

## **The Heartland – BOTU vs. Ubuntu**

Well, we're almost there – the finishing line is in sight. Months of dogged preparation and inspiring performances - all leading to these final weeks of intense competition.

Head to head and toe to toe, the battle has come down to the final countdown. The winner takes a step forward, representing the best we can offer to Europe and the eventually the world – tried and tested in the heat of combat on not just the playing fields of Eton, but on all the pitches of the British Premier League.

Premier League?

Well yeah, the only game in town – Spurs vs. Man. City for 4<sup>th</sup> place and a place in Europe next year! What could be more important than that?

OK, I know most readers are more interested in the General Election – the next biggest “event “ this week, but that isn't until Thursday – let's get our priorities right.

However, being the servant of the people, not the master - to paraphrase a recent quote by David Cameron, which echoes a constant meme in the speeches of Nick Clegg – I offer the following observations and titbits of insight into some of our political research.

In other parts of our site we have written about the “heartland” of the supporters of the main Westminster parties and how they have changed over the last 5 years.

Here I'll take a quick look at some baseline work we did in November 2009 - 6 months prior to this election - and compare and contrast the values positionings of the national parties, but excluding the nationalist parties – Plaid Cymru, the Scottish Nationalist Party and the various Northern Ireland parties. These parties are very specific to geographical locations and present methodological issues at this level of analysis.

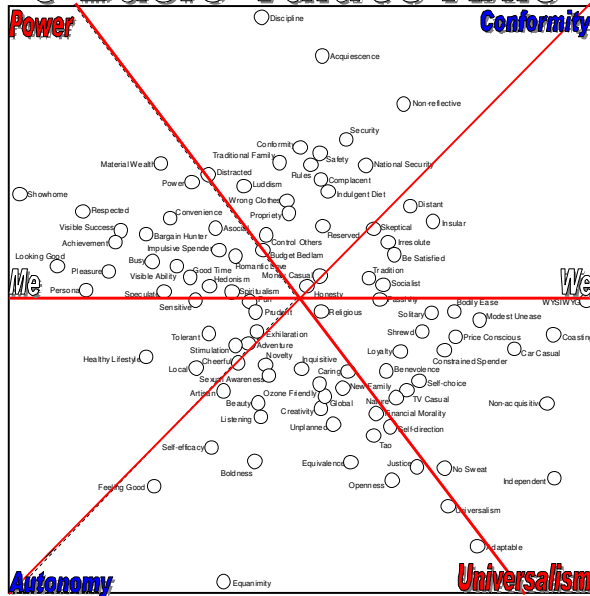
I hope this will be easy to read and help you understand the core appeal of the respective parties to their supporters, and by definition their core support in the British culture.

In a previous article (<http://www.cultdyn.co.uk/ART067736u/viewpoints/Ubuntu-BOTU.pdf>), I described the fundamental values axis in British culture and, for the most part, World culture. It is the polarity between the need for power and the desire for universalism; something we have called the BOTU-Ubuntu Axis...the need to be recognized as number one and the desire to be and act as a unique and integral part of a group of many other unique individuals.

I'm going to expand that a bit and give a fuller view of the THREE main axes, as revealed by our research. In order of strength, the three axes are:

- Power versus Universalism (BOTU versus Ubuntu)
- Conformity versus Autonomy
- Me versus We

# 3 Basic Values Axis



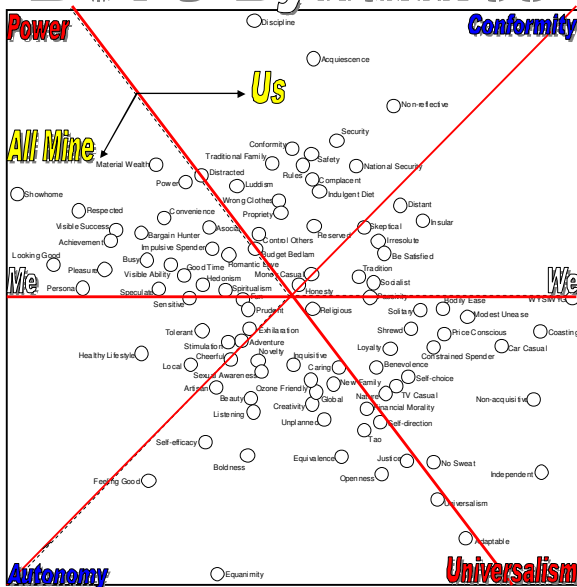
Looking at the dynamics between these axes can help us understand the values of heartland supporters and the natural appeal of the national political parties. With this insight you can begin to judge how well or how poorly the parties are hitting the target of their core support.

The Power end of the Axis is actually a continuum of values that range from Power and Conformity (US) to Power and Me (It's All Mine).

