



# **Stranger in My Own Country:** Populism & Nativism in America

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A Summary of Initial Research Findings

January 2017



# STRANGER IN MY OWN COUNTRY

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

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Stranger in My Own Country is the first report in a series seeking to better understand and respond to nativist attitudes among American voters. This report has been prepared by a Republican-led group of researchers and published by Democracy Fund Voice, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping America build a stronger, healthier democracy.

The initial findings described in this report are the product of three pieces of research focused on the attitudes of strong supporters of now-President Donald Trump during the 2016 election cycle. First, hour-long, in-depth interviews were conducted in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Then, a national public opinion poll that oversampled whites without a college degree was used to quantify attitudes observed in the earlier interviews. Finally, the team tested how voters respond to digital and print media to see what kinds of messages could impact attitudes towards Muslim Americans.



# STRANGER IN MY OWN COUNTRY

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

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The results conveyed in this presentation are by no means definitive, but rather the first step in our effort to understand the current positions of the electorate. Over the coming months, Democracy Fund Voice will continue to ask difficult questions and support the efforts of Republican researchers and leaders to engage with voters in ways that address underlying anxieties, frustrations, and concerns, resulting in greater unity and understanding among an increasingly diverse America.

This research was collected with the goal of understanding the factors that are motivating nativism, racism, and other cultural anxieties among the American electorate. The findings document attitudes and perspectives that are sensitive and which do not reflect the views of Democracy Fund Voice or other involved organizations.

In addition to learning about the attitudes of strong supporters of Donald Trump, this report sought to understand whether it may be possible to increase tolerance for other points of view. The report concludes on a positive note with the preliminary finding that targeted messages can significantly influence nativist attitudes in ways that may help fewer Americans feel like strangers in their own country.

Over the coming months, Democracy Fund Voice will continue to support efforts to understand and engage voters in order to produce a country with greater unity.



# RESEARCH TEAM

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**PROJECT LEAD:** Mindy Finn - Civic entrepreneur, former strategist for RNC, NRSC, Mitt Romney, and George W. Bush

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**RESEARCH LEAD:** Alex Lundry - Co-founder and Chief Data Scientist at Deep Root Analytics, ran analytics for Mitt Romney and Jeb Bush

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**PROJECT ASSOCIATE:** Kelsey Jarrett - Former member of the Google+ Political Partnerships Team, former digital strategist for NRSC and RNC

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## RESEARCHERS:



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# RESEARCH TEAM

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Edge is a marketing research firm with expertise in exploratory and formative research. We help corporations, nonprofits, and government clients from Citrix to Ocean Conservancy to the CDC examine their assumptions and listen actively to their audiences. Edge brings innovation and techniques from the consumer research world to issue-focused research studies. Our team employed a variety of interviewing and listening techniques to understand the reasons behind these voters' words, including metaphor elicitation and exploring themes of American identity.



Echelon Insights merges traditional opinion research, data analytics, and digital intelligence to help clients optimize all aspects of persuasion: message, audience, and delivery. Our unique mix of skills at the forefront of opinion research and digital technology allows us to apply a broader range of tools to answer the most essential research questions. The Echelon team brings experience working for presidential campaigns, Fortune 500 corporations, and leading nonprofits, and has included high-level interviewing and in-depth study of elite audiences. Echelon is based in Alexandria, VA.



Emily Ekins is a Research Fellow at the Cato Institute, a non-partisan think tank, which promotes public policy based on individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace.



# METHODS



## QUALITATIVE - IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

- 19 in-depth interviews in Pittsburgh, PA and Wilmington, NC targeting voters who supported Donald Trump or leaned toward supporting him
- One-on-one setting and metaphor technique designed to draw out the thinking of “disaffected” voters
- August 18 & September 22, 2016



## QUANTITATIVE - NATIONAL SURVEY

- Online survey of 2,000 registered voters nationwide
- N=1,200 oversample of whites without a college degree
- October 6-9, 2016



## QUANTITATIVE - MEDIA TEST

- Online survey of 6,700 American adults nationwide
- November 3-6, 2016
- Exposure to different creative pieces followed by survey on key attitudinal measures



# DEFINITIONS

## DEGREE OF TRUMP SUPPORT

**Interviewees:** Voters who participated in the in-depth interviews. These participants fell on a scale of Trump primary supporters to those who were open to voting for him in the general election, but had not decided at the time of the interview. They tended to be lower education and lower income voters.

**Trump Primary Voters:** These are voters who self-identified in the survey as voting for Trump in the primary election, also referred to as “**Trump GOP**” in graphs representing the data from the survey.

**Non-Trump Primary GOP:** These are voters represented in the survey that said they did not vote for Trump in the primary. Their general election vote is unknown.

**Non-Trump General GOP:** In the media test, these are voters that expressed they had no intention of voting for Donald Trump in the general election.

**Strong Trump Voters:** These are voters represented in the media test who rated Trump between 80-100 on a favorability scale of 1-100 (100 being most favorable).

**Weak Trump Voters:** These are voters represented in the media test who rated Trump less than 80 on a favorability scale of 1-100 (100 being most favorable).



# KEY FINDINGS



Many Trump supporters in our research feel a nostalgia for a country that may have existed, but that many have never experienced - "Make America Great Again" worked for a reason.



Many Trump supporters in our research have a great fear of decline. They feel alienated from government, community, and the "new" America with which they don't feel comfortable.



Ideals of the melting pot, the American Dream, and American generosity of spirit continue to exist among all Americans. The strength of these ideals is being tested by the current climate.



Many Americans surveyed expressed positive views of immigrants' work ethic, but have concerns that immigrants are no longer willing to learn English, feel patriotic, or assimilate into American culture.



Concern about Muslims is distinct from concerns about racial tensions, and it exists outside of class, education, party, or income. Muslims are perceived as a threat to many respondents' personal values and way of life.

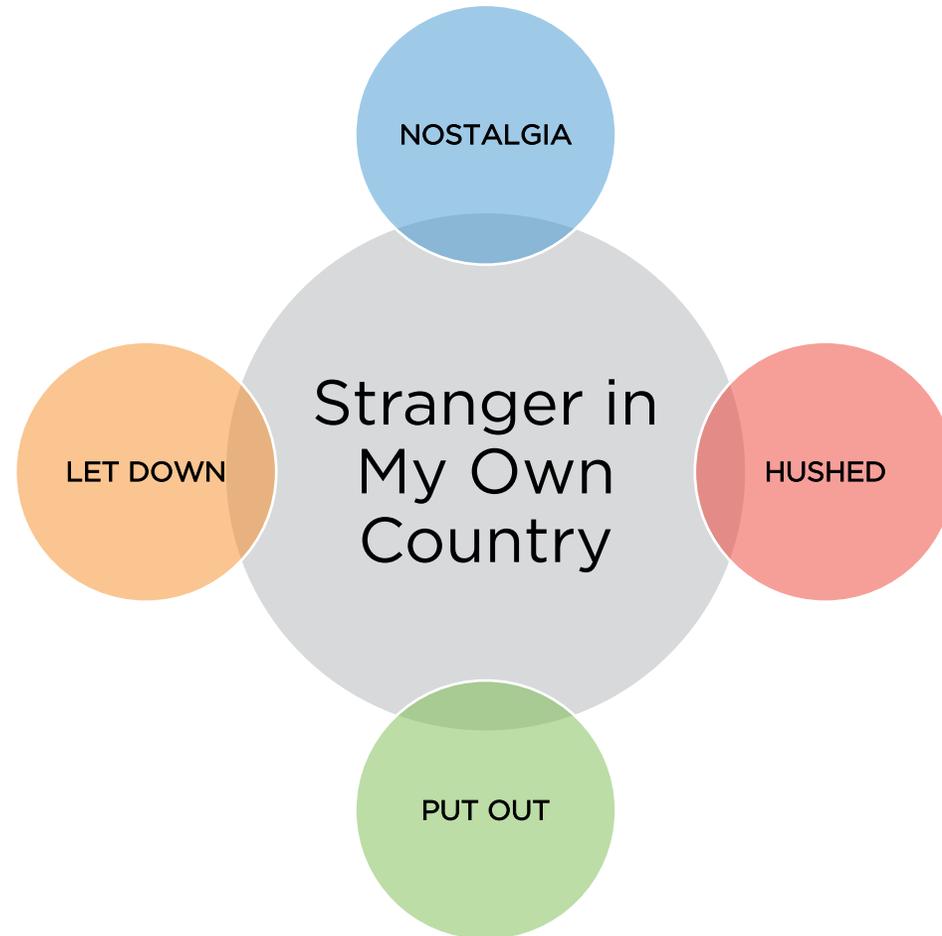


**The right message can create statistically significant movement on key attitudes among the most concerned and anxious groups.**



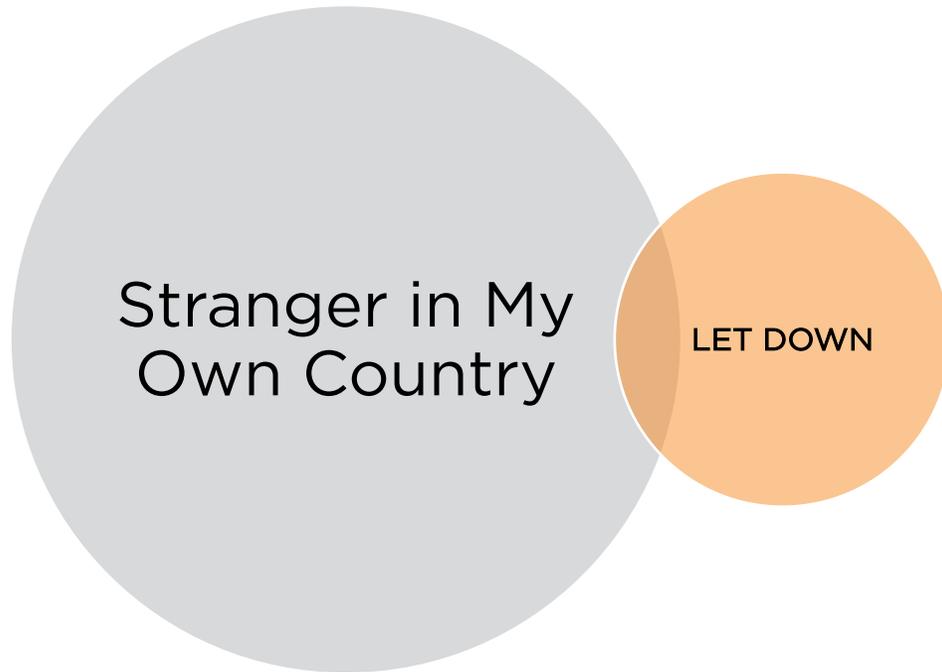
# SOME VOTERS FEEL LIKE STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY

Discussions with qualitative interviewees broadly aligned around four key feelings, each of which contributed to their growing sense of disconnection from their country.





# SOME VOTERS FEEL LIKE STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY



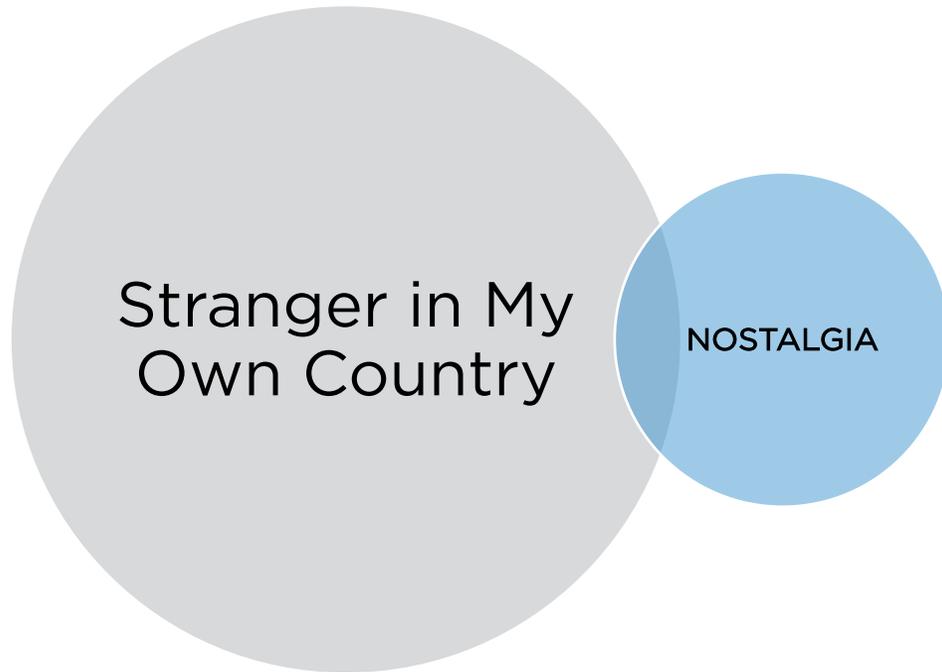
Interviewees feel disappointment at many levels - government officials, community support, and society

“People today are more selfish... I want things to get better, not worse, but it feels like it’s getting worse.” *Sean, PA*

“Congress doesn’t do anything anymore. They just butt heads on everything, and we make no progress.” *Steve, NC*



