

Implications of the 2024 Presidential Election on the Status Quo

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Abstract

The 2024 Presidential election was highly anticipated and regarded for numerous reasons, but the two parties campaigned to create a better America. Prior to the election, the nation was more divided than ever, and both Presidential Candidates presented immensely different visions and politics they would integrate into the United States. Both contenders had strong motives and policy agendas on various topics, such as immigration, abortion, and foreign policy, that provided clear distinctions between them. However, the difference between the two political entities is not as expansive as their specific claims, suggesting minimal movement from the status quo, regardless of the election outcome. Both political parties span a relatively narrow range of the Political Compass, concentrated in the authoritarian right quadrant, indicating greater overlap and broader similarities. Through an evaluation of the Political Compass, third-party candidates and their profiles are considered, and their campaigns are discussed to examine the role of third-party perspectives in the election. No matter the election results, the ultimate status quo will remain relatively stable.

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America's 2024 Presidential election held the attention of people from all backgrounds, marking a historic and provocative series of events. Kamala Harris as the Democratic candidate, following former President Biden's stepping down in the 2024 election, and a convicted felon, former President Donald Trump, as the Republican candidate. This election was highly anticipated, with a favorable outcome being sought from two divided parties. In a country with a fractured population, the idea of one candidate winning over the other was incomprehensible to many, as the future of the nation seemed to be held in the hands of only one qualified candidate.

America's political landscape appears to have been more divided than ever this past election, with each candidate presenting starkly different visions for the nation's future. Beyond the candidates, Americans were polarized, unable to see beyond the blue and red categorization. While it seemed like a battle between two forces on the outside, upon closer examination of each platform's policies, the distinction between the two parties appears less evident and more streamlined. What seems clear is that both candidates approached the election with a different tone to win over the republic, however, the outcome of the status quo itself would not differ irrationally depending on the successor. Each candidate approached their campaign differently, presenting their intentions excellently targeted, however, beneath all the jargon, the long-term policy implications will be the same. The difference between the two parties may not be as vast as specific core issues when looking through a varied lens. While this was a historic election season, Americans hoped for drastic changes favoring their party, the election will not leave a lasting impact, and the status quo will ultimately remain much the same, as the inherent policies of both candidates are fundamentally indistinguishable. As the oligarchy dynamic of our nation, with the control of the wealthy elites, the government, rather than working for the people,

benefits itself, and the abuse of power prevails, the nation will not change effectively. Short-term policy changes will be implemented following the election in the temporary run, however, ultimately, the status quo of the United States will not drastically change in the long run.

With the return of President Donald Trump following the election to the White House, the phrase “Trump 2.0” seems inevitable, and policy changes have already been enacted following the establishment of the term. Regardless, the effects are immediate, but over time, the status quo will not undergo significant changes due to our government system. However, immediate changes can be observed and characterized, as seen in previous observations, that will be diminished in the long run.

Historical Evaluation of the Prevailing Government System

America’s political party system has persisted since the near emergence of the nation, labeling the adversarial sides. Noted during the Articles of Confederation, early controversy was initiated, as it promoted discordance from its purpose, which was to establish a connection between the government and the people and resolve conflict. The United States' two-party system is unique and prominent today, as it is a distinctive political system that changes the political picture. “Two moderate parties with the ability to negotiate and compromise are, so it is claimed, a logical consequence” (Heineman et al., 1995, p. 89). Prior to the establishment of the Democrats versus Republicans, the Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, and other parties took initiative and contended for power. Prompted from the beginning, the Republicans in power were more conservative, and Democrats were on the liberal spectrum, and the distinctions between them have become further standing. The establishment of the two-party system works against smaller parties; however, the proportion of a third party can alter the course of the election.

Looking at the statistics, President Trump won 49.9% of the votes, not an outright majority, in the 2024 election. “Trump’s margins — both in raw votes and in percentages — were small by historical standards, even for the past quarter century, when close elections have been the rule” (Jacobson, 2024). A close election, with its implications for the nation thus far, does not show an overwhelming majority of support. While the third-party candidate seems insignificant thus far in the overall election poll, the implications of a few percentage points will drive the vote towards one end of the spectrum. “While 3rd party contenders may not often secure victory, their presence can significantly impact elections. Experts believe the 2024 election could be exceptionally close, making third party candidacies potentially decisive” (Greer, 2024). Usually, third-party candidates form and promote ideals different from those of the two main political entities and adhere to one main issue that is neglected. This brings about a unique advantage to the system, as their platform singularly emphasizes a specific ideology, and it brings certain issues to the forefront of the political landscape, with opinions from the two parties coming forth. While their impact is on a smaller scale, they still promote their individualized platform and can gain momentum by positioning themselves in alliance with one of the larger parties. Typically, third parties are unable to expand exponentially due to the considerable grassroots effort and money required to build a successful campaign. This allows for the localized connection to occur with the majority of political parties and can skew votes in certain directions. Third parties play a significant role, as they “demand that the major parties take on these particular issues as part of their platform” (Greer, 2024), which can encourage third-party supporters to join the larger entity. The real question is whether a third-party vote away from the two mainstream candidates will have a significant enough effect to tip the scale in a particular direction. In an interview with Boston University political expert, Arjun Vishwanath,

