

# Truth be told, U.S. has always been divided

By **MIKE PEMBERTON**

There's talk since Donald Trump's election that



differing perspectives between rural and urban, common folk versus

the elite, will lead to the Balkanization and destruction of the republic with authoritarian Trump reigning.

Paul Krugman of the New York Times said: "... it's completely reasonable to worry that America will go the route of other nations, like Hungary, which remain democracies on paper but have become authoritarian states in practice."

"Yes," people howl.

Except they're not Trump haters. They are President Obama bashers.

There's the rub.

Liberals fear an authoritarian Trump while conservatives bellow Obama already ruled as such. Who speaks the truth?

Both, Nietzsche might argue, since perspective, how we experience and view the world, leads to different conclusions. That doesn't mean all views carry the same weight. A physician's view on health is more credible than most Facebook infomercials. But there is not necessarily a true or false conclusion in all circumstances. Trump and Clinton voters acted on the truth as they saw it.

Americans have always

quarreled amongst ourselves, today's divisions similar to those during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Historian Orin Grant Libby wrote how ratification was influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical factors. New Hampshire: coastal, higher educated, urban areas, supported, while rural areas opposed. Massachusetts: coast/urban, 73 percent favored, interior/rural, 86 percent opposed. Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia for, rural against. New York: New York City and surrounding areas supported, rural opposed.

The 2016 election revealed similar perspectives. Urban areas voted for Clinton. The coastal states of New York and California accounted for her popular vote win. Rural areas voted for Trump, who won 2,626 counties to Clinton's 487. Midwestern voters supplied Trump the victory, Pennsylvania mimicking its 1787 divide.

After the election I spoke with a friend from Fairfax County, Va., near Washington D.C. A retired government employee, he is a substitute teacher.

"The students hate Trump," he said.

"Many of mine at the community college love him."

"You're kidding."

"Hey," I said, "I didn't vote for either one, but think about where we live."

I live in Vermilion

County where the median household income is \$42,977, 18.8 percent of the people earn less than poverty level income, unemployment hovers at 7 percent, and 14 percent of people 25 and older have a college degree. Factories shuttered, the population has declined from 88,155 in 1990 to 80,000 in 2015.

Fairfax County has a median household income of \$111,000, 6 percent earn less than poverty level income, unemployment is 3 percent, and 60 percent of people over age 25 have a college degree. The population grew from 821,761 to 1,142,234 from 1990 to 2015.

Vermilion County voted 70 percent for Trump/change. Fairfax County voted 65 percent for Clinton/status quo.

The eternal internal American battle will continue regardless of the White House occupant. Our perspectives support the notion that the strength of a republic depends upon participation of its citizens and the free expression of divergent views.

The United States of America, divided we stand.

May it always be so. At least, that's my perspective.

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