

The Similarities Between the Democrats and Republicans

Audrey B. Poulson

Department of Political Science, Diablo Valley College

POLSC 121: Introduction to the United States Government

Adjunct Professor: John Kropf

November 14, 2023

Abstract

The Democratic and Republican candidates will bring no significant change to the political and economic status quo due to their similarities. Through looking at the past presidency of Trump and Biden, comparing the economic rates and goals, change the spending, revenue, and deficit levels from these baselines. As well as the political status quo looking at the social and political issues like media, climate change, and education. Viewing these topics will prove how both parties are more similar than how the media portrays them to be. The similarities between the two parties bring no change to the current system meaning the status quo remains the same. The two-party system leads to no change in the political system. By considering a different system the political parties will be able to make a difference in politics and economics instead of the status quo remaining the same.

The Similarities Between the Democrats and Republicans

Jorgenson, not Trump or Biden, but Jorgenson, is the person who aligns most with my political beliefs. Jorgenson is a libertarian politician who supports lowering government spending by lowering taxes, allowing American citizens the right to travel or trade, and limiting the number of visas given to people to enter the United States of America. The Libertarian Party believes in non-interventionism, promotes civil liberties, mitigates the size and scope of government, and supports laissez-faire capitalism. Simply meaning that the Libertarian Party wants little government intervention in any situation. Does not matter if they are rich or poor people. The government should not interfere with the event. Not aligning with Trump was an eye-opener that caused me to question why a Republican and Democratic candidate, Trump and Biden, are so close together. Yet, my placement on the political compass was not even near them, which is shocking. I ended up in a whole different section than Trump and Biden. Before taking the political compass, I was under the impression that I was a Republican. Even now, I am still shocked to think that I align with the Libertarian Party. Personally, I had the belief that you were either Democrat or Republican, and some people in the middle. There is an issue with how the Libertarian Party does not even have a chance in a presidential election. Even though the Libertarian Party is able to promote nominees 18% of the population is libertarian (Ekins, 2017). Yet, every election I have witnessed has been between a Republican and a Democratic candidate.

The upcoming election will be no different. It will be between Republican and Democratic candidates due to people sticking with the two-party system. The two-party system has been happening since the 1800s, starting with Andrew Jackson leading the Democratic party and Henry Clay leading the Whig party (Library of Congress). So, the upcoming election will continue the two-party system with a Republican and Democratic candidate fighting for the

presidency. The two-party system leads to other parties' values and opinions not being represented in the candidacy. Spineless people still have to pick the best out of the two options because they have no choice but to not vote. Often picking the lesser of two evils.

Currently, the political and economic status quo are stuck in the same endless cycle no matter who takes over. No matter the candidate, the president will face multiple issues that will need reforming. The president often chooses to keep the norm. The connotation the current system is intact or the same due to the reform or act that is passed, bringing no real change to the actual problem. The reform or act passed will be a more temporary solution to the problem, like a band-aid. It does not fix the problem entirely but is enough to fix the problem for now. The upcoming election of Democratic and Republican candidates will bring no significant change to the political and economic status quo due to their similarities.

On the outside, the belief is Democratic and Republican parties are polar opposites, yet that is not the case. The public point of view of the parties is not better; either person considers the worst part of the other party. This is often due to social media and news. Some Democrats, for example, think that Republicans are extreme conservatives with fascist ideas regardless of the fact that people can not consider the whole party the same as some people in it.

The standpoints of the parties are definitely different. The Republican Party stands for anti-Communist, and anti-collectivist, are committed to limited government, anti-New Deal, free market economics, and congressional prerogatives, the G.O.P. It means the party wants people to work for their money and for people to be free to do as they wish without huge intervention from the government. The Democrat Party stands for a mixed government system, LGBTQ rights, border welfare, environmental stewardship, international peace, and expanding health care. Illustrating how the parties stand for totally different things with no similarities. Demonstrating

how there is a necessity to prioritize people and the planet. Yet, that is not shown when either party wins the election for the presidency. Based on the descriptions of the parties' standpoint, there is a belief that when one party wins the election, there is a dramatic change to the system favoring that party's value, yet that is not seen economically and politically.

