In 2020, a segment of Latino voters demonstrated they are more "swinging" than commonly assumed.
1. Trump appeared to make gains in the last year of his term among voters usually on the sidelines of politics. including the economy.

2. This is a story of turnout and persuasion. Some analysis makes the mistake of treating the Hispanic electorate as static from election to election, when in fact it is incredibly dynamic and fast-changing. The Trump coalition of Hispanic voters, still dwarfed in size by the Democratic coalition, grew on the margins thanks to a combination of defections and new voters, with likely a greater number of the latter.

3. While the “why” of this shift requires more investigation, part of the story appears to be that the barrier keeping some conservative Latinos from voting for Trump went down during COVID, with a change in focus from his anti-Latino or anti-immigrant positions.

Key Findings

- Trump appealed to make gains in the last year of his term among voters usually on the sidelines of politics. While Latinos are often treated as a target for registration and turnout, it was less frequent Hispanic voters who showed the most "swing."

- Some analysis makes the mistake of treating the Hispanic electorate as static from election to election, when in fact it is incredibly dynamic and fast-changing. The Trump coalition of Hispanic voters, still dwarfed in size by the Democratic coalition, grew on the margins thanks to a combination of defections and new voters, with likely a greater number of the latter.

- While the “why” of this shift requires more investigation, part of the story appears to be that the barrier keeping some conservative Latinos from voting for Trump went down during COVID, with a change in focus from his anti-Latino or anti-immigrant positions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2016 Support</th>
<th>2020 Support</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLORIDA Miami-Dade (&gt;50 Cuban)</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORIDA Miami-Dade (&gt;50 LatAm)</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCEOLA (&gt;30 PR)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARIZONA Maricopa (&gt;50 Latino)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEVADA Clark County (&gt;50 Latino)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>WISCONSIN Milwaukee (&gt;50 Latino)</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<td>TEXAS Rio Grande Valley (counties)</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>MASSACHUSETTS Lawrence (city)</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<td>NEW JERSEY Paterson (city)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY Marlboro (&gt;50 Latino)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-26%</td>
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</table>

Outside Miami, Latinos still supported Democratic nominee at high levels. Shifts occurred in Hispanic-heavy geographies across the country, to differing degrees.
Latinos aren't a monolith, but they remain a group. Trump gains seemed to be unique among those identifying as Latino across geography and place of origin. We can't explain the national baseline shift toward Trump with idiosyncrasies specific to one region or nationality. Border dynamics don't explain changes in New Jersey. Cuban/Venezuelan fear of socialism doesn't explain movement in Milwaukee. We can't explain the national baseline shift toward Trump with geography and place of origin. Latinos aren't a monolith, but they remain a group.
Trump’s raw vote totals surged in Latino-heavy spots across the country. But Arizona a case study in countering GOP gains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>% Change in Raw Vote Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maricopa</td>
<td>120%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miami-Dade Cuban</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami-Dade RGV</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark NV</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee WI</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paterson NJ</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGV TX</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latam AZ</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Equis analysis of densely Latino precincts in AZ, WI, NV, FL; county results for TX; city results for NJ.
Various credible theories to explain Trump gains — but not enough data yet to say

- Activation around religion, SCOTUS and Canon
- Realignment along lines of gender, education & ideology
- COVID and the economy
- Dog whistle politics & racial status anxiety
- "Socialism" and fear of the left
- Incumbency and personality
- Trump campaign & social pressure/realtional persuasion
- Propaganda & misinformation
- Shifting salience of immigration and/or shifting norms around Latino identity

No one theory has fully explanatory power, but they can’t all be equally valid either.
A story of turnout and persuasion
Thinking in terms of “turnout vs. persuasion” misses the larger story about Latinos who feel on the sidelines of the political process. We know enough to say it’s a mistake to assume the 2020 shift was exclusively about turnout, or about vote-switching by Clinton voters. The truth is closer to both.

Evidence from FL, TX and NV shows how the distinction between turnout and persuasion gets blurred.
Some 15% of Cubans who voted Clinton ’16 went Trump ’20—true vote-switching.

Source: Cuba Study Group/Equis post-election survey of 600 Cuban-American voters in Miami-Dade, 11/4 - 11/8/20
The Cuban shift was notable, but the LatAm (non-Cuban/PR) drop more dramatic. Trump won over many LatAm voters and benefited from increased turnout. The source of the precinct analysis is based on BlueLabs sub-ethnicity model.
In Miami, big spike in new registrants among Hispanic GenXers, older millennials.
In terms of total number of votes, the Democratic trend line in the RGV looks healthy...
But Trump saw a huge surge in total votes that narrowed the Democratic margin.
Early voter group averaged 75 partisanship score, performed 15 points below Dem-learning.

In Texas RGV, Trump made gains with voters predicted to be Dem-leaning.

"Utilizing non-public predictive model for Democratic partisanship.

Counties included in analysis: Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, Webb.

