

Digging Down to the Root Cause of the Trump Phenomenon

Why is Donald Trump a serious contender for winning the 2016 United States presidential election, when to the fact-based observer his policies and temperament would be ruinous to the United States and the world? Using root cause analysis, this in depth article presents a rigorous analysis of the phenomenon, and concludes that it is realistically possible to solve “the Trump phenomenon” and to restore the health of democracy. Three sample solutions for doing this are presented.

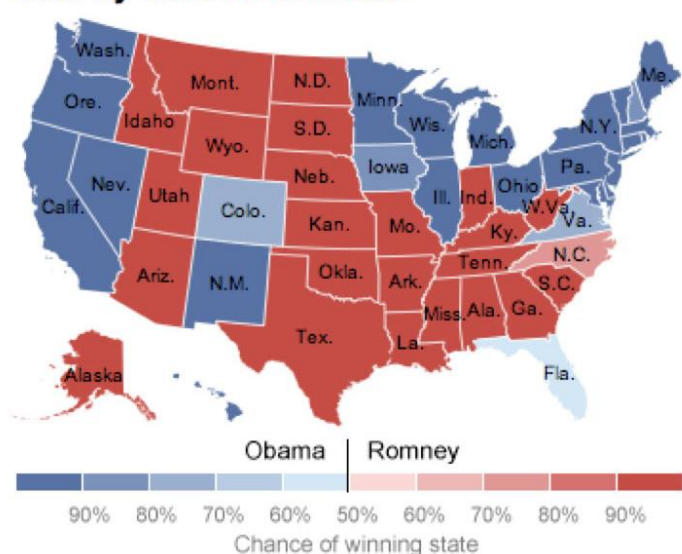
Rigorous analysis has only recently come to political forecasting. Before Nate Silver pioneered the technique of weighting polls for accuracy, poll based predictions were only slightly more reliable than horoscopes. In the 2000 US presidential election, the consensus, based on published forecasting models, was that Al Gore would win by as much as an 11 point landslide. Instead, Gore won the popular vote by 0.5% while George W. Bush narrowly won the electoral vote.

Fast forward to the 2008 election. Nate Silver became an overnight sensation by correctly calling 49 out of 50 states for the presidential election, and 35 out of 35 for senate elections.

And then in 2012 he did it again, calling it correctly in all 50 states and 31 out of 33 senate seats. [Image source](#). “*Triumph of the Nerds: Nate Silver Wins in 50 States*” proclaimed a Mashable headline. Nate [correctly predicted](#) all 50 states, “when all around him political pundits pronounced the race too close to call or maddeningly inconclusive.”

Today in 2016, the nerds have won. Weighted forecasting models, based on objective statistical analysis of poll data

State-by-State Probabilities



Nate Silver’s famous prediction for the 2012 presidential election.

and demographics, are the new norm. Statistical models like Nate Silver's and The New York Time's *Upshot*, released in July 2016, have replaced the guesswork and glitter of punditry with the cool reliability of nerdism.

But while analysis has come to the "WHO will win" question of political forecasting, it has not yet come to a more important question. WHY are politicians like Trump doing so well? Compared to Hillary Clinton, an objectively better qualified opponent whose policies (according to experts) would lead to a better future, WHY is Trump within a whisker of winning? And "WHY do so many Americans vote against their [own] economic and social interests?" as Thomas Frank asked in *What's the Matter with Kansas?* back in 2004.

The pundits have no sound answers to WHY questions like these. On the contrary, explanations for Trump's appeal run all over the map:

Explanations for Trump's Appeal

1. "It's about a gut feeling that things are screwed up [like on immigration and trade], and this guy is the only person who gets it. ... The other key element to Matthews's analysis of Trump is the revulsion with elites. It's a classic 'us' vs. 'them' message. THEY think you're stupid. THEY think they're better than you. THEY think they can tell you what to think and how to act." [Source](#)
2. "Donald Trump is a charismatic figure, and he has effectively tapped into fear. ... Trump has touched a deep vein within his following: he does not espouse new belief systems, but brings out the old and familiar anger, hatred, racism, and sexism of his base. Trump legitimates these feelings, and encourages people to express them." [Source](#)
3. "Of all relevant variables, it's primarily [a person's] authoritarianism – not education or gender or income or race – that predicts support for Trump. MacWilliams defines the authoritarian attitude as one dominated by a desire for order and conformity and by a fear of change, particularly social change." [Source](#)
4. "[Trump] speaks to a level of frustration, even despair, that some people are experiencing in this country. He regales his followers with promises that lift their spirits and provide hope for the future." [Source](#)

So what's missing? I feel the answer is surprisingly simple. What's missing is the same thing that was missing before Nate Silver came along. Before Nate, there was no reliable method for analyzing the data available for election forecasts. That's precisely where we

are today when it comes to analyzing the data available for explaining WHY questions like those above. The data is there. But the method of analysis is not.

Let's see if that can be changed, by using the same approach Nate Silver used.

Prediction problems

If you're a cutting edge stats nerd or prediction pundit, then your favorite book is probably Nate Silver's 2012 *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail—But Some Don't*. The book explores "failures of prediction." This class of problems includes things like the ability of economists to *reliably* predict recessions, of baseball managers to predict which young players will turn into stars, of weather forecasters to predict hurricanes, and of analysts to predict election outcomes.

Nate Silver's central insight is that solving "the prediction problem" boils down to one over-riding question: "How can we apply our judgement to the data—without succumbing to our biases?" (*The Signal and the Noise*, p16) Following that question to its logical outcome over his still young career, Silver solved two problems in this class with groundbreaking solutions.

First he revolutionized baseball with his PECOTA model, which predicts a player's future success based on his similarity to other players whose career outcome is known. Before PECOTA, only a player's own past statistics were considered. But that's not much data. And it's only modestly predictive. By putting similarity to other players in the model, Silver expanded the relevant data a thousand fold—enough to give PECOTA a decisive edge over competing models.

And then he moved on to a bigger game. Baseball players win games and then go home to their families, to munch a few chips together and practice for the next game. But when a politician wins a game, he doesn't go home. He starts a new job and goes off to Washington or Albany, where he's no longer a player on a bench. He's the manager of the whole stadium.

The bigger game of political forecasting was a perfect fit for Silver's skill at data analysis using statistics. Having identified baseball data that was just sitting there waiting to be used, Silver then did the same thing in politics. Adam Sternbergh, writing for [New York Magazine](#), tells the story:

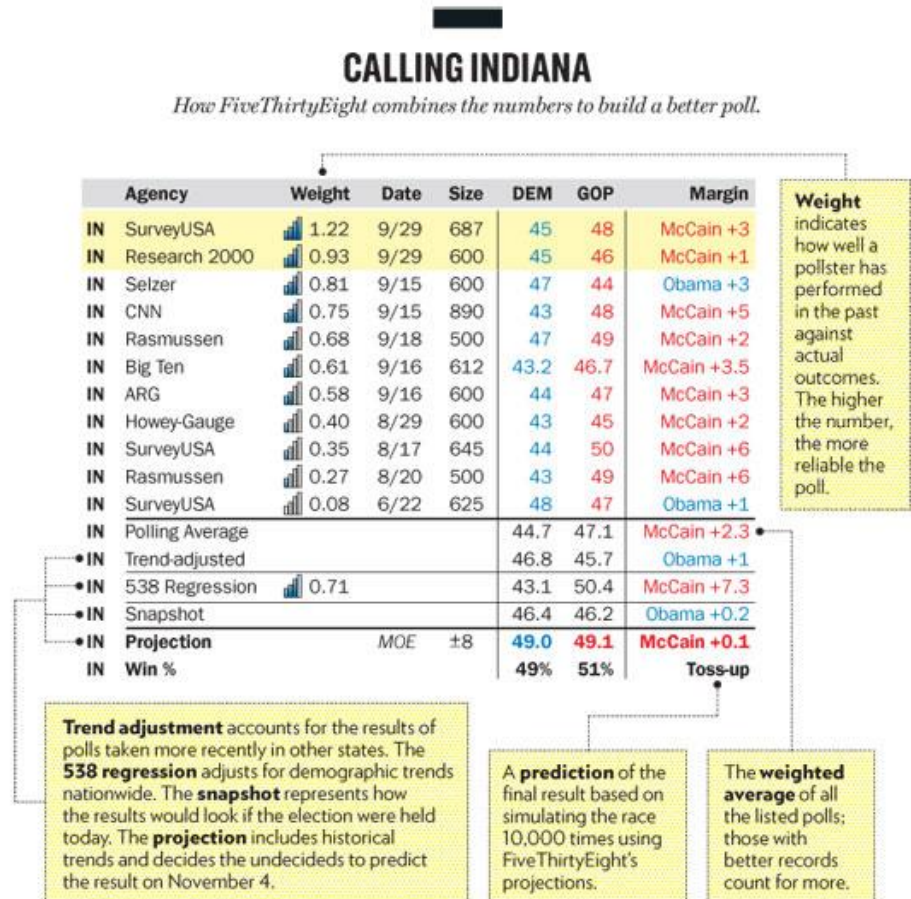
"Silver doesn't know all that much about high finance; these days [October 2008], he's spending most of his energy on his political Website, FiveThirtyEight (the total number of Electoral College votes), where he uses data analysis to track and interpret political polls and project the outcome of November's election. The site earned some national recognition back in May, during the Democratic primaries, when almost every other commentator was celebrating Hillary Clinton's resurgent momentum.

Reading the polls, most pundits predicted she'd win Indiana by five points and noted she'd narrowed the gap with Obama in North Carolina to just eight.

"Silver, who was writing anonymously as 'Poblano' and receiving about 800 visits a day, disagreed with this consensus. He'd broken the numbers down demographically and come up with a much less encouraging outcome for Clinton: a two-point squeaker in Indiana, and a seventeen-point drubbing in North Carolina. On the night of the primaries, Clinton took Indiana by one and lost North Carolina by fifteen. The national pundits were doubly shocked: one, because the results were so divergent from the polls, and two, because some guy named after a chili pepper had predicted the outcome better than anyone else.

"Silver's site now gets about 600,000 visits daily."

Silver solved the political prediction problem two main ways. Primary polls have low reliability because voter decisions are shifting so fast and turnout is low, which gives groups that do turnout a disproportionate advantage. So rather than rely on polling data, as all the other forecasters were doing, Silver reached over and used data that was sitting there unused. The demographic groups that support candidates are relatively stable. They change slowly. So slowly, in fact, that when Silver mined the demographic data and added it to his model, he could now predict how one politician in one primary would do—based on how well other politicians had recently done in earlier primaries with the same demographic groups. It was PECOTA all over again, but with a twist.



Nate Silver's model results for Indiana's 2008 primary, with the outstanding elements of the forecast model identified. The key is the weighted average.

General elections, however, are a different animal compared to primaries. Turnout is much higher. Voters decide early. Last minute voter drift is low. And there are no blocks of like behavior data sitting there waiting to be mined, because each general election has different candidates, different issues, and is separated by years. No problem. Silver found other data that was unused. Other models simply averaged the polls and based their predictions on that. Silver saw that if he analyzed the predictive accuracy of each polling firm and then used that to calculate a weighted average of polls instead of the normal way to calculate the average, the predictive reliability of the model shot up by an order of magnitude. It was like asking the experts in a room what they thought and downplaying the opinion of everyone else. As simple as this improvement is in retrospect, at the time it was revolutionary. How all this works is summarized in the image for [Indiana](#) on the previous page.

