

Are contradictions determining U.S. elections?

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This month, the United States celebrated the 250th anniversary of the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*. However, this milestone comes at a time characterized by high levels of political polarization and just four months before the 2026 midterm elections, elections that could well determine the future direction of the country.

Two recent articles shed some light on questions that have puzzled political observers over the past several election cycles: why do people vote for candidates who do not promote their interests, or vote for candidates who are seriously flawed?

[In an article published in the Guardian](#), Saida Grundy, associate professor of sociology and African American studies at Boston University, said that white working-class voters who comprise the MAGA base are motivated less by economic concerns than by “access to power over other racial groups.” Grundy goes on to examine the long history of efforts to prevent African American and low-income white workers from joining together and acting in solidarity around their common concerns.

She observes that when governments support multiracial democracy or are seen as responsive to Black social movements, working class and poor whites tend to support politicians who push for tax cuts and slash the programs on which low-income people rely. In closing she says, “No amount of persuasion will move those who have chosen to maintain control and violence over putting food on the table when the point of their trade-off is keeping others from putting food on theirs.”

[In response to the senatorial primary elections in Maine and Texas](#), where two scandal-ridden candidates won, Charlie Hunt, an associate Professor of political science at Boise State University, discusses party polarization and negative partisanship, two factors which have greater consequences today than in past years.

The gap between the two major parties on policy choices, issue positions and culture is wide today. This polarization is moving beyond these differences to personal animosity between Republicans and Democrats and is escalating to the point where they not only disagree but see the other party as a threat.

Voters are now “making decisions based not on who should win elections but rather on who shouldn’t. The opposing party is not just the less preferred option – it’s a threat that must be stopped at all costs. Voters constantly report feeling the need to “hold their

noses” and vote for the “lesser of two evils.” The alternative – the other party taking power – is too grave to permit a truly principled stand. As a result, the race to the bottom continues, because the other side will always be worse.”