

Compare and Contrast Essay

Political aspects and activities within a state revolve around political ideas, policies and the electoral process. Within these processes, political elites, the public mass and the media come up with divergent political ideas thus leading to ideological differences. The ideological differences in return formulate the concept of cultural wars and a polarized situation. In fact, the ideological differences not only arise among the democratic and republican elites, but also to the public mass. In this regards, the public mass involves the citizens within the state that identify themselves as supporters of the democratic and republican elites. However, the larger polarization among the public mass is revealed in the area of journalism and media. Consequently, the aspect of ideological differences and polarization of the public mass, democratic and republican elites brings about the question of culture wars. On that note, Fiorina and Abramowitz have stated their claims on how they view culture wars in the world of politics, journalism and mass public in general.

As a starting point, Fiorina views the idea of cultural wars as a myth. The idea of viewing culture wars as a myth is hinged on the claim that culture war is integrated into various sectors of the society. In that

regards, various individuals within the society acclaim their view, support and attribution to the components of culture wars. Firstly, the idea of culture wars started as a collective theme in the day-to-day discussions of American politics. In that view, the American politicians use the components of culture wars in presenting ideas, themes, political contrasts and metaphors.

The idea of presenting culture wars in a metaphoric form brings out a clear reason as to why Fiorina would term culture wars as a mere myth. Fiorina views the idea of culture wars as a myth because of the disconnection between the policies made by the political elites. The elected representatives give policies, but do not implement the policies once they assume their respective seats. As a result, mass public is left with nothing but demoralized individuals. This makes them to keep off the world of politics.

By contrast, Abramowitz's views the theme of cultural wars in the context of an extensive polarization in the mass public. To second this statement, Abramowitz observes that the issue of political ideology is deep rooted in the opinion of the mass public. For instance, the subject of ideology is a subject matter to students whereby, the students greatly represent the political elite. The political ideas presented by the democratic and republic elites are deep root in the ideas of the mass public. In regards, the mass public takes their stands and generates a new chain of ideological differences arising from the mass public. As a result, the instigation of the public mass by the elites ensures that their

views are represented in the voting exercise.

Therefore, Fiorina and Abramowitz's observations on the idea of cultural wars stand contrasted in the aspect of reality and the representation of the myth. While Fiorina argues that cultural wars are the mere representation of myth and has no correlation with polarization, Abramowitz's affirms that cultural wars are indeed rooted in not only the elites, but also polarized in the mass public.

Therefore, Abramowitz argues against the idea of polarization as presented by Fiorina and states that polarization does not turn off voters nor does it depress turnouts among the public mass.

On another view, Fiorina views the role of journalists and their contribution to the increased partisan members among the political elite. The media has been an instrumental tool in painting culture wars and describing the elite's deep involvement in politics. This ignites the involvement of public mass. As a result, the information passed to the public mass from the media causes partisan polarization and incites the thinking of the public mass. Journalism clearly covers the American politics highlighting the disagreements, statements, opinions and culture wars shared among the political elites. Fiorina attributes increased partisan involvement to the works of the media, but still sees polarization as slightly increasing in the public mass. Abramowitz bases his claims on the evidence conducted by American National Election Studies. According to the results, partisan polarization has greatly

increased in the recent times.

However, Abramowitz observes that the increase in partisan traits among political elites is because of partisan identification. The partisan identification has involved itself in the societal context of establishing the needs of the society. In identification of needs such as employment, health and living standards, Abramowitz & Saunders have brought out a clear insight to the involvement of the educated individuals in political engagement. Therefore, increase in partisan traits among the elite is been attributed to the awakening of the educated individuals and coming of presidential candidates that bring about tempting promises to the mass public. The result of that is the high correlation between ideological identification and partisan identification.

Conclusively, according to Abramowitz, partisan identification and ideological identification with the needs of the society has led to an increase of partisan polarization among political elites.