# SOME VOTERS FEEL LIKE STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY



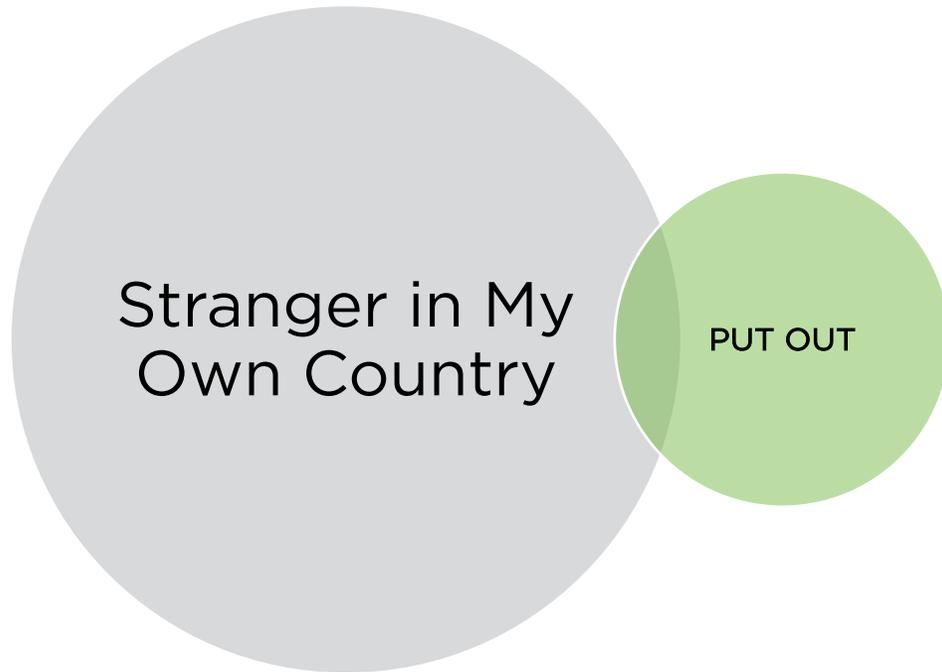
Interviewees feel nostalgia for the past, even if they hadn't experienced it first-hand

“It was just a different time back then. I think people, I think things were better back then.” *Corinne, PA*

“We used to be the most powerful country... We used to be #1, and we may be #3 now.” *Brittany, NC*



# SOME VOTERS FEEL LIKE STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY



Interviewees feel burdened by changing demographics, a shaky economy, and new social norms



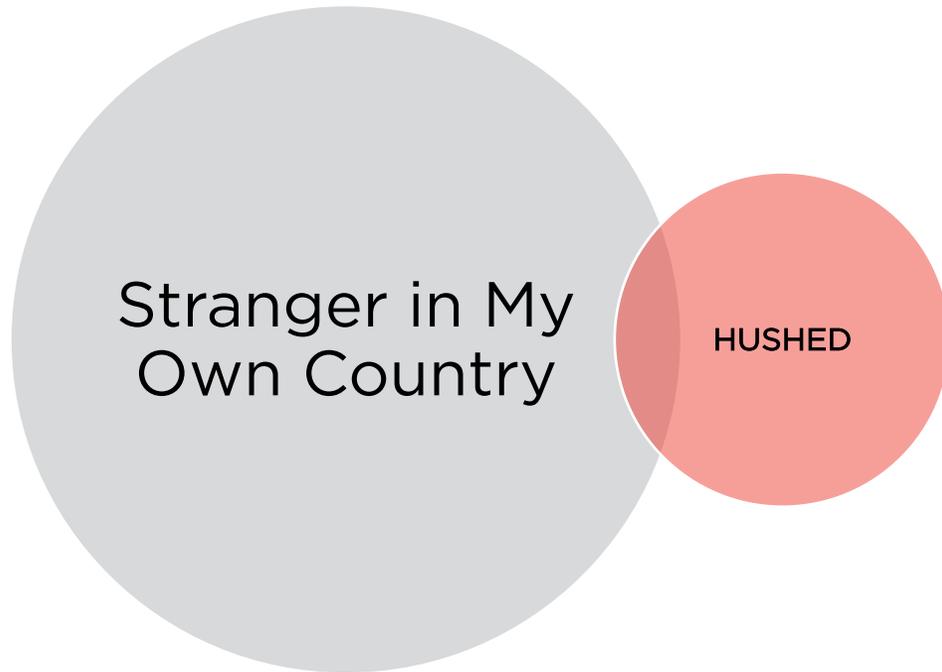
“Black women are coming up faster than a lot of whites. It’s getting to be reverse discrimination.”  
*Haley, PA*



“I hate sounding like a racist or bigot or anything but, for instance, the Hispanic population, now they do a lot of the construction and it’s been years since I’ve been into it, but I know there used to be a problem with getting undercut with the Hispanic immigration.” *Rodney, NC*



# SOME VOTERS FEEL LIKE STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY



Interviewees feel the government isn't listening and people today are overly sensitive

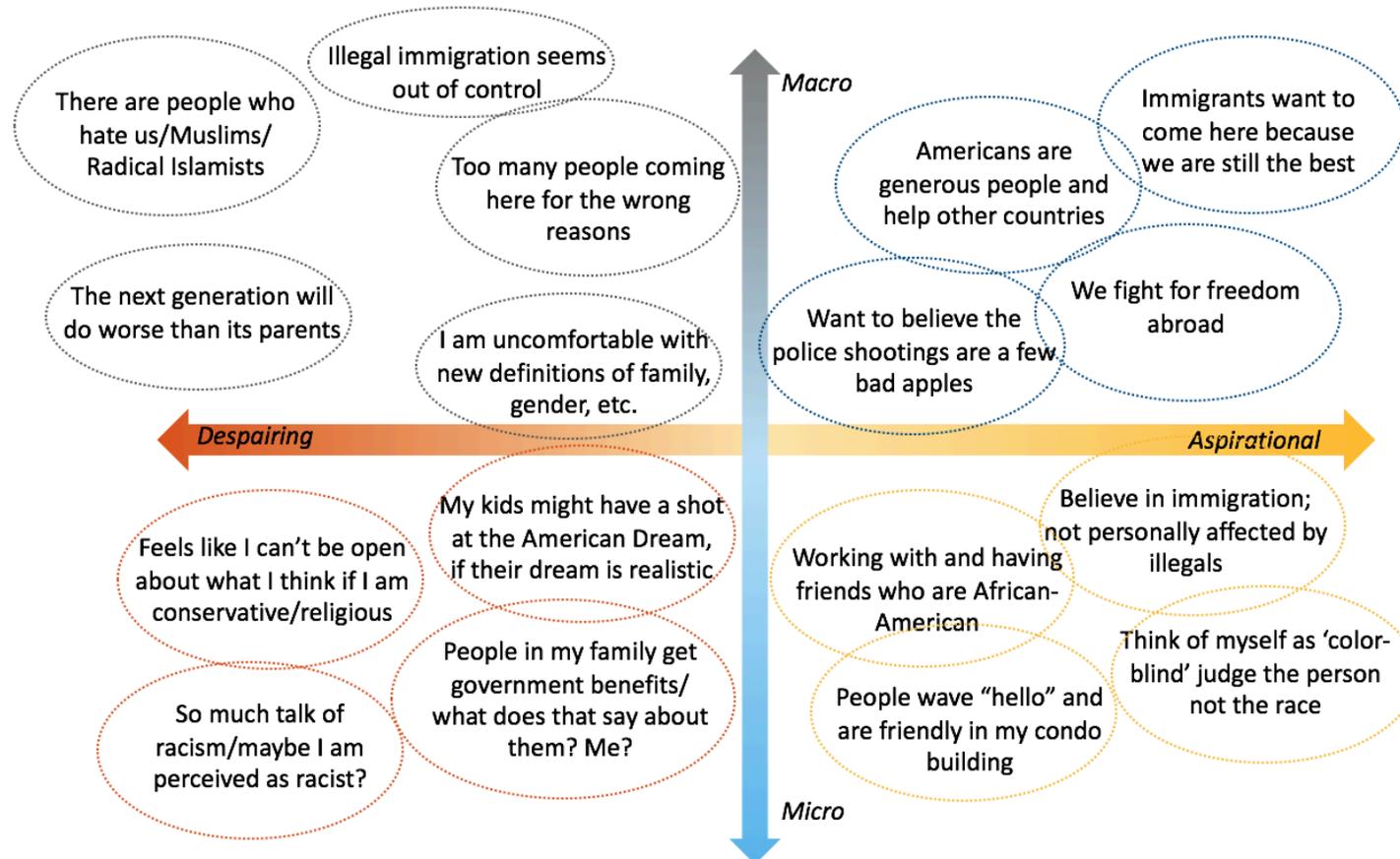
“I’m hoping – I pray, and I hope – that we will have a voice, but I just see all this corruption in our politics, in the government.” *Rebecca, NC*

“I think people have to get a grip on themselves before we can be happy again... There are things that we’d say in construction, if you said in an office you’d be fired or sued... Now, people take offense at what you say.” *Ralph, NC*



# DISCUSSIONS REVEAL DIMENSIONS OF VOTER DISCONNECT

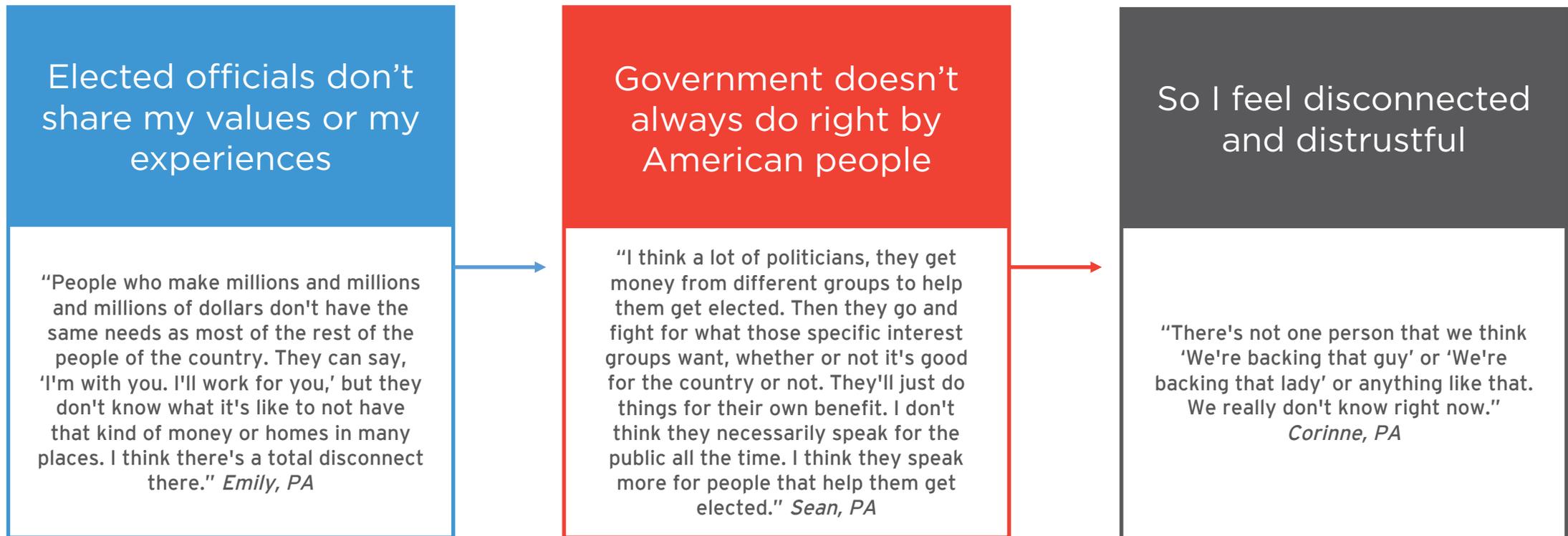
Interviewees are struggling with trends, beliefs, and experiences that push them outside their comfort zones or don't align with their experiences, and can be arrayed along two different dimensions: those that are despairing to more aspirational attitudes, and micro-level considerations to macro ones.





# SOME VOTERS FEEL DISPIRITED ABOUT GOVERNMENT

Interviewees' critiques extend to both Democratic and Republican leaders.

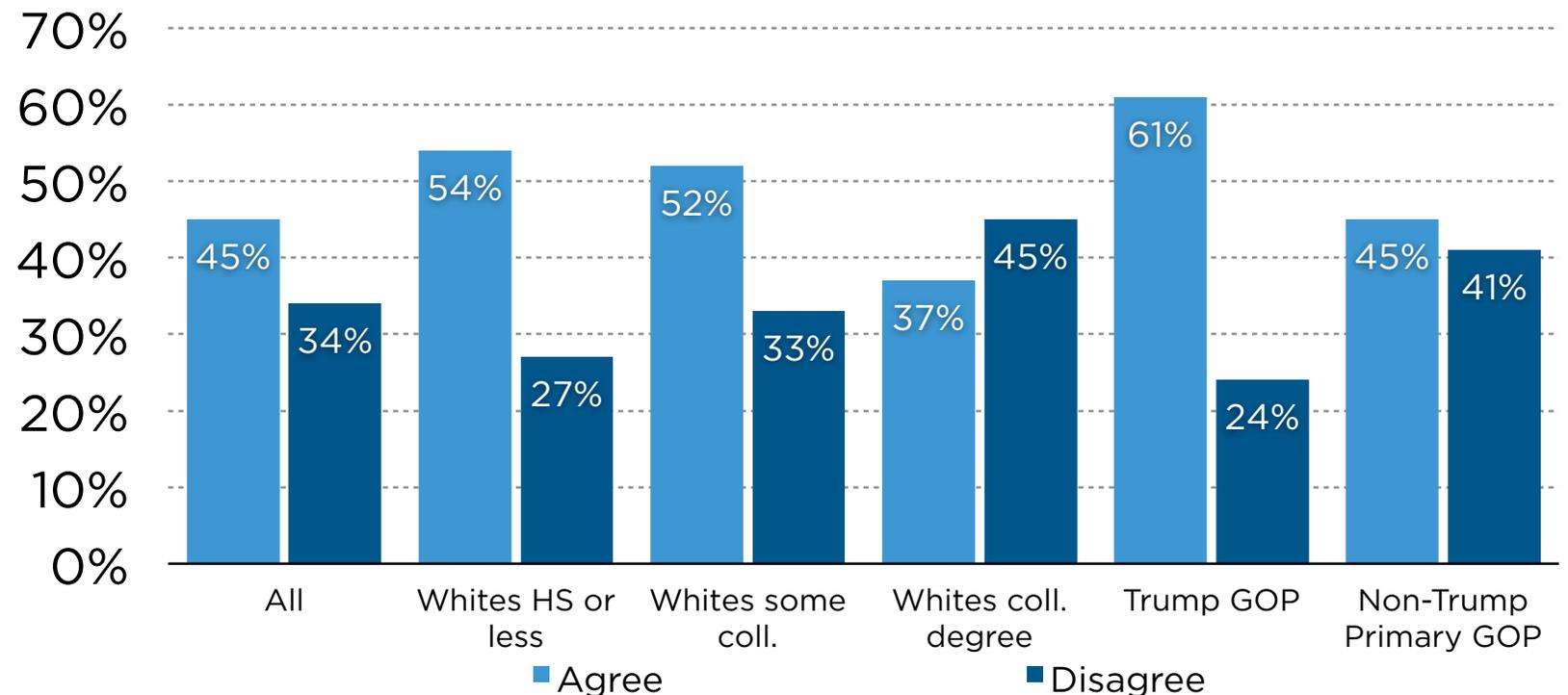


# SOME VOTERS ARE STRUGGLING TO GET AHEAD

Concerns from qualitative interviews are mirrored by survey respondents.