The former can be typified as “power is important to people like me and my reference or affiliation group – us”.

My understanding of this orientation is that the holders of this values group – US – feel this important because they DON'T feel they have power. It is an unmet Need in Maslow terms. Once this Need is met it is no longer a Need. The need is met when a person feels they are secure enough to exercise a bit of control over their own lives. This security may be situational to begin with, but as they feel more in control of many aspects of their lives, their values set can and will change to another orientation around this end of the axis.

# BOTU Dynamics



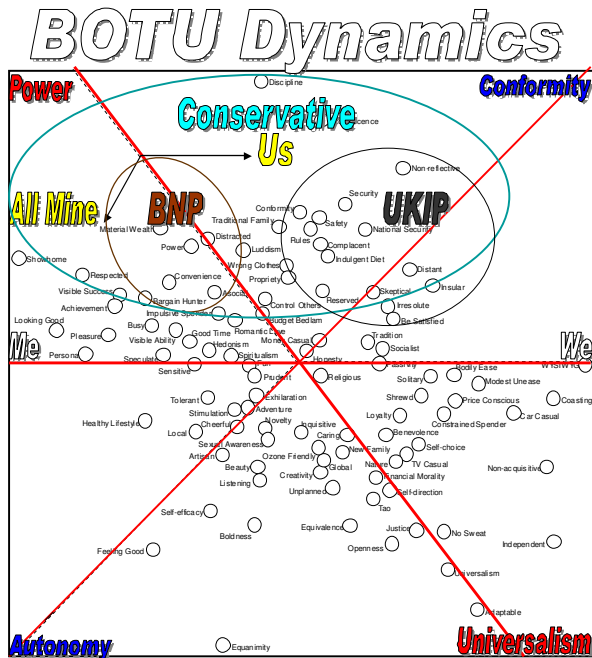
Culturally this can result in people changing their political and ideological orientations. Many of the political organization and national parties have a base in this values set – we'll see this in a later map.

As they change, their entire values set will move away from the group orientation of power to a more individualistic power orientation – the Need to feel they have power to use as they so desire – to create and maintain images of themselves as powerful and desirable people. In this “Power-All Mine” orientation they may reject many aspects of their earlier lives and adopt a different approach.

This is a group of people who no longer feel bound by moral strictures and obligations. They desire the freedom to do just about anything they please, and damn the consequences. This can lead to high levels of achievement, but also high degrees of social and personal unrest and anxiety.

Politically, these people are far more pragmatic about elections – moving away from a tried and tested ideology to a “pick the winner”, competitive orientation that asks, and expects an answer to the question “What have you done for me lately?” Much more short term and immediate in their thinking, they are looking for a bright future ... but are not too sure how to gain it.

Let’s see which political parties appeal to this end of the Axis.



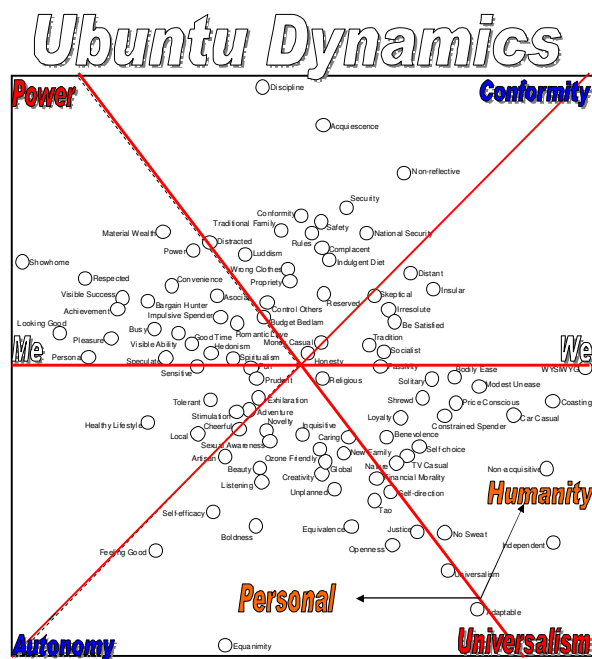
This shows me straight away that the David Cameron appeal should have deep roots in the old Tory party ideology.

Every time he talks about “hugging a hoody”, or gay rights, or his idea of a “Big Society” he is alienating his core supporters. The liberal ideas these represent are seen as threatening by his core.

These threats to their sense of “rightness” can lead them to the other parties that hold ideologies and policies that appeal to their values sets.

The very traditional UKIP party will take votes away from Cameron on election day, and the more disappointed and alienated of his core will take their votes to the BNP - potentially a bigger threat to the Tories than to any other party. Immigration is the flashpoint issue for all people in this values orientation.

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So what does the other end of the Axis look like?