Donald Trump and Joe Biden are the candidates who will most likely represent the coming 2024 election. Trump will represent the Republicans, and Democrats will be represented by Biden. Both the candidates have one presidency already under their notch with the pros and cons of their entire presidency, in spite of them being nominated for another one. Despite that, when either party takes over, there is very little change to any standpoint, for example, economics and politics.

The economic goals of the parties vary. However, that is not shown through their economic progress. The economic goal for Republicans is that everyone deserves the right to build, invest, own, and prosper, besides making practical business regulations by improving both the economy and the consumers and businesses (Republicanviews, 2014). Additionally, they oppose interventionism. Interventionism does not allow the federal government to have power over an industry. The economic goal for Democrats is to help all Americans meet the challenges of the 21st century. By helping everyone, the party hopes to rebuild our infrastructure, spur job creation, and invest in clean-energy technologies and small businesses (Democrats, 2019). Additionally, the Democrats want to make sure corporations, wealthy people, and Wall Street pay their fair share in taxes (Democrats). Now with these diverse economic goals, there is an expectation that when a Democratic or Republican president takes over, there will be considerable changes in the economy aligning with the economic goals, but that is simply not the

case. Instead, people see little to no change in the economy, only band-aid solutions that are short-term solutions to the actual problem.

One example of the similarities between the Democrats and Republicans is economics. The economic goals of Trump and Biden's presidency are filled with promises that are not kept, failed, and a few successes. When Trump became president, his economic administration goals were to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"), individual and corporate tax cuts, immigration restriction, trade protectionism, financial sectors, and deregulation focused on the emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (Amadeo, 2022). The accomplishment on the goals of Trump's presidency is a failure to repeal Obamacare instead, trying to take Obamacare apart piece by piece, individual and corporate tax cuts lowered by 15 to 20 percent, trade protectionism failed, financial sectors improved from the previous president Obama and did deregulation from COVID-19 pandemic incredibly (Amadeo, 2022). As seen in Trump's presidency, he did not accomplish all the things he set out to do. Biden's economic administration goals were to improve the Affordable Care Act, increase Americans' health insurance coverage, raise tax revenue by increasing taxes on the top tax rate to 39.6%, increase the corporate tax rate to 28%, forgive student loans and tax capital gains at ordinary rates. Biden's accomplishment so far is he was able to improve the Affordable Care Act and coverage of America's health insurance, nothing has currently happened to the corporate tax rate and capital gains tax rates, and student loans have been forgiven (D'Souza, 2023). Biden's presidency is yet to end but so far, he also failed to accomplish his goals. Moreover, both the presidents dealt with Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act, Trump trying to get rid of the act and Biden trying to add to the act. Both Trump and Biden created a short time solution to a problem. Trump considered the Affordable Care Act not good for the economy and Biden disagreed. Both of

them did not accomplish all they set out to do, demonstrating how the inability to get things done keeps the status quo the same and demonstrates their similarities due to them keeping things the same.

The economy rate rarely changes with either party in control. Not only that the economy rate depends on the president's luck in world issues. If a president inherits a recession during their presidency or not as well as other factors like if there is war or not (Irwin, 2017). With the parties being opposite of each other there would be a huge change in the economy. Yet, in 2021 the economic growth under President Joe Biden was 5.7% while with President Trump in 2020 it was 3.4% (Riedell, 2023). There is only a 2.3% difference in economic growth. The difference is not caused primarily by the president either, in Trump's presidency the Covid-19 pandemic occurred causing a recession in the economy making his economy rate lower (Riedell, 2021). While at the start of Biden's election the economy was recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Looking back on former Republican presidencies like Richard Nixon who had a light recession in the beginning of his first year of his presidency, yet the recession started at the end of Johnson's presidency. The light recession had an effect on Richard Nixon's economy rate being 2.53% even though it was not his fault at all for the recession (Fact First, 2023). Proving how the economy rate is dependent on the good fortune of the president not if they are Republican or Democratic.