Strong support for this notion also distinguishes Trump primary voters.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "People who work hard and do the right thing can't get ahead in America anymore."

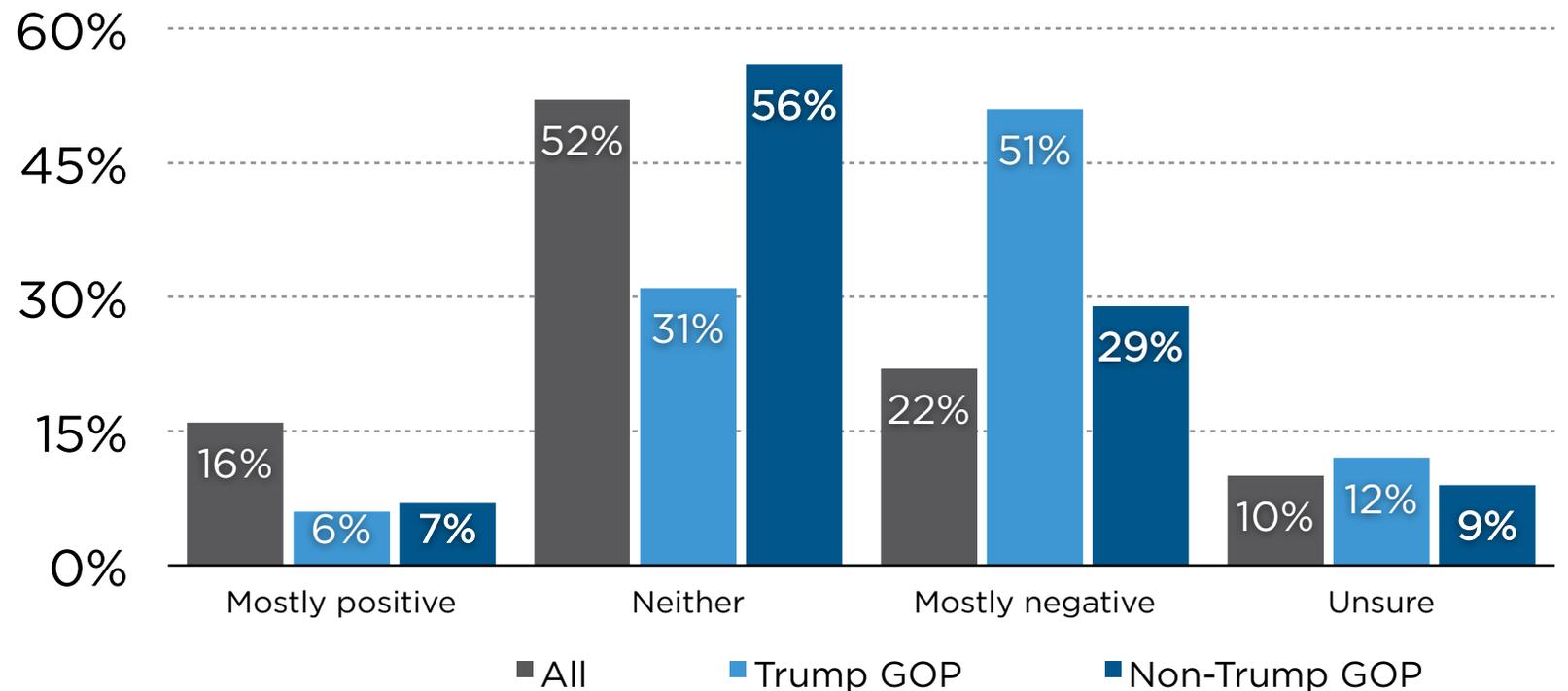




# TRUMP PRIMARY VOTERS CONCERNED ABOUT MAJORITY-MINORITY AMERICA

Majority of Trump primary voters are mostly **negative** on the idea, vs. **29%** of voters who didn't support Trump in the primary and **22%** of Americans surveyed.

Q. The United States could be a majority-minority country in a few years, meaning that racial or ethnic minorities may make up a majority of the population. How does that make you feel?



# Four Aspects of Cultural Anxiety

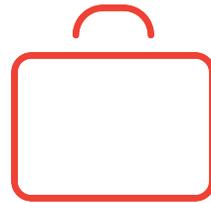
# FOUR ASPECTS OF CULTURAL ANXIETY

## HOW VOTERS EXPRESSED CULTURAL ANXIETY & NATIVISM IN THE 2016 ELECTION

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**AMERICANISM:**  
Losing what makes  
America special and  
unique



**IMMIGRATION:**  
Losing control of  
our borders



**RACE:**  
Fear that demographic  
change is for the  
worse



**ISLAM:**  
Concern we are letting  
people hostile to us  
into the country



Four Aspects of Cultural Anxiety:

# AMERICANISM



# AMERICANISM

## What it means to interviewees...

team spirit  
loyalty

friendship  
shared experience

coming together  
-or-  
moving apart



“When I was growing up we didn’t lock the doors. As long as you were back for supper, we played all over.”

*Sue, NC*



“This is about how divisive [Ferguson] is, and what has since become of it, and what vitriol there is now being played out in politics and the media.”

*Tom, PA*



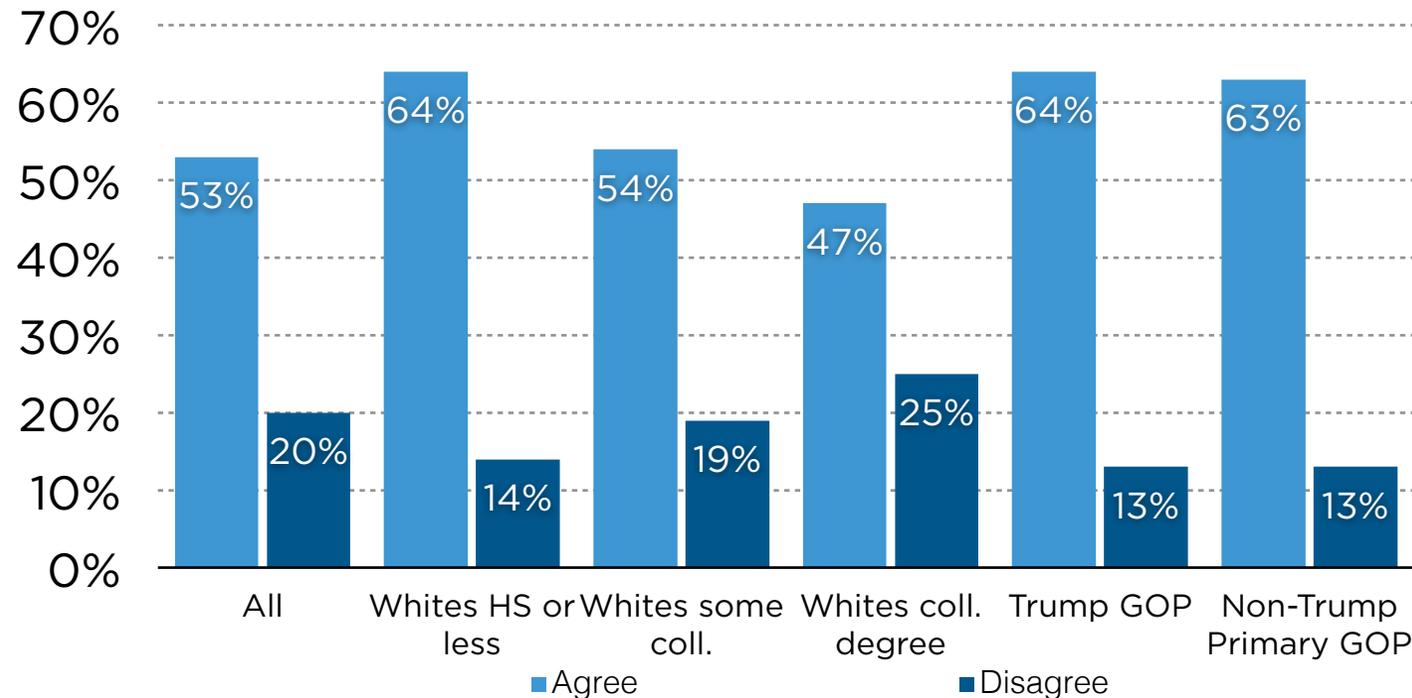
# AMERICANISM

## SOCIETAL CHANGE IS CHALLENGING MANY VOTERS

Challenges emerge in survey data.

**Strong agreement from Republicans who did and did not support Trump in the Republican primary. Whites with a high school education or less agree at similar rates.**

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Our society is changing so fast that it can be difficult to keep up."



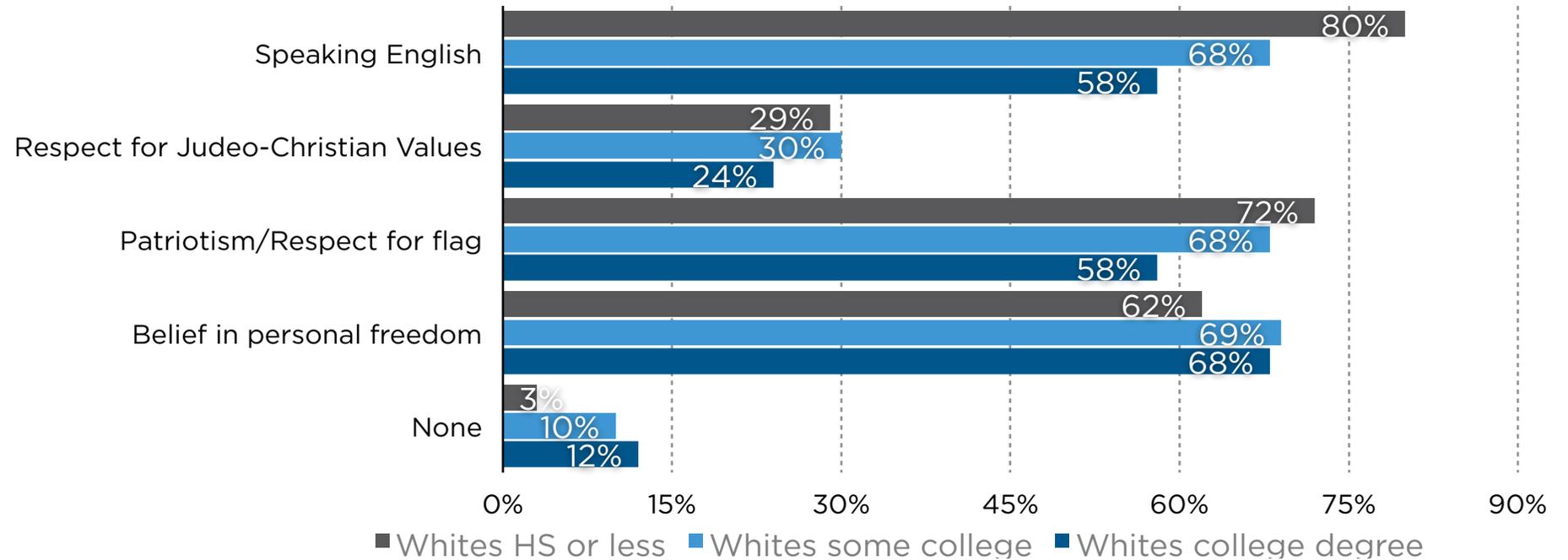


# AMERICANISM

## SOCIETAL CHANGE IS CHALLENGING MANY VOTERS

Among white voters surveyed, patriotism, speaking English, and a belief in personal freedom stand out as requirements to be an American.

Q. Which of the following do you think should be requirements for someone to be an American? Please check all that apply.



