

Decision 2024: Neoliberal Fascism Or Neoliberal Business As Usual?



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11-03-2024 ~ Trump's rise the result of the ongoing erosion of the political culture in the U.S. under neoliberalism, which has essentially become the dictatorship of big financial capital.

With just a few days left until Election Day, the fact that the [race to the White House](#) between U.S. Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) and former President [Donald Trump](#) remains extremely tight is truly mind-boggling. Reason dictates that the Democrats should be set to win a landslide, but what could very well happen instead is the return of Donald Trump to the White House.

Unfortunately, there are some good reasons why this is a tightly fought election. First, the cold truth is that Kamala Harris is not an inspiring leader. What's even worse is that she is a flip-flopper. She's changed her position on [fracking](#) and on the infamous [border wall](#) (she is now against fracking natural gas bans and seems to be leaning in favor of building more border wall) and hasn't done enough to explain her policy positions on several issues, including Medicare for All. Rational voters would not fail to take notice of such shortcomings in a presidential candidate.

Second, Kamala Harris represents a party that has lost the [working class](#) and is perceived as being one with the elites. Harris' own campaign has been too focused on winning over wavering Republicans, preferring to share the stage with Liz Cheney and billionaire Mark Cuban over progressive icons like Sen. [Bernie](#)

[Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez (D-N.Y.), and attacking Trump as a [threat to democracy](#).

Both strategies appear to have backfired. First, because working-class people represent a much larger segment of the electorate than wavering Republicans, and because cozying up to anti-Trump Republicans and receiving the endorsement of the warmongering [Cheneys](#) has alienated progressives. Second, exhorting citizens to vote for the Harris-Walz ticket because Trump represents a threat to democracy isn't making inroads with average folks who are mainly concerned with how to make ends meet. Most adult citizens have [no confidence in U.S. institutions](#) and in fact [mistrust the electorate system](#), which is why millions of citizens do not bother to vote and the [voter turnout](#) in the U.S. trails that of many other Western countries.

Third, Harris has not distanced herself from the Biden approach on [Israel and Gaza](#), which has been nothing short of a moral catastrophe, and has subsequently alienated the young, progressive and non-white voters who overwhelmingly sided with President Joe Biden in 2020. Not only that, but she and the Democrats have managed to create the impression among a large swath of voters that they are now the real warmongers, which is not far from the truth.

In the meantime, Trump's support has remained stable and defined in spite of what he says. Trump exerts a [cult-of-personality](#) influence over his followers like no other populist leader in the Western world. Of course, this is the result of the ongoing erosion of the political culture in the U.S. under neoliberalism, which has essentially become the dictatorship of big financial capital. Neoliberalism is incomparable with democracy as it alters society's balance of power overwhelmingly in favor of big capital, transforms citizenship into an exercise of consumer choice, and undermines policy initiatives aimed toward the common good.

Neoliberalism must be understood not only as an economic project, but also as a political and cultural project. And nowhere else in the Western world is civil society's neoliberal transformation so pronounced as it is in the United States. Even the right to unionize, a fundamental human and civil right, faces massive challenges due to the political power of the corporate world. This is because [democracy in the U.S. has always been of a very fragile nature](#) and the consolidation of democratic ideals has faced resistance and opposition down to

this day. Under such circumstances, the rise of the authoritarian strongman government that Donald Trump represents must be seen as an inevitable outcome.

Indeed, the unwavering appeal of Donald Trump among his supporters, in spite of all his crimes and scandals, speaks volumes both about the nature and scope of the [cultural divide](#) in the U.S., as well as about the political and economic effects of neoliberalism. This is the only way to understand why the white working class and less-educated voters, the traditional base of the Democratic Party, have flocked to Republicans in recent decades and now represent Trump's base. White working-class and less-educated voters broke ranks with the Democratic Party when the New Democrat faction severed completely its ties with the "New Deal" policies and embraced in turn economic policies that are the backbone of the neoliberal project.

By the same token, the old stereotype of the Republicans as the party of the rich and the elite no longer holds sway with many voters. And there is ample evidence to explain why this is the case. Virtually all of the [wealthiest congressional districts](#) across the country are now represented by a Democrat, while it is the Republicans who claim to represent the people who struggle.

In the end, it is probably not mind-boggling at all that election polls show a very close race between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. In a recent Pew Research Center survey, more than [80%](#) of registered voters said that the economy is the most important issue for them in the 2024 presidential election. And in a final [Financial Times](#) poll, voters expressed preference for Trump over Harris to lead the economy.

Of course, analyses that expose [Trump's myths about the economy](#) and warnings by experts that his own economic plans would [worsen inflation](#) and wreak havoc on [U.S. workers and businesses](#) while increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots either do not reach his supporters or simply leave them unfazed. In either case, indifference to truth is a symptom of our extremely polarized times and, in a society that has lost its vision for the common good and has allowed in turn the rich to hijack the political system, all that matters now is that people believe in their own reasoning. Demagogues like Trump are fully aware of the existing social realities and not only exploit the available circumstances but make an art out of the belief that reality is what you make of it.

As sad as it may be, the 2024 presidential election is a choice between neoliberal fascism and neoliberal business as usual. Some would say there is still a difference between the two options; others might call it irredeemable politics. But these are the only two choices that U.S. voters have.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/neoliberal-fascism-election-2024>

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