



These are the five types of Trump voters and their feelings about Latinos

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The unexpected rise of Donald Trump and his far-reaching support has left many observers of American politics perplexed about who exactly is supporting him.

How many of them are the "deplorable" racists that Hillary Clinton spoke of? Did they vote for Trump because they believed in him or because they wanted to avoid a Clinton victory? Can Democrats win some of them back?

A new study, called The Five Types of Trump Voters, sheds light on the issue, fighting the widespread view that Trump's voters are a homogenous bloc and presenting them as a coalition with different interests, concerns and anxieties.

Lea esta nota en español.

The author, Emily Ekins of the Cato Institute, based her analysis on a macro-survey of 8,000 voters conducted in December and commissioned by the nonprofit Democracy Fund. The study is so comprehensive that it includes data on what Americans think about Latinos. The racist minority of Trump voters detest them but the rest of Americans have increasingly warm feelings towards them, it shows.

1. Staunch Conservatives (31 percent)

These are the classic conservatives who have been the backbone of the party. Although their positions do not correspond exactly to Trump's, they supported him in the primaries and in the general election.

They are firm fiscal conservatives, who adhere to a moral traditionalism and have a conception of American identity and moderately nativist immigration. To be a good American, they consider it very important to have been born in the United States (47 percent), to have lived in the United States most of life (40 percent) or to be a Christian (37 percent). Although most (59 percent) say they have a warm feeling about Latinos, 21 percent have a cold feeling toward that ethnic group (23 percent have that feeling about black people and 12 percent about Asians).

It is a group that seems to have been receptive to Trump's negative rhetoric about trade agreements. Although most continue to support increasing trade treaties, support has fallen compared to in 2012 (from 60 percent to 50 percent).

They rely on an individual's ability to make progress on their own and, unlike other Trump voters, they do not believe the system is manipulated to favor elites.

They tend to be older, more males than females, from the upper-middle class and with lower levels of education than the average American. This is the group that most follows Fox News and tends to rely almost exclusively on the conservative television network to receive political information.

2. American Preservationists (20 percent)

This is the group that believes the white race and traditional culture are the most important elements of American identity. In economic terms they tend to defend progressive and anti-elite positions.

Its members are those with the lowest incomes of all Trump voter groups and also have low levels of education. Although members of this group say that religion is "more important" to them, they also attend church the least regularly.

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They have the most people in Medicaid of any group, with the most disabilities and smokers. Although they watch a lot of television, they do not follow news channels like Fox News and are the least informed about politics.

It is the group with the most hostile positions toward minorities and in particular toward Latinos. In fact, their opinion of Latinos is more negative than that of other minorities. In order to be a real American, they consider it "very important" to have been born in the U.S. (69 percent), to have lived most of life in the U.S. (67 percent), to be a Christian (59 percent) or to be of European descent (47 percent).

A slight majority of this group believes that discrimination against whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against other groups. It is the most hostile group toward Latinos. Some 35 percent said they felt cold towards them, while 29 percent said they felt that way towards blacks and 24 percent towards Asians.

They defend obedience to authority and believe that the death penalty is not imposed enough.

3. The 'Freemarketeers' (25 percent)

The most important aspect of those in this group is that many of their political preferences are pitted against Trump's rhetoric and preferences of other Trump voter groups. They are in favor of reducing the size of government. They favor free trade and have moderate to liberal positions on immigration and race. This group's vote for Trump is less about enthusiasm for the Republican candidate and more a rejection of his rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Mostly they come from the West, they are men, they have high incomes and a lot of education, and they are the best informed of all of Trump's voter groups.

They are also more cosmopolitan, they are more likely to meet people from the LGBT community, and they watch TV and smoke less.

They are the Trump voters with the best opinion of Latinos - 76 percent have a warm feeling towards them - and members of other races. It is the group for which race is a less important element of their identity (only for 17 percent). Only two percent responded that it is very important to be of European descent to be a good American. Eighty-eight percent believe that diversity must be accepted to be a good American.

But despite being the most tolerant Trump supporters, 63 percent support the Muslim ban.

4. Anti-Elites (19 percent)

This group of Trump supporters tends to be economically progressive, believes that the system is corrupt and takes relatively more moderate positions on U.S. immigration, race and identity than other conservatives. They are also the group most likely to favor political compromise.

About 12 percent of respondents harbor cold feelings towards Latinos, while 13 percent feel the same way about Asians and 15 percent about blacks.

Most reject the "traditional" label. They are the most liberal about same-sex marriage and abortion.

This group is the closest to the Democrats but takes less liberal positions on legal immigration and the Muslim immigration ban. According to Ekins, the candidates of the Democratic Party who moderate their positions in immigration could win these votes. A quarter of them voted for Obama in the 2012 election.

5. The Disengaged (five percent)

This is a small group that does not know much about politics but trusts Trump as the man with the ability to fix problems. What they do know is that they feel alienated from institutions and elites and are skeptical about immigration.

They are voters who do not pay a lot of attention to politics. Most respond "I do not know" to questions about climate change, free trade or taxes. As with American preservationists, Latinos are the most rejected minority. Some 23 percent have cold feelings towards them, 18 percent feel this way towards blacks and six percent towards Asians.

They are young, mostly women and their education and income levels are moderate. They are also less religious than other Trump voter groups.

"Solidarity" with Latinos and Muslims

A number of earlier studies claimed that racism was the engine that drove Trump to power, but according to Ekins's study, the vision of Trump voters about race and American identity varies widely. The study does not perceive a dramatic change in the perception of minorities with respect to data from the same survey in 2012.

Ekins and others have warned that the fact that most racists support Trump does not mean that Trump's sympathizers are mostly racist. But the fact that they voted for Trump suggests they did not care about being associated with the candidate's more intolerant base or his hostile rhetoric against minorities.

What united Trump's voters was his rejection of Hillary Clinton and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (but not hostility against immigrants), support for the immigration ban on Muslims, and the perception that their economic status had worsened over the previous year.

For many Trump voters, rejection of undocumented immigrants is explained by increased security concerns, according to Ekins. "Where we saw a change over 2012 is in concerns over the Islamic State (ISIS) group and terrorism," says Ekins. "Trump benefited from increased support after the Paris bombings of November 2015."

Trump's more racist voters, called "American preservationists" by Ekins, have a more unfavorable view of Latinos than other minorities such as Asians or Blacks, but overall the image of Latinos has actually improved since 2012.

"Contrary to the negative things Trump said about Latinos, the view of American voters on Latinos improved either out of solidarity or because they do not want to be associated with racists," according to Ekins. A similar pattern is observed in opinions about Muslims.