Left and Right Democracy

From Kevin Williamson at National Review, The Anglo-Americans:

> *American politicians of the Left use "democracy" in the vaguest possible way, as a catch-all for all things good in politics, even the un-democratic and anti-democratic ones. Politicians of the Right use "democracy" with some skepticism, having been taught to emphasize the fact that the United States is a republic, not a democracy, the latter being something that the Founders feared and dreaded and pronounced themselves opposed to even as they crafted the greatest set of democratic institutions known to man.*
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> *Democracy, properly understood, is not the American form of government, but an aspect of the American form of government, one that we conservatives sometimes undervalue. Many of us agree with F. A. Hayek's declaration that he would prefer a liberal (we might say "libertarian") dictator to an illiberal democratic government, assuming that this libertarian dictator (what an idea) would be something like an Antonin Scalia, hewing as closely as possible to the letter of the Constitution — except for all the messy voting bits. One of the great differences between conservatives and progressives is that conservatives will sometimes say out loud that there is such a thing as too much democracy. Progressives believe there is sometimes too much democracy, too, for instance when the demos prefers policies other than those the progressives want it to prefer, but saying as much in public has been out of fashion since approximately the Wilson administration.*

The left and right have different beliefs even when they use the same word to describe them. Semantics matter.