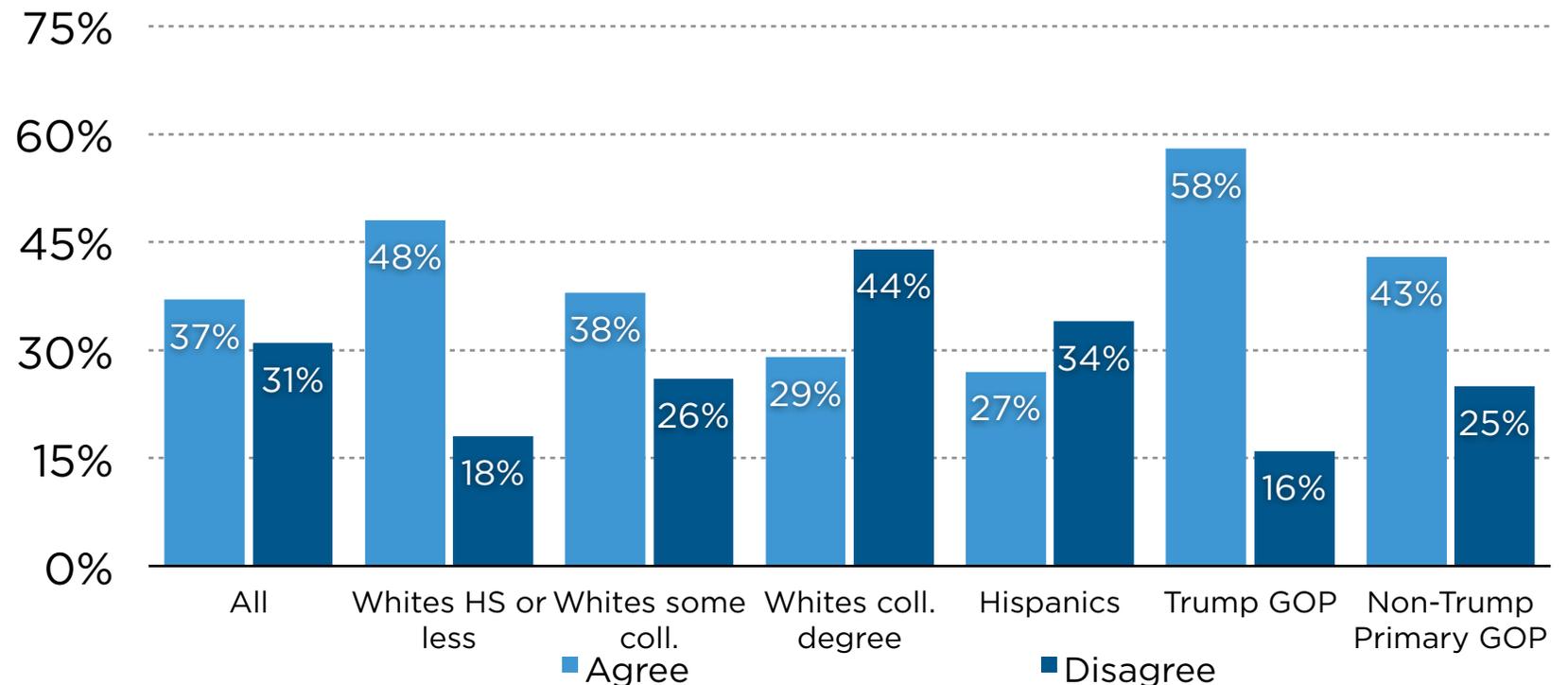


# AMERICANISM

## OVER ONE-THIRD FAVOR IDEOLOGICAL TEST FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS

More than **one-third** of voters **support** an ideological test in order to immigrate to America. Whites with **college degrees disagree**, while **lesser educated whites agree**.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "We should have new immigrants to America take an ideological test to make sure they align with American values."





Four Aspects of Cultural Anxiety:

**IMMIGRATION**



# IMMIGRATION

## What it means to interviewees...

history  
heroic acts

diversity  
assimilation

new threats  
shrinking resources



"On the one hand it would be people like my great-grandparents that **came from Germany** in the 1860s. They had to be drug-free, they had to say certain things in English, and they worked... [Syrians] They're the people, **they hate America**, and I would not bring those 500,000... **Look what's happening in Germany** and some of these places where they've **opened their doors up** and **they've totally ruined.**" *Brad, PA*



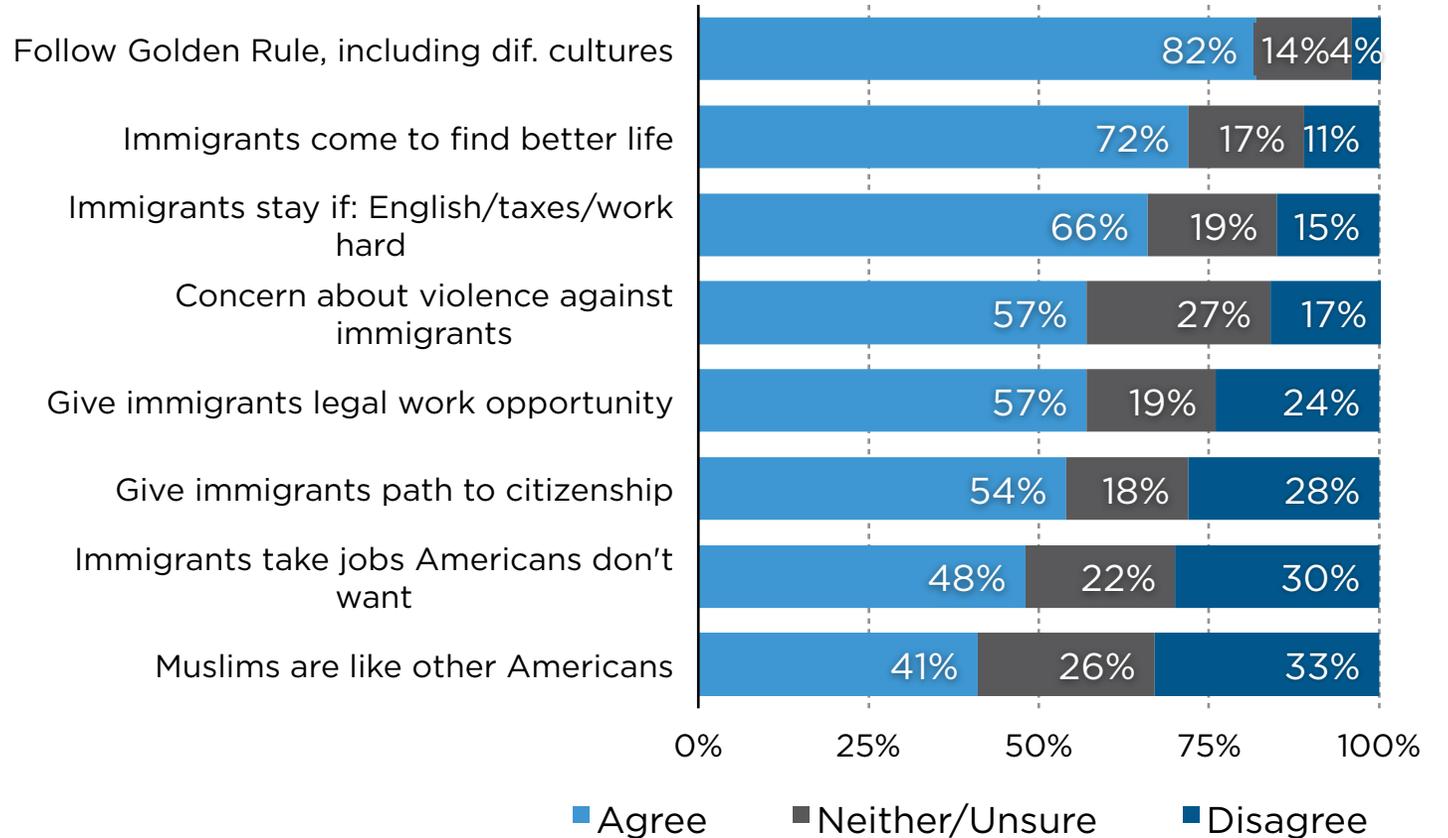
# IMMIGRATION

## VOTERS MAINTAIN OPENNESS TOWARD NEW IMMIGRANTS

Americans surveyed are characterized by **generosity of spirit** towards new immigrants. They think even illegal immigrants come here seeking a **better life**, and believe that more can come, provided **certain criteria are met** like **hard work** and **speaking English**.

Q. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement?\*

\*Among all surveyed





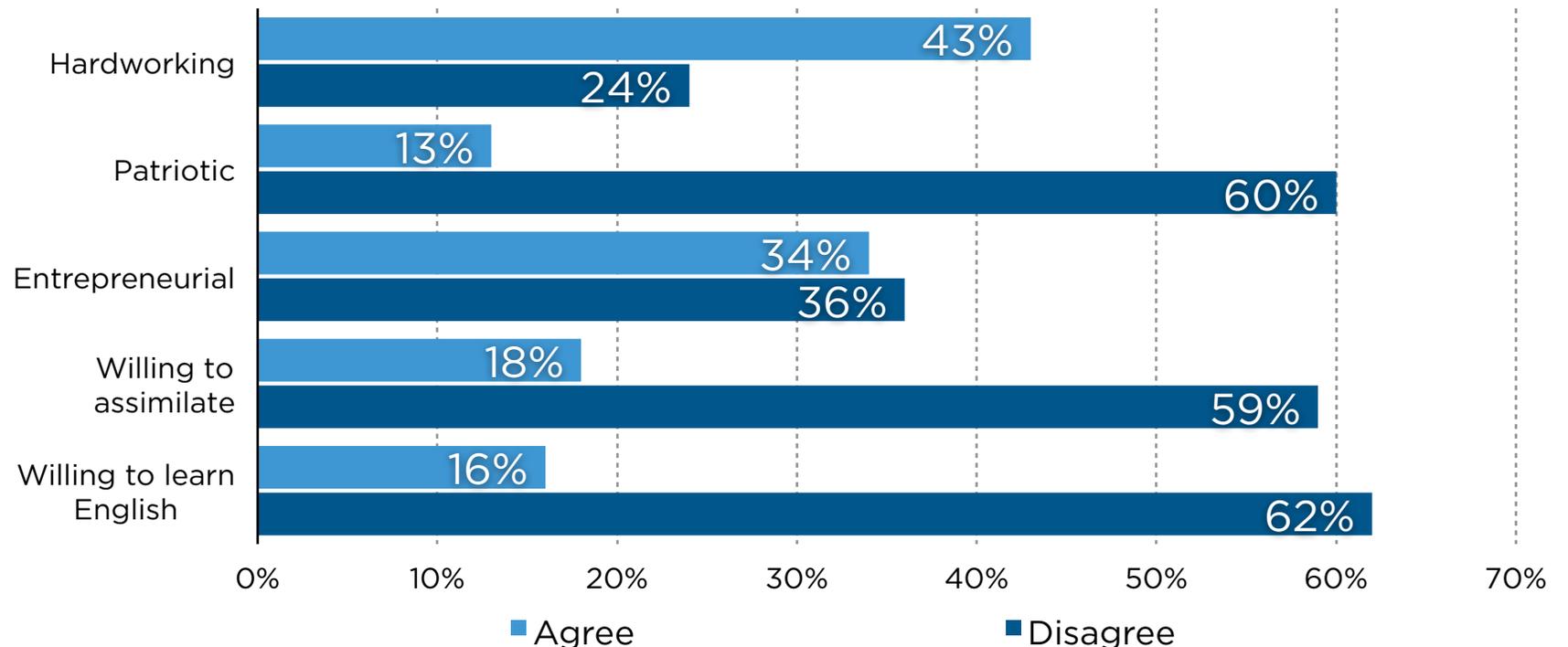
# IMMIGRATION

## TRUMP PRIMARY VOTERS SURVEYED ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ASSIMILATION BY IMMIGRANTS

Despite believing immigrants are **hardworking**, Trump primary voters do not believe immigrants are **willing to assimilate** or **feel patriotic** towards America.

### Q. Are immigrants today...\*

\*Among Trump supporters



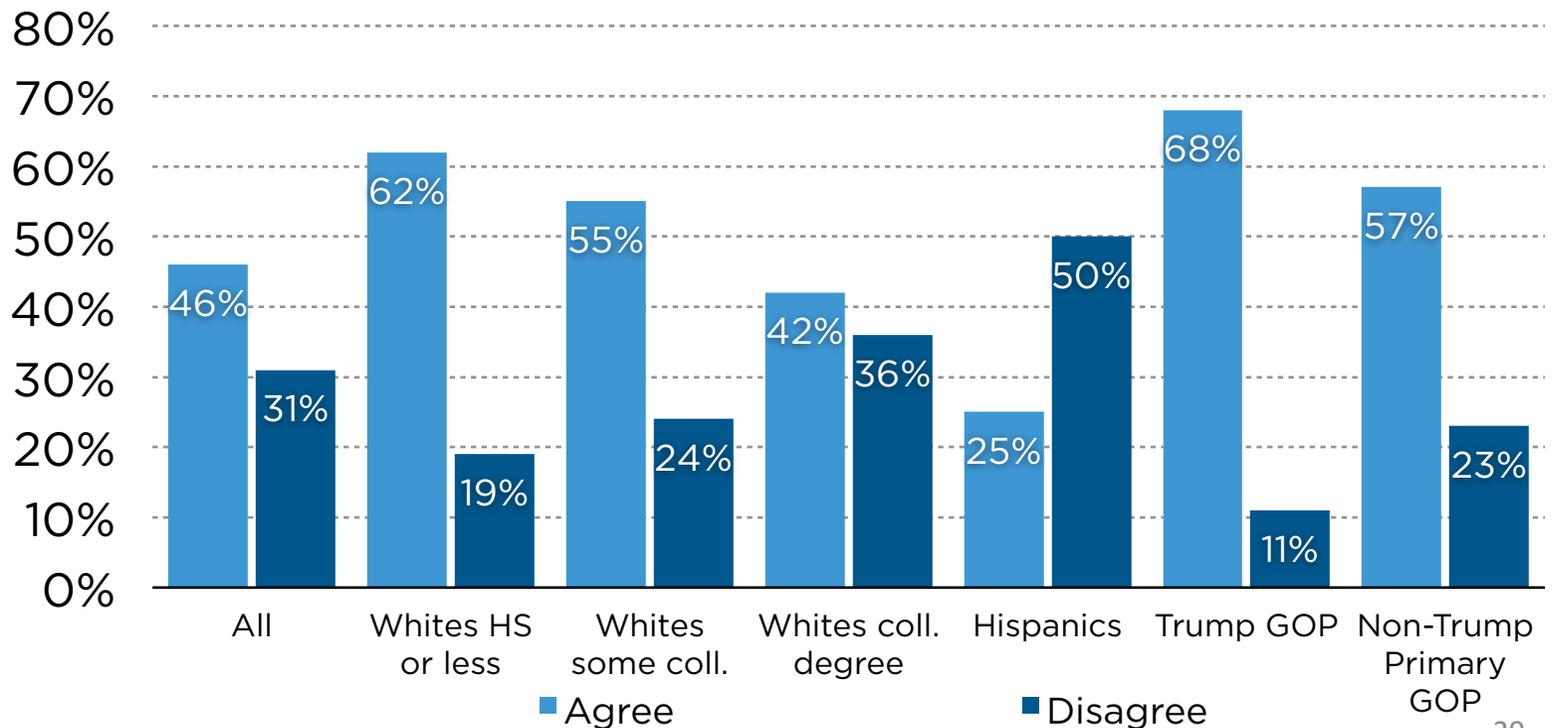


# IMMIGRATION

## AMERICANS SHOW DISCOMFORT WITH IMMIGRANTS WHO DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH

Overall, Americans surveyed feel bothered by a **15-point** margin. Trump primary voters feel bothered by a **6-to-1** margin.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "I am bothered when I come into contact with immigrants who don't speak English."