he claims, “Votes for the Green Party are going to be votes taken away from Harris and the Democrats, and votes for the Libertarian Party are going to be votes taken away from Trump and the Republicans...last time around, the key states were decided by 40,000 to 80,000 votes in some places. This year, that could mark the difference between victory and defeat” (Bouranova, 2024). This highlights the true implications of third parties, and although they comprise a tiny minority of the American political spectrum, they can play a significant role in a close Republican versus Democratic election campaign.

The two opposing parties in today's elections, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, encompass and promote different platform perspectives, emphasizing different positions. The Democratic Party advocates for a larger government role in economics, playing a significant part by expanding social welfare programs and the social safety net, while also seeking greater freedom. They also favor progressive taxes to support the government, not in opposition to taxing the wealthy. Generally, Democrats promote more progressive policies, hence advocating for abortion rights, civil rights for minorities, environmental protection programs, gun control, and other progressive outlooks. Directly taken from the Democratic Party website, it states what it means to be a Democrat: “believe that health care is a right for all and that the hard work of middle-class families should be rewarded. We believe our schools and streets should be free from gun violence and that a woman’s decisions about her own body are hers to make” (Democratic National Committee, n.d). The Republican Party, on the other hand, is known to be conservative and looks towards a smaller government, less involved in the economy. They are in favor of lower overall tax collection, enormous military spending, and a more traditional approach to freedom. Republicans dominate rural America and also are not on the advocacy side of abortion rights. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). Quoted directly from the

Republican Party website, they define their return to power following democracy to establish a set of goals to address, “the growing aggression from China; the invasion of illegal aliens facilitated by the previous administration; and the relentless attacks on our system of justice, which has been weaponized to target political opponents and erode the very foundations of our democracy” (The Republican National Committee, n.d). Both of these party campaigns and beliefs are varyingly different. However, in the long run, the shift in ideologies will balance each other out, and the overall status quo will remain primarily unchanged.

Political Compass, Where the Opposing Parties Stand Together

The Political Compass is a two-axis diagram depicting economic and social policy, creating four quadrants: authoritarian left, authoritarian right, libertarian left, and libertarian right (The Political Compass, 2024). Despite being opposites in the eyes of the nation, remarkably, both President Trump and former Vice President Harris appear together in the top right quadrant, which is characterized as a right authoritarian position. Since the 2004 elections, all the Democratic and Republican candidates have fallen into the same right upper corner region, showcasing the limited scope of our candidates. Both fall under the same ideologies on the Political Compass, which suggests that U.S. politics operates within a limited scope. In the eyes of the nation, while the Democratic and Republican candidates seem distinctly opposite, the Political Compass highlights the overlap and the shared principles that underlie them. Both support market-based systems and lean towards state authority. While they may seem miles apart in their propositions, the diversity is brought about by the two-party system, which is regulated to the same quadrant of beliefs. Beyond the one-quadrant beliefs our nation has been limited to, third-party candidates have taken alternative political perspectives. While third parties do not determine the majority vote in presidential elections, their scope and outlook can still be

evaluated. The opinions of these parties challenge the dominant societal position and offer a diverse perspective. The Libertarian Party occupies the bottom right quadrant of the Political Compass, characterized by minimal government intervention, and stands in favor of free market capitalism. The Green Party occupies the left-libertarian quadrant, pushing for an eco-socialist approach and environmental sustainability, including climate change initiatives. Such third parties provide insight into different opinions and ideologies within the American public, and a diverse set of beliefs that the Political Compass evaluates beyond authoritarian right.

Immigration: A Key Factor Implicating the Polls

The results of the election may not alter the status quo, evidently, but regarding immigration policies, Trump and Harris broadcast differing messages, and this was a key issue in the 2024 election. President Trump's campaign was highly aggressive on the topic of immigration, broadcasting a much harsher approach than in his previous term. "Donald Trump promises to decimate American communities by targeting immigrants who are already contributing members of society and blocking new immigrants from coming lawfully to the United States" (Trump on Immigration, 2024). President Trump's 2024 campaign was highly focused on this issue and differing from his 2020 campaign's emphasis on building a border, his focus moved internally towards undocumented immigrants within the nation. His plans are towards mass deportation and constructing new detention facilities due to his expansion of policies. Before his election victory, sources close to his office claimed, "(In the) first few days, you will see those executive orders come out to stem the flow (of migrants) and impact that flow that's coming during that time. The immediate focus is on who is already here. Those are the first two things prioritized in the first few days" (Alvarez & Mattingly, 2024). Following his assent to a second term, President Trump quickly enacted upon his claims during his campaign

regarding immigration policy, “aggressively pursuing removal of noncitizens, pressuring states and localities to cooperate in immigration enforcement, limiting access to humanitarian forms of relief, and closing the southern border” (New York City Bar Association, 2025).