Likewise, both authors agree that American elections are polarized. As an illustration of this statement, Fiorina presents a bell-shaped curving as a representation of the public engagement in the election. According to Fiorina, the views of the public stand on a moderate forum. Half of the individuals have a clear conscience on the partisan involvement and are certain regarding the candidate to vote for during the election. Similarly, the other half stands divided without knowing whom to vote for and are more careless in line with the candidate to

vote for. In other words, the bell shape curving acts as an illustration of half of the public mass being involved in politics while the other half are either spectators or “just around” individuals who can easily be swayed by the crowd. Thus, Fiorina represents the public in a moderation aspect of 50-50, which is in the form of a bell-shaped illustration.

On the other, hand Abramowitz presents the public participation in the election in a near bell-shaped outcome. According to him, the public has greatly involved itself in political involvement as indicated by the high turnover of individuals in the voting process. Abramowitz notes that the political elites actively participate in the election process, however at a moderate consideration.

Moreover, the contrast of individuals who did not care about the elections similarly participated through the persuasion of the engaged. Therefore, both authors come into an agreement that the general public is comprised of moderation towards the participation of politics. Besides, polarization stands concentrated among the electorates who are elites according to Fiorina’s observations. Consequently, Abramowitz affirms the statement by indicating that the political elites and activists greatly lead to polarization and that they influence other individuals using their activism through the creation of awareness and persuasion.

Furthermore, Fiorina acclaims that there is a slight difference between

the red state and the blue state. In both states, the statistical configuration of polarization is insignificant. Thus, when it comes to the social cleavages of the public, the differences are more or less on the same configuration. Taking for instance in Bush's presidential election, most of the individuals in the red and blue states were of moderate opinion. The involvement of the partisan and the ideological differences as witnessed in the elections was less distinct. Therefore, there is no sharp contrast and Divisions in aspects of race, age, gender and religious differences in the social context as viewed by Fiorina. In other words, as much as the red states preferred Bush for candidature, so was the case in the blue states thus terming and viewing the polarization and sharp contrast of the social cleavage as either moderate or less considerate.

Abramowitz's perspective views a sharp contrast and division among the blue and red states. According to Abramowitz's observation, the social class represented by the red states was becoming redder. Likewise, the blue states were also becoming bluer. Also, Abramowitz claims a sharp contrast occurs in the social characteristics of the blue and red states and especially in attribution to religion. While the blue state voters consider themselves more of protestants, their red counterparts were more identified in their social characteristics of opposition to gay marriage, abortion and therefore they were more of conservatives.

Partisan and culture wars are greatly reflected in aspects of

gerrymandering by the political elites. Since the states reflect a bell shape illustration, most of the uncertain individual groups stare at being tossed about by their other counterparts. Also, the politics in the American society is at a level being maneuvered by the partisan individuals for their states and political gains. The elite and engaged partisan are more polarized thus becoming the driving force of culture wars, political and ideological differences.

When running for election posts, the representatives come up with policies that back up their election claims. In most cases, the policies made pertain to social issues that touch on the individual lives of people within their states, thus majored on social welfare related issues. An indication observed that the public takes the stand of electing a representative based on the policies made thus selecting the candidate with the policies that favors their desires most. However, upon been elected, the policies turn out to be fables and thus are no longer considered by the elected representative. As a result, the issue of culture wars makes individuals disregard politics due to empty promises, which leads to a turnoff on polarization among the mass public. Also, Abramowitz notes the same disconnect between policies made by the elected representatives and actions taken afterwards. However, his observation indicates that the lack of policy fulfillment ignites the mass public more into polarization as it brings about political ideologies.