Silver solved the prediction problems of baseball and political elections by taking the *right tool* and applying it to the *right data* in the *right way*. Let's use these three steps to solve our own prediction problem.

How root cause analysis works

Let's begin with the first step: the *right tool*. The most powerful tool in the business world for solving problems of any kind is not statistics, but root cause analysis. The extraordinary power of the tool comes from the way it deftly turns WHY problems into prediction problems. First you find the root causes of the problem. That solves the WHY problem since all problems arise from their root causes. Then by closely examining the structure of the system you find the high leverage points that if pushed on with solution elements would resolve the root causes. You can now confidently predict, within a range of probability, how the system will respond to various solutions. The best predicted response is the best solution. Root cause analysis can turn any problem into an analytically solvable prediction problem, assuming the problem can be solved.

Root cause analysis is the ultimate systems thinking tool, because it forces you to consider the whole system. Somewhere in the system hides the cause and effect structure that is causing the problem. Once that structure becomes known, night becomes day. All of a sudden how the system *really* works becomes blindingly obvious, so much so that a typical reaction is "Why didn't we see this before?" The answer, of course, is because traditional problem solving methods were used instead of root cause analysis.

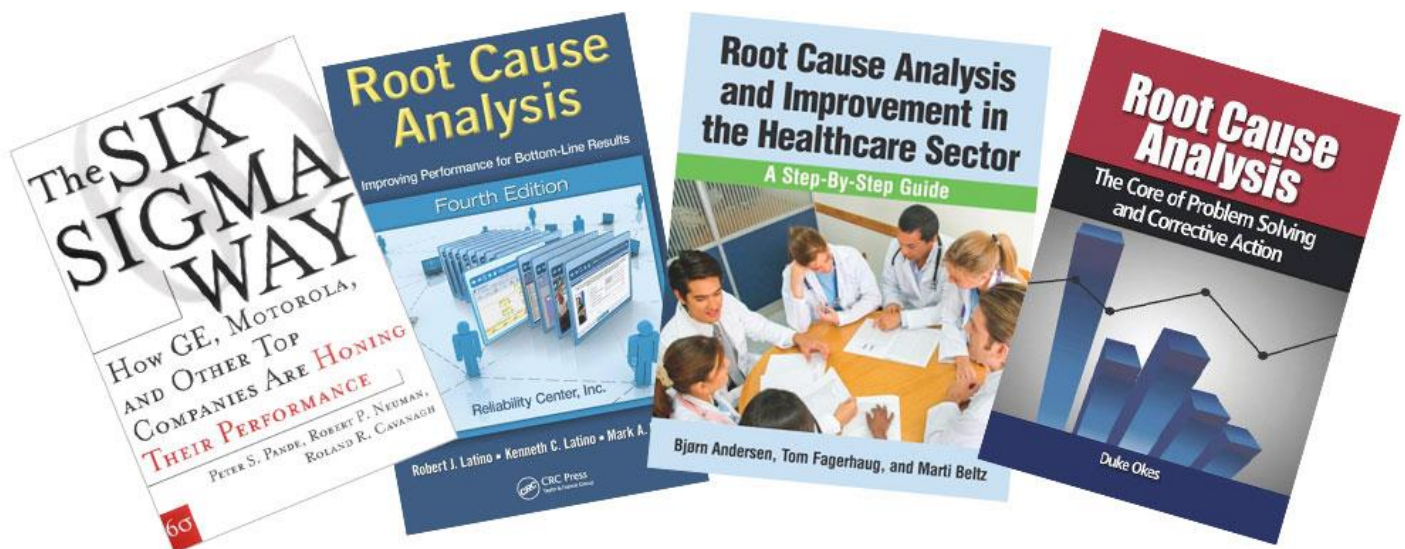
Root cause analysis is a philosophy, a way of thinking about problems. It's a perspective that lets you cut through even seemingly impossible-to-solve problems with ease—if the practice is rigorously followed. The practice centers on two definitions and a single core principle.

A **root cause** is the deepest cause in a causal chain that can be resolved. **Root cause analysis** is the process of finding and resolving the root causes of a problem. The foundational principle is *all problems arise from their root causes*. Root causes are found by starting at problem symptoms and tracing the causal chain backward by asking “WHY does this occur?” until the root causes are found.

What makes difficult problems difficult is their intermediate causes are easy to see, but their root causes are so well hidden in the complexity of the system that they take a long time to find. The result is symptomatic solutions directed at intermediate causes.

For example, the cause of infectious disease was long thought to be “miasma,” a noxious form of “bad air.” Miasma theory held that diseases like cholera, the bubonic plague, smallpox, measles, and the flu were caused by dirty water, foul air, decomposed matter, etc. These sources created a poisonous vapor or mist that caused illness. Since the true cause of illness was unknown, treatments varied wildly and were ineffective. Millions of patients died due to symptomatic solutions like poultices, plasters, bleeding, leeching, purging, and plunging patients in cold baths to cure their fever. But fever is an intermediate cause, so a cold bath will have no effect. Stomach pain is an intermediate cause, so purging will also have no effect. And so on.

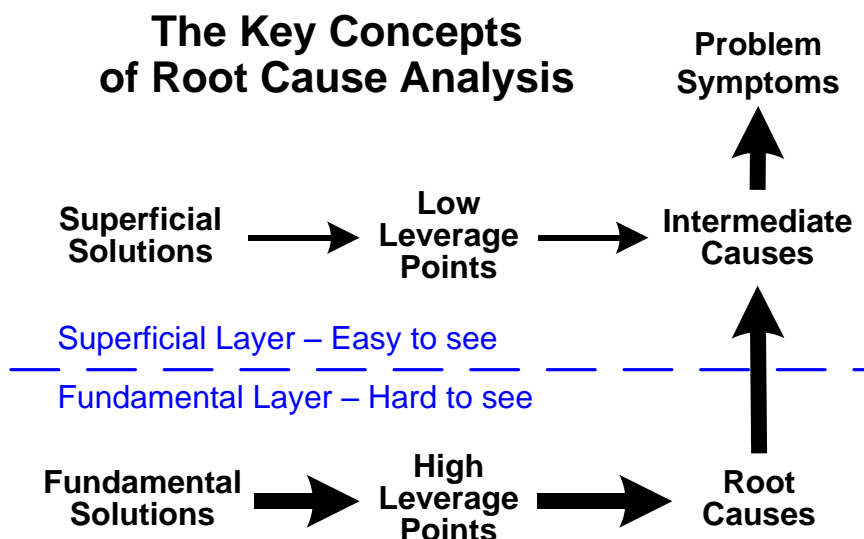
The root cause of infectious disease was eventually found to be germs. Once the root cause was known most infection problems were easily solved, either by prevention with hand washing, antiseptics, inoculation, and other techniques, or by treatment with antibiotics.



Root cause analysis is so radically effective that today, 82% of Fortune 100 companies use Six Sigma, the most popular root cause analysis [process](#). NASA could have never put a man on the moon or a rover on Mars without its [Root Cause Analysis Tool](#). Modern quality control, on which entire industries like high tech electronics and auto manufacture are

based, depends on root cause analysis to achieve consistent high quality by statistical control of the root causes of manufacturing defects.

Tools like root cause analysis and statistics are a completely different way of looking at the world from the way we normally look at it. But deep statistical analysis, like the way Nate Silver does it, requires high math skills and intensive training. By contrast, root cause analysis does not. It can be quickly learned by anyone. All that's required is learning the terms shown in the Key Concepts diagram and how they work together. Once understood, root cause analysis is both astonishingly simple and powerful.



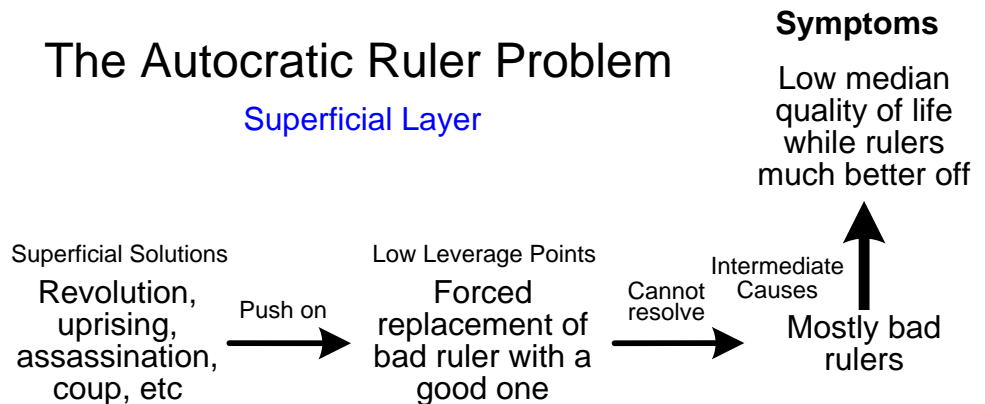
The key concepts diagram explains how root cause analysis works. **Root causes** cause **intermediate causes**, which cause **problem symptoms**. This forms the basic **causal chain** of the problem. Until the causal chain of a problem is correctly determined, the problem is insolvable except by trial and error, which for difficult problems can take a long time or forever.

The **superficial layer** of a difficult problem is easy to see. As a result, people routinely assume the intermediate causes are the root causes and attempt to solve the problem with **superficial solutions**. These fail because they push on **low leverage points**. They are low leverage because the root causes exert a much greater force on the intermediate causes than the low leverage points. This causes superficial solutions to not work at all, work only a little, or work for only a short time. That's why they're known as symptomatic solutions, Band-Aid solutions, or quick fixes. A **leverage point** is a place in a system where a solution "pushes" in order to influence the behavior of the system.

By contrast, the **fundamental layer** of a difficult problem is hard to see. The correct solution is not obvious, because the **root causes** are so well hidden in the complexity of the system. But once the root causes are found everything changes. The **high leverage points** become obvious. So do the **fundamental solutions** for pushing on the high leverage points.

A classic example of a superficial solution may be found in the **Autocratic Ruler Problem**, one of history's most intractable problems. Countless warlords, dictators, and kings ruled their subjects with complete authority. Some were benevolent, but most were not. In general, authoritarian leaders either took too much for themselves and the ruling class or plunged their state into war too often, or in many cases both.

The superficial layer of the problem can be diagrammed as shown. This is all people could see for thousands of years. Problem symptoms were horrific: *low median quality of life while rulers were much better off*, because of *mostly bad rulers*.



