also, 40% of Hispanic/Latino voters responded that the economy is the most important issue among election agenda, nine points higher than the voting population overall.

This might suggest some difference of degree of commitment of both supporters. Hispanics and blacks (males) are not enthusiastic about the emergence of 'The first black female President', another glass ceiling for Kamala Harris to break in the future.

The next demographic breakdown of exit polls by Edison Research shows another unexpected demographic inclination to Donald Trump[2].

52% of white women voted for Trump. Harris, nominated to be the first black woman President apparently failed to gain their support despite her consistent appeal for women's abortion rights. Interestingly, Mr. Trump's famous sex scandals (or any scandals whatsoever) seemed not to have affected his popularity at all. Quite contrary to the case in Japan (reflected by a recent scandal by opposition leader, Yuichiro Takami).

Latino Male Voters Shift Toward Trump in 2024 Election
% of U.S. Latino Men who voted for...

	Harris	Trump
2024	44%	54%

	Biden	Trump
2020	59%	36%

edison research

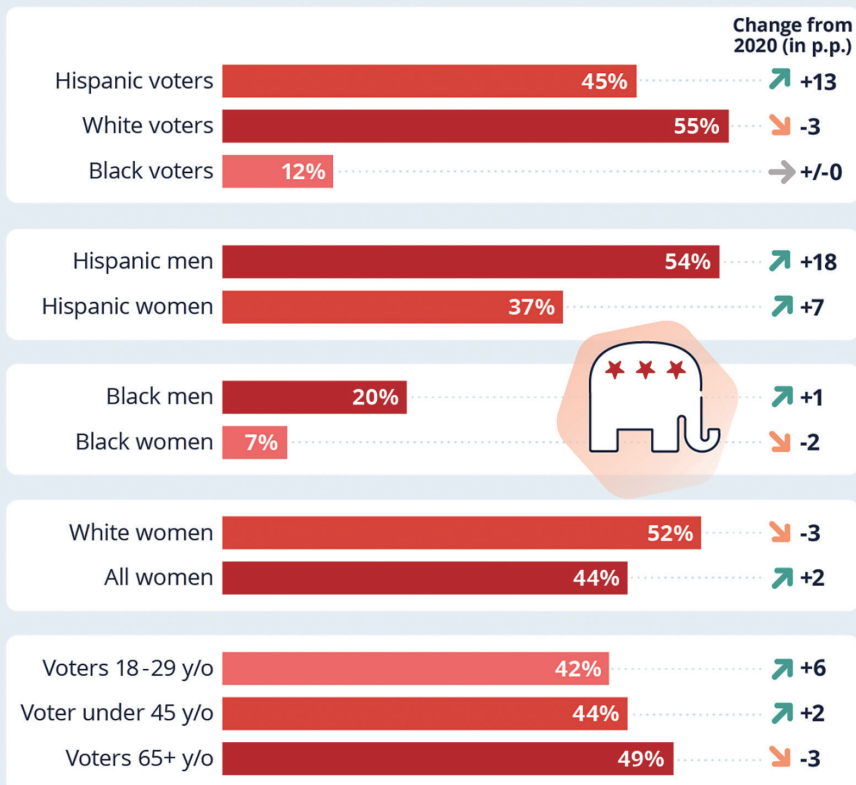Source: NEP Exit Poll 2024 conducted by Edison Research

As to gender ceilings, only 18-29 age group supported Harris over Trump overwhelmingly. Harris, succeeded Joe Biden because of his senility could not really appeal her youth and energy. Some media expressions to describe her performance as 'words salad' or 'tedious same speech at every convention' would not heat up tension or commitment of Democratic supporters.

Harris suffered from several unseen glass ceilings: demographically, white men and women, Hispanic males, black men and as to the age, almost all age groups but the youngest. In other words, Harris did not seem to have outstanding charm nor charismatic leadership possibility to stir commitment and sentiment of American voters although she is apparently gifted academically and legally. She did not make enough use of her three-year political experience as Biden's vice president but shared a burden of incumbent. In short, she was too 'normal' to compete with anormal human existence an almost 'invisible' as an incumbent Vice President.

Exit Polls Suggest Major Trump Gains With Latinos

Share of U.S. voter groups who picked Donald Trump for president in 2024 according to exit polls

Voter group	Share	Change from 2020 (in p.p.)
Hispanic voters	45%	↗ +13
White voters	55%	↘ -3
Black voters	12%	→ +/-0
Hispanic men	54%	↗ +18
Hispanic women	37%	↗ +7
Black men	20%	↗ +1
Black women	7%	↘ -2
White women	52%	↘ -3
All women	44%	↗ +2
Voters 18-29 y/o	42%	↗ +6
Voter under 45 y/o	44%	↗ +2
Voters 65+ y/o	49%	↘ -3

Source: Edison Research via Reuters

statista

Exit Polls by NBC – Crucial questions selected by the author [(3)]

10 key states average

(Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin): % shows breakdown of Democrats (Upper) and Republicans (Under).

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

Foreign policy (4%)

37%

57%

Abortion (14%)

74%

25%

The economy (32%)

19%

80%

Immigration (11%)

9%

90%

The state of democracy (34%)

80%

18%

-Which ONE of these four candidate qualities mattered most in deciding how you voted for president?

