

The Seattle Times

UW professor got it right on Trump. So why is he being ignored?

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June 14, 2017

Ask Google the question “who predicted Trump winning the election?” and you get 19.3 million results.

Most are about professors with oddball prediction systems, or the rare pollster who got it right, or the liberal filmmaker Michael Moore, who famously sent out [a mass gut-level warning](#) about Donald Trump’s appeal last summer.

One name that doesn’t come up: Christopher Parker.

“Nobody in the media has called me up and said ‘you were right,’ ” says Parker, a political-science professor at the University of Washington for the past 11 years.

Parker has his suspicions about why he’s been overlooked, which we’ll get to in a minute. But first: [He correctly foresaw](#) in September 2015 that Trump would win the GOP nomination — eight months before Trump clinched it.

Then, last September, Parker [told](#) anyone who would listen, which was not many, that Trump could well win the presidency. And now, most important, new research shows Parker was more than just prescient about the outcome. He was nearly alone in nailing *why* it would happen.

“It’s what the data showed and what history would suggest, so I didn’t see it as some out-there guess,” Parker shrugs now. “It seemed like a no-brainer to me.”

On Monday researchers released the [most comprehensive survey data yet](#) aimed at understanding what actually went down in Election 2016. The group includes academics but also right-leaning outlets such as The Heritage Foundation and left-leaners like the Center for American Progress.

What’s different about the [Voter Study Group](#) is that it tracks the attitudes and votes of the same 8,000 adults since before the 2012 election, and then throughout the 2016 election. So it’s like the nation’s largest, longest political focus group.

The story we’ve told ourselves — that working-class whites flocked to Trump due to job worries or free trade or economic populism — is basically wrong, the research papers released this week suggest.

They did flock to Trump. But the reason they did so in enough numbers for Trump to win wasn't anxiety about the economy. It was anxiety about Mexicans, Muslims and blacks.

Here's how they put it in academesese: "What stands out most, however, is the attitudes that became more strongly related to the vote in 2016: attitudes about immigration, feelings toward black people, and feelings toward Muslims," writes George Washington University professor John Sides. He notes that the media focused on less-educated whites, but negative racial attitudes fueled by Trump were a big motivator for college-educated whites, too.

A substantial share of Trump voters "appeared to embrace a conception of American identity predicated on birthplace and especially Christian faith," Sides found.

This is the drum Parker has been banging for years. His 2013 book on the tea party, "Change They Can't Believe In," with professor Matt Barreto (now at UCLA), used survey data to show it was not a small government movement as advertised. It was more about America being stolen from "real Americans" — a reaction triggered by the election of President Obama.

"I've got three words for you: scared white people," Parker says. "Every period of racial progress in this country is followed by a period of retrenchment. That's what the 2016 election was about, and it was plain as it was happening."

To be clear: Neither Parker, nor the latest research, is saying that Trump voters are all racists. Most voting is simply party-line no matter who is running. What they're saying is that worries about the economy, free trade and the rest were no more important in 2016 than in previous elections, but racial resentment spiked.

It makes sense, considering the candidate himself was maligning Mexicans and openly calling for banning Muslims.

What's doubly interesting is that Parker suspects the reason his research gets overlooked is because he is black. He senses it's assumed that as a black man he must be biased about race, or is too quick to invoke it.

"I get a whole lot more respect over in Europe," Parker told me. "There, it's all about the ideas and whether my social science is sound. It's not about who I am, like it so often is here."

Meanwhile, white writers such as J.D. Vance, author of "Hillbilly Elegy," are seen as guru guides to Trump country. Even though the mostly colorblind story of economic dead-end-ism Vance tells apparently isn't what really turned the election.

Parker and Barreto now are working on their own book, out next year, called "The Great White Hope: Donald Trump, Race and the Crisis of Democracy." Will that get ignored, too?

"I get it, nobody wants to be told what they don't want to hear," Parker says. "People want there to be a more innocent explanation, about jobs or trade or something. But sorry, everyone — it just isn't there. My plea to people is we ought to start focusing on what's real."