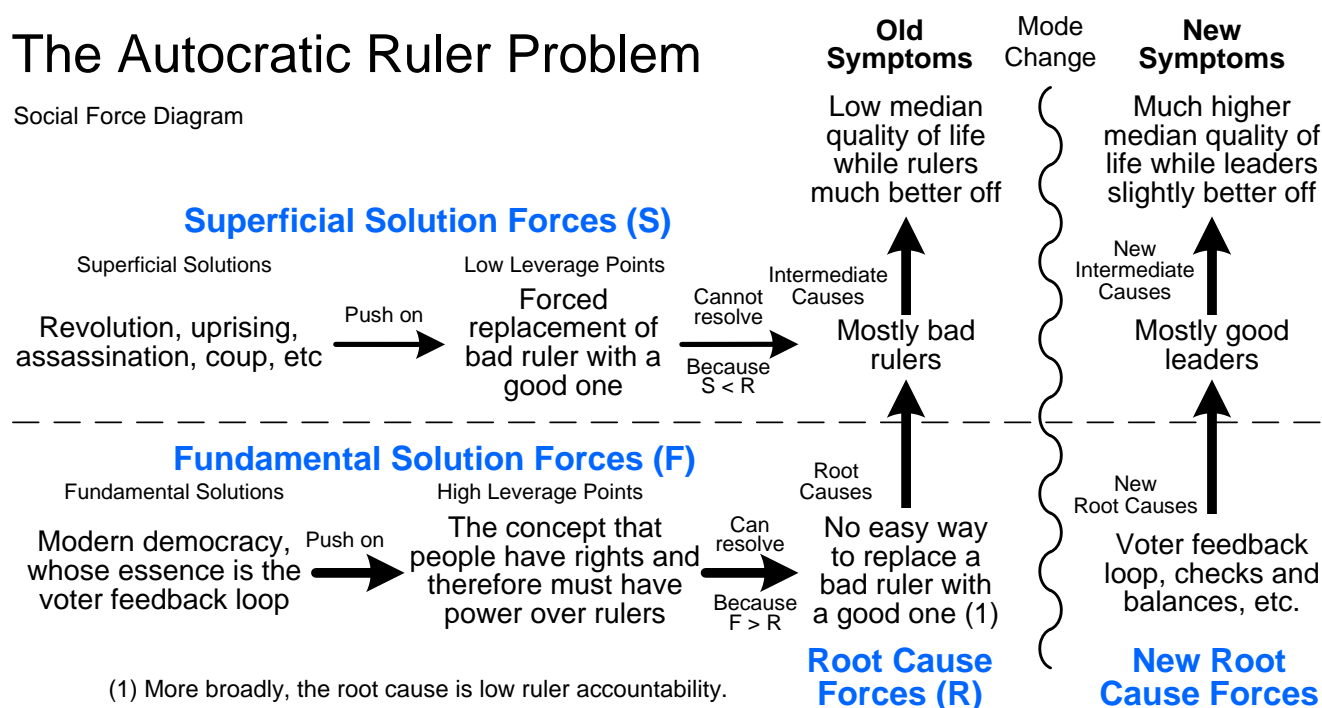
Given this diagnosis, the only way to solve the problem was *forced replacement of a bad ruler with a good one*. This was done with solutions like *revolution, uprising, assassination, coup, etc*. But as the bloody pages of history show, these solutions were superficial. They failed to solve the problem permanently. When a bad ruler was forcibly replaced with a good one, it was usually not long before the good ruler went bad or was succeeded by another bad ruler. (This is a simplified analysis to keep the example simple.)

And then one of the epic turns of history occurred. Modern democracy appeared, beginning with the United States' *Constitution* in 1788 and France's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* in 1789. The change occurred spontaneously. The problem was solved by trial and error rather than root cause analysis, which is why it took so long.

Hindsight sharpens the vision. A retrospective root cause analysis would look about like the one shown on the next page.

The Autocratic Ruler Problem

Social Force Diagram



This is a social force diagram, an advanced tool developed by Thwink.org for applying root cause analysis to difficult large-scale social problems. Social forces are as real as the force of gravity, and must be identified if we are to correctly analyze social problems like the Trump phenomenon.

The diagram shows at a glance why superficial solutions failed to solve the Autocratic Ruler Problem for so long, why it is so necessary to penetrate to the hard to see fundamental layer with root cause analysis, why the fundamental solution worked, and why, once the mode change occurred, political systems tended to stay in the new mode due to the right new balancing feedback loop. Once a population has tasted democracy, they don't want to go back.

The root cause was *no easy way to replace a bad ruler with a good one*. The high leverage point for resolving the root cause was *the concept that people have rights and therefore must have power over rulers*. Once this concept clarified and strengthened, it was just a matter of time before the fundamental solution of *modern democracy, whose essence is the voter feedback loop*, spontaneously appeared.

In difficult large-scale social problems, fundamental solutions permanently change the way the system behaves by introducing new feedback loops and/or changing old ones. These solutions can be surprisingly simple, as indeed the solution of the voter feedback loop appears today.

A strong fundamental solution causes a rapid mode change to the whole system. In the Autocratic Ruler Problem, once the first two voter feedback loops were introduced in the

United States and France, the solution quickly spread. Today, only 52 out of 167 countries have authoritarian regimes. The rest are partial or full [democracies](#).

Now let's apply the *right tool* (root cause analysis) to the Trump phenomenon, using the *right data* (truth data) in the *right way* (by modeling how that data causes the phenomenon).

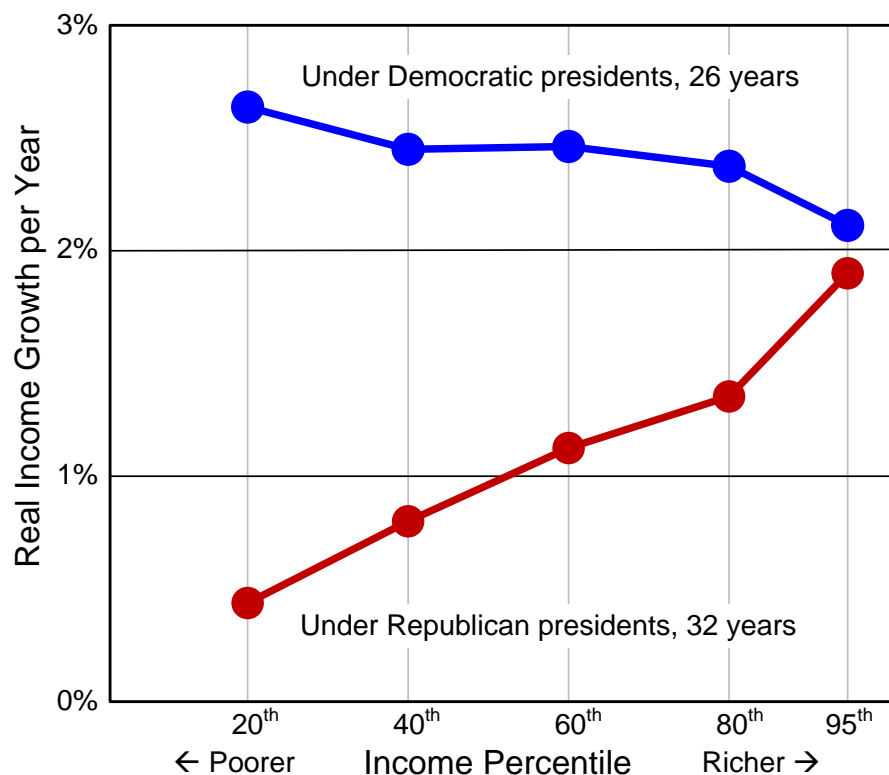
Defining the real problem

WHY is Trump doing so well in the polls when to most writers and news organizations (including many that normally lean Republican) he is unqualified, uninformed, and unable to provide credible policies to achieve his signature proposals? Voters voting for Trump would be voting against their own best interests, so logically Trump should be well behind in the polls.

There's a deeper pattern here. Trump is not the only politician who has somehow convinced Americans to vote against their own best interests. The data shows that the entire Republican Party appears to be doing the same thing. For income growth, the data clearly shows that under Democratic presidents income growth is about the same for all income groups, with the poor doing slightly better and the rich doing slightly worse. But under Republican presidents, the richer you are, the higher your income growth. The difference is so extreme that income growth for the upper 20% (the 80th percentile on the graph) is three times that of the bottom 20%. If you follow the data, a vote for a billionaire like Trump, or a vote for a Republican candidate, favors the rich at the expense of everyone else.

U. S. Family Income Growth from 1948 to 2005

Annual average adjusted for inflation. Data source: *Unequal Democracy*, by Larry Bartels, 2008, p33. Regraphed by Thwink.org.



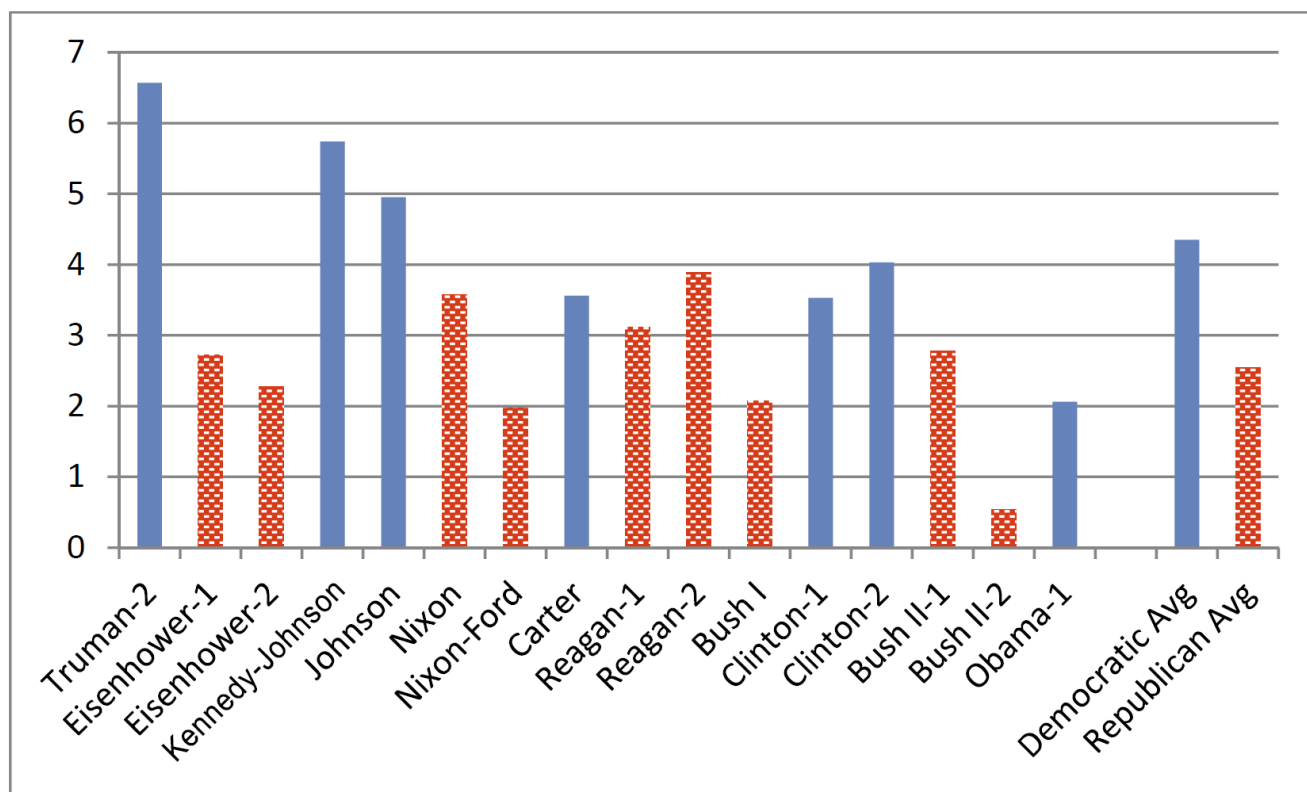
The broadest and most complete investigation of how political parties affect economic performance is *Presidents and the Economy: A Forensic Investigation*, by Alan Blinder and Mark Watson of Princeton University, 2013. Examining the data, they concluded that “The

U. S. economy has performed better when the President of the United States is a Democrat rather than a Republican, almost regardless of how one measures performance.”

Analysis of the key measure of performance, national GDP growth from 1944 to 2011 under different presidents, is shown below. The results show that on the average you are better off under a Democratic administration.