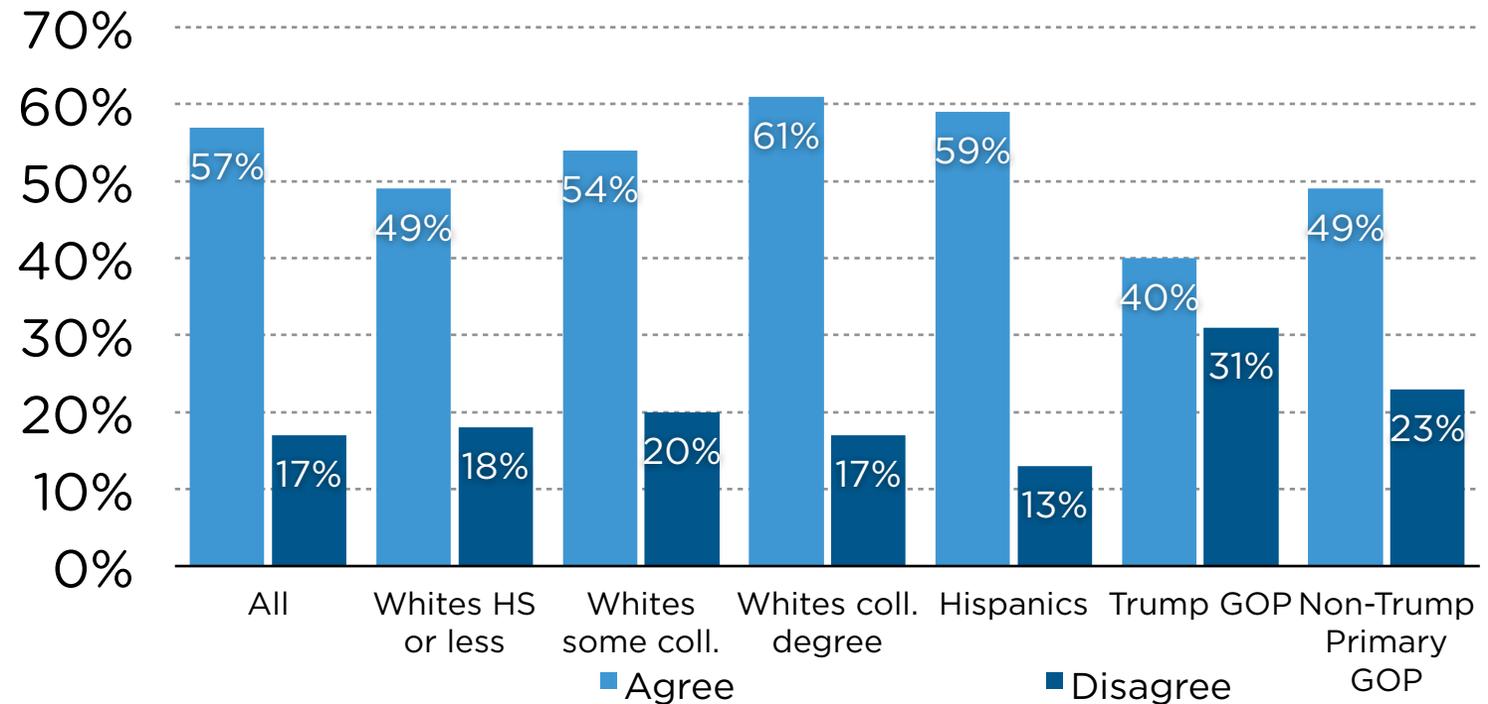


# IMMIGRATION

## VOTERS ACROSS THE BOARD ARE CONCERNED ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT WILL LEAD TO VIOLENCE

**Two-fifths** of Trump primary voters are concerned about violence against immigrants, but this is **17% below** the national average of all Americans surveyed.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "I am concerned that current anti-immigrant sentiment will lead to more violence and hate crimes against immigrant communities."



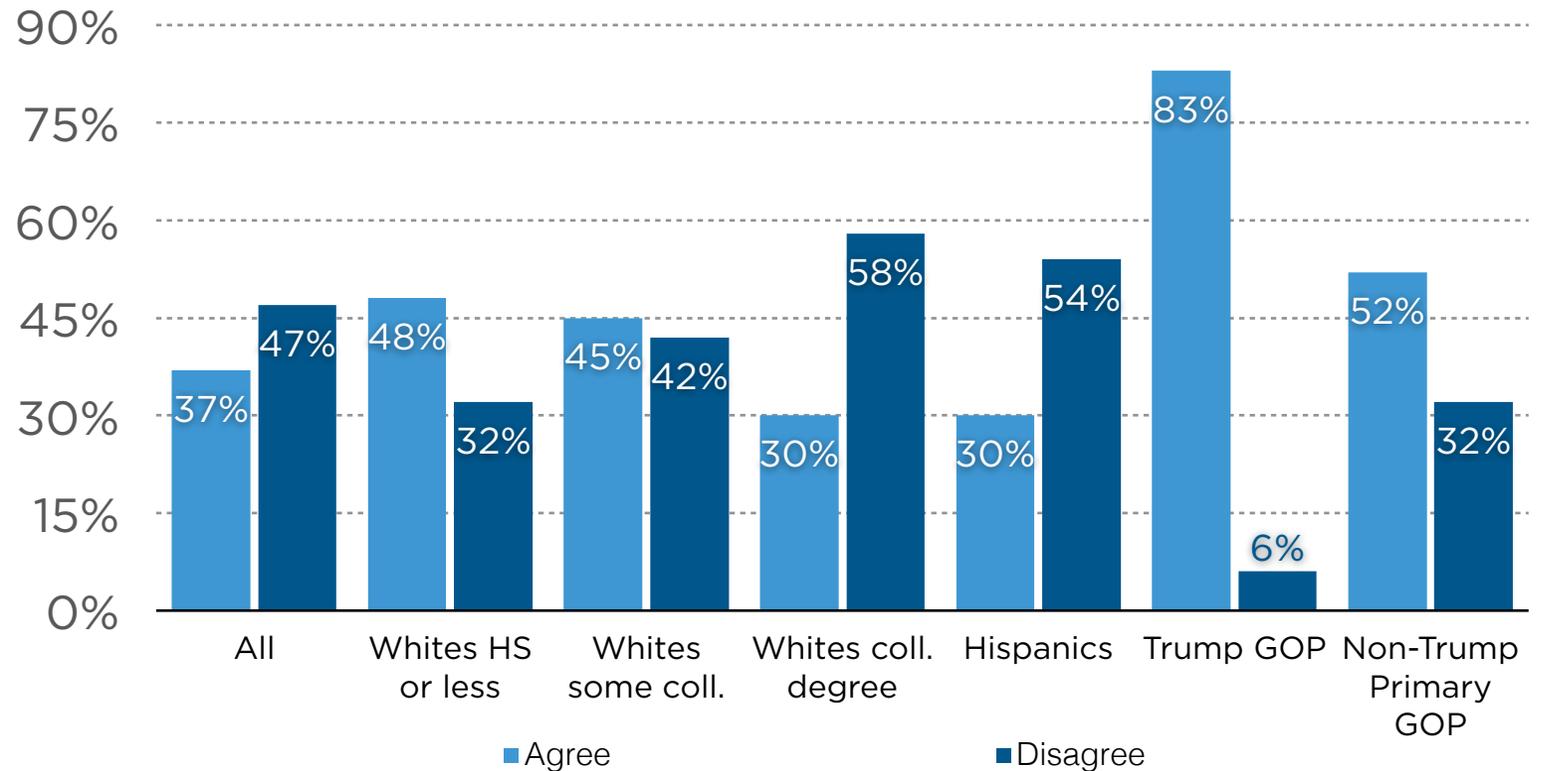


# IMMIGRATION

## A BORDER WALL: POLICY OR POLITICAL STATEMENT?

Trump's signature immigration policy is **supported by his primary voters 83%-6%**, while other Republicans only **support it 52%-32%** and Americans overall **reject it 37%-47%**.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "We should build a wall between Mexico and the United States."





Four Aspects of Cultural Anxiety:

**RACE**



# RACE

## UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW TO ACT, WHAT TO SAY, AND WHEN TO SPEAK FREELY

Interviewees expressed anxiety about not knowing how to act, what to say and when it was appropriate to speak freely in today's society.

Racial Progress

“I’m glad, I am happy about this [desegregated restrooms]. You can go in there whether you’re white, black, yellow. It’s important because **we’re all the same, that we’re all getting treated the same.**”  
*Haley, PA*

“In my family we have standard white Americans, not any other race in my family... All my friends are white. Six years ago I became best friends with someone and she is black... **She’s my very best friend in the whole world...and my mom [says], ‘I don’t want you to be friends with her.’ I said, ‘She’s like a sister to me,’ and it’s really bizarre.**” *Brittany, NC*

“**We didn’t allow blacks to be a part of society. We put them over here and we kept them over there until 1960 and I really don’t know how that can be repaired.** That’s the way I feel. I think we just set them over here and didn’t allow them to be educated and move with society and I don’t know what we can do to change it.” *Ralph, NC*

But Prejudices Remain

“They accused me of saying that all blacks are alike and all blacks are lazy. No. I’m not prejudiced, honey!... They terminated me and I appealed it. They said, ‘If there’s only been one, then that would have been fine. But, there was three.’ One of the reports was by a white girl. **She says I said, ‘It’s nice to see a white face,’ which I didn’t. I said ‘pale face.’ Did I mean ‘white face?’ Yes, but that was not condemning the blacks, okay?**” *Haley, PA*

“Even if you’re not a racist, there’s always going to be... You’re going to be exposed to that. **Even though I was raised, don’t date black, I’m not a racist.** If you said, ‘oh, my husband’s black,’ **I’m not going to change how I feel about the person even though I’m not for it.**” *Brittany, NC*

“**I think the black people have to... I think they have to get over it and get on with life.**” *Ralph, NC*

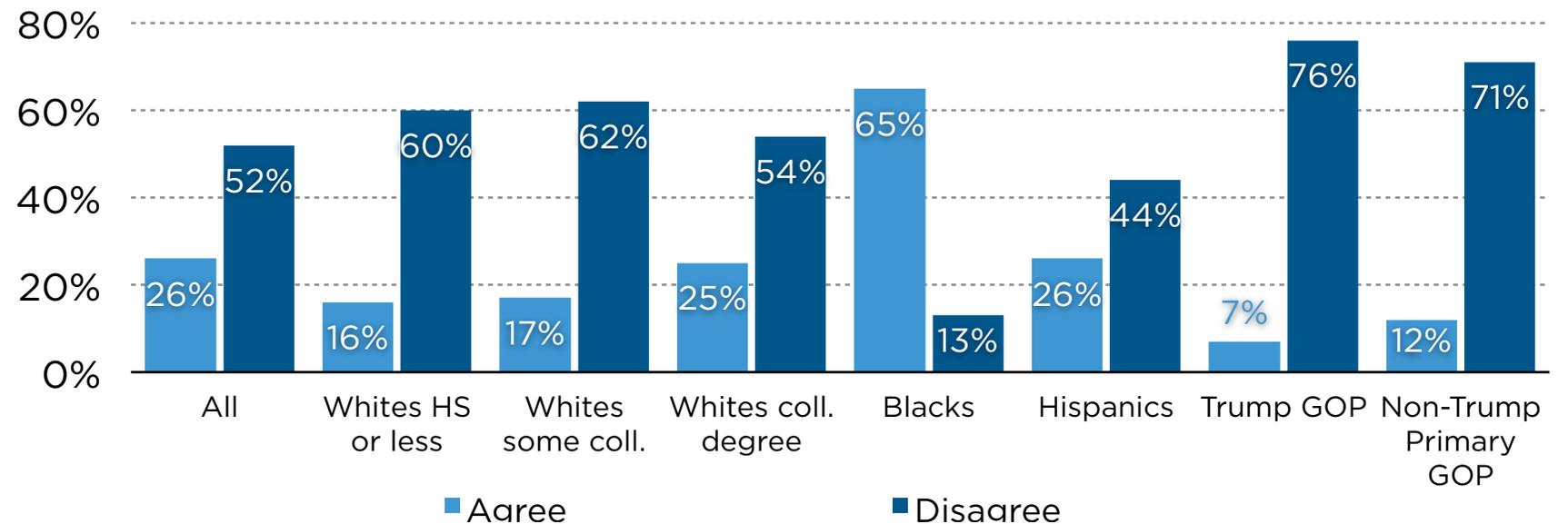


# RACE

## PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WHO SHOULD DECIDE: WHAT IS RACISM?

White voters surveyed across all levels of education **disagree** that minority groups are **more qualified** to judge **what is and isn't racist**, despite having faced **more racism** personally.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Because minority groups like black people have faced disproportionate racism in the past, they're better qualified than white people to judge what is and isn't racist."