Here we see the Universalism/Ubuntu end also has a continuum from Universalism and Autonomy (Personal) to Universalism and We (Humanity).

“Personal-Ubuntu” is typified as the Need to be unique and “giving back”, no matter if others understand. Being true one’s self. In this values orientation issues are important - and it is important that solutions are sought consciously.

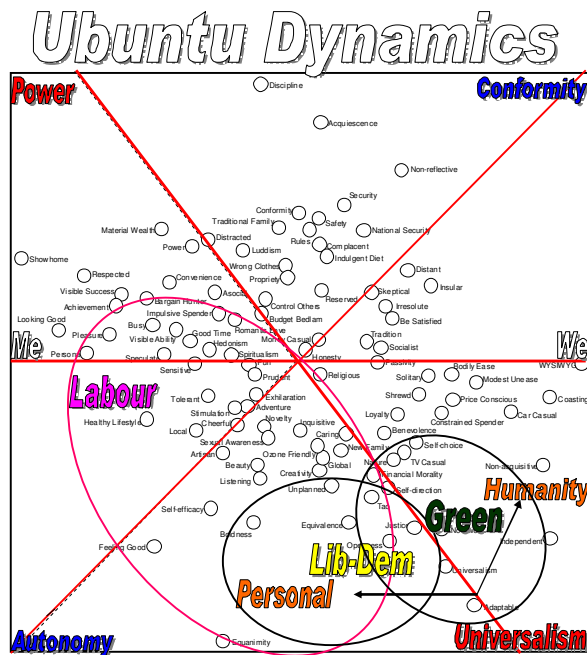
“Humanity-Ubuntu” is different – though in many other way so similar it is hard to tell the two ends of the continuum apart in materialistic terms.

This end is more about holism - a more spiritual sense of oneness with all of humankind. In this sense they are the solution - not just part of it. They can rationally accept that “being” is more important than “doing” – without denigrating doing in any sense at all.

This tends to be an older group of people who feel blessed by life. They know that “giving back” is as much about material possessions as it is about emotional connections – both are important but the importance is determined by the receiver rather than the giver. In other words happiness is about other people.

Bugger me, this doesn't sound like the BOTU people does it?

In my everyday job as a consultant I have to keep reminding my clients that values research does not make judgements about good and bad, right and wrong and the whole gamut of values based pronouncements. My everyday job is to be impartial and point out that the values judgements being made by my clients are reflections of their own values sets and that this why others, with different values sets, differ with them on matters that seem so obvious.



So when I say Ubuntu people do not look or feel like the BOTU people I am NOT judging right or wrong – I'm merely pointing out differences.

Let's see how those differences translate into heartland support for political parties.

Labour has a unique position among the parties of having heartland appeal in two of the three Maslow Groups. This is both good and bad news. Good because it is wide base - needed for sustainable governing – but bad because it is difficult to please all the people all the time - and especially at election time.

The Lib-Dems have remained in almost the same position for decades, never breaking out into mass appeal. Nick Clegg has undoubtedly had his uplift in the polls from biting into some of the more pragmatic Labour Prospector people – good for votes but picking up people less likely to be in congruence with the Ubuntu roots of the Lib-Dem platform of policies.

The Green Party will stand by to pick up alienated Lib-Dems as they talk about joining a pact with one of the other parties in Westminster if the outcome is a hung Parliament. The Green Party has more of its heartland supporters likely to resonate with Ubuntu values.

These maps show very clearly that the BOTU vs, Ubuntu axis is a powerful influence on political appeals in the election of 2010. The big two parties have a wider range of

values they appeal to – but the smaller parties have a more focused appeal and overlap the larger parties primarily on known axis points.

These are the stresses and strains that the commentators and pundits see but don't have the language to express. As a result their commentaries are often devoid of much insight and/or ability to delineate the real issues within the voting public's attitudes and behaviours. The dominant discourse of the British media has gone from "Apathetic Voters" to "Cleggmania", to "Bigoted Grannies", to "Cammo the Comeback Kid". All frantically bipping and bopping from one simplistic reading to another – sound bite heaven - but politically sterile in the extreme.

One more day and it is all over – for awhile at least – a hung Parliament may just throw the cat among the pigeons in a manner none of us foresee!

More thoughts tomorrow as Britain goes to the polls and a summation of "where we got ourselves" post-election. This has gotta be the most interesting election in my lifetime and though I have been right far more than I've wrong about the outcome over the years I still don't know if we are going to see a hung Parliament – though I do expect an almighty curfuffle if Labour ends with more seats but less votes than the Conservatives and the Lib-Dems get to choose which party gets the honour of ensuring the Queen gets her budget – with the price being a new form of voting!

Until then...COME ON YOU SPURS!!!!!!