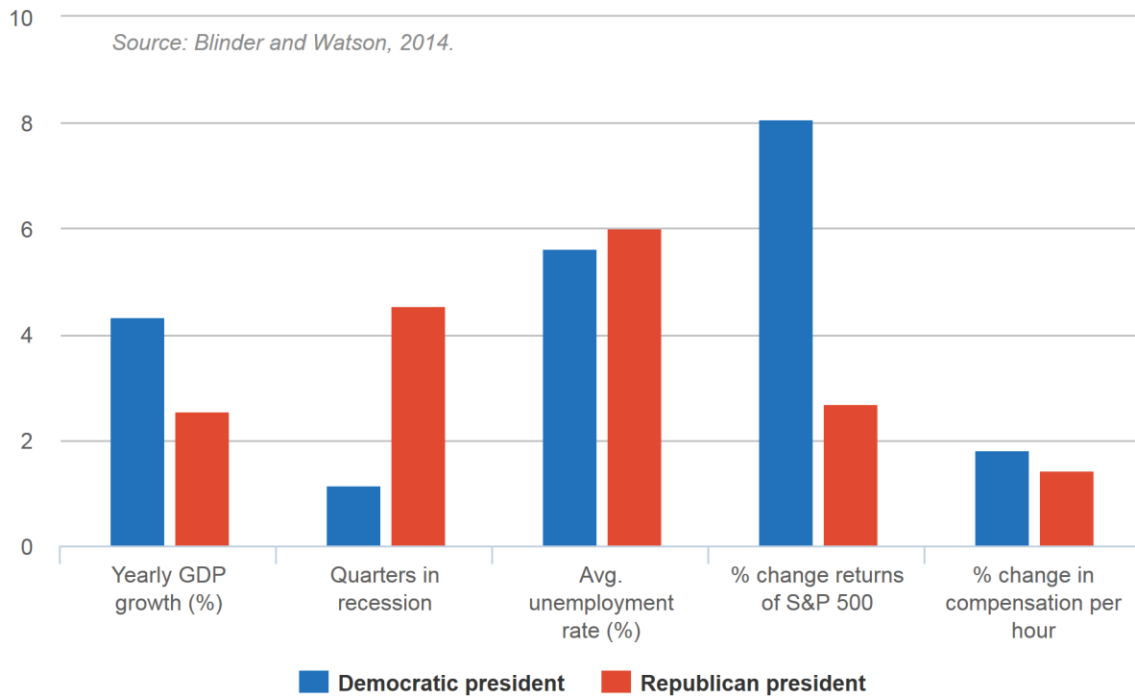
Average Annualized GDP Growth, By Term

Source: *Presidents and the Economy: A Forensic Investigation*,
Blinder and Watson, 2013, Princeton University.



The findings of the Blinder Watson study were neatly summarized in a single bar chart by Sean McElwee of Demos, as seen below. The first indicator summarizes the Average Annualized GDP Growth chart above. Data like this tells a powerful story. One party is consistently doing better for the average person than the other.

AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS

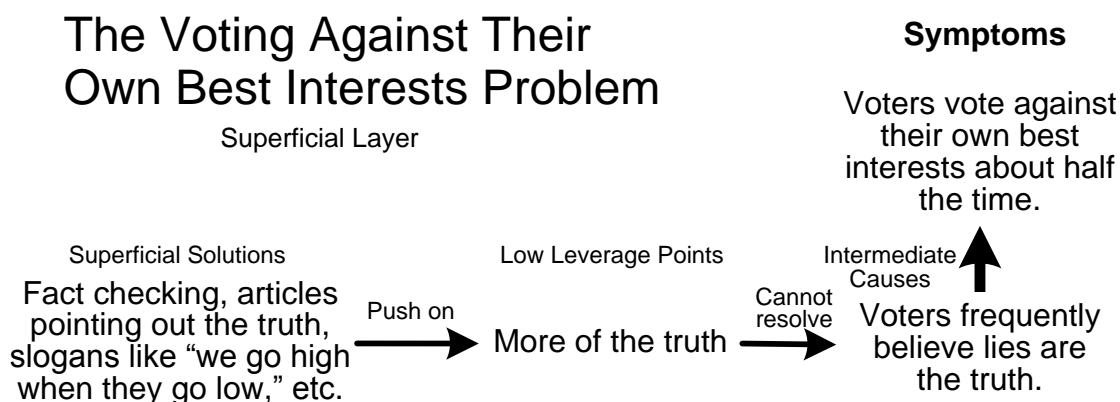


The data paints a paradox. In theory, democratic elections should (on the average) lead to citizens electing leaders who will do the best they can for the population as a whole. But in practice that's not what's happening. Democratic administrations consistently outperform Republican ones. Yet Republicans win about half the time. Logically this should not happen, since voters should not vote against their own best interests. But they do. Thus the problem to solve is: *WHY do voters vote against their own best interests about half the time?*

Until that question is answered at the root cause level, modern democracy will continue to suffer the ill effects of parties like the US Republicans and politicians like Trump. To answer it let's do the same thing Nate Silver did: build a predictive model of system behavior. We need to predict how the system will behave when various solutions are applied.

Conventional wisdom and the superficial layer

The diagram below shows the superficial layer of the problem. This is all most people can see, due to the complexity of the problem.



Root cause analysis works by starting at the symptoms of a problem and asking “WHY does this occur?” until the root causes are found. So WHY do *Voters vote against their own best interests about half the time*? This is the same result as voting randomly, where 50% of the time you would pick the best of two candidates just by guessing. It appears that voters are making deeply irrational decisions. WHY?

In a political system, there are only three ways to get voters to vote against their own best interests: bribery, force, and deception. The first two are illegal in a democracy. Therefore the intermediate cause of WHY voters are voting against their own best interests must be deception. *Voters frequently believe lies are the truth*. Thus the best way to manipulate a large base of voters into voting against their own best interests, and for selfish special interests instead, is one lie after another. Trump follows this formula. He also lies better than his Republican opponents, which is how he shot to the top in a crowded primary field.

As the leading master of deception, Trump is the ultimate political con man. He’s so far ahead of the rest, such an outlier, that “Even experts on deception don’t know what to make of Donald Trump’s lies,” [writes](#) Katie McDonough:

“In the year since Donald Trump first rode down that escalator in Trump Tower and told the world he was running for president, he has lied about Ted Cruz’s father’s relationship to the man who killed John F. Kennedy, his position on the Iraq War, whether or not Trump brand steaks still exist, Hillary Clinton’s position on the Second Amendment, and things Gandhi said. This, it should be noted, is a wildly incomplete list of things that Donald Trump has lied about.

“According to PolitiFact, a fact-checking site that has spent the last 12 months rating Trump’s public statements, a full 76% of the presumptive Republican nomi-

nee's major statements have been demonstrably false. (Of those statements, 19% of the things Trump said were deemed to have basically no factual basis, compared to 0% for Bernie Sanders and 1% for Hillary Clinton.)

"And yet his supporters don't seem bothered, and the former reality television star recently clinched the number of delegates he'll need to become the party's nominee. A handful of recent polls also show that Trump and Hillary Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner, are basically neck and neck in a general election matchup."

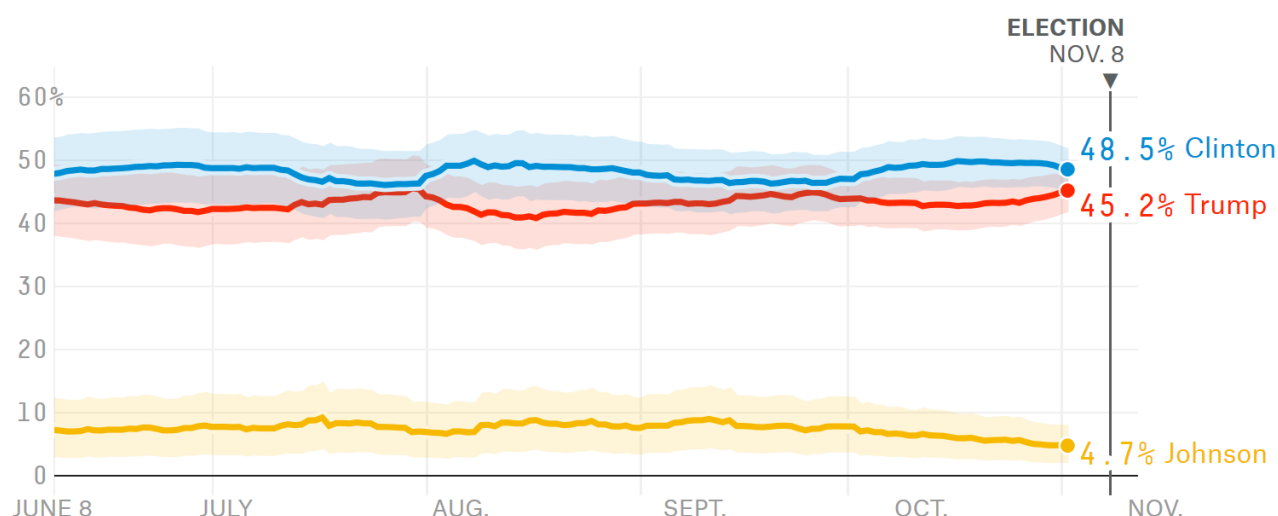
If the cause of the problem is too many voters believe the lies that politicians tell, then the leverage point is obvious: *more of the truth*. This is done with solutions like *fact checking*, *pointing out the truth*, "*we go high when they go low*," etc. FactCheck.org, Politifact.org, and The Washington Post's Fact Checker, plus dozens of similar organizations in other countries, have appeared to provide the public with "more of the truth" by fact checking political claims. Countless articles and talk shows point out the truth of what happened, in an effort to inform the public so they can make better decisions. Michelle Obama's "We go high when they go low" means "We resort to the truth while they resort to lies," such as vicious *ad hominem* attacks. Hillary invoked the phrase in the second presidential debate. When Trump lobbed a series of lies at Hillary Clinton about Bill Clinton's behavior, Hillary responded this way:

"Well, first, let me start by saying that so much of what he's just said is not right.... When I hear something like that, I am reminded of what my friend, Michelle Obama, advised us all: When they go low, you go high."

But these solutions haven't worked. They certainly didn't prevent Trump from winning the Republican nomination, even though he was the biggest liar in field. Nor have they prevented past liars from tricking voters into voting against their own best interests. Republican presidents are elected about half the time. And finally, all the fact checkers and truth in the world have not deflated Trump's polling numbers versus Hillary's. The [graph](#) below shows the two are running neck and neck, separated by only a few percentage points. Trump's lies are working all too well. Over 40% of voters are consistently supporting him, despite the fact that electing Trump would, to the objective analyst, be calamitous.

