



Battle of the Think Tanks

By **Conor Friedersdorf**

[Brink Lindsey](#):

On the vexing question of how to defuse the entitlements fiscal time bomb, there is no "us" and "them." The politics of us versus them is almost always ugly and illiberal. And on the policy questions that Brooks is concerned with, there's no need for such deliberate divisiveness. Yes, there are strong disagreements about market regulation and the proper size and scope of social spending, but these disagreements are not based on some irreconcilable differences in values. Vigorous support for continued economic growth is nearly universal across the political spectrum. How else will we put jobless Americans back to work, and how else will we pay for the activities of government, without a strong, dynamic private sector? A similarly broad consensus exists for the following two propositions: On the one hand, a government safety net is needed to protect Americans from various hazards of life; on the other hand, that safety net shouldn't bankrupt us.

Figuring out how to restore growth and how to construct an effective but affordable safety net, are questions for debate, analysis, and democratic decision-making. My answers to those questions may differ from yours, but dividing up into warring tribes and demonizing each other aren't the ways to figure out who's right.

That excerpt comes from a piece wherein Mr. Lindsey, a vice president at The Cato Institute, mounts a forceful argument against Arthur L. Brooks, who heads the American Enterprise Institute.

It is worth reading in full.

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