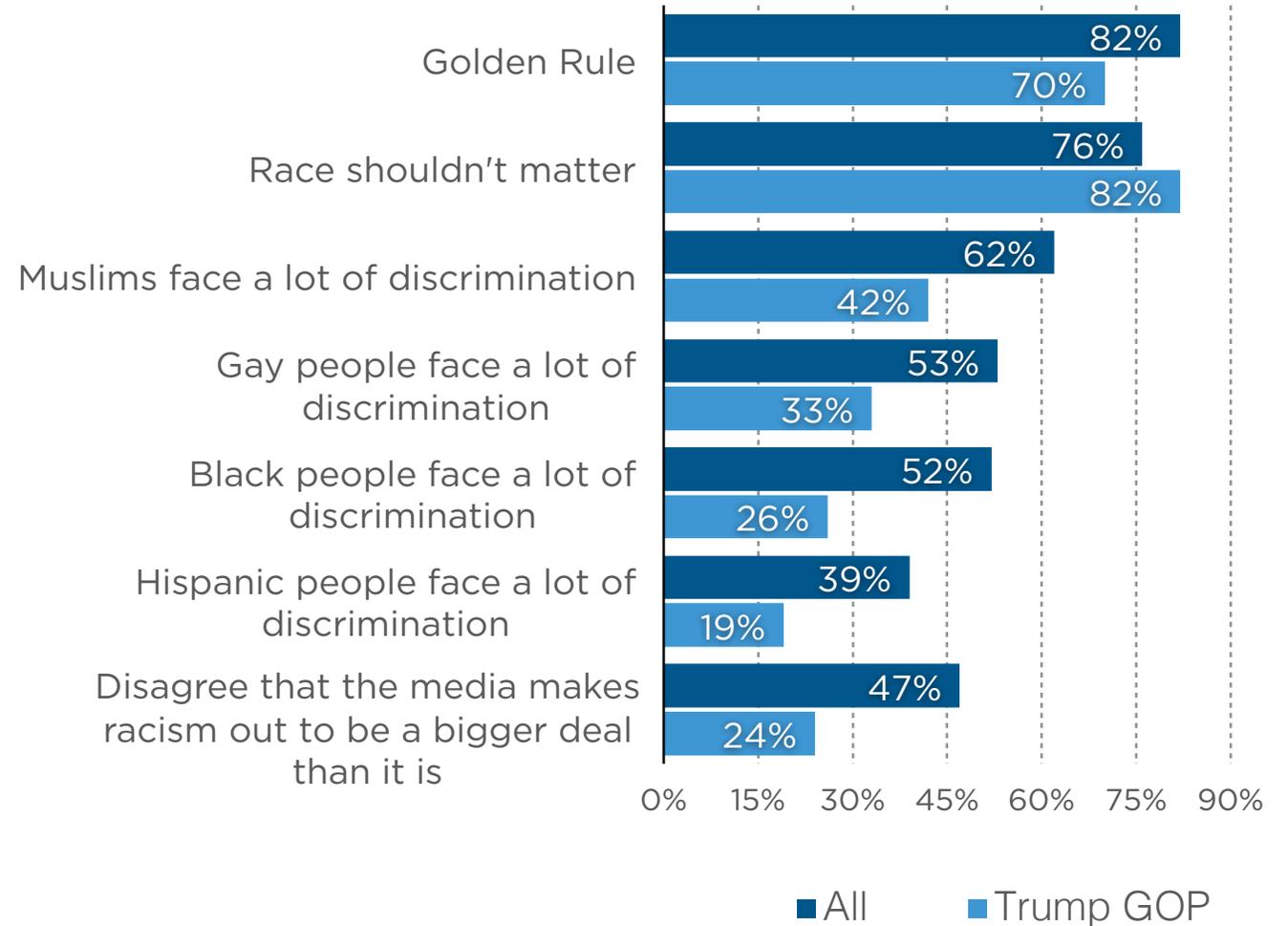




# RACE

MAJORITIES OF AMERICANS REJECT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE AND ETHNICITY, AND SEE THAT DISCRIMINATION EXISTS AND IS A PROBLEM.

Majorities of Americans surveyed agree that we should **follow the Golden Rule** and treat others as we'd like to be treated, including people of different races, cultures, and countries; and that **race shouldn't matter** as much as it does.



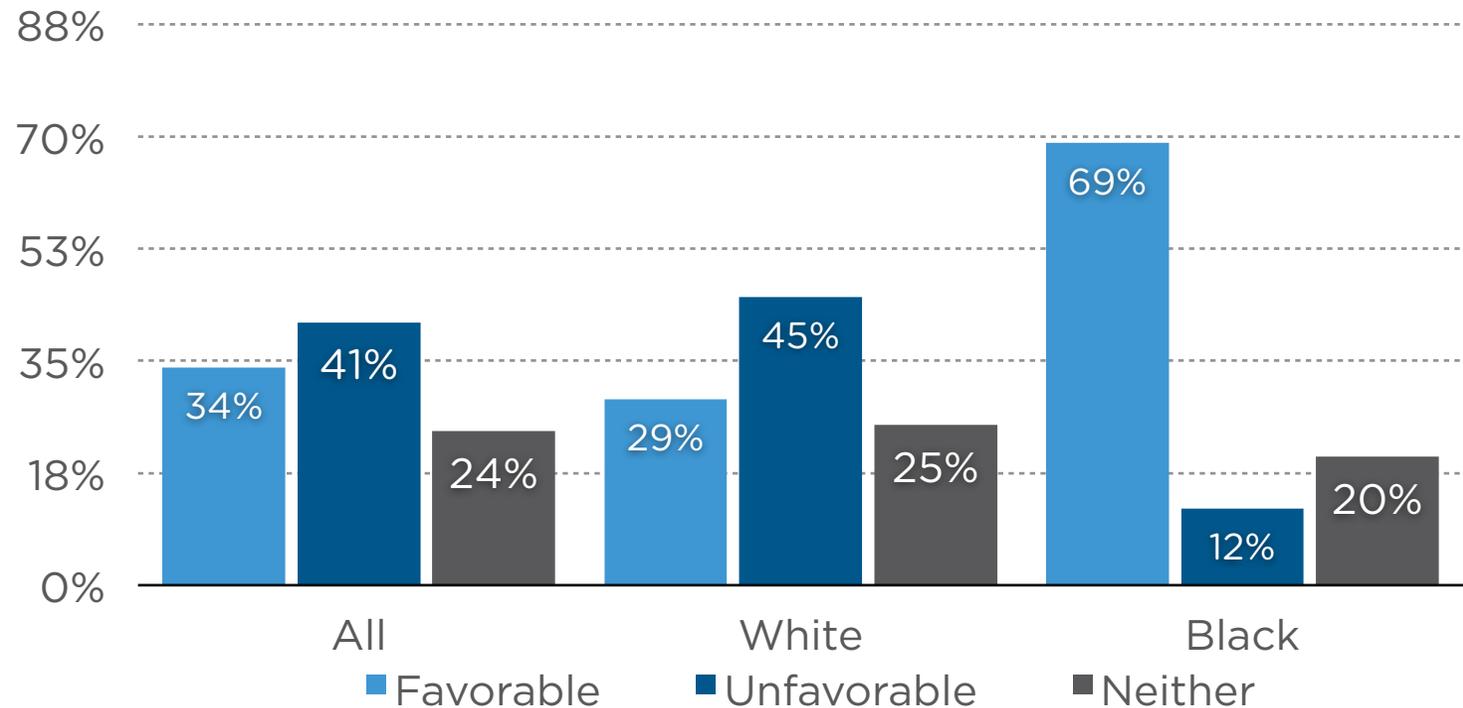


# RACE

## RACIAL DIVIDES ON POLICING AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Racial divides are real on questions of discrimination in policing and the justice system.**

Q. For each of the following groups, would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of them?... Black Lives Matter



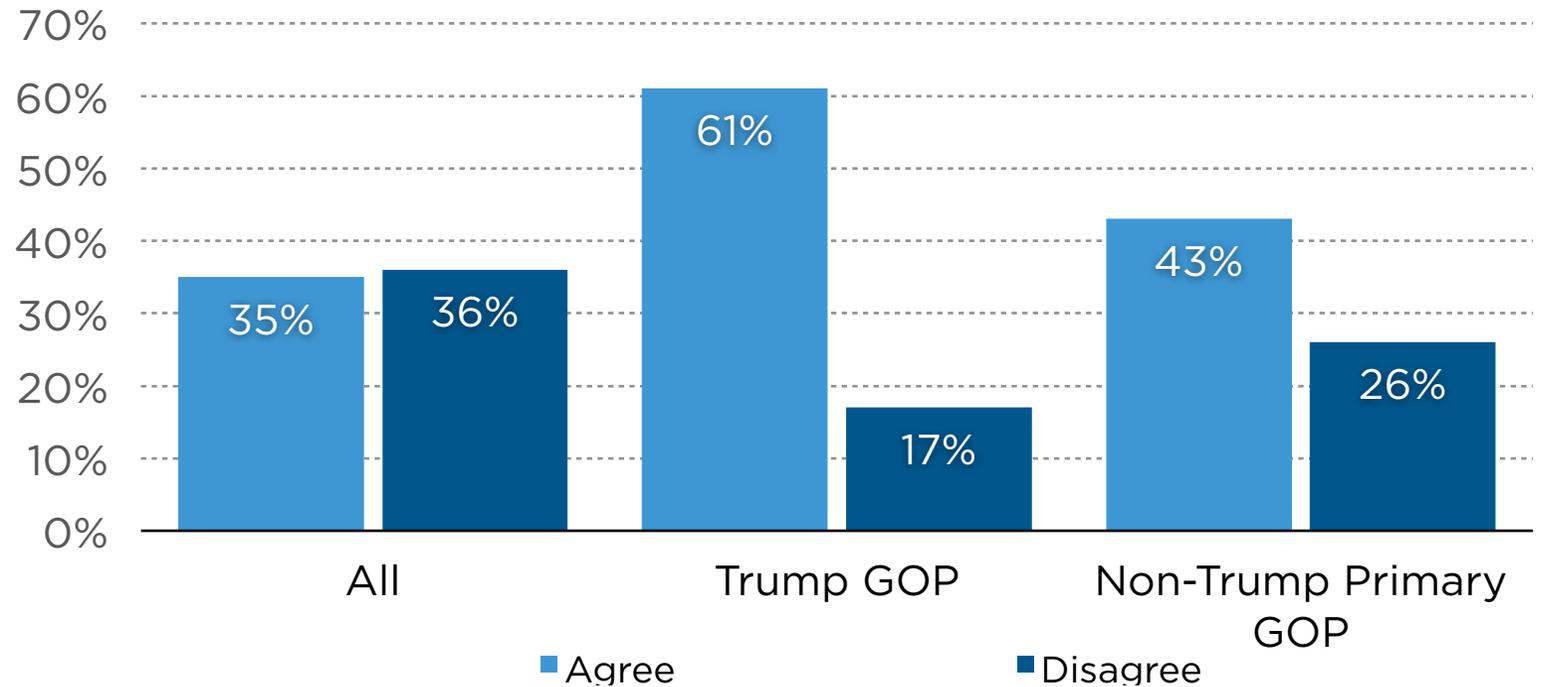


# RACE

## SOME VOTERS BELIEVE THEY ARE MAKING TOO MANY SACRIFICES

**Trump primary voters** are much more likely to **agree** that they are asked to make **too many sacrifices** that **benefit** people of **another race**.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "People like me are asked to make too many sacrifices that benefit people of another race."





# RACE

## PERCEIVED CHALLENGES

Some interviewees feel their own perspective is **losing voice** while communities of color have **increasing voice and rights**.

### Reverse Discrimination

#### Perceptions:

- Respondents believe they are losing status or jobs
- They believe society sends signals of devaluing white lives
- They feel they have to be especially careful of what they say (people overreact to speech)

“I want everyone to have the same rights. That's all we need... **Because you're black, you can get this and this and this, and it's very true...we're not fully fifty percent. So, this black person isn't as good as you, but we have to hire them because we need to, for the quota, for the United States government.**” *Haley, PA*



# RACE

## PERCEIVED CHALLENGES

A **default reaction** to police shootings by many interviewees was to focus on looting or other illegal behavior in African-American community protests and say **two wrongs don't make a right**, alleviating the need to question the **behavior of the police**.

### Protest

#### Perceptions:

- Some participants understand the anger, but all denounce the perceived violence
- Several believe all protests have ended in violence

“A protest is a protest. As long as you're law-abiding, there could be thousands of people, like here. You could speak and you could tell, 'Something's wrong. The police are targeting black people.' You can say that, and you can ask questions, but then it always happens. They go the next step and they start looting. **What does stealing flat-screen TVs from Walmart have to do with the shooting of an African American man?**” *Rebecca, NC*



# RACE

## PERCEIVED CHALLENGES

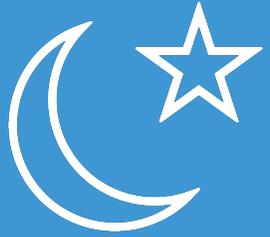
As some interviewees see it, the African-American community brought troubles on itself.