Poll Data - Popular Vote for Clinton, Trump, Johnson

As of November 2, 2016
Source: FiveThirtyEight.com



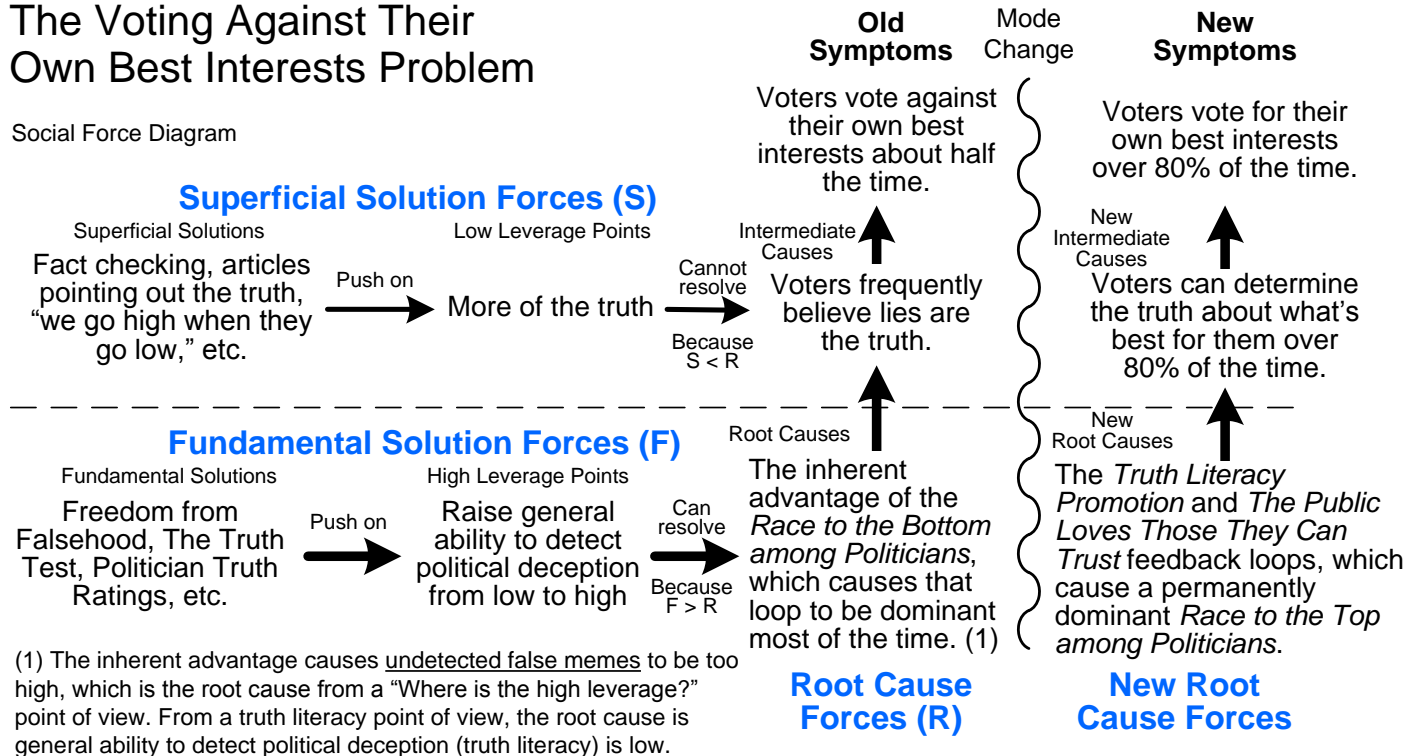
WHY is Trump getting so much support, despite everything that's been done to get voters to see Trump for what he really is? It's because citizens, the press, and the pundits see only the superficial layer of the problem. This causes them to falsely assume the intermediate cause is the root cause. This in turn leads to superficial solutions that, because they do nothing to resolve the root cause, are guaranteed to fail.

Penetrating to the fundamental layer with root cause analysis

But suppose the fundamental layer was revealed by using root cause analysis. Now the problem looks completely different, just as in The Autocratic Ruler Problem. Like the way a picture is worth a thousand words, one little diagram can say so much.

The Voting Against Their Own Best Interests Problem

Social Force Diagram



The social force diagram was built by modeling the problem. To predict how a system will behave in the future, Nate Silver builds statistical models. Rather than a statistical model I built a feedback loop model. A simplified version is shown on the next page. The model consists mainly of two feedback loops, **The Race to the Top** (the left) and **The Race to the Bottom** (the right). The two loops are locked in a perpetual duel to see which loop can gain the most supporters. The two loops reflect the left/right political spectrum that characterizes all democratic systems.

On the model, false memes are the same as falsehood, and true memes are the truth. A **meme** is a mental belief that affects behavior. A **degenerate** is someone who has fallen from the norm due to infection by false memes. They have degenerated and no longer base their behavior on rational logic. The term is not meant as a pejorative label, but rather as a hopefully temporary fall from virtue.

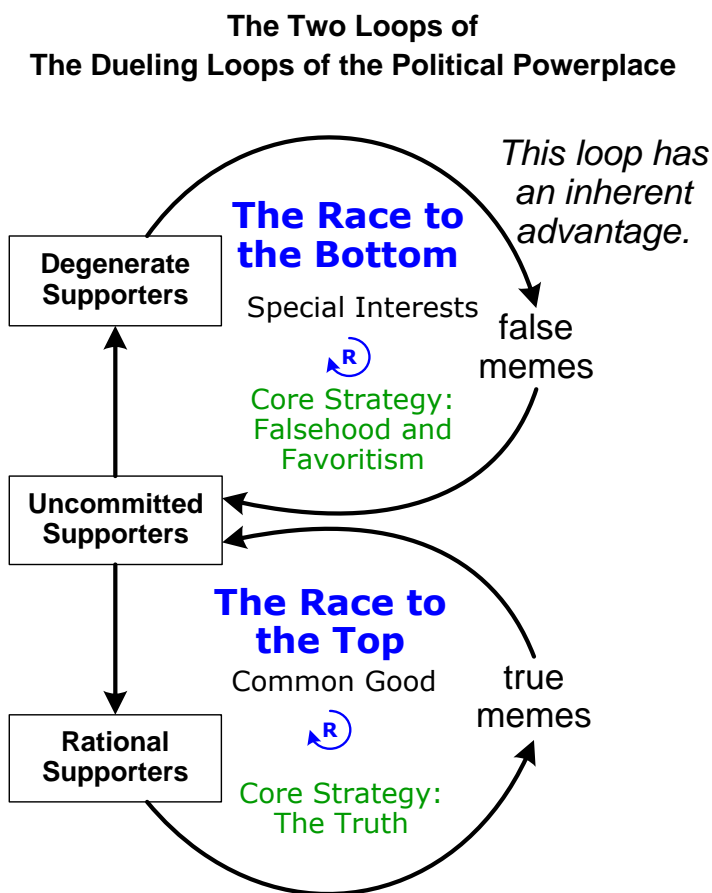
The loops are identical except for two critical differences. The first difference is **The Race to the Bottom** employs falsehood (lies) and favoritism (jobs, pork barrel gifts, etc.) to gain supporters for special interest candidates. Favoritism is minor compared to falsehoods because it's expensive and hard to apply to hundreds of millions of voters.

In sharp contrast, **The Race to the Top** uses the truth to gain supporters for candidates seeking to promote the common good. In the United States, the evidence shows that **The Race to the Bottom** is used by Republicans, while **The Race to the Top** is used by Democrats. Some politicians are exceptions, such as far right (blue dog) Democrats and far left (moderate) Republicans.

The secret of good analysis is to strip away everything that doesn't matter, leaving only the essential essence of the problem. As far as I can tell, the Dueling Loops model cannot be any simpler and still contain what's needed for a complete root cause analysis. The model is amazingly simple, considering the baffling complexity of the problem. This simplicity allows the model to be understood by everyone.

The two feedback loops work like this: In **The Race to the Top**, true memes are used to convince Uncommitted Supporters to become Rational Supporters. The more rationalists there are, the more resources available to promote more true memes, which in turn causes more Uncommitted Supporters to become Rational Supporters. The loop goes round and round, growing in strength until there are no more Uncommitted Supporters. It's a **reinforcing loop**, because with each revolution it grows in strength until it hits its limits. **The Race to the Bottom** works in an identical manner, except it uses false memes instead of true memes to sway supporters.

The second difference contains an important insight. **The Race to the Bottom** has an inherent advantage over **The Race to the Top**. This advantage remains hidden from all but



A feedback loop diagram consists of nodes and arrows representing their relationships. An arrow means "causes." Node names are underlined in the article.

the most analytical eye. *Lies can be used to inflate the appeal of a claim, but the truth cannot.*

A politician can tell a bigger lie, like budget deficits don't matter. But they cannot tell a bigger truth, such as I can balance the budget twice as well as my opponent, because once a budget is balanced, it cannot be balanced any better. From a mathematical perspective, the size (and hence the appeal) of a falsehood can be inflated by saying that $2 + 2 = 5$, or 7, or even 27, but the size of the truth can never be inflated by saying anything more than $2 + 2 = 4$.

This has huge implications. Because the size of falsehood can be inflated and the truth cannot, lying politicians can attract more supporters for the same amount of effort. A lying politician can promise more, evoke false enemies more, push the fear hot button more, pursue wrong priorities more, and use more favoritism than a virtuous politician can. *The result is the race to the bottom is the dominant loop far more than it should be in a healthy democracy.*

Because of its overwhelming advantage, **The Race to the Bottom** is the surest way for a politician to *rise to* power, to *increase* his power, and to *stay* in power. But this is a Faustian bargain, because once a politician begins using deception to win, he joins an anything goes, the-end-justifies-the-means race to the bottom against other corrupt politicians. He can only run faster and keep winning the race by increasing his deception. This is why the race to the bottom almost invariably runs to excess and causes its own demise and collapse, which is where we are today.

Here's one example of proof that politicians are basically following either race to the bottom or race to the top strategies. A February 2016 [article](#) on *Study Shows GOP Candidates Who Lie the Most, Do the Best* had this to say:

“Politicians lie. They make stuff up, revise history, twist the truth and cherry-pick statistics in outrageous ways. Too often they are not called out for making false statements and therefore keep doing it – they face virtually no consequences for lying on the campaign trail.

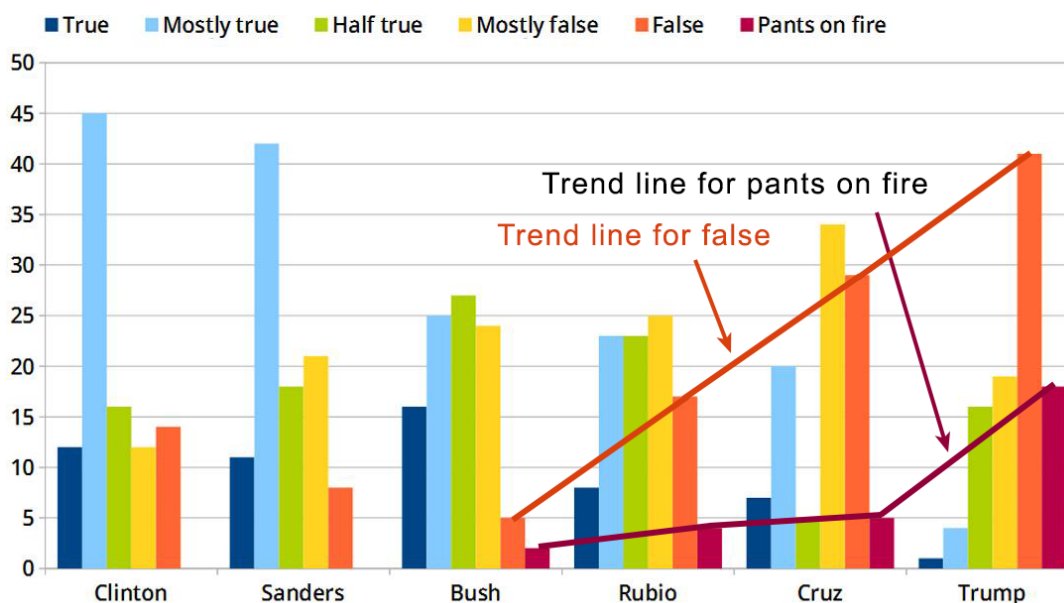
“What we found in the Republican field is a distressing correlation between lying and doing well in the polls. Frontrunner Donald Trump is truly in a league of his own. Of the 73 statements of his that PolitiFact analyzed, only one was rated as true – Trump's claim that Putin enjoys great popularity in Russia – and three others as mostly true.

