

Viewpoint on the Nature of our Political Party System

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I used to think political parties represented fundamentally different *policy positions*. Republicans: fiscal conservatives; small-government advocates seeking minimal interference in one's personal life; supporters of a strong military but not international involvements. Democrats: believers in big government helping citizens, especially the poor and elderly; supporters of taxes to pay for such help. Both parties, patriotic; each with conservative and liberal wings crossing party lines to pass legislation.

I no longer think this way. President Trump is not a fiscal conservative, nor a small-government advocate. He has sought to interfere with personal choices (e.g., women's right to choose) and tried to overturn an electoral majority for President Biden—a clear demonstration that Trump believes in an Authoritarian State, not majority rule (i.e., democracy) or the Rule of Law. “*Democracy*,” writes Francis Fukuyama, links to “*Classical Liberalism*” based on “*the foundational importance of equal individual rights, law and freedom*” recommended by our Founding Fathers. Current data show over 30% of Americans support Trump.

Longer-term data suggest the following: Republicans may have always represented those who favor authoritarianism (“*Democrats fall in Love and Republicans fall in Line*”). When Republican leaders were fiscal conservatives, so were their followers. When Trump led, they followed as well.

Democrats favor a smorgasboard of views, none of which features authoritarianism. Believing in egalitarian rights and the Rule of Law, Democrats are Classical Liberals, thus true conservatives, à la the Founding Fathers.

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