COMPETING VISIONS OF AMERICA: AN EVOLVING IDENTITY OR A CULTURE UNDER ATTACK?

Findings from the 2021 American Values Survey

@PRRIpoll
@RobertPJJones
@nataliemj10
#AVS2021
12th Annual American Values Survey, conducted by PRRI in partnership with The Brookings Institution

Survey of 2,508 adults who are members of KnowledgePanel, a probability-based panel run by Ipsos, conducted September 16-29, 2021.

Supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from the Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock.
CULTURAL ANXieties, CONSPIRACIES, AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE
Change in American Culture and Way of Life Since the 1950s, by Party Affiliation

Percent who say things have changed mostly for the better since the 1950s

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat

Sources: PRRI 2013-2021 Surveys.
Perceptions of Cultural Change in the U.S. as a Threat, by Party Affiliation

Percent who agree

- Things have changed so much that I often feel like a stranger in my own country
- Today, America is in danger of losing its culture and identity
- The American way of life needs to be protected from foreign influence

Sources: PRRI surveys 2016-2020.
The 2020 Election was Stolen from Donald Trump, By Party Affiliation and White Christian Affiliation

Percent who agree

- All Americans: 31%
- Republican: 68%
- Republican - most trust Fox News: 82%
- Republican - most trust far-right media: 97%
- Independent: 26%
- Democrat: 6%
- White evangelical Protestant: 60%
- White mainline Protestant: 37%
- White Catholic: 40%

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
True American Patriots Might Have to Resort to Violence in Order to Save Our Country, by Party Affiliation

Percent who agree

- All Americans: 18%
- Republican: 30%
- Republican - most trust Fox News: 32%
- Republican - most trust far-right media: 40%
- Independent: 17%
- Democrat: 11%

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
True American Patriots Might Have to Resort to Violence in Order to Save Our Country, by Religious Affiliation

Percent who agree

- Among All
- Among those who believe 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Percent who agree Among All</th>
<th>Percent who agree Among those who believe 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian religion</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Catholic</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Catholic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline Protestant</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
True American Patriots Might Have to Resort to Violence in Order to Save Our Country, by Selected Attitudes

The 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump

Things have changed so much they feel like a stranger in their own country

God has granted America a special role in human history

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believing in individual freedoms, such as freedom of speech</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing that every citizen should be able to vote in elections</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting people of diverse racial and religious backgrounds</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting American political institutions and laws</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to speak English</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
## Traits Associated With Being “Truly American,” Areas of Disagreement by Party Affiliation

*Percent who say the following is very or somewhat important to being “truly American”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believing capitalism is the best economic system</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing in God</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being born in America</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Christian</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being of Western European heritage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
Preference for Racial and Ethnic Diversity vs.
Western European Majority in U.S., by Party Affiliation

Percent who would prefer the U.S. to be a nation primarily made up of...

- People from all over the world
- Middle of the scale
- People of Western European heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People from all over the world</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle of the scale</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Western European heritage</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Prefer People belonging to a wide variety of religions</th>
<th>Prefer Middle of the scale</th>
<th>Prefer People who follow the Christian faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian Religion</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Catholic</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline (non-evangelical) Protestant</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Catholic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
ECONOMIC ANXieties
Concerns About Ability to Pay for Household Expenses, by Race and Ethnicity

Percent who are somewhat or very concerned about being able to pay for:

- Basic goods
- Rent or mortgage
- Credit card debt
- Student loans

All Americans: 42%
- Basic goods: 25%
- Rent or mortgage: 20%
- Credit card debt: 31%
- Student loans: 31%

White: 38%
- Basic goods: 26%
- Rent or mortgage: 20%
- Credit card debt: 31%
- Student loans: 33%

Black: 44%
- Basic goods: 31%
- Rent or mortgage: 20%
- Credit card debt: 33%
- Student loans: 38%

Hispanic: 48%
- Basic goods: 30%
- Rent or mortgage: 15%
- Credit card debt: 38%
- Student loans: 37%

Another race: 41%
- Basic goods: 24%
- Rent or mortgage: 23%
- Credit card debt: 32%
- Student loans: 24%

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
Perception of a College Education as a Smart Investment in the Future vs. A Gamble That Might Not Pay Off, by Party Affiliation

Percent who say a college education is a smart investment in the future:

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey
Polarization and Perceptions of the Political Parties
Self-Reported Shifts in Partisan Identity Over Last Five Years, Among Whites by Education Level

Percent who are more likely to see themselves as

- A Democrat
- A Republican

White Americans without a four-year college degree
- 19% more likely to see themselves as Democrats
- 35% more likely to see themselves as Republicans

White Americans with a four-year college degree
- 34% more likely to see themselves as Democrats
- 20% more likely to see themselves as Republicans

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
“Racists” and “Socialists”: Perceptions of Political Parties, by Party Affiliation

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.

The Republican Party is trying to protect the American way of life against outside threats
The Republican Party has been taken over by racists

The Democratic Party is trying to make capitalism work for average Americans
The Democratic Party has been taken over by socialists

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
CRITICAL ISSUES
Perceptions of Critical Issues Facing the Country, by Party Affiliation

Percent who say the following is a critical issue:

- The coronavirus pandemic
- Health care
- Terrorism
- Increasing costs of housing
- Immigration
- Climate change
- Crime
- Jobs and unemployment
- Growing gap between rich and poor
- Racial inequality

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
### Support for Roe v. Wade and the Legality of Abortion, by Party Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Agree Roe v. Wade was the right decision and should be upheld</th>
<th>Say abortion should be legal in all or most cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust Fox News</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust far-right media</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust mainstream news</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.
Beyond the “Critical Race Theory” Jargon, Common Ground about What We Should Teach Children about American History

We should teach American history to our children in school that:

- Includes both our best achievements and our worst mistakes as a country
- Focuses on what makes this country exceptional and great

Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.

Bar chart showing the percentage of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats who support teaching American history in these ways.
Recent Killings of Black Americans by Police are Isolated Incidents vs. Part of a Pattern (2015-2021), Among Whites by Party Affiliation

### Percent who say recent killings of Black Americans by police are ISOLATED INCIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Republican</th>
<th>White Independent</th>
<th>White Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions of the Need to Protect Voting Access, by Party Affiliation

Percent who say

- Bigger problem is eligible voters being denied right to vote
- Congress should pass a voting rights law to guarantee every citizen access to the ballot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Bigger problem</th>
<th>Voting Rights Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust Fox News</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust far-right media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican - most trust mainstream news</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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