“A stunning 60% of the examined statements were rated as either false or mostly false and, on top of that, Trump made 13 claims that earned a ‘Pants on Fire’ rating, more than twice as many as the other candidates we looked at combined.”

Below is the graph from the article. The data confirms the Dueling Loops model. The left depends on the truth to gain supporters, while the right depends on falsehoods. The article found that *the bigger the falsehood, the better you do*. From the viewpoint of the analysis, all that's really happened in the 2016 presidential elections is a candidate has emerged who knows how to tell a more enticing set of lies than his opponents. The system keeps evolving. Each election cycle brings bigger and bolder lies. Under the evolutionary constraints of the structure of the Dueling Loops, a candidate like Trump becomes inevitable. Trump, the current master of political deception, follows the pattern of other dangerous demagogues who came before him, like George Wallace, Huey Long, and Joseph McCarthy.

PolitiFact Checks - Percentage of statements checked that are:

Graph from WhoWhatWhy.com Feb 1, 2016 - Trend lines added by Thwink.org



However, the rule that “*The bigger the falsehood, the better you do*” holds only up to the point of diminishing returns. If a lie is too big it’s detected. People can see it’s not true and would harm them. This is what eventually tripped up Trump.

The breaking point came on October 7, 2016 when *The Washington Post* released a video showing Trump bragging about his sexual assaults on women and his ability to get away with it because “when you’re a star they let you do it. You can do anything.” Condemnation was universal and swift. Trump issued an apology later that night. But it didn’t work. The carefully built illusion that Trump would make a good president, despite lack of political expertise and all sorts of over-the-top claims, was shattered. Trump’s campaign went into meltdown mode and fell precipitously in the polls.

There's a sucker born every minute, so political deception normally works. *You can fool some of the people some of the time*, so Trump (and the Republicans in general) has an ideological base that won't abandon him no matter what, even after the sexual assault video was released. *But you can't fool all of the people all of the time*. When that video came out, the dam broke. The people woke up, because now they could see that *the emperor has no clothes*.

The Dueling Loops model predicts all of this. The model doesn't make exact *quantitative* predictions like a statistical model because that's not its purpose. Instead, the model makes *qualitative* predictions. It says falsehood will garner more supporters than the truth, up to the point of diminishing returns. This is similar to the evolutionary algorithm, which says that due to the Law of Survival of the Fittest, each new generation will, on the average, be more fit for its ecological niche than the previous generation. This holds up to the point of diminishing returns. When a species has evolved to optimize how fully its members can exploit an ecological niche, significant further evolution stops.

Unlike a statistical model, which models only inputs and outputs, the Dueling Loops model can go one step further. Because it's based on root cause analysis and the causal structure of how the system works, the model can uncover the fundamental layer of the problem, reveal the root cause of the problem, and broadly predict how the system will respond when high leverage points are pushed on to resolve the root cause.

If you dig deep enough using root cause analysis, sooner or later you strike gold. Let's turn our attention to the golden nugget our own analysis found.

The root cause and how it can be resolved

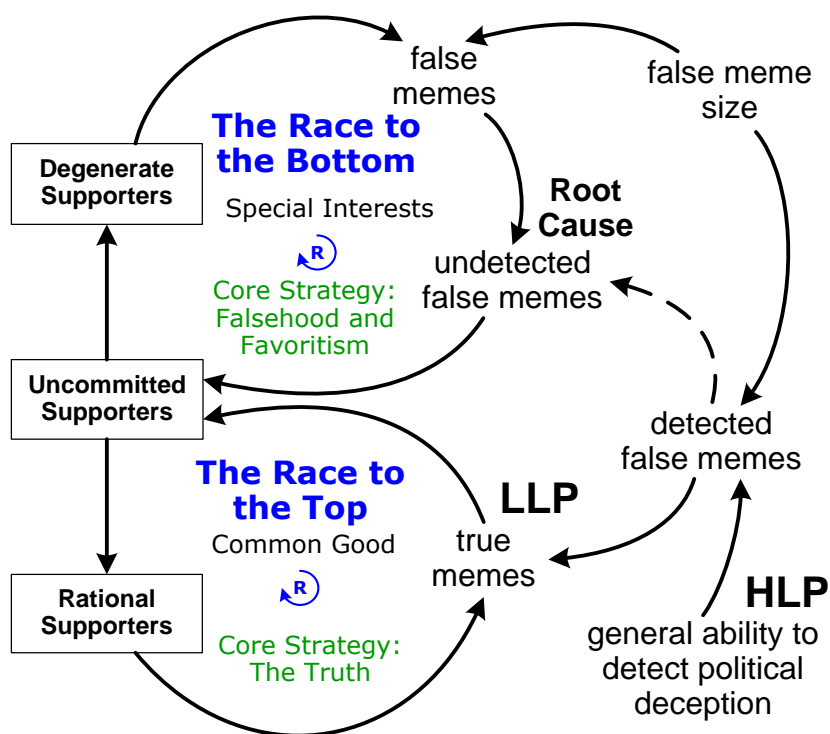
To more fully reveal the fundamental layer we need to update the Dueling Loops model. The revised model shows the main root cause and the high leverage point for resolving it.

As simple as the model is, it explains so much. The model shows that the intuitively attractive solution strategy of more true memes (“more of the truth”) fails because it’s a low leverage point (LLP) that does nothing to resolve the root cause.

To a journalist, “more of the truth” is exactly what the public needs to make informed decisions. But voters, bombarded with information on a normal day and flooded with even more information during an election, don’t see it that way. To voters, “more of the truth” solutions, like fact checking and pointing out the truth, have only a modest effect because the average voter sees “more of the truth” as just one more handful of snowflakes in a blizzard of news. “More of the truth” does nothing to improve a person’s ability to detect false memes (lies) themselves, *before* the lies have infected the person’s mind. “More of the truth” thus does nothing to raise truth literacy, and therefore does nothing to resolve the root cause.

*The root cause is that due to the inherent advantage of **The Race to the Bottom**, undetected false memes is too high.* Resolving the root cause requires solutions that push on the high leverage point (HLP) of general ability to detect political deception. Presently this is

The Basic Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace



The key to understanding the model is the high leverage point. General ability to detect political deception (truth literacy) is currently low. As long as it remains low, voters are at the mercy of crafty lying politicians like Trump. The founders of modern democracy assumed that voters would, on the average, be able to choose leaders who would promote the common good. In other words, the health of democracy depends on high general ability to detect political deception. The higher that is, the higher detected false memes are. The higher that is, the lower undetected false memes (lies that appear to be true) are and the higher truth memes (the truth) are. Once general ability goes high, The Race to the Top becomes the dominant loop.

low because truth literacy is low. **Truth literacy** is the ability to tell truth from deception. Once you are truth literate, you are inoculated against the infective power of deception.

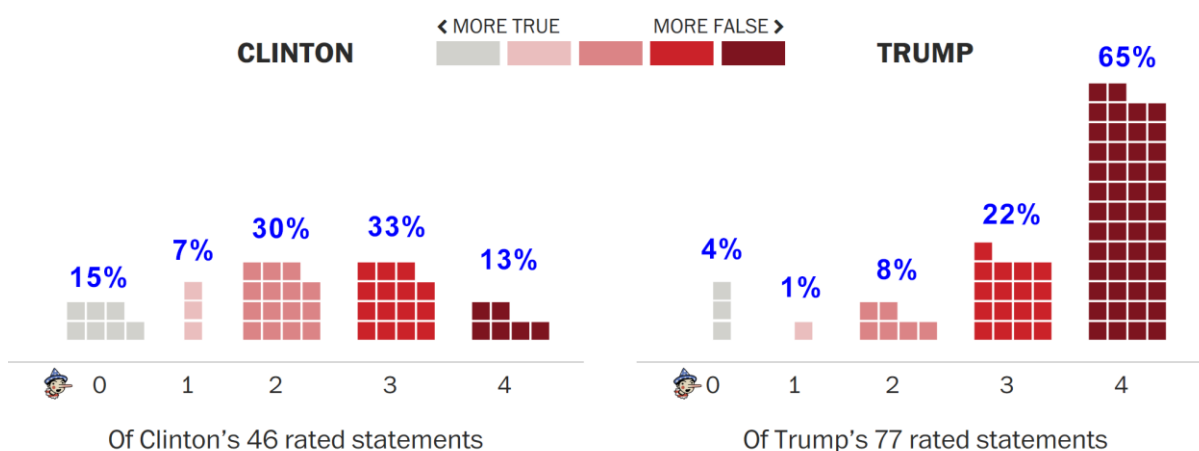
Problem solvers need to switch to fundamental solutions (described later) that push on the high leverage point, like Freedom from Falsehood, the Truth Test, and Politician Truth Ratings. People need to become truth literate in order to detect political deception themselves, or democracy cannot long survive.

Clinton versus Trump

Let's illustrate how the Basic Dueling Loops work with the Clinton versus Trump presidential election. We know from poll data that Clinton is slightly ahead in the popular vote, though this varies considerably over time. We also know, from truth data like that below, that the candidates employ entirely different truth strategies. Clinton's statements follow a normal distribution. Their truth clusters slightly to the right of the middle with smaller tails below and above. Most of her statements had truth ratings of 2 or 3. In sharp contrast, Trump's statements follow an abnormal distribution. 65% received 4 Pinocchios, the highest possible rating for falsehood. In plain English, 65% of Trump's statements were blatant lies. Trump's core strategy is deception, while Clinton's is *the truth about what's best for the common good*.

How the candidates' fact check rankings break down

Source: *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2016. Percents added by Thwink.org.



These two strategies have led the candidates down two strikingly different paths. The raging battle of Trump against Clinton, the master of deception versus the champion of truth, has captivated the public's interest like no other presidential race in America's history, because there's never been a presidential nominee like Trump. No nominee of a major party has ever been less qualified, in terms of policy proposals, political expertise, and temperament, than Trump. No nominee has ever presented such a threat to the nation that

