

Reagan's Choice Ties Liberal Superstitions to Totalitarian Ideology

Kate Bachelder (Top 10 Liberal Superstitions, 10/31/14): “A hallmark of progressive politics is the ability to hold fervent beliefs, in defiance of evidence, that explain how the world works—and why liberal solutions must be adopted.” Insightful observation; erudite list—which can be expanded: multiculturalism good, profiling bad; Soros and Steyer good, Koch brothers bad; demographic diversity good, intellectual diversity cruelly censured, Obama administration scandals ignored, conservative actions demonized, and on and on. But a disparate list of superstitions or policies is not good enough. Required is a framework, founded in philosophy and economics, that explains progressive politics and predicts future behavior.

Ronald Reagan (A Time for Choosing, 1964) provided that framework: “[Not] left or right . . . only up . . . to man’s age old dream, the maximum individual freedom, consistent with law and order, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism.” Bachelder’s observation (beliefs in defiance of evidence) follows Plato’s *Republic*—a world ruled by progressives imposing by force of government their beliefs as to how the world ought to be, i.e., down to totalitarianism. Aristotle’s *Politics*, in contrast, is founded upon real world fact and evidence, which lead upward to individual freedom.

The field of economics as well reflects Reagan’s Choice. Micro economics (price theory) studies how individuals, each one responding to incentives in order to maximize his/her self-interest (predominantly freedom), i.e., Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, et al, follow Aristotle. Macro economists (Malthus, Keynes, Piketty, et al) study how government fiscal and monetary policies empower solutions that liberals believe should be adopted—a Platonic worldview.

The scientific test of a framework or theory is—how well it explains current behavior of the observed phenomena and predicts their future behavior. I challenge every news consumer to apply Reagan’s Choice to Bachelder’s list or any public policy. For example, did Tuesday’s voting elect Aristotelians (by and large limited-government Republicans) or Platocrats—progressives (without exception Democrats) who favor expanded (Obama’s) governmental policies?

And If the Reagan’s Choice framework viably predicts a Republican Congressional majority—would that majority act to maximize individual freedom? Specifically, would Republicans measure performance by economic growth (consistent with law and order)? Indicators: the number of laws repealed, regulations streamlined, tax codes simplified, small business and entrepreneurs encouraged, etc. Such actions would effectively counter progressive beliefs in liberal (big government) solutions. Mr. Reagan said it best: “we come to a time of choosing”. Will Republicans follow Reagan—and Aristotle, Friedman et al?