

# THE REPUBLICAN SPLIT

By Chris Anderson



2016 has been called the year of the outsider. Republican nominee Donald J. Trump has redefined the meaning of outsider and the meaning of American politics as a whole.

Trump was initially expected to lose the Republican primary by almost all political experts. But due to social, economic, and political conditions in America, along with a one-of-a-kind personality, Trump found himself leading the Republican ticket.

Trump has been criticized, hated, and even loved for his non-traditional policy positions and bold, sometimes brash, personality. All of this combined with his outsider status has led to a new brand of politics some call "Trumpism."

To understand Trumpism, it helps to look at what has been going on around the world.

"It seems as though in Europe, the U.S., and in the Philippines, the political agenda is going away from socialism and towards nationalism," Dr. Steffen Schmidt, professor in political science, said.

Schmidt characterized nationalism as a right-wing political ideology that puts national interests before anything else. The important aspect of nationalism is its opposition to immigration.

Trump has made immigration one of the central issues in his campaign for president. He has even gone so far as to suggest that

a wall should be built on America's southern border to stop the flow of immigrants from Mexico.

Schmidt has the opinion that the rise of right-wing politics around the world is due to the same reason everywhere. That reason is the influx of people that are culturally or ethnically different.

"Millions of people are fleeing from one place or moving from one place much more than normal. When that happens the country that they are going to starts to feel overwhelmed, and we saw that with the collapse of Syria," Schmidt said.

In addition to taking a tougher stance on illegal immigrants from countries like Mexico, Trump has opposed plans by President Obama and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton to let in refugees from Syria. People who support these sentiments, according to Schmidt, do so because of a perceived threat from these immigrants whether it be economic, social, or in the form of terrorism.

"There probably is somewhat of a clash of civilizations," Schmidt said, "I think it is difficult for people with very different views of how people should live to be jammed together and be tolerant of each other"

Schmidt also believes sociology and anthropology suggest people feel more comfortable being around people who act like them. These factors lead to anti-immigrant sentiments taking hold in many

parts of the world. But, to Schmidt, these right-wing politics are about more than just anti-immigration.

“The alt-right is a lot more than anti-immigration. It’s also a new, more nationalistic cluster of people who think things are slipping away, that our moral values are disappearing,” Schmidt said.

Trump’s campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again” hits the nail on the head with these sentiments. Many nationalists want to return to the way things once were because they perceive it as a better time.

The place of this new voting block created by Trump however will not be seen till the next midterm election in 2018, according to Schmidt.

“We’ll see what happens to the Republicans. Were they able to survive the criticism and keep getting members of Congress

elected?” Schmidt said. “But you could ask the same question; will the Democratic party survive Hillary Clinton?”

Schmidt also brings forward the idea that within the Democratic party Hillary Clinton may not necessarily be the best candidate. He sees the millions of young voters who supported Bernie Sanders dissatisfied with the Democratic nominee.

“I think both parties have to figure out are they gaining anything with the two candidates at the top,” Schmidt said.

Regardless there seems to be an air of uncertainty in the future of both major parties. The only certainty is that we are seeing a crossroad in American politics.

Many students at Iowa State are wholeheartedly behind Trump and his new brand of American politics.

One of these students is Austen Giles, a public relations major and chapter president for ISU students for Trump on campus.

“I think it can be summed up in three points: jobs, Supreme Court, and Constitution.”

In other words, Giles believes Trump is the best candidate to create jobs, keep conservative values in the Supreme Court, and defend the constitution. Although to Giles it’s about a lot more than just the policy points, it’s the persona.

Trump has been criticized for his rhetoric some perceive as offensive; Giles is not one of these people.

“I love it,” Giles said. “It’s super attractive. I’m not a traditional conservative.”

Giles characterized the Trump movement as not being in line with

Photo by: Jessica Darland



traditional conservatism, that it's "a whole new thing. A part of this new conservatism is the bold, non-politically correct rhetoric of Trump.

"I'm glad he speaks like a dummy sometimes," Giles said. "He's very much a people's president, much like Reagan."

Giles blames a lot of the controversy surrounding statements made by Trump on bias from the mainstream media. He recalls meeting Trump once and was surprised by his warmth and energy.

Trump has come under fire for saying things many found racist or sexist. One such example was calling the federal judge presiding over the lawsuit for his Trump University scandal unable to give a fair ruling because "he's a Mexican." Giles disagrees with the claim Trump is a racist or sexist, and attributes it to politics.

"Nobody called him a racist before now," Giles said.

Giles also believe a lot of the things Trump says is a media tactic to get people talking about him.

"Trump's the king of free media, he's got \$2 billion worth. He's a genius in the sense he's playing 4D chess with everyone." Giles said.

Giles, as the president of a campus based political organization, sees Trump's value in his appeal to millennials.

"What's attracting millennials is the anti-establishment thinking; and that is what Trump brings to the table." Giles said.

The anti-establishment movement is a major part of Trumpism. Trump has been known to ignore or completely reject traditional conservative values.

"Trump is not a Republican whatsoever," Giles said. "The Republican Party tried to out him several times."

Other students disagree with Giles.

Bethany Emsick, junior in industrial engineering. "I am Republican and my political views align more with Trump. I don't really respect who he is as a person, I don't like him, but I completely disagree with Hillary so I'm just left with Trump."

It's clear to the experts and those involved that Trumpism is a new kind of movement. No matter the effect one thing is clear: Donald Trump is changing American politics.

"People are tired of 50 years of nothing, they're tired of the Democratic and Republican party" Giles said. "Trumpism is kind of a thing of its own."





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