An Economic Analysis of The 1964 Election in Oklahoma

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Oklahoma voters in November, 1964, confirmed the adage, "the lower the income, the greater the chance one will vote Democratic." Confirmation of this adage could be made by comparing voting statistics with the per capita income in each of the state's 77 counties.

Using the per capita income figures for the last full year, 1963, comparison of this sum with each county's vote, for the Presidential and Senatorial candidates was made. Fifteen counties voted for Senator Barry M. Goldwater, the Republican nominee for President. These 15 counties had an average per capita income of $2918. The 62 counties which voted for President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic nominee, had an average per capita income of only $1980. In other words, the Republican counties had a per capita income of almost $1000 more than the Democratic counties.

When checking high and low income counties, we find a striking contrast. For this we compared the highest 10% with the lowest 10% in per capita income. The eight highest counties had an average per capita income of $3521. All but one of these counties voted for Senator Goldwater, with an average vote of 57% for the Republican nominee. When one looks at the lowest eight counties in per capita income, we found they averaged only $1393. President Johnson carried all eight by an average of 63%.

We also examined those counties at the upper and lower economic quartiles. The 19 counties with the highest average income ($3080) included only eight that voted Democratic. Among the 19 counties with the lowest economic level ($1527), none supported Senator Goldwater.

The most Republican county in Oklahoma in 1964 was Major County (per capita income $3078), where 65% of the votes were cast for Senator Goldwater. Coal County, with a per capita income of $1826, was the most Democratic county in Oklahoma this year. There only 21% of the votes were cast for Senator Goldwater.

Leflore County had the lowest per capita income (only $1230 in 1963) of the State's 77 counties. Leflore County voted Democratic by 64 percent. Grant County led the State in per capita income with $4524. Oddly enough, President Johnson carried this wealthiest Oklahoma county by 50.2 percent.

In comparing how the State's 77 counties lined up in the Senatorial race, only slight variations are noted from the Presidential pattern. For example, none of the eight counties with the highest income level voted for Senator Fred R. Harris, while only one of the eight lowest counties voted for Bud Wilkinson. Among the 19 with the highest income level, only five supported Senator Harris, while among the 19 lowest counties, only one supported Wilkinson. Among the 38 counties with the highest income level, 14 supported Harris. Whereas, among the 38 counties with the lowest income, only two supported Wilkinson. These two were Adair and Cleveland counties.

Does this report tell us something really new? No, but it does confirm many ideas and suspicions held by persons in both political parties. It does tell us that since there are far more persons of low than high incomes, the Republican party must make a direct and concerted appeal to those of lower income levels if they expect to win in 1966.

A list of all counties showing income and voting statistics follows.

PER CAPITA INCOME AND VOTING STATISTICS OF OKLAHOMA COUNTIES, 1963-1964

COUNTY	1963 PER CAPITA INCOME	% for LBJ	% for FRH	COUNTY	1963 PER CAPITA INCOME	% for LBJ	% for FRH
Grant	$4524	50	47	Kiowa	$2122	62	54
Alfalfa	4410	41	35	Osage	2120	56	52
Cimarron	3691	42	39	Jackson	2113	71	69
Washington	3215	41	37	Woodward	2097	49	42
Beaver	3162	43	42	Nowata	2097	55	49
Harper	3088	47	44	McClain	2077	69	66
Major	3078	35	31	Stephens	2004	63	62
Kingfisher	3002	45	37	Love	2002	74	72
Ellis	2995	46	40	Logan	1999	53	45
Dewey	2983	53	49	Payne	1978	53	49
Noble	2853	55	48	Pushmataha	1978	66	67
Harmon	2830	74	69	Grady	1960	68	63
Texas	2747	43	41	Carter	1932	68	64
Roger Mills	2746	57	59	Cleveland	1916	55	47
Cotton	2703	66	69	Beckham	1911	62	59
Washita	2683	61	57	Rogers	1902	58	54
Woods	2678	49	42	Garvin	1899	67	63
Tillman	2589	63	62	Ottawa	1896	65	62
Kay	2545	49	42	Johnston	1895	69	66
Jefferson	2455	76	75	Lincoln	1895	56	50
Greer	2399	68	61	Pottawatomie	1867	62	55
Tulsa	2392	44	40	Mayes	1855	57	53
Blaine	2383	47	39	Coal	1826	79	66
Canadian	2310	53	47	Wagoner	1816	58	53
Garfield	2293	46	38	Comanche	1802	63	62
Marshall	2263	67	66	Pontotoc	1785	64	60
Custer	2253	57	49	Delaware	1783	57	54
Oklahoma	2165	52	46	Muskogee	1729	66	59
Pawnee	2147	51	47	Okmulgee	1717	68	64

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COUNTY	1963 PER CAPITA INCOME	% for LBJ	% for FRH	COUNTY	1963 PER CAPITA INCOME	% for LBJ	% for FRH
Caddo	$1706	67	62	Bryan	$1550	70	69
Creek	1691	61	55	McIntosh	1547	71	68
Haskell	1683	65	63	Cherokee	1510	56	53
Hughes	1631	73	70	Sequoyah	1456	60	62
Craig	1627	69	55	McCurtain	1432	67	69
Seminole	1617	65	60	Okfuskee	1386	64	61
Murray	1612	71	70	Adair	1310	51	46
Latimer	1606	73	72	Choctaw	1276	69	69
Pittsburg	1585	74	70	Leflore	1230	64	66
Atoka	1560	63	63				
				Entire State	2101	55.9	51.1

All income figures cited are from a report by the

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