---

Early + Absentee Votes By Partisanship Score

By Modeling

Trump

>70

40%

70 - 79

26%

21%

Dem

60%

51%

>70

21%

70 - 79

26%

51%

Rio Grande Valley (TX)
Counts included in analysis: Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, Webb

A majority of those "swinging voters" had sparse history of voting.

Early + Absentee Votes by Modeling & Vote History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democratic Partisanship Score</th>
<th>% Voted in General Elections</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-80</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to voting in 2020, voted:

- 1 of 3: 33%
- 2 of 3: 30%
- 3 of 3: 28%
- 14,16,18: 54%

% of County Population

- <40: 33%
- 40-80: 33%
- >80: 33%

Rio Grande Valley (TX)*

*Counties included in analysis: Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, Webb
Nevada
In Nevada, vote-switchers were a smaller part of Trump’s 2020 coalition than new voters.
In NEVADA, first-time Trump voters were less ideological, younger, more foreign-born than regular Trump voters.

Source: Equis/Myers survey of 2020 Latino voters in Nevada, 1/14 - 1/19/21
Who shifted 2019->2020? Voters on the margins of the electorate
No two electorates are the same

Preliminary state data shows large share of Latinos who voted in 2020, not 16

Courtesy of Catalist. Based on 33 states with vote history, defined as voting in the same state both years (more analysis to come).
Shift in net Trump approval job among Hispanic voters

States included in analysis: Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina and Florida

From 2019 average to last pre-election polling (average change across 7 states)

Largest in-cycle % shifts were among women, non-college, foreign-born & conservative
For this analysis, we use an average of Equis polling across 7 states, not a combined, weighted number.

States included: Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Florida.

For this analysis, we use an average of Equis polling across 7 states, not a combined, weighted number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Young Men (&lt;50)</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-College</th>
<th>Young Women (&lt;50)</th>
<th>Young Men (≥50)</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change from 2019 average to last pre-election poll, weighted by % of sample.</td>
<td>+4.4</td>
<td>+2.7</td>
<td>+0.1</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
<td>+2.1</td>
<td>+1.4</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
<td>+3.4</td>
<td>+2.2</td>
<td>+4.6</td>
<td>+2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of Demographic Shifts on Trump Job Approval Margin

US-born, Catholic and non-college shifts become more important too. Weighted by subgroup size, shift among women made greatest impact.
Based on Equis 2019/2020 polling of registered Latino voters

Gender divide persisted, even as Latino numbers came back down to Earth. Youngish women shifted more than male peers in-cycle, but remained far more anti-Trump.
In polling, most consistent shifts toward Trump were among conservatives who'd earlier held back.
Change in % Very Motivated to Vote

Change in Motivation Among Hispanic Voters By Self-Reported Ideology

Based on Equis 2019/2020 polling of registered Latino voters

Not just passive support: conservative Latinos also became more motivated to vote across key states
Conservative Latinas, in particular, appear to have been galvanized
Meanwhile their liberal counterparts became slightly less motivated during the election.
Very Motivated to Vote ->

% Approve of Trump ->

Based on Equus 2019/2020 polling of registered Latino voters. States included: AZ, NV, TX, FL, NM, NC, CO.

Change in Motivation X Trump Approval Among Hispanic Voters - By Ideology x Gender
Conservative Republicans 14%
Moderate Republicans 6%
Liberal Republicans 1%
Conservative Independents 11%
Moderate Independents 15%
Liberal Independents 7%
Conservative Democrats 11%
Moderate Democrats 22%
Liberal Democrats 14%

Registered Latino Voters By Party ID x Self-Reported Ideology

A reminder about the ideological & partisan diversity of Latinos.

Source: Equis baseline survey of Latino registered voters in 11 states, July/August 2019 (n=4000)
Equis polling from July 6, September 2019 (n = 9,230) and Sept/Oct 2020 (n = 4,042) was included; Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Florida. “Independents” includes “leaners.”

Conservative shift driven more by independents than by Republicans or Democrats.


Conservative shift driven more by independents than by Republicans or Democrats.


Conservative shift driven more by independents than by Republicans or Democrats.
Change in Motivation x Trump Approval Among Hispanic Voters - By Ideology x Party ID

Conservative Independents became more pro-Trump, while conservative R’s & D’s got more motivated.


Equis polling from July & September 2019 (n = 9,230) and Sept/Oct 2020 (n = 4,042)
Low-Frequency Voters Assumptions vs. Reality
even more diverse than they are in Arizona.
Democratic prospects in Texas, where nonvoters are
add further intrigue to speculation about
The relative Democratic strength among Hispanic
more so.
Democratic as their voting counterparts, or even
Hispanic nonvoters, who tend to be just as
One exception to this general pattern is among
exist based on their demographics alone.
monic the Democratic advantage that would seem to
demographically, they seem like people who want to vote
Nonvoters Are a Source of Hope for

[A large portion of nonvoters sit out because they do

By Nate Cohn
Low and high propensity voters felt similarly about Trump in 2019.

