

## **Rise of the Far Right 2.0: Angry Voters Reminisce Back to an Earlier Era**

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What should we think of this election cycle? Are voters angry at the rising threat of immigration or the cost to American workers? We often hear a great deal of chatter of immigrants threatening American jobs, of the mythical idea of building a wall to keep out other threats, of banning specific groups of immigrants from particular Middle Eastern countries. Is this any surprise that we see a similar set of movements rising in Europe as well? One cannot help but make connections to the recently depressed economies (within the last 5 years) of Greece (Golden Dawn) and Hungary (the Jobbik Party)<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36150807> to see where this could lead in terms of angry behavior, of facing the fact that America's demographics are changing rapidly. I see and hear the concerns of my students from time to time who worry what other Americans think of them, especially those from particular cultures outside of the mainstream public or from smaller cultural or religious groups. Many of them are concerned and powerless about how to face this wave of anger and resentment towards them; in fact, some are quite sad that contemporary Americans have forgotten that they themselves came from countries whose economies were also depressed at one point before embarking on a treacherous voyage by sea to a new land, a new life. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/18/us/muslims-in-america-irpt/> Have we truly become absent-minded about American being the land of the free, the home of the brave?

What does a real American truly look like? Why is it that particular media outlets continue to beat the drum of immigrant threats from cultural communities too small to have a significant public presence in our nation's capital, blaming many of our economic woes on the threat of terrorism or on religious groups which many Americans know little about or understand? <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/06/22/anatomy-terror-threat-files-shed-light-on-nature-extent-plots-in-us.html> Well, it is simply too easy to point fingers at others instead of finding the root of the problem. The tactics being used today are similar to the ones used by parties mentioned above in Europe, as well as other neo-fascist parties such as Front National in France or the Freedom Party in Austria.

We might recall that quite some time ago, a strong isolationist, anti-immigrant sentiment swept across Europe, a number of leaders were able to capture the public's imagination amidst a wave of new challenges in economic terms came to the table. Voters were promised a new beginning, a way to wipe away recurring debt or to start anew. No doubt, these leaders did not simply promise a better economy, but to bring their nations back to what it meant to be truly Austrian, German, Hungarian, Italian, with promises or a revitalization of an old empire renewed. This meant, no doubt, that ultranationalism not only thrived, but generated further hostilities across the continent. Leaders, warmongers, whose names started with the letters H and M (and others) suddenly came to public prominence, with an authoritarian bent. [http://www.salon.com/2016/03/11/trumps\\_not\\_hitler\\_hes\\_mussolini\\_how\\_gop\\_anti\\_intellectualism\\_created\\_a\\_modern\\_fascist\\_movement\\_in\\_america/](http://www.salon.com/2016/03/11/trumps_not_hitler_hes_mussolini_how_gop_anti_intellectualism_created_a_modern_fascist_movement_in_america/) The next step, ultimately, after our own nation decided to retreat from the problems of their overseas neighbors was that inevitably, things only got worse, and suddenly we had another major world war on our hands.

Today, we not only have a looming threat on the horizon, but a number of political candidates who have made references to similar policies about particular groups or blamed them for our difficulties with the political process, with domestic policy, terrorism, etc. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/03/23/cruz-pulls-trump-muslims/dbSILlhI4zjzcWUOdoIISP/story.html>

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Though our election cycle has observed major party candidates with imperfect records, we might wish to recognize that allowing particular immigration threats or ultra-nationalists sentiments to thrive could ultimately lead to more conflict globally or hostilities in familiar territory once again. Would we simply move forward with the same kind of attitude as before, pushing our head into the sand and hoping for the best, allowing extremist movements to move forward unchecked, or should we take a stand and rid ourselves of the rabble-rousers who pose a threat to our own stability and the future generations that come before us?

I have seen an enormous divide in this election cycle between millennials and older Americans about how the issues are presented, and I have seen politicians simply throwing gasoline on the fire, pointing fingers at each other instead of fixing the problems before us. However, what remains troubling is that the far right seems to have found a particular voice where previously, their irrational ramblings were drowned out by mainstream politicians and the media. In today's world, where political scientists are wondering what went wrong to allow such a circus atmosphere as we have in this particular notorious, wild 2016 presidential election, we now have a case of conspiracy theorists feeling justified that they have found a voice to echo their ideas, which can be dangerous to those being targeted by such feelings.<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/a-dialogue-on-2016/483063/> Giving any particular voice to far-right ideals, of a purified, home-grown race of Americans remains of concern. The whole point of America was that there never was a truly perfect ideal of what an American looked like, which gives some flexibility to the notion that immigrants feel at home here, that the only color that matters is green.

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/07/a-new-american-melting-pot-214011>

How do we move on from the particular feelings of the old WASP stereotype, the old-country, wholesome American dying and the new, more culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse American rising? There are two choices. We can simply wait until the old anger and resentment is outgrown, literally, within a few generations, and younger, more culturally aware Americans rise to power who grew up with a greater pool of nationalities around them, who are used to having conversations with Americans of not only European descent, but Asian, African, and Latin American or Amerindian descent, etc. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/27/the-demographic-trends-shaping-american-politics-in-2016-and-beyond/>

The other choice is that we can simply vote for better candidates who spend more time developing sound policies to help all Americans than those who simply waste time blaming particular groups for their problems, those politicians who continue to beat the twin drums of fear and paranoia that seem to proliferate every few decades or so once again. <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/05/2016-election-realignment-partisan-political-party-policy-democrats-republicans-politics-213909>

Only America, Land of the Free and Home of the Brave, can choose its own destiny, the long-term implications of which have yet to be determined. Frank Fuller, PhD, is an adjunct professor of political science at Temple University, Chestnut Hill College, and Atlantic Cape Community College. He has also taught at Villanova University, Rutgers Camden, Rowan University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Lincoln University.