Presidents do not have a significant amount of power to change the spending, revenue, and deficit levels from these baselines (Riedl, 2023). When a president takes office, they inherit a 10-year budget baseline demonstrating the default yearly projected levels of tax spending, revenues, and deficits. Additionally, the tax codes are on an autopilot mode that is only changed by Congress act to alter rates and programs. The last of the President's spending is debated

between the White House and Congress though it rarely changes any of the budgets. The budget-deficit baseline is often misunderstood and confused making it flawed for analysis (Riedl, 2023). Budget-deficit is often changed during the presidency. Some presidents have to spend more than others due to wars, pandemics, and other problems. Consequently, the total budget deficit in a presidential term is demonstrating the president's commitment to fiscal responsibility. An example of the effect of conflict on the budget deficit is under George H. W. Bush. He faced a conflict in the Middle East that Americans helped in the rescue leading to the 1990-1991 recession (Knott, n.d.). Following the recession, the fiscal improvement had nothing to do with policies of President Clinton (or House Speaker Newt Gingrich). Continuing in 1992 and 2000, the federal budget had a surplus of 2.3% of GDP and a deficit of 4.5%. In addition, the 80% of this fiscal improvement was analogous with the end of the 1991 recession as well as the 1990s economic bubble (Riedl, 2023). There is a 20% credit to the policy choices by Clinton's 1993 tax rise and the spending cuts championed. The choice Clinton made did have an effect on the budget improvement despite that naming him as the man that had a historical budget improvement would mean giving him the credit for things he did not do. Like for America's win over the Soviet Union, the economic recovery that had started before he even took office and the technological boom. In short Clinton was in the right place at the right time. Proving how the presidents do not have a significant amount of power in the pending, revenue, and deficit levels.

The political status quo is how the nation goes about state affairs regarding political and social issues. The political status quo stays the same throughout the presidents, with no significant changes to the norm. Currently, the political and economic system is stuck in an endless cycle no matter who takes the presidency. Change in the political system has been considered a terrible solution due to the fear that change will result in a less good solution

(Smith, 2023). This causes no significant changes to happen, meaning nothing will change if people elect a Democrat or Republican. Most people assume when a President takes power, they can do whatever they want. Especially when people think of Democrats or Republicans, whoever wins the election, people consider the other party to be the loser, and the winning party gets all the power to do as they please. Though that is not the case, people believe the winners get the right to do what they want. There are several forces that make that impossible like effective organization, political compromise, and fear of the state. Effective organization is how the winner wants to run the most useful organization for their cause by having no barriers, type of staffing, and any amount of secrecy. In spite of that, presidents are not giving any of those luxuries. Presidents do get some basic political force though they are anchored to public force and working against effective organization. Another force against the winners from doing anything they want is political compromise. Political compromise is when both parties come up with an agreement that meets the needs or reach a solution that is suitable for everyone. For the U.S. political compromise does not occur; instead, if the winning party wants to change the normal status quo they have to have the losing party participate in the creation of the plan. The losing party strongly suggests an idea that will undermine the project. Due to all this the project will be created by a party that does not want to see the plan win instead to see it fail. Having people who do not want the cause to fail leads to plans only being a short-term solution to the problem leading to the plans failing and the status quo remaining the same. Fear of the state is how certain politicians cannot be controlled and the use of power in public by a certain group of people (Moe, 1994). The winners often are scared of their group opponents and even more afraid of public officials because they have the power of public authority. This type of public authority is the type to destroy and create unwanted attention to the group.