### Distracts from “Real” Problems

#### Perceptions:

- Many don't recognize systemic racism as such
- The 'real problem' in their view is crime, lack of family values, disrespect of authority, etc.

“If you look at the statistics, it doesn't seem to be one group of people that it's happening to. It doesn't seem to be one race of police officer that's doing it. **There are bad policemen, there are bad white people, there are bad black people, there are bad people.** If we talk about the issue...get the corrupt police... Whatever it is that we need to do, we need to address the problem and not the race of the people that are involved.” *Sue, NC*



Four Aspects of Cultural Anxiety:

**ISLAM**



# ISLAM

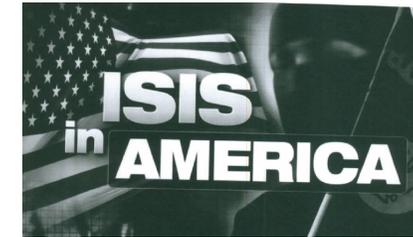
## SOME VOTERS RESPOND TO ISLAM WITH FEAR

Interviewees say this directly and indirectly when they share images from the news and talk about the forces shaping America.

As interview participants tell it, 9/11 was their introduction to Islam.



To interview participants, continued global terrorism makes Muslims the villains in their eyes.



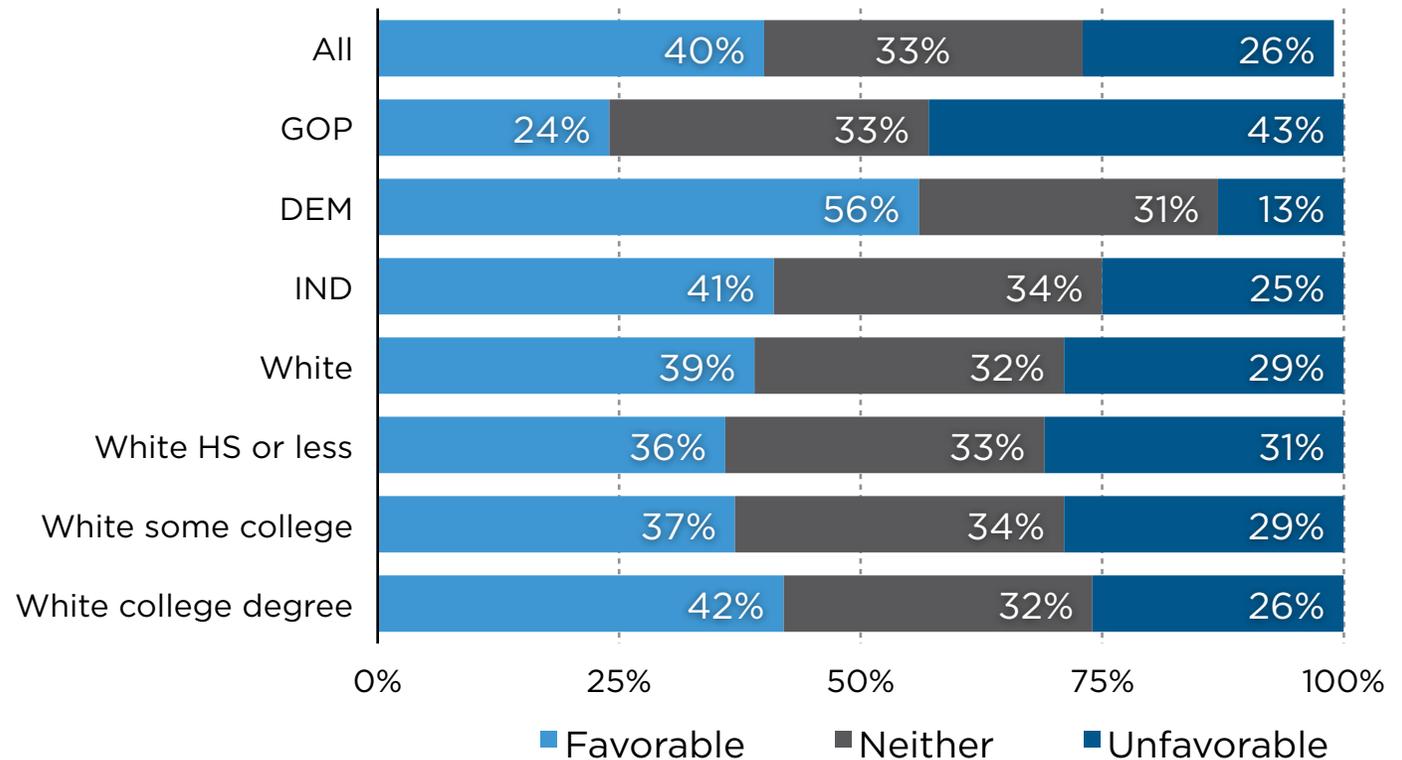


# ISLAM

## PARTISANSHIP & EDUCATION DEFINE VOTERS' VIEWS ON MUSLIMS

Among Republicans surveyed, Muslims are **viewed unfavorably** by **43%** compared with **13%** of Democrats surveyed.

Q. For each of the following groups, would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Muslims?



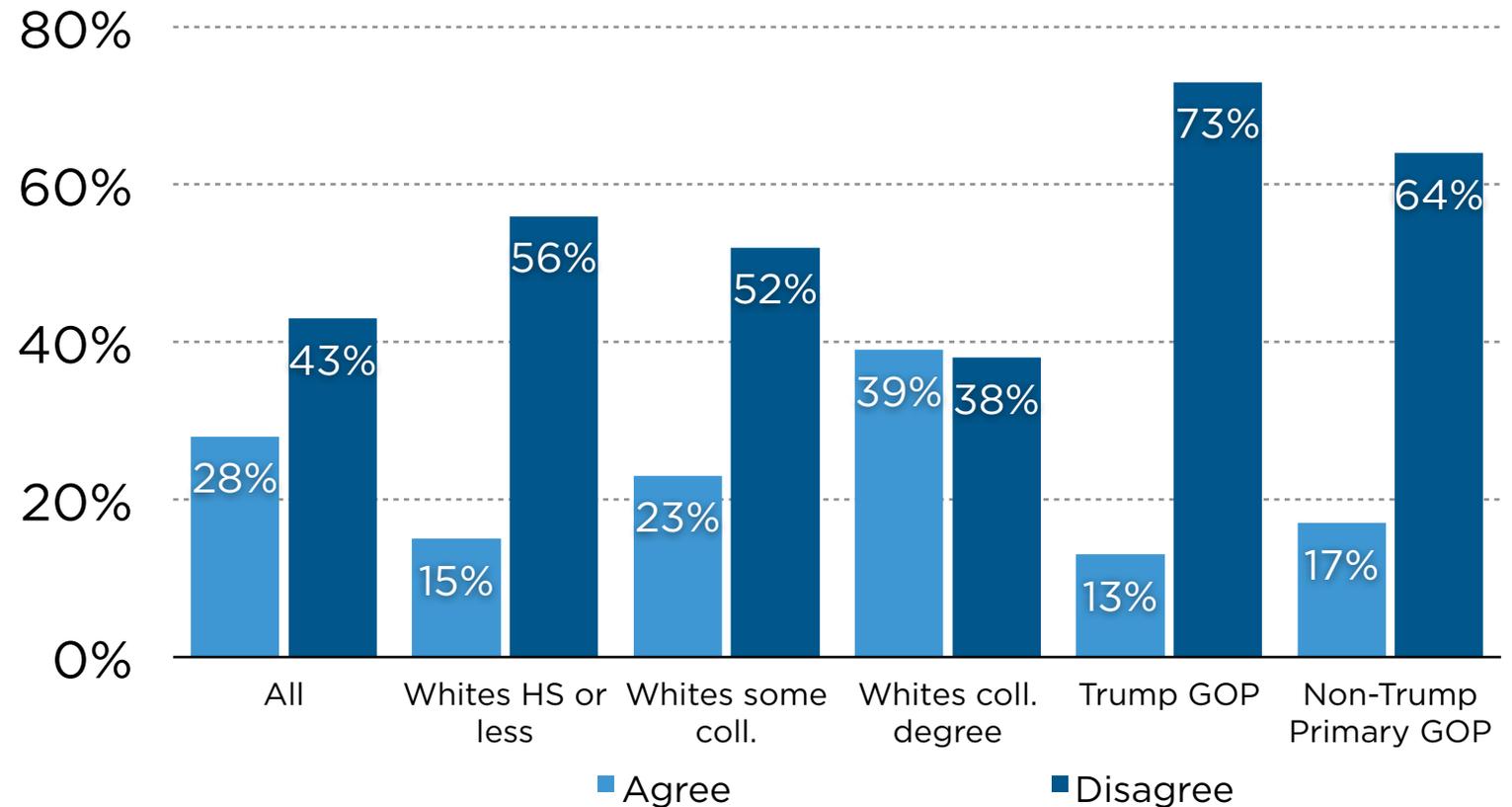


# ISLAM

## MANY VOTERS THINK ISLAM IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH AMERICAN VALUES

**Two-thirds** of Republicans surveyed (Trump GOP and Non-Trump Primary GOP) say it's **not compatible**, with a stark divide amongst whites along educational lines, although even whites with college degrees are split on the issue.

Q. Do you agree or disagree that Islam is compatible with American values?





# ISLAM

## MANY VOTERS THINK ISLAM IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH AMERICAN VALUES

Interviewees see a disconnect between American values and Islam. Most interviewees feel that Muslim immigrants cannot, or will not, assimilate. The overarching emotion here is fear.

### PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM & WOMEN

"The Muslim religion has kept the men in power and the women as slaves. Women to them are just as low if not lower than dogs so how can they assimilate into our society?" *Ralph, NC*

### PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM & VIOLENCE

"Like I'm not sure that all beliefs think of life as being good here on Earth. I think some beliefs are kind of the religion where the more destruction that you can do here the better the reward would be when you leave here, like Muslims." *Josh, NC*

### PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM & WESTERN LIFE

"There's no problem with heritage, no issues with heritage but to come here and to fly a different flag. That's to me you're trying to impress or make the United States your something that we originally were not... like Muslims. You got Muslim communities now that are trying to adhere to their... Again, nothing wrong with heritage or customs or anything but they're trying to impress their beliefs." *Rodney, NC*



# ISLAM

## SOME VOTERS HAVE DIFFERENT FEELINGS ON SYRIAN REFUGEES THAN MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS AS A WHOLE

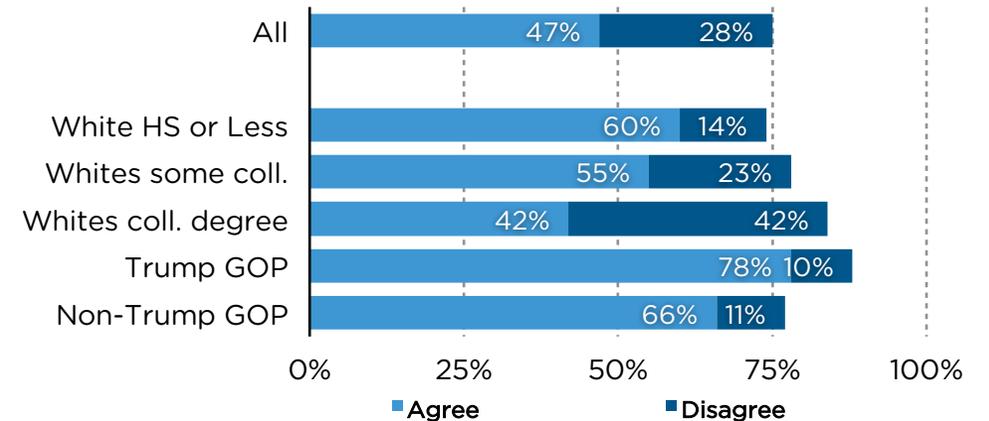
Slightly more Americans surveyed are worried about Syrian refugees than Muslim immigrants.

Trump primary voters agree most with stopping or limiting immigration for both Syrian refugees and Muslims as a whole. Whites with high school education or less show the least distinction between Syrian refugees and Muslims on this issue.

### Q. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement?

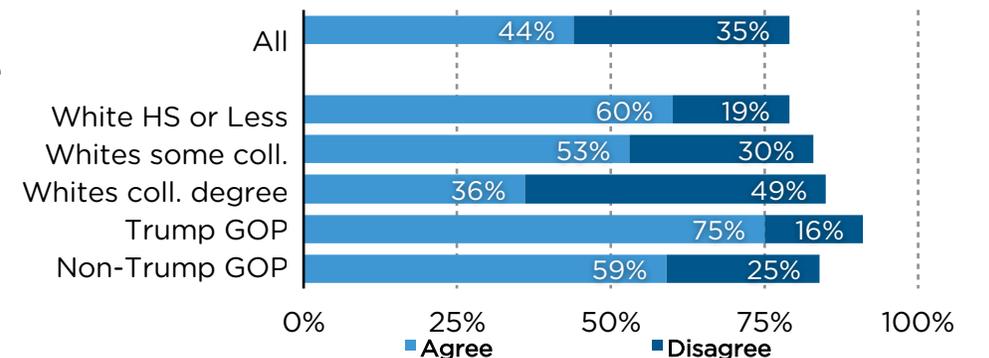
#### Split sample A:

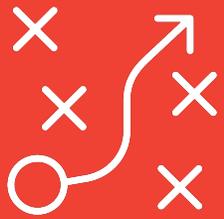
"The vast majority of Syrian refugees coming to the U.S. are peaceful, but it only takes one to commit a terrorist attack. We should stop or strictly limit Syrian refugees coming the U.S."