Harris’s campaign regarding immigration focuses more on the security of the border and also highlights drug smuggling. Rather than harshly deport or remove immigrants, her plans fall towards reform, “seeking pathways to citizenship for immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, with a faster track for people living in the country illegally who arrived as children” (Santana, 2024). Less spoken about this topic, she has not shied away from calling out Trump’s “zero-tolerance” policies, breaking apart families. Coming from a background of border security, Harris shares, “The issue of border security is not a new issue to me. I was attorney general of a border state for two terms. I saw the violence and chaos that transnational criminal organizations cause and the heartbreak and loss from the spread of their illicit drugs” (Kapur, 2024). With a strong background, Harris hopes to devote her efforts to border security and protection, acknowledging the diversity of the United States while understanding border regulations.

Abortion and IVF: Key Factors Swinging the Polls

Coming into the election, abortion was a central, controversially discussed topic, where both parties made it a key factor in their presidential campaign. The Republicans held a more conservative stance, while the Democrats held a more progressive stance. Both sides had vastly different outlooks on the debate, sparking large controversy as Harris sought to protect and Trump sought to reverse the progress. This was the first election following the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. “In *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decided that the right to privacy implied in the 14th Amendment protected abortion as a fundamental right” (*Roe v. Wade* and Supreme Court Abortion Cases, 2023). The establishment of *Roe* had great implications for many women,

decreasing overall maternal mortality and many other outcomes, however, the overturn had brought uproar to this sector of debate. The reversal of this decision had caused for the establishment of individual abortion laws for each of the states.

During the September 10th presidential debate, Kamala Harris advocated, “Understand, if Donald Trump were to be reelected, he will sign a national abortion ban”. She also “claimed Trump's second-term agenda includes limiting access to birth control, outlawing medication abortion, and banning abortion nationwide” (Quinn, 2024). The Democratic party campaigned an abortion advocacy campaign, and Harris made abortion rights a key aspect of her campaign, “I will fight to restore what Donald Trump, and his hand-selected Supreme Court justices took away from the women of America”. More evidently, Harris promotes significant policy changes regarding abortion rights if elected. The Republican stance, on the other hand, was conservative, and it is noticed that for Republicans, “Abortion is the third-least important issue” (Bleiker, 2024). During his first term, Trump hired the Supreme Court justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the protection for abortion rights that had stood standing had diminished. However, during the Biden-Harris administration, executive orders expanded birth control accessibility and signed multiple executive orders protecting abortion (Lewis & Thompson, 2024). After starting his second term, Trump has already made changes to policies regarding women’s reproductive rights, rather than leaving the decision to the individual states. Coming from JD Vance, it is quoted, “Trump would be ‘the most pro-family, most pro-life American president of our lifetimes’” (Ollstein & Paun, 2025). He has revived some of his previous anti-abortion policies from his first term, showcasing the truthful implications of his campaign.

Regarding beliefs on IVF, Trump’s policies regarding abortion are also impacting people's ability to conceive through in vitro fertilization. IVF is the process of impregnating a

woman through the fertilization of the woman's eggs and sperm outside the uterus and then transferring it to fully develop in the womb. On Trump's opposition, Harris has claimed to protect reproductive aids such as IVF, "Tim Walz, said he and his wife used fertility treatment (though not IVF specifically) to have children, and many other prominent Democrats have shared their experiences with IVF" (Lewis & Thompson, 2024). The Democratic Party is much in line with the continuation of IVF; however, they have faced internal resistance. This is another policy building off of abortion, the candidates show an apparent discrepancy.

Foreign Policy and Trade: Key Factors Swinging the Polls

Similar to abortion and immigration ideals between the two parties, the discrepancy in foreign policy beliefs continues to widen. With election day on the horizon, trade policies, especially with China, had a significant impact on candidate support, however, it was smaller compared to domestic policies. For President-elect Harris, she "centers relationship building, and promised in her Democratic National Convention acceptance speech to 'stand strong' with NATO allies". However, Presidential candidate Trump takes a differing approach, claiming "the U.S has 'long been taken advantage of' by 'so-called allies'" (Murray, 2024). It seems as though Trump is promoting a "nation first" approach on trade, wanting to undo partnerships. However, President Harris has a more alliance approach to the inquiry, and rather than take an upfront full force stance, she hopes to continue the few changes of the Biden Administration but wholly stay similar. Looking at perspectives following the election, Trump has enacted harsh foreign policy regarding tariffs, as part of his administrative plan.