The political status quo also relates to the social issues that people experience like with media, climate change, education, and more. Some might say that these issues are constantly changing with whoever takes the presidency, however that is not the case. The media is a social issue that does not change from president to president. The media often favor one side for the other however that is not due to the reason that the Democrats and Republics are alike but instead because of the media being unreliable sources. A President's choices/actions during their presidency is scrutinized and each media network has a different way of describing the event. Often not telling the whole truth to support their side. Croteau and Hoynes argue that corporate media fails to fulfill three functions that are crucial for watchdog journalism in a democratic society. These three functions are to inform the public, to act as a check on government power, and to provide a platform for meaningful public debate. Croteau and Hoynes believe that corporate media outlets are more concerned with promoting corporate interests than with performing these functions. They argue that the media's reliance on advertising revenue and corporate sponsorship creates a conflict of interest that hinders their ability to hold those in power accountable. Making them less accountable and reliable for people to watch. The big names Fox and CNN are the most unreliable sources. That raises concern as these large corporations often own media outlets and rely on them for funding. However, it is essential to note that not all media outlets fall into this category. Some independent media organizations strive to fulfill these functions and provide a counterbalance to corporate media. The media does not act as a fair platform for debate because often sources are unreliable leading to misunderstanding and misconceptions of the events. It's like one person watches CNN and one person watches Fox. Both these media companies will have biased information leading to a terrible debate because no one knows the true story. Additionally, not having an accurate

understanding of an event is just wrong because the media should be here to inform rather than subject opinion onto you. The media also plays a role in pinning the two parties against each other and making the illusion that Democrats and Republicans share no common ground.

The media for Trump and Biden are not positive. A majority of media sites either take the side of Biden or Trump. Knudsen took a Republicans and independents poll on whether or not Biden is too old to run for another election. The outcome was that “92.3 percent and 64 percent, respectively, believe Biden is too old to effectively serve a second term in the White House 92.3 percent and 64 percent, respectively, believe Biden is too old to effectively serve a second term in the White House” (Knudsen, 2023). Meaning the majority of Republicans and independents think that Biden is not up to being president again. While the democrats disagree with this point. That if Biden was truly unable to run again and he would not be in charge now if it was the case he was not physically or mentally healthy. Pillar has been looking into the trail for Trump that is currently happening. He feels as though, “Trump has posed to the nation in the past and will do so again in the future if he is put in a position to do so. That danger has included—as in the subject of his second impeachment—no less than the attempted overthrow, including through incitement of violence, of the American democratic system of choosing leaders through free elections and respecting the results of those elections” (Pillar, 2023). Trump has been charged with four criminal cases over four and half months not including his felony counts. Over three different states he has 96 felonies ranging from hush money to porn star, to hoarding classified documents, and his election interference in the state of Florida. It is important to note that if Trump is charged and found guilty, he can still run for president. Despite the ability to run for president, Democrats hope that people will not vote for a convicted felon.

Another example of a social issue that does not change from the president is climate change. Climate change is how our temperature and weather patterns are changing. This will heavily affect food quality, availability, and diversity. Now each president has their own plan of action for climate change despite that temperature is still rising, worse weather events are happening, and sea level is still rising. The article climate change impacts almost entire global population by Barna brings up the concerning statics of, "100,000 studies on weather events, finding that 80% of the world's land mass has been impacted by climate change, influencing most of the world's 7.7 billion people" (Barna, 2021). Proving how the worlding of climate change is an issue that is not being addressed by any president more. Some may say however that President Biden has championed in his elections that he will fix climate change. President Biden addressed climate change at Brayton Point Power Station Somerset, Massachusetts stating that, "And when it comes to fighting climate change — climate change, I will not take no for an answer. I will do everything in my power to clean our air and water, protect our people's health, and win the clean energy future" (The White House). In the speech Biden makes himself out to be a pro climate activist wanting to help improve your carbon footprint. Yet, on March 13, 2023 the Biden administration passed The Willow Project which is a project that allows ConocoPhillips to start an oil drilling project in the North Slope of Alaska in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. Oil and fossil fuel release huge amounts of methane which traps heat in the Earth's atmosphere more than CO₂. About 38% of all methane emissions in the United States is caused by oil and gas (Horning, n.d.). The Biden administration passing The Willow Project will have huge negative side effects on climate change through adding to the buildup of heat in the Earth's atmosphere. On the other hand, Trump does not believe in climate change and has tried to remove climate change acts. Trump believes in cleaning up the