#### Split sample B:

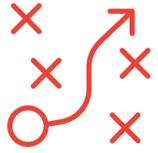
"The vast majority of people from the Muslim world immigrating to the U.S. are peaceful, but it only takes one to commit a terrorist attack. We should stop or strictly limit immigration from the Muslim world."





Isolation From Different Views:

# **A CHALLENGE FOR AMERICAN UNITY**

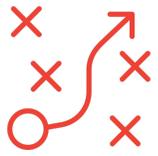


# CHALLENGES FOR AMERICAN UNITY

MANY AMERICANS ARE UNLIKELY TO SEEK OUT DIFFERENT VIEWS

## Among all Americans surveyed...

- **Clinton supporters** are somewhat more isolated from Trump supporters than the reverse. **60%** of Clinton supporters say none of their five closest friends is a Trump supporter.
- Majorities or near-majorities of all surveyed say **all five of their closest friends** share their race, educational status (amongst college whites), or candidate choice.
- **64%** of all voters surveyed say none of their five closest friends is an immigrant to the United States.
- Americans are **more likely** to have friends from different religions or income levels than to have friends of a different race.

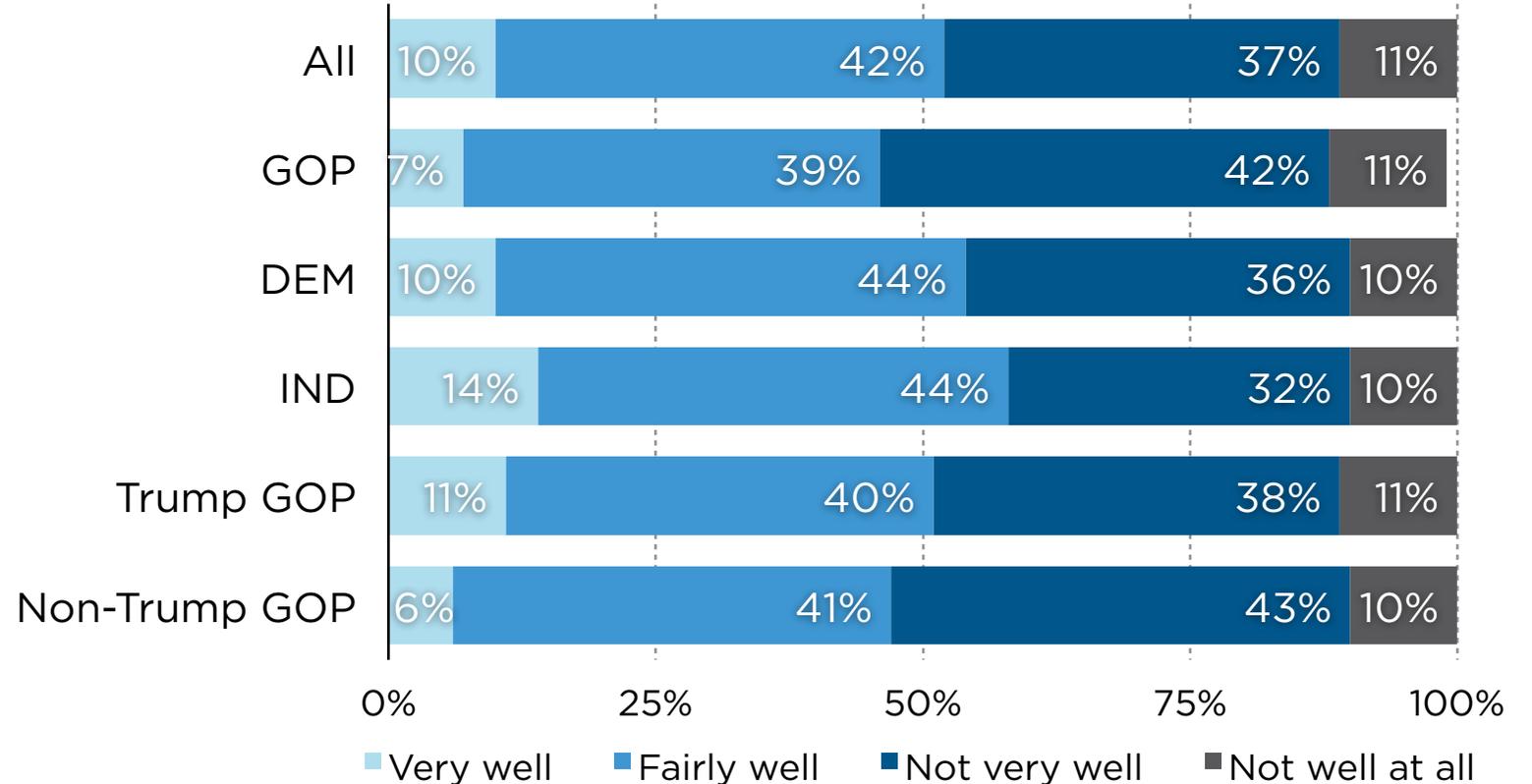


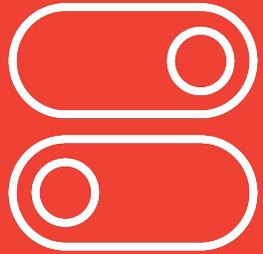
# CHALLENGES FOR AMERICAN UNITY

## FEW VOTERS ARE VERY LIKELY TO SEEK OUT DIFFERENT VIEWS

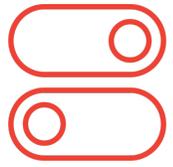
Americans surveyed are stuck in **information silos**, as many don't seek out information from those they **don't agree with**.

Q. How well do the following statements describe you? "I seek out information from people I don't agree with."





# MEDIA TESTS



# MEDIA TESTS

## METHODS



### Treatments

We tested 3 kinds of treatments including video ads (6), banner ads (3), and op-eds (1)



### Content

Each treatment featured Muslim Americans or information about Muslims



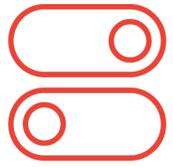
### Survey

To measure the persuasive effects of the treatments, all respondents took the same public opinion survey



### Fielding

We fielded the experiment November 2-6, 2016 on Amazon Mechanical Turk among 6,700 respondents



# MEDIA TESTS

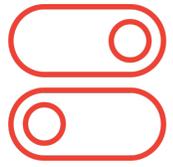
## FINDINGS

### The Right Treatments Have Large Effects

- Certain video treatments and the op-ed had **large, statistically significant effects on attitudes towards Muslim Americans**. They improved feelings towards Muslims and reduced nativism and ethnocentrism.
- Video ads on refugees were **less impactful overall**, but did **slightly raise** the number of refugees Americans are willing to accept.

### Insights from the Media Test

- Results suggest treatments that conveyed the following were **key to improving attitudes towards Muslims and reducing nativism**:
  - Muslims in the U.S. think of themselves as Americans
  - Islam is compatible with the American way of life
  - Muslims want to join the American way of life rather than change it
  - Muslims are relatable
  - Show the harmful consequences of prejudice



# MEDIA TESTS

## EXAMPLE TREATMENT: MUSLIM AMERICANS READ FACEBOOK COMMENTS

The treatment with the most impact across all groups was a YouTube video from Peace House depicting young Muslim Americans reading mean Facebook comments about a mosque that burned down in Florida.

### Three messaging tactics to take away from this test:

- Shows the harmful emotional effects of prejudice
- Depicts Muslims as regular young Americans, a stark contrast from the image many from our research have in their mind
- The Muslim Americans in the video repeatedly say “I am an American”



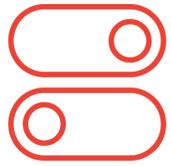
“I was born here. Where am I going to get deported to, the hospital?”



Ad Source: Peace House



“[[Reads Facebook comment:] ‘I see no problem here, let it burn’ – Did they want people to be burned?!”

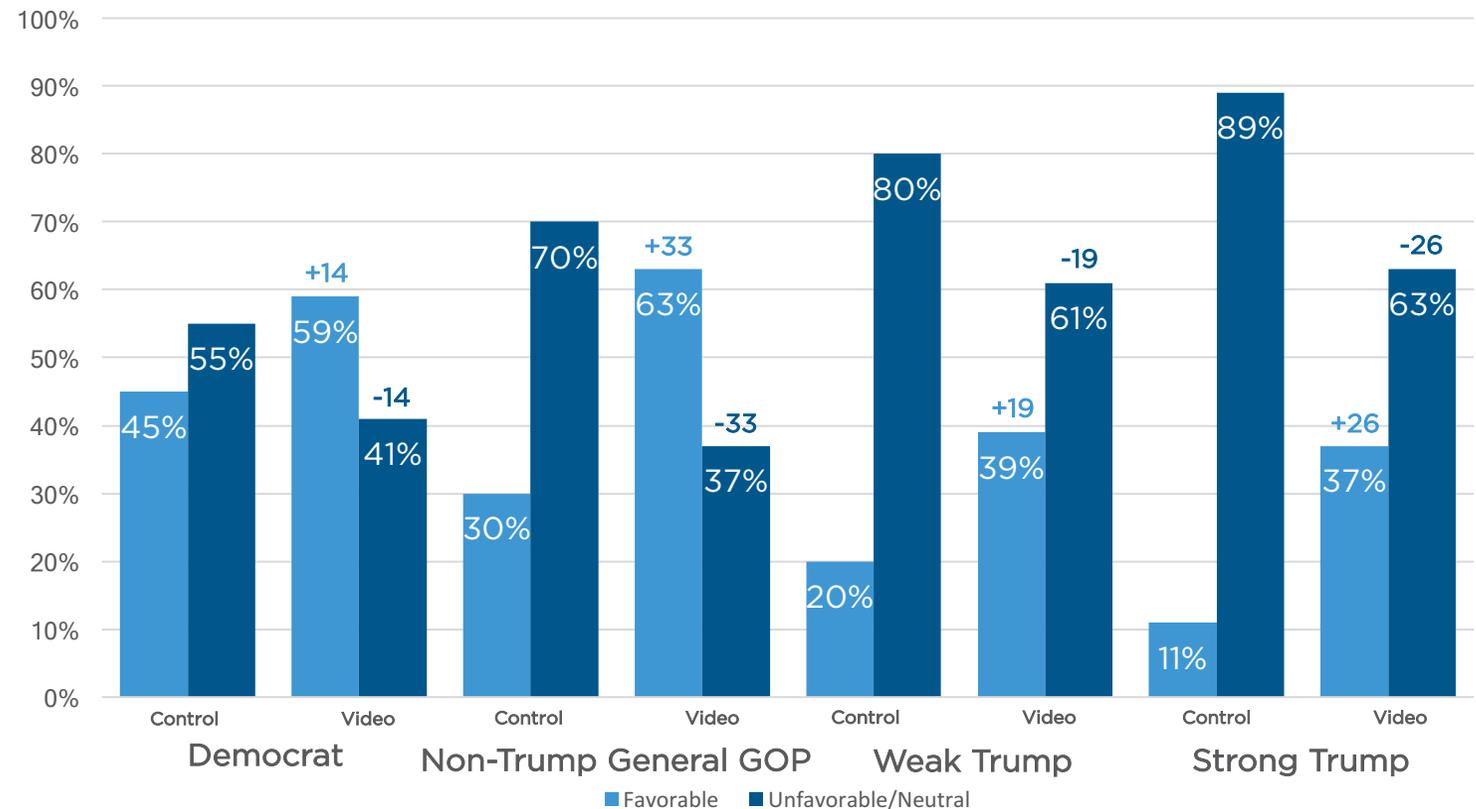


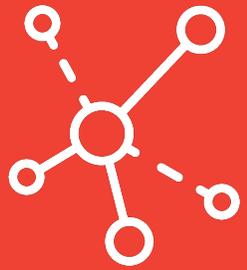
# MEDIA TESTS

## FINDINGS

The treatments had the effect of **“reversing” attitudes** among **Republicans** who said they would not support Trump in the general election. Even if a majority had an **unfavorable view of Muslims** in the control group, the treatment resulted in a **majority gaining a positive view of Muslims**.

Muslim Feeling Thermometer  
Treatment\* Group  
\*Facebook Comments Group





# KEY FINDINGS



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Many Trump supporters in our research feel a nostalgia for a country that may have existed, but that many have never experienced - "Make America Great Again" worked for a reason.



Many Trump supporters in our research have a great fear of decline. They feel alienated from government, community, and the "new" America with which they don't feel comfortable.



Ideals of the melting pot, the American Dream, and American generosity of spirit continue to exist among all Americans. The strength of these ideals is being tested by the current climate.



Many Americans surveyed expressed positive views of immigrants' work ethic, but have concerns that immigrants are no longer willing to learn English, feel patriotic, or assimilate into American culture.



Concern about Muslims is distinct from concerns about racial tensions, and it exists outside of class, education, party, or income. Muslims are perceived as a threat to many respondents' personal values and way of life.



**The right message can create statistically significant movement on key attitudes among the most concerned and anxious groups.**



# ABOUT DEMOCRACY FUND VOICE

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Democracy Fund Voice is a young, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping America build a stronger, healthier democracy. Like our sister organization, the Democracy Fund, we are working to ensure our political system is responsive to the public and able to meet the greatest challenges facing our nation.

Democracy Fund Voice invests in ideas and organizations that encourage civic engagement, improve the quality of election administration, foster transparency, and promote effective governance in Washington and our state capitals.