

Erik Moberg ©:

The Election of Donald Trump to President of the US

In the book I wrote that the political careers in the US (the only democracy which combines presidentialism with majority elections) differ from those in other democracies. Thus I wrote (page 364) that “[i]n principle it should be possible for individuals with relevant experiences, other than political or party-political activities, to get directly from the outside into political and into high positions” and I also gave several examples. Now the election of Donald Trump to president is the most flagrant case of this phenomenon so far.

But even if the election of Trump thus gives support to my theory in the sense mentioned there is a problem with another aspect. I wrote (page 363) that in campaigning precise proposals, intended to be implemented, are hardly used. “No one, not even a chosen president, can count upon being able to actually implement policies proposed while campaigning. ... Even the president will, in many cases, have to engage in negotiations with a Congress in which majorities do not necessarily belong to the president’s party, and for which the opinions of the individual members anyway are unknown. Under such conditions it is probably imprudent, and perhaps even somewhat ridiculous, to campaign by making detailed proposals for various kinds of measures. ... Better then to try to sell oneself as an individual, to inspire confidence, ... “.

Now, this hypothesis was hardly corroborated. Donald Trump, when campaigning, did in fact make quite a lot of detailed proposals. But perhaps it nevertheless makes some sense. The hypothesis is deduced from the assumption that the campaigning candidate has a good understanding of politics and the political game, and Trump was hardly such a candidate. And, in fact, he has also met a lot of problems when dealing with the Congress. For instance, and according to *The Economist* (August 5th 2017, page 29), “After six month in office, Mr Trump still does not have a big legislative achievement, despite Republican majorities in both houses of Congress”.

So, possibly, Trump could have got still more votes in the presidential election had he abstained from some of his detailed proposals.