

Americans Love Politics

Exotic countries outside that of America are often seen as enticing, or perhaps more appealing because of their drastic differences. But what about our neighboring countries? What can we gain from viewing our character through the lenses of another Westernized country? As a Canadian immigrant, Rozhina Varamini provides a new perspective on an outlying characteristic of America: our burning passion for politics.

In her home of Calgary, Alberta, Rozhina's day-to-day routine was very much like her life here in the U.S. She woke up, went to school, then came back home. She said if she misses anything about Canada, it would be the "simple things" such as hanging out with friends. Here in America, she said, "people have been pretty nice"; any discomfort she's had is what you'd expect when one arrives in the middle of high school. Besides the preference to "mom jeans" over "Lululemon" and "cowboy vibe" of her city, Rozhina found one significant difference.

This outlying characteristic was the "tension in politics." In Canada, she said, political discussion is not "a huge thing." Whereas people in the United States identify, often passionately, as Democrat or Republican. In Canada, Rozhina said, "it wasn't really a big deal if someone was liberal or conservative." News about American politics did make its way into conversations in Canada, but still, Rozhina was surprised to see how controversial politics can be in the States.

Most of the dust-ups over politics she sees here are not so prevalent in the classroom. Instead, she observes the controversies "online," "in the news," and in "social media in general." For Rozhina, this has translated to a certain hesitancy to converse about American politics here. "It's hard not to offend people," she said, "people get angered easily." She also has come to realize that it's not always easy to find information that is truly trustworthy. The different news outlets ultimately seem "biased," she said, and there's no way of her to form a "solid opinion."

In exploring the possible explanations for Americans' involvement in politics, she points to the country's size and diversity. The enormous variety of backgrounds and cultures might also be what drives the population to be "really different in their opinions."

Rozhina's observations speak to the extent to which American politics have become increasingly polarizing. How might this state of America conflict with the unique freedoms it was founded on? As she continues to learn how America functions, Rozhina also embraces her own individuality. She hopes for a career in health or medicine and remains open to whatever opportunities may come in the future. Rozhina plans to attend a college in Oregon but has not bound herself to one distinct path.