Third-Party Positioning in the 2024 Election

The 2024 election was not only highly anticipated regarding the Democratic and Republican candidates, but it was also seen as much more diverse with the presence of many

alternative candidates. Historically, third parties have been the catalyst for bringing niche, more targeted issues into the campaign. Many were brought about by minority parties such as, “abolition of slavery, women's right to vote, the direct election of U.S. senators, initiative and referendum powers, the progressive income tax, shorter working hours, child labor laws, federal farm aid, and unemployment insurance,” showing the real impact they can have on the progressive aspect. There have also been occasions where the third-party has shown an appearance in government implications “between 1890 and 1902, the states of Kansas, South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, California, Colorado, North Carolina, Idaho, Alabama, and Arkansas all sent People's Party representatives to Congress...The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota thrived in the 1920s and 1930s, electing a number of senators and representatives to Congress” (Sifry, 2003). Often, the composition of the third party encompasses more politically inexperienced populations, as well as minor issues.

This past year, candidates such as Cornel West, Jill Stein, Chase Oliver, and Claudia De la Cruz made up third-party and independent prospects in the election. Many of them claimed to be “merely hoping to give voters who do not care for either major-party candidate another choice while also looking to advance their parties”. Jill Stein, in particular, claims, “It’s a victory for democracy if we put on the table the other choices that the American people are begging for” (Chatelain, 2024). Many of her supporters have come from leaving the Democratic Party, and the establishment of her third-party allows for another campaign to be supported, opposing a transfer to the Republicans. Another candidate was Chase Oliver, who claimed, “I’m far more concerned about what we can do to reduce the size and scope of government than just merely attacking my opponent and saying they are threatening democracy...I am more focused on spreading the libertarian message to the voters” (Chatelain, 2024). All of these campaigns support minority

views, acting as outlet sources unaligned with either primary party in power, taking probable votes from the majority, with importance.

Culmination of Changes, Hardly Inhibiting the Status Quo

The Presidential Election brought about great anticipation and ultimately resulted in the election of President Donald Trump. While America was divided among the polls, and many people thought their elected candidate was the only solution, in the long run, the economic and political status quo will not change drastically. Already with Trump in office for a significant amount of time, we see the implications of his campaign on the nation, however, these scope immediate effects that will ultimately not play a larger role in the country. Due to the dominance of the Democratic and Republican parties in our two-party system, the policies enacted by one entity often balance, if not counteract, the policies preceding them. The influence of third parties in the nation is frequently forgotten, but when considering the implications and evaluations through the Political Compass, we see that both the Democrats and Republicans fall into a very small sphere of influence, and their voices are limited. While they differ in terms of policy enactment on various fronts, such as civil liberties, abortion, immigration, taxation, and tariffs, to name a few, the ultimate view seen by the Political Compass does not differ significantly from one another. While there will be immediate effects and there have already been partial effects on specific demographics, their lives will be impacted, however, the culmination of the status quo will not be drastically modified. In general, changes will be seen in minority quantification, however, through a broader lens, it will be combated and equalized. Both parties promote a right-authoritarian viewpoint and broadcast an overall similar message advocating a similar political structure, where internal policies may differ, but overall, the outcomes point in the same direction.

Conclusion

If Biden is given one term in office and replaced by a Republican candidate, part of America will undoubtedly see the nation as “Making America Great Again”, but the change in terms of the status quo is regarded as the definition of change. Not everyone will see the transfer of political power as beneficial, but in this case, it does not seem to hold the rhetoric as staying only as a business. With the removal of Biden, many Biden-era policies will be undone, or actions will be taken to reverse part of the impact. With the restoration of Trump, he will change policies in areas of immigration, abortion, and foreign policy, where a large part of the campaign discrepancies focused. While many short-term policies will be enacted and swiftly changed, many core systems will not change fundamentally. With the change in political party, many economic policies are likely to remain similar, as there is no rational way to completely overturn fundamental aspects, and the restoration of their original ideals is not evident. Looking at this from a lens past the election, many of the immediate changes were made on the grounds of the Trump Administration, however the central respects did not moreover have an upturn, and while drastic policy changes were made, some will believe in America’s greatness being restored, while others will see a continuation of diversified policies. With the Trump Administration coming out victorious in this election year, many changes have occurred, and many more can be anticipated in the near future. However, these changes are short-term, and their outcomes last for a relatively small proportion of the time. Under another storyline, had Kamala Harris beaten the Republican Party, immediate changes would also be varied on different grounds, but they would be tailored differently. Regardless of the outcome, the overall effects would be quite similar, if not identical, regarding the status quo, and the nation's political and economic positioning would

not differ significantly during the transfer of power. While nothing is certain, previous patterns and outcomes have led to this assessment.

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