environment by improving air quality, championing conservation, improving forest management to reduce wildfire risks, protecting endangered and threatened species, and more. In Trump's presidency people breathed the cleanest air by him improving air quality (The Trump Administration's Environmental Accomplishments). Trump's administration cleaned air quality by improving Air Quality Standards which allowed and promoted better ways to promote and cost-effective ways to implement the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (The Trump Administration's Environmental Accomplishments). The social issue climate change may not change from president to president proving how even if they may say that they stand for or against climate change that the problem climate change does not get fixed. The only thing that is happening from president to president is band aid solutions or projects that add to the wording of climate change.

Consequently though some people the current education system will lead to a different status quo of politics and economics. The education system has been through two major reforms, one in the 1900s due to a broader Progressive act of American politics and government (Moe. n.d.). The Progressive act got rid of politicians giving their own party jobs as a reward to keep working for the party. Making the bureaucratic system which means that instead of politicians running who work it, business corporations, and public institutions (Library of Congress). The system, however, did not immediately become bureaucratic due to politicians not wanting to give up the power they had accumulated so the transition took several decades to accomplish. The bureaucratic system did eventually win, and the administrative professionals took on the role of defending the new system National Education Association. The administration came in organized and prepared with one ally, the National Education Association or the NEA. National Education Association mission is to champion justice and excellence in public education today

there over 9,000 delegates (NEA, n.d.). They made the system so complex that only experts could figure the system out. There is a flaw in the system though their political power is with those who understand the complex system meaning that the people who were voted are based on their expertise and not on the votes. The second reform happened in the sixties and seventies due to teachers being powerless in the institution (Moe, n.d.). When the state started to change their laws to promote and permit collective bargaining for public employees. The American Federation of Teachers began to fight for the teachers for the same purpose. The National Education Association immediately changed into a labor union. The effect was that all schools became organized and unionized. The reform led to a totally new educational system, one quite similar to the Progressive but different in leadership and separation of power. The change in the system by making teachers a union caused huge changes allowing politicians to get into school affecting the education.

No matter what ends up happening the coming election does not matter because whoever wins there will be no significant change to the status quo. Both the Republican and Democrat party are too similar to each other to make any significant change to the system. Currently, the political world has disorganized the basic structure of American politics, which keeps people separated from each other through the two-party system. To fix the disorganized world there needs to be drastic changes to the government structure so that people can actually see change in the status quo rather than electing people who change nothing and keep the system the same. . The government wants the people separated by creating barriers between parties that do not actually matter due to the parties being the same. The government hopes to keep people's interests narrow and on what they want instead of looking at if change is happening to the system. When you only have your interest in mind, you lose sight of the bigger picture, leading

you to be easily influenced and manipulated by politicians. Lastly, the problem is people are all economically different, causing different interests from each economic level. Consider it like this: a low-income person will not have the same interests as a high-income person. They will have multiple disagreements like taxes, healthcare, and more. The persistent regional economic disparities have hindered cohesive national efforts to address various issues and further fragmented individuals with similar concerns. All these examples illustrate how ordinary people caused a disorganized political world due to economic and political differences.