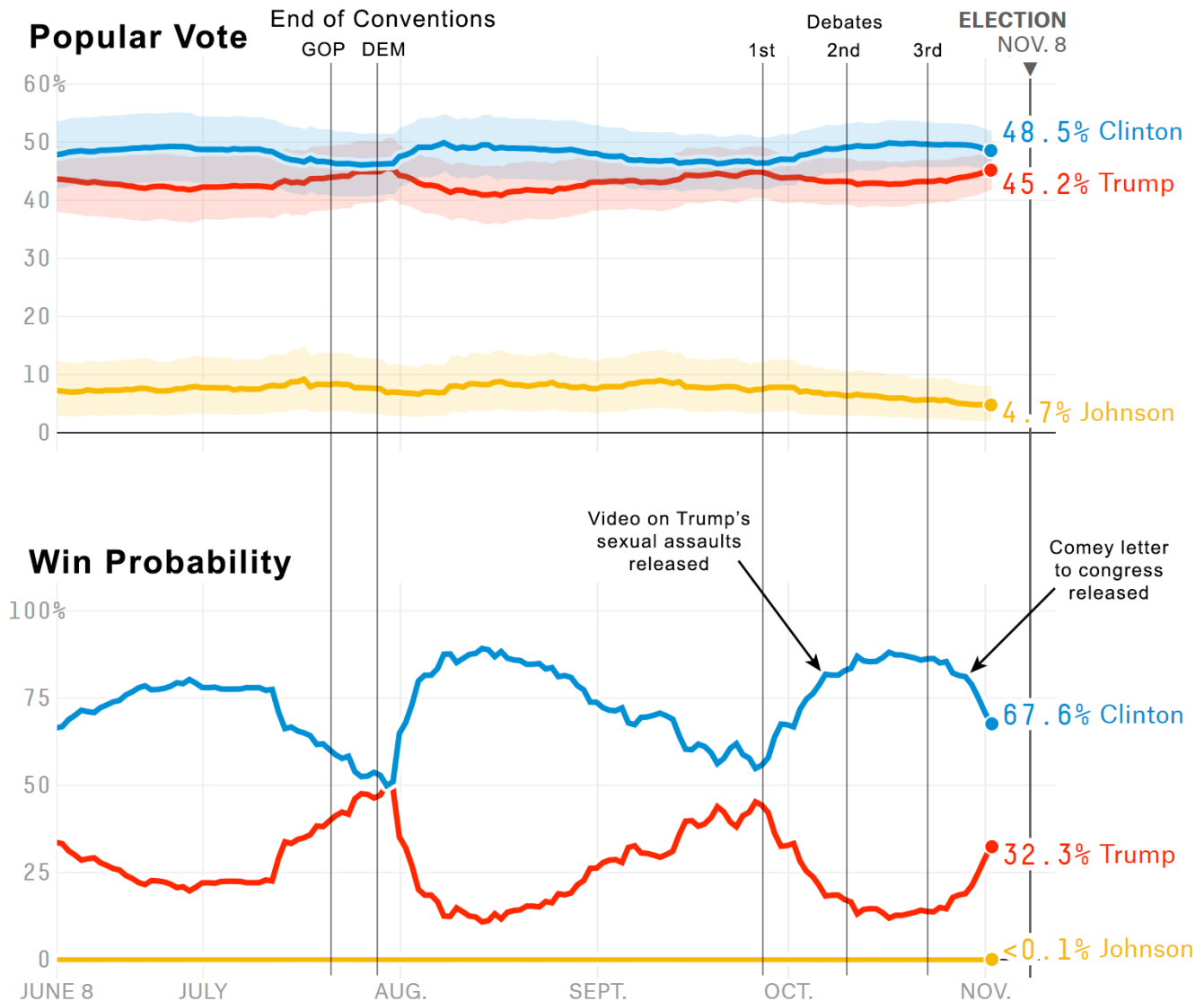
[The Arizona Republic](#), which since 1890 has “never endorsed a Democrat over a Republican for president. Never.” was forced to conclude that “This year is different.” The paper emphatically endorsed Hillary Clinton, because “In a nation with an increasingly diverse population, Trump offers a recipe for permanent civil discord. In a global economy, he offers protectionism and a false promise to bring back jobs that no longer exist.” [USA Today](#), which “has never taken sides in the presidential race [is] doing it now. ... [Trump is] unfit for the presidency. [He] has demonstrated repeatedly that he lacks the temperament, knowledge, steadiness and honesty that America needs from its presidents.” [Foreign Policy](#), which has never before endorsed a political candidate of any kind, broke that policy with a scathing denouncement of Trump:

“The dangers Trump presents as president stretch beyond the United States to the international economy, to global security, to America’s allies, as well as to countless innocents everywhere who would be the victims of his inexperience, his perverse policy views, and the profound unsuitability of his temperament for the office he seeks.”

Trump got to where he is with deception, by exploiting the inherent advantage of **The Race to the Bottom**. If we examine Nate Silver’s win probability over time, shown below, we can see exactly where Trump’s strategy began to fail.

Presidential Election 2016

As of November 2, 2016
Source: FiveThirtyEight.com



For Trump, exploiting the power of deception worked beautifully up until just after the Democratic convention in late July. The secret to his success was no secret. [The New York Times](#) had reported in December 2015 that:

“His entire campaign is run like a demagogue’s — his language of division, his cult of personality, his manner of categorizing and maligning people with a broad brush,” said Jennifer Mercieca, an expert in American political discourse at Texas A&M University. “If you’re an illegal immigrant, you’re a loser. If you’re captured in war, like John McCain, you’re a loser. If you have a disability, you’re a loser. It’s rhetoric like Wallace’s — it’s not a kind or generous rhetoric.”

Suddenly the triumph of Trump fell apart. After the two conventions voters could see with their own eyes which candidate was better. First Trump, in [his acceptance speech](#), played the fear card:

“Trump’s overarching intention was to sow fear in America’s voters: Fear of uncontrolled crime and terrorism that ‘threaten our very way of life.’ Fear of immigrants, including refugees from the civil war in Syria. Fear of Muslims, although instead of the “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” he proposed last year, Trump said he would suspend immigration from countries that have been ‘compromised by terrorism.’ Fear of foreign trading partners that, thanks to ‘disastrous trade deals supported by Bill and Hillary Clinton,’ have destroyed American manufacturing.

“Finally, Trump warned that Americans should fear Hillary Clinton, whom he described as a corrupt politician whose legacy as secretary of State amounted to “death, destruction and weakness.”

“But Trump’s speech was frightening in a second sense: By softening his strident rhetoric, by (selectively) citing statistics, by couching cruel policies in the language of compassion, Trump managed to make an extreme agenda sound not only plausible but necessary.”

It worked. Trump got the usual convention bounce. Pushing the fear hot button, combined with prior fear mongering and other types of deception, brought Trump to about even with Clinton.

But then at the Democratic convention Clinton did just the opposite of Trump. She played the “love each other” card. Her campaign slogan of “stronger together,” which capitalizes on cooperation and the truth of what’s best for all, ruled the convention and [her acceptance speech](#):

“Our country’s motto is *e pluribus unum*: out of many, we are one. Will we stay true to that motto?

“Well, we heard Donald Trump’s answer last week at his convention. He wants to divide us – from the rest of the world, and from each other. ... He wants us to fear the future and fear each other. ...

“We will not build a wall. Instead, we will build an economy where everyone who wants a good paying job can get one. And we’ll build a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants who are already contributing to our economy!

“We will not ban a religion. We will work with all Americans and our allies to fight terrorism. ...

“And most of all, don’t believe anyone who says: ‘I alone can fix it.’ Those were actually Donald Trump’s words in Cleveland. And they should set off alarm bells for all of us.”

The alarm bells went off and it worked, perhaps better than anyone expected. A few days later the polls began a dramatic upward turn for Clinton, because at last the people could see the truth.

Clinton employed much more than a “more of the truth” strategy of providing facts and pointing out the truth. For each seed of fear Trump had sown with his speech, Clinton offered a positive policy alternative. She offered voters a choice between the negativity of fear and its opposite, the positive assurance of a favorable, joyful future together. The choice was so easy to make that the polls shot up.

But then, after a few weeks they begin coming back down. The convention bounce effect was over and Trump’s continued barrage of charismatic demagoguery (which dominated most news cycles) worked its magic once again. By the first debate the two candidates were almost even.

And then the same thing happened again at the first debate. The great benefit of political debates is the audience can directly compare candidates. At first the two candidates were about equal. But then it quickly became “[A win for Hillary Clinton](#)”:

“From about the 15-minute mark (of a total of 90) the debate became very strange. The moderator, Lester Holt, had an impossible job trying to prevent the two candidates from yelling at each other. Mrs. Clinton launched a series of personal attacks on Mr. Trump, which he couldn’t resist picking up on. Mr. Trump bragged, bulldozed and free-associated, as he had through the primaries. Mrs. Clinton was well-prepared and verbose.

“The turning point came when Mr. Holt asked the Republican candidate to explain why he had claimed, for many years and ignoring the facts, that Barack Obama had not been born in America. The exchange was so bizarre that it is worth quoting at length: [The question was why Trump had falsely claimed Obama was not a natural born citizen. Trump replied by going off on a tangent so irrelevant that Holt had to repeat the question. Trump replied with nonsense like ‘Well, it was very—I say nothing. I say nothing, because I was able to get him to produce it. He should have produced it a long time before. I say nothing.’]

“Mr. Trump suddenly had all the self-assurance of a weak swimmer who has just discovered that his water-wings have a fast puncture. By the end of the debate he had spent a lot more time talking about his tax affairs (on not paying federal income tax: ‘That makes me smart’); denying he had said things about the Iraq war and climate

change that he had in fact said; and riffing about Rosie O'Donnell. Mrs. Clinton, by contrast, had a strong finish.”

Under the spotlight of a determined moderator and up against a candidate employing a race to the top strategy of the truth, Trump's tried and true style of one mesmerizing lie after another fell apart. He had nothing to fall back on and came across as rattled, disorganized, unprepared, and unqualified for the job.

After the first debate the polls shot up again for Clinton. They went up still more when on October 1 the first pages of Trump's 1995 tax returns were released by [The New York Times](#). They revealed just what Clinton had claimed was probably true: Trump has likely paid no taxes for years because of a tax break that is unavailable to anyone but wealthy real estate developers like himself. Trump had been hiding something after all with his lie that he couldn't release his tax returns because he was under audit.

On October 7, two days before the second debate, [The Washington Post](#) dropped a bombshell. Trump, who promoted himself as an upstanding family man and a person of high moral caliber, was anything but that. A video of Trump from his 2005 appearance on Access Hollywood revealed he was in fact a sexual predator who bragged about his exploits. This was more than even Republicans could take, and they began disowning him in droves. The polls continued to rise for Clinton and fall for Trump, and Clinton's victory was beginning to look fairly certain.

And it was all because for Trump, deception no longer worked. In the Basic Dueling Loops model, detected false memes had gone so high that [The Race to the Bottom](#), for Trump, collapsed. Swing voters could now see far more true memes to attract them to Clinton than undetected false memes to lure them to Trump. Enough moved to [The Race to the Top](#) to shift the polls strongly in Clinton's favor.

But the true masters of deception (and their infected supporters) never sleep. On October 28, eleven days before the election, another bombshell dropped. FBI Director James Comey announced in a letter to congressional leaders that “the FBI has learned of the existence of emails that appear to be pertinent to the investigation [of former Secretary Clinton's personal email server]” and would be reviewing the emails, “although the FBI cannot yet assess whether or not this material may be significant.” The letter triggered a tidal wave of condemnation, [from both Democrats and Republicans](#), because it violated long standing protocol to not comment on ongoing investigations until complete and to avoid influencing upcoming elections.

From the viewpoint of the forces of the Dueling Loops, the letter was a deception classic. It was the fear, uncertainty, and doubt [strategy](#), wrapped in plausible denial that the letter was, in fact, extremely partisan.

“**Fear, uncertainty and doubt** (often shortened to FUD) is a disinformation strategy used in sales, marketing, public relations, talk radio, politics, religion, and propaganda. FUD is generally a strategy to influence perception by disseminating negative and dubious or false information and a manifestation of the appeal to fear.”

The letter *pushed the fear hot button*, because the emails might contain incriminating evidence against Clinton. The letter created *deep uncertainty*, because “the FBI cannot yet assess whether or not this material may be significant.” And the letter planted *seeds of doubt* in voter’s minds that Trump’s derogatory label of “Crooked Hillary” might have some truth to it after all. The ploy worked. Clinton’s polling numbers took [an immediate hit](#).

“An ABC/Washington Post tracking survey released Sunday, conducted both before and after Comey’s letter was made public on Friday, found that about one-third of likely voters, including 7 percent of Clinton supporters, said the new e-mail revelations made them less likely to support the former secretary of state.”

