



Explaining the Enduring Appeal of Trump

American politics is in a unique condition, embroiled in the kind of political landscape that has generally been rare for the United States:

In America today, much of the discourse and debate revolves around one single man: Donald J. Trump.

While there are many hot-button issues and Trump engages with the majority of them, Trump himself has essentially become the main issue driving much of the dialogue in national politics. Turn on any news channel and you'll hear topics of controversy such as whether Trump will go to prison, whether Trump will be kept off the ballot, and whether Trump is an authoritarian.



Luis Miguel
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Moreover, several of the political divides that currently exist specifically involve individuals' personal allegiance to Trump. While there are real ideological differences between factions of the Republican Party (neocons, paleoconservatives, libertarians), the most distinguishing factor now is whether a given Republican displays loyalty to Trump or not — hence the division between MAGA and NeverTrumpers.

In some cases, the question of loyalty to Trump transcends ideology, with some individuals who on paper would be classified as neocons or Establishment getting a MAGA pass, so to speak, because of their vocal support for the 45th president.

In this sense, Trump's enthusiastic popularity on the Right, and the simultaneous fervent opposition to him on the Left, has resulted in a form of personality politics that is more reminiscent of the intrigue surrounding historical monarchies than the politicking of republics that had been standard in the United States for so long.

Monarchical systems, in which power is concentrated in the lifelong position of a king or emperor, are rife with scheming to remove the ruling monarch or dynasty, whether through succession claims, war, assassination, or plotting to get one family intermarried with another. All this is because when a system lacks a process for the regular transfer of power, those who are dissatisfied with the status quo or who seek power are willing to use any means necessary to rid themselves of their opponents.

U.S. politics, while having its share of large personalities over the centuries, has tended to be issue-driven due to the republican nature of the American system of government. The degree, then, to which so much debate revolves around the person of Trump is unprecedented.

A factor contributing to this development is the breakdown of the nation's institutions due to the lawlessness, persecution, censorship, and lies perpetrated by the Deep State, the Left, and the mainstream media. As public trust in the efficacy of elected bodies, in the good faith of the criminal justice system, and in the legitimacy of the government itself decline, people look not to institutions, but to charismatic personalities to provide a sense of leadership, stability and protection.



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 18, 2024

Donald Trump stepped into that void and managed to capture lightning in a bottle. And the rapport he has built with the Republican base has been so strong that, at this point, there is virtually little that could break his supporters away from him.

Trump's dominance was on full display again this week when he won the Iowa caucus, the first contest of the GOP presidential primary, by a historic 30-point margin.

The enduring appeal of Trump is tied not only to his stance on the issues, but to the carefully crafted image of the man himself. Of course, the issues matter — if Trump did a 180-degree turn and became a complete socialist, the majority of his ardent supporters would jump ship. They love him because he gave voice to the crucial issues — from immigration to trade to crime — that the political class in Washington for so long would not touch.

But Trump's appeal and hold over the hearts of the conservative movement also go beyond the issues. This is why only Trump can get away with being malleable on the issues (it's a lesson Trump challengers like Ron DeSantis should have understood prior to getting in the race).

For example, Trump has changed stances on abortion; recently he has called for the GOP to take a more moderate stance, although as a candidate in 2016 he went so far as to say that mothers who abort their children should face some form of punishment. He had also made overturning *Roe v. Wade* by appointing conservative Supreme Court justices a centerpiece of his 2016 campaign.

Trump has also flipped back and forth on the issue of gun control, at times calling for due process to be revoked in order to stop mass shootings.

While shifting stances like these may provoke grumbling, they have not caused the vast majority of Trump's base to jump ship.

The allure of Trump is, in part, that he represents the American ideal: A highly successful businessman who excels at his field and works indefatigably to get what he wants, yet also emits an air of fun and enjoyment of life. The fact that he is a household name with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame that was once a fixture on network TV furthers the appeal of Trump in a nation that has an often unhealthy fixation with celebrity.

And now, added to all this, is the fact that he is the encapsulation of the outsider archetype, a nonpolitician who is fighting against a corrupt system. Ironically, the more the Establishment and the Left have attacked Trump, the more they have endeared him to the hearts of his supporters.

This is why, in the end, the Washington Swamp isn't likely to rid itself of Trump — for the Establishment finds itself at odds with a force that only grows stronger as they heighten their opposition.



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