The economic and political discrepancies without a doubt drive American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism is the belief or thought that the United States is unique, better, and distinctive compared to other countries. However, that is not the case due to the political system that keeps the two-party system intact leading to no change in the government. If the status quo stays the same for a long period of time it can cause negative side effects. One major consequence is the ability to allow people or groups to consolidate power and wealth causing uneven allocation of opportunities and resources. Leading to inequality and social mobility causing more social unrest and instability. Another major consequence of lack of change in the current status quo is the damper the unchanging system puts on innovation and progress. Innovation is necessary to change and new ideas. If there is no innovation in a society then it can cause a society to not adapt to new challenges and opportunities. Leading to a decline in economic growth and competitiveness, which can have long-term consequences for the society's prosperity. To conclude, there is a necessity to change the current political and economic status quo by not allowing the two party system to continue.

References

- About NEA. (n.d.). *National Education Association*. <https://www.nea.org/about-nea>
- Amadeo, K. (2022, April 6). President Donald Trump’s economic plans and policies. *The Balance*. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/donald-trump-economic-plan-3994106>
- Barna, M. (2021, October 12). Climate change impacts almost entire global population. *Public Health Newswire*. <http://publichealthnewswire.org/?p=climate-update-2021#:~:text=In%20the%20new%20global%20study>
- Biden, J. (2022, April 20). Remarks by President Biden on actions to tackle the climate crisis.
- Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2023. (n.d.). https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/budget_fy2023.pdf
- Democrats. (2019). *Democrats*. <https://democrats.org>
- Horning, J. (n.d.). Drilling effects on clean air. *WildEarth Guardians*. <https://wildearthguardians.org/historical-archive/drilling-pollution-solutions/#:~:text=Not%20only%20that%2C%20the%20oil>
- Irwin, N. (2017, January 17). Presidents have less power over the economy than you might think. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/17/upshot/presidents-have-less-power-over-the-economy-than-you-might-think.html>
- Knudsen, H. B. (2023, June 20). Poll: majority believe Biden is “Too old to effectively serve” a second term. *Breitbart*. <https://www.breitbart.com/2024-election/2023/06/20/poll-majority-believe-joe-biden-is-too-old-to-effectively-serve-a-second-term/>

- Library of Congress. (2022). Overview: Progressive Era to New Era, 1900-1929. U.S. History. *Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.* 20540 USA. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/progressive-era-to-new-era-1900-1929/overview/>
- Moe, T. (n.d.). The politics of the status quo. *The Hoover Institute*.
https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/0817939210_177.pdf
- Moe, T. M., & Wilson, S. A. (1994). Presidents and the politics of structure. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 57(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1192044>
- Pillar, P. R. (2023, June 12). The Trump case and the decline of true American nationalism. *The National Interest*. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/trump-case-and-decline-true-american-nationalism-206548>
- RepublicanViews.org. (2014, May 24). Republican views on the economy. *Republicanviews.org*.
<https://www.republicanviews.org/republican-views-on-the-economy/>
- Riedl, B. (n.d.). Presidents as economic managers. *National Affairs*.
<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/presidents-as-economic-managers>
- Skins, E. (2022). How many Libertarians are there? The answer depends on the method you use. *Cato*. <https://www.cato.org/blog/how-many-libertarians-are-there-answer-depends-method-you-use>
- Smith, J. (n.d.). Power, balance and the status quo. Jeff Smith, Wisconsin State Senator, District 31. <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/31/smith/news/columns/20230329-power-balance-and-the-status-quo/>

Strauss, V. (2015, February 11). How school reform preserves the “status quo” — and what real change would look like. *Washington Post*.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/29/how-school-reform-preserves-the-status-quo-and-what-real-change-would-look-like/>

The Political Compass. (2018, February 11). *The Political Compass*.

<https://www.politicalcompass.org>

The Trump Administration’s Environmental Accomplishments.

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/210114-Final-Accomplishments-Document.pdf>

The White House. (2022, July 20). Remarks by President Biden on actions to tackle the Climate

Crisis. *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/07/20/remarks-by-president-biden-on-actions-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis/#:~:text=a%20President%20possesses.>