



Sanders' Socialism: The future of Democratic Party

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Bernie Sanders describes himself as a democratic socialist, and Hillary Clinton has questioned whether he's a Democrat. But, as *Voice of America (VOA)* suggests, his supporters, and democratic socialism, could be the "Future of the Democratic Party."

Sanders has managed to win over young people with his personality, policies, and call for a "revolution." A recent McClatchy-Marist poll has those under 30 preferring Sanders 76-29 percent over Clinton. And, even in those states he's lost, he has had a commanding lead with young voters.

Hillary Clinton has struggled to explain why she's an outsider, with answers focusing on how she's a woman. The perception that Sanders is more anti-establishment and different may be another reason why he has been able to draw in young people.

"There's a willingness to look at what's going on in America and say, 'We need to change. We're unhappy with the status quo. We don't necessarily know the answer, but we're willing to look around for solutions,'" Peter Hart of the Hart Research Organization said.

That may even be the case if "change" means socialism. A December Harvard IOP poll showed many don't think the label matters, and 24 percent would even be more likely to vote for Sanders because of it. Emily Ekins of the Cato Institute suggested that young people prefer socialism because they don't understand it, but for now, it seems to be helping rather than hurting Sanders.

Ekins noted young people will prefer free markets as they get older and make more money. However, that might not be the case. "I don't know that there's a lot of positive evidence for it," UCLA Professor David Sears told *VOA* when asked about the "widespread" idea that voters get more conservative with age.

Socialist Noam Chomsky believes Sanders's popularity could represent a return to a more liberal Democratic Party. It is, however, unclear if that will translate to more democratic socialism in

the party. Still, Sanders's "campaign has, so far, restored some of the concerns and aspirations of the reformist New Deal Period," Chomsky said.

There is the concern of "unrealistic expectations" if Sanders is not elected or cannot live up to his promises. Hillary Clinton and her supporters have often pointed this out. A young Sanders supporter has also urged young people to bring about true changes by not just voting for Sanders as president, but participating in local elections.

"The message is being heard, and people know we need to stay involved and continue to be involved in the political process after the election," Ken Quam, who helped form a grassroots volunteer organization supporting Sanders, told *VOA*.