In the aspect of sorting, Fiorina states that sorting within partisans leads

to weak public appeal. Sorting involves the partisan involvement in politics of class, which in turn brings about a drift in the ideological perspectives of the partisan. However, Abramowitz contradicts Fiorina's views and says that he sees sorting in aspects of polarization. Abramowitz affirms this statement by illustrating that the sorting of democratic and republicans voters leads to a distribution scale of the different ideas presented by the political elites and thus becoming more polarized. Similarly, Fiorina introduces the concept of choice and position. For instance, Fiorina gives a clear distinction between choice and position in the example of Bush's election. In his view, Fiorina observed that individuals confused between choice and position. In this regard, individuals made a choice of voting for Bush in accordance to his position. However, when it comes to position, individuals would vote for Bush in regards to how the individuals feel about the policy of gay marriages, gun related crimes, job and unemployment. The distinction between choice and culture is essential in trying to understand that it is possible to polarize choice, but impossible to polarize position.

Consequently, public has become significantly polarized along political and ideological lines in the recent years. The political aspects and culture wars have resulted in polarization because of the divergent political views. The journalistic view has also greatly channeled the polarization aspect among the public. There has been an intense follow-up of policies made by the representatives and rise of activists in the articulation of social perspectives such as gay rights, absorption,

and aspects of unemployment. On that note, Fiorina views the ideological perspective of absorption on a liberal and moderation perspective. The liberal perspective is indicated by both the red and blue states thus they are either in favor of abortion or against it.

Fiorina and Abramowitz notes that the issue of positions of elites and activists has become more constrained. As a result, both authors believe that the issue of positions of regular members partisan Democrats and Republicans or general public has become more inter-connected. In the Liberal-Conservative Policy presentation by Abramowitz, he indicates the democrats were much more liberal than the partisan were. However, there was an indication of a small difference in the social issues such as abortion. As a result, the analysis concluded that there was an increase in interconnectedness between the liberal and conservative dimensions. On the other hand, Fiorina in the issue preference table, observes slight differences in the views of the conservatives and liberals in the aspect of abortion.

To make his point on culture myth, Fiorina uses the aspect of abortion on the social contextual issue used by partisan while asking for votes. Abortion, been a non-economic issue is being used by the political elites in order to come up with economic policies. However, the policies are not implemented.

In the critical aspect, Fiorina argues that the idea of polarization is limited only to the "political class". In response, Abramowitz argues that

there is evidence of polarization and thus the ties remain intact and thus there is no need of sorting.

In Conclusion, the representations of Abramowitz and Fiorina possess weaknesses and strengths ,especially in their data presentation. As for the weaknesses, their data presentation has a sharp contrast thus in the ideas of the information. While, Fiorina appears more dialectical in his presentation, he lacks concrete evidence on the indication that culture war is a mere myth. On the other hand, Abramowitz's data presentation establishes a distinct correlation in the items under study. However, the relationship between the presentation and analysis used is different. However, on the stronger end, the accord data evidence conducted and analyzed presents concrete information as to why polarization and culture wars are the general view of the public. Therefore, the writings and presentations of Abramowitz make stronger and convincing arguments. Abramowitz's work greatly addresses against Fiorina's claims of culture wars been a mere concept of myth.

According to Abramowitz, culture wars are points of political identification and ideology. This leads to an intense culture war that stands on the reality of the society rather than just myth. Going by Fiorina's claim, the concept of cultural myth leads to depression among the public mass thus doing away with the idea of polarization is advised. The turn off appears when the representatives fail to implement the policies formulated during their election. In contrast, Abramowitz observes that the discontent of the failure by the elected

representatives results to ideological differences thus increasing public and partisan participation in politics thus bringing an overall desire in polarization.

In summation, the views of Abramowitz are more considerate considering his presentation of data and facts that acclaim his position. In retaliation, polarization is not a myth since polarization is rooted in the larger society thus defining the world of politics.

Emerging issues and policies have stood geared by the aspect of polarization and culture wars that arise within the contemporary society. Cases such as marriages, gay rights, abortion, unemployment and crime related activities are aspects that stand tied to the societal cleavages of every state. As an indication, the partisan, public and the media generate and contribute a lot to the aspect of polarization. When cases such as terrorism occur, the partisan go back to the drawing board to strategize and come up with security initiatives. Similarly, the subject matter of security triggers ideological differences thus fueling polarization.