Source: TargetSmart turnout score + Equils polling of registered Latino voters in AZ, NV, CO, NM and FL. July 2019 to December 2019.
Bivariate relationship between likelihood of voting (measured by turnout score) and Trump job approval

"But in fall 2020, low propensity voters were significantly more approving of Trump..."
Shift in Net Trump Job Approval by Modeled Likelihood to Vote in 2020

From 2019 average to Sept/Oct 2020 polls

Very likely & less-likely Latino voters moved in different directions on Trump approval

Source: TargetSmart turnout score + Equis 2019/2020 polling of registered Latino voters
In other words: the shifts appear to be among those with the lowest partisan formation. We know enough to say these look like true swing voters. Neither party should assume that a Hispanic voter who cast a ballot for Trump in 2020 is locked in as a Republican going forward. If there’s a lesson for the future, it’s to watch the margins and those voters who often remain invisible: the ones who stayed home and the many others aging into the electorate. Nor can we assume this shift was exclusive to Trump and will revert back on its own.
Setting Up the Why
First things first: we can't ask what moved conservative Latinos toward Trump without asking what held them back from Trump.

This is where "Latino identity"—and, relatedly, the role of immigration—emerges as central.
Research in Process: Shifting Role of Immigration
In 2016, opposition to tough immigration policy a driver of Clinton vote

Derived from a logistic regression model with controls for gender, age, education, religion, nativity, language, party ID and ideology (n = 225)
In late 2019, children in detention and family separation were top of mind even with conservative Latinos who agreed with Trump on other aspects of immigration. “Separating families is the ultimate disgrace of this administration,” making racist comments about Mexicans. “Yes they shouldn’t cross illegally, but breaking up families is a little harsh, your plan needs more work.”

People are not animals and should not be caged like in a zoo. “I think you had the right idea in how you were trying to deal with the immigration issue but then you do things that backfire and then making racist comments about Mexicans.”

“I think you had the right idea in how you were trying to deal with the immigration issue but then you do things that backfire and then making racist comments about Mexicans.”

Separating families is the ultimate disgrace of this administration. Some disagreement of this administration. Some disagreement of this administration.
“There are many Hispanics who voted for [Trump] because... For example, **Obama talked about immigration and didn’t do anything.** He says, he promises, and he didn’t act. Meanwhile, Trump didn’t say and he didn’t promise and he didn’t act. It’s what many people didn’t like about him, he says things clearly and directly. Unlike other presidents who talked and didn’t act.”

- Peruvian-born Latina, 42, first-time Trump voter

Post-primary in 2020, moral high ground on immigration may have been muddied by attacks on Obama/Biden-era deportation policies

Source: Equis focus groups (with Castillo & Associates/Myers Research), February 2021
From January 2016 to November 2020

Google searches for "Immigration" vs "Unemployment" (General Population)

Immigration was in the zeitgeist in 2016 & 2018… but not in late 2020

Source: Google Trends
Throughout the cycle, Trump’s highest numbers were on Economy, lowest were on Immigration. Throughout cycle, Trump’s highest numbers were on Economy, lowest were on Immigration.

An election that was a referendum on former, vs. latter, could’ve produced narrower margins.

Registered Hispanic voters in 10 states

July - Dec 2019

Trump Job Performance By Issue Area

Immigration
Economy
Overall Security
Healthcare

Throughout the cycle, Trump’s highest numbers were on Economy, lowest were on Immigration.
Preliminary analysis of pre-election ANES data. Results are derived from a logistic regression model with controls for gender, age, education, religion, church attendance, nativity, language, party ID, and ideology (n = 521).

In 2020, immigration wasn’t salient to vote choice — but approval of Trump on economy was.
Research in Process: Role of COVID-Era Economy
Persistent view of Trump as a businessman: "knows how to move money."

Credit for Trump for pre-pandemic economic growth

A desire to reopen the country and, more importantly, avoid a complete shutdown. "Biden was acting like he wanted to do a complete shutdown. Trump wanted to reopen the states, return to normal."

Support for Trump (or not to support Biden).

Theme amongswing Latino voters in focus groups: Trump the Businessman. Among some subset of voters, terrible COVID economy more reason to oppose Biden.
"Voting for Trump] suited me because of my job. This year things have gone much better for me. The way he communicates made me hesitate. But I voted for him more for economic reasons."

- 31, Amazon delivery driver in Wisconsin, first-time Trump voter

Source: Equis focus groups (with Castillo & Associates/Myers Research), February 2021
In NV, those who lost jobs less likely to vote Trump than those who held on to jobs.

69% of Latinos said their jobs were impacted by pandemic.
Other Areas of Inquiry: Role of Social Media
In NEVADA, new Trump voters more likely to get political news from YouTube.
This map shows the most popular websites that are also distinctly Latinx.

From Equis Research / Harmony Labs / PredictWise study on Latinx media consumption habits.
YouTube now a leading source