

The Myth of Tribalism

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By now, even people who differ on nearly all issues seem to agree on at least one thing: American politics has become riven by [tribal conflict](#). [Tucker Carlson claims](#) that “schools are creating tribalism in our kids.” [Former President Barack Obama has warned](#) that we risk “turning away from democratic principles in favor of tribalism and ‘might makes right.’” As the journalist George Packer, now of *The Atlantic*, [once summarized the problem](#), “American politics today requires a word as primal as ‘tribe’ to get at the blind allegiances and huge passions of partisan affiliation. Tribes demand loyalty, and in return they confer the security of belonging. They’re badges of identity, not of thought.” The underlying psychology of “us and them” appears grounded in deep-rooted human tendencies to carve the world into groups and discriminate in favor of one’s own.

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