Has the ability to lead (30%)

33%

66%

Cares about people like me (18%)

73%

25%

Has good judgment (20%)

82%

16%

Can bring needed change (28%)

24%

74%

-Should most undocumented immigrants in the U.S. be:

Offered a chance to apply for legal status (56%)

75%

22%

Deported to the countries they came from (40%)

11%

87%

-Is U.S. support for Israel:

Too strong (31%)

67%

30%

Not strong enough (30%)

17%

82%

About right (31%)

59%

39%

-Which comes closest to your position? Abortion should be:

Legal in all cases (32%)

87%

10%

Legal in most cases (33%)

49%

49%

Illegal in most cases (26%)

7%

92%

Illegal in all cases (6%)

11%

88%

-Which comes closest to your position? Abortion should be:

Legal (65%)

68%

29%

Illegal (31%)

8%

91%

-Who do you trust more to handle abortion?

Kamala Harris (49%)

93%

5%

Donald Trump (45%)

2%

96%

-Who do you trust more to handle the economy?

Kamala Harris (46%)

98%

1%

Donald Trump (52%)

5%

93%

-Who do you trust more to handle immigration?

Kamala Harris (44%)

98%

1%

Donald Trump (53%)

7%

90%

-When did you finally decide for whom to vote in the presidential election?

In the last few days (4%)

41%

47%

In the last week (3%)

42%

54%

In October (6%)

47%

40%

In September (7%)

54%

42%

Before that (79%)

49%

50%

-Time of vote decision

In the last month (13%)

44%

46%

Before that (86%)

49%

49%

-Time of vote decision

In the last week (7%)

41%

50%

Before that (92%)

49%

49%

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

Excellent or good (31%)

91%

8%

Not so good or poor (68%)

28%

70%

-Compared to four years ago, is your family's financial situation:

Better today (24%)

82%

14%

Worse today (46%)

17%

81%

About the same (30%)

69%

28%

-In the last year, has inflation caused you and your family:

A severe hardship (22%)

24%

74%

A moderate hardship (53%)

45%

51%

No hardship at all (24%)

77%

20%

-Do you think America's best days are:

In the past (35%)

31%

67%

In the future (61%)

58%

40%

-How do you feel about the way things are going in the country today?

Enthusiastic (6%)

89%

11%

Satisfied, but not enthusiastic (19%)

81%

18%

Dissatisfied, but not angry (43%)

42%

56%

Angry (30%)

27%

72%

Economy as a key component?

The possible reason why many distinguished scholars failed to predict the outcome of election is the 'economy' in different connotation in different groups.

To the question of "Which ONE of these five issues (foreign policy, immigration, economy, abortion, the state of democracy) mattered most in deciding how you voted for president?", 34% of the voters (80% of Democrats, 18% of Republicans) chose 'the state of democracy', and 32% (19% of Democrats, 80% of Republicans) chose 'economy'. Democrats seem to have apprehension for social unrest and Republican had more anxiety for economy.

However, it is mostly agreed recent American economy (macro-economy) has been potent as every major economic indicator suggests. In these cases, incumbents have overwhelmingly enjoyed election advantages in American Presidential elections by about 5%. That is why many pollsters predicted the victory of Kamala Harris.

Meanwhile, there is possibility when voters are talking about 'economy', that means everyday financial status as an individual consumer. Selected two of the particular questions here are:

To the question, "Compared to four years ago, is your family's financial situation:"
24% (82% Democrats, 14% Republicans) answered 'Better today'.
46% (17% Democrats, 81% Republicans) responded 'Worse today'.
30% (69% Democrats, 28% Republicans) chose 'About the same'.

Then, to the question, "Do you think the condition of the nation's economy is:"
31% (91% Democrats, 8% Republicans) selected 'Excellent or good'.
68% (28% Democrats, 70% Republicans) stated 'Not so good or poor'.

Interestingly, negative evaluation toward the nation's economy is 68%, which is higher than personal income's 46%. Democrats are optimistic about both 'economies', some 20% said 'Better today' for family income, and also about 20% replied 'excellent or good' to nation's economy. As to Republicans, about 37% said family status 'worse', and some 48% replied nation's economy 'Not so good or poor'. (calculated from the table by the author)

Republican's pessimistic evaluation on both economies can be a trigger to Trump's victory in 2024. Obliviously, Republicans who have been worse off financially for recent four years are the key component in deciding the election outcome. And this segment of population, as Bernie Sanders warned [4], is to be the target Democrats are aimed to recover in 2026 general election.

References

1. Latino Male Voters Shift Toward Trump in 2024 Election - Edison Research
   www.edisonresearch.com/latino-male-voters-shift-toward-trump-in-2024-election/
2. https://www.statista.com/chart/33417/exit-polls-voter-group-migration/
3. National Exit Polls: Election 2024 Results
   www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-elections/exit-polls
4. Bernie Sanders, the independent, who caucuses with Democrats, said it "should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working class people would find that the working class has abandoned them."

Bernie Sanders blasts Democratic Party following Kamala Harris loss - ABC News
abcnews.go.com/Politics/bernie-sanders-response-presidential-election/story?id=115582079

（Last updated on 2024-11-13）