As the election draws near Trump is once again within a whisker of winning, all because of the extraordinary power of political deception. However, once we understand WHY political deception works at the root cause level, it becomes possible to make it impossible for politicians like Trump to win.

Three fundamental solution elements

A nation cannot long endure if oppressed, whether by a mother country, a colonial power, a tyrant, a class, or any other group who puts their own interests first. **Oppression** is the act of using power to benefit one group at the expense of another. Since no sane person wants to be oppressed, in a democracy mass oppression requires mass deception, so that an oppressor can get elected, stay elected, and gain continued support for his actions.

Truth literacy is the ability to tell truth from deception. Universal truth literacy is just as important to the health of democracy as reading literacy, because if people cannot “read” the truth they are blind to what the truth really is. They are easily controlled by any politician who uses deception to hoodwink the masses into supporting him and his positions, which will tend to benefit him and the special interests supporting him.

The high leverage point for resolving the root cause is general ability to detect political deception. Currently this is low. It can be raised to high by making the population truth literate. Here are three sample solution elements for doing this:

1. Freedom from Falsehood – This is the foundation for all the remaining solutions. It introduces a new explicit goal for democratic systems. People now have the legal right to freedom from falsehood from sources they must be able to trust. These sources include all “servants” of the people, such as politicians, public employees, and corporations, though we should start with politicians.

What is not prohibited by law is permitted by implication. Therefore if people do not have the legal right to Freedom from Falsehood, then by implication it’s okay for those in positions of power to manipulate citizens by the use of spin, lies, fallacies, soothing half-truths, the sin of omission, and all the forms of deception, propaganda, and thought control available.

If deception no longer works, politicians will be forced to compete for supporters on the basis of the objective truth. The truth includes the long term optimization of the general welfare of all members of *Homo sapiens*, which is the rightful goal of the human system. If citizens do not have Freedom from Falsehood, then falsehood in all its Machiavellian and Orwellian forms will continue to appear again and again, because it is the surest way to *rise to power, increase power, and stay in power*.

2. The Truth Test – This is a simple procedure and related knowledge that, once learned, allows citizens to tell truth from deception. This creates the **Truth Literacy Promotion** balancing feedback loop (not shown), whose goal is Freedom from Falsehood.

The objective of the Truth Test is to reduce political deception success at the individual level to a low, acceptable amount. The test consists of four simple questions:

1. What is the argument?
2. Are any common fallacies present?
3. Are the premises true, complete, and relevant?
4. Does each conclusion follow from its premises?

From my experience, the Truth Test will allow you to correctly test over 95% of all the arguments you commonly encounter in political appeals. The test does this by providing you with quick methods of argument examination, ones that are easy to learn, remember, and apply.

3. Politician Truth Ratings – This would provide an accurate measure of the truth of important statements made by politicians. First a government passes legislation creating Freedom from Falsehood. This makes lying by politicians to gain public support on elections or positions illegal. To efficiently implement the legislation, the government implements Politician Truth Ratings. All important elected officials then receive Truth Ratings,

though it would take some time to ramp up the program. Campaign speeches, ads, articles, speeches once in office, and so on are rated for the truth of the claims employed. This may seem like an expensive burden, but most claims (arguments and facts) are repeated. Only the first occurrence requires new work. In addition, everything need not be checked. A statistically valid sample will do.

It's possible that fines for excessive lying by politicians will be required. However, the most efficient penalty is not a fine. It is public knowledge a politician broke trust with the citizens of his or her country and lied. Once voters can see who they can and can't trust, that's where their votes will go. Which positions a politician supports also matter, like environmental sustainability, health care, gun control, tax reform, etc. But what matters more than any of these is trust. Can a voter trust a politician to do what they claim they will do during a campaign? Once in office, can a voter trust that what a politician is saying is the truth?

Politician Truth Ratings need not affect all voters to make the critical difference—only the swing voters. Fortunately it is this group who is most likely to be receptive to a tangible, sound reason to choose one politician over another.

A **truth rating** is the probability a politician's important arguments are true. We already have credit ratings, restaurant ratings, product ratings, and so on. Ratings are a proven mechanism for improving the quality of a person's decisions. Politician Truth Ratings would be performed by independent non-partisan organizations or agencies. Truth ratings raise truth literacy by providing a reliable source of truth data that the public can use to supplement their own determination of the truth.

Dozens of democracies have already taken the first step to Politician Truth Ratings with fact checking, so this solution element is already partially implemented.

Once Politician Truth Ratings exist, **The Public Loves Those They Can Trust** feedback loop appears (not shown). Politicians would compete to see who could be the most truthful and therefore the most trustworthy. While things would not be perfect, campaigns would become based on reason and truth rather than deception and who can raise the most money so they can manipulate the most voters.

Smartphone Ratings and Test Results

Consumer Reports - October 19, 2016

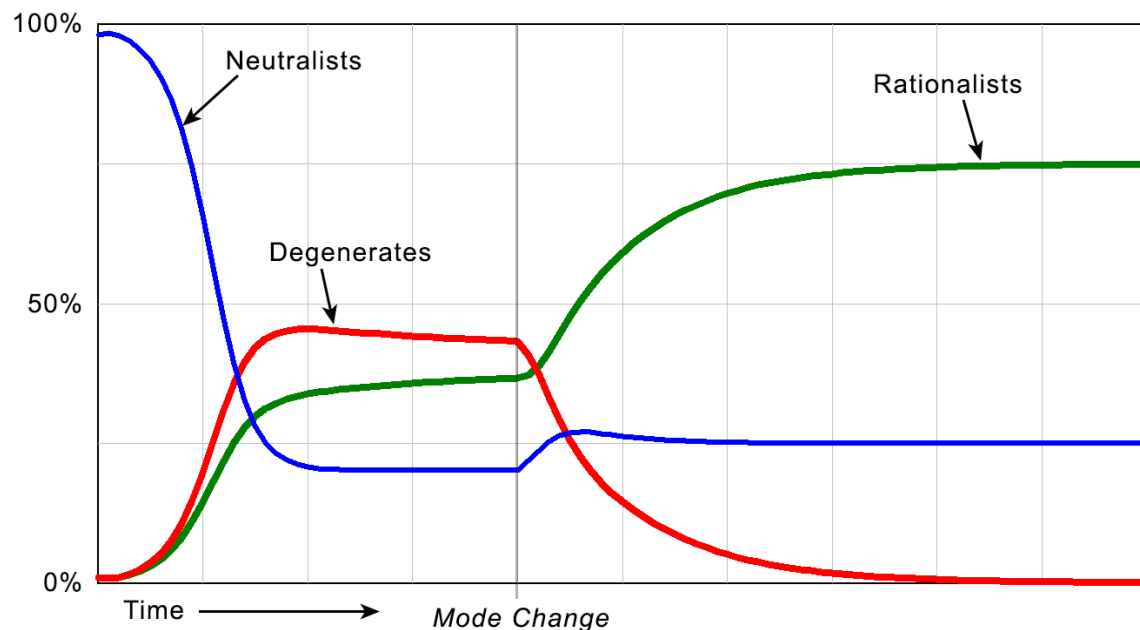
Overall score	Brand & Model / Price	Ease of use	Messaging	Web browsing	Display quality	Voice quality	Phoning	Battery life	Camera: Image quality	Camera: Video quality	Portability	Water resistance test	AT&T	Sprint	T-Mobile	Verizon	Unlocked	Display diagonal size (in.)	Display resolution	Operating system
Overall score 80	Samsung Galaxy S7 ✓ Recommended Price: \$650.00											Pass						5.1	1440x2560	Android
Overall score 79	Samsung Galaxy S7 edge ✓ Recommended											Pass						5.5	1440x2560	Android
Overall score 79	Samsung Galaxy S5 ✓ Recommended Price: \$520.00											Pass						5.1	1080x1920	Android
Overall score 78	LG G5 ✓ Recommended Price: \$500.00											NA						5.3	1440x2560	Android
Overall score 78	LG G4 ✓ Recommended Price: \$360.00											NA						5.5	1440x2560	Android
Overall score 78	Samsung Galaxy S6 active ✓ Recommended											Pass						5.1	1440x2560	Android
Overall score 78	Apple iPhone 7 ✓ Recommended Price: \$650.00											Pass						4.7	750x1334	iOS

Imagine replacing the product names with politician names. Each politician would have a Truth Rating, which is their overall score. This would be broken down into areas like foreign policy, the economy, the environment, discrimination, and inequality of wealth, just as the Smartphone Ratings rate ease of use, messaging, etc. Voters would have a clear, reliable starting point for making decisions about who to vote for.

The next step in the long evolution of democracy

Fundamental solutions like these would cleanly resolve the root cause, causing the inherent advantage of **The Race to the Bottom** to disappear. The social force diagram for The Voting Against Their Own Best Interests Problem shows how once the root cause is resolved, the old root cause force would be replaced by the new root cause force. At that point a system mode change would occur. How the system would approximately behave over time is shown below.

Simulation Run - Mode Change, The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace



The Dueling Loops simulation model was built as root cause analysis was applied to the problem. Running the model allows us to test if it can roughly duplicate past and present system behavior, as well as predict how the system would respond to various solutions. A long series of simulation runs were done. The graph shows how the problem could be solved with a simulation run designed especially for this article.

When the simulation run begins, there are 98 neutralists, 1 degenerate, and 1 rationalist. General ability to detect political deception is 40%. The system comes to equilibrium with the degenerates having a slight edge over the rationalists. For this portion of the run, the optimum false meme size was 2.4. A lie has over twice as much infective appeal as the truth. True memes always have a size of one since the appeal of the truth cannot be inflated.

To simulate the mode change, general ability to detect political deception was suddenly raised from 40% to 80%. Politicians adapt to the times, so the optimum false meme size was raised from 2.4 to 4.7. But even lies that big are not enough to save the degenerates. Their numbers crash and eventually none are left. Meanwhile, rationalists have risen to 75% of voters. This is more than enough to insure that **The Race to the Top** remains the

dominant loop. This is a qualitative model, so none of the numbers are exact predictions. But the model does predict that when fundamental solutions push on the high leverage point, the problem will be quickly solved.

Returning to the social force diagram, the new root cause force gains its energy from the new feedback loops mentioned above, **Truth Literacy Promotion** and **The Public Loves Those They Can Trust**. These loops would cause a permanently dominant **Race to the Top**. This in turn would cause a new intermediate cause: *Voters can determine the truth about what's best for them over 80% of the time*. Once they can do that, the problem's new symptoms would appear: *Voters vote for their own best interests over 80% of the time*. These symptoms describe the new mode. The new mode differs radically from the present one, where *Voters vote against their own best interest about half the time*.

Just think of how enjoyable life would be for *all* in the new mode. It's a pleasant thought. Things wouldn't be perfect. But they would be considerably better and more stable than they are now, so much so that it would essentially be the next step in the long evolution of democracy.

If the root cause analysis presented here is anywhere close to correct, then I'd like to think that we could make the mode change happen. Soon.

There's also a lot of truth data sitting there, just waiting to be analyzed and modeled.

Further reading

For further reading please see Thwink.org.

- For description of the Truth Test see the [Truth or Deception](#) pamphlet.
- For more detail on the Dueling Loops model, including description of the actual simulation model and graphs showing how it behaves under various conditions, see [The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace](#). The model was first created in 2005 for the purpose of analyzing systemic change resistance to solving the sustainability problem.
- For a full description of the analysis and the problem solving process that produced it, see [Cutting Through Complexity: The Analytical Activist's Guide to Solving the Complete Sustainability Problem](#). The *complete* sustainability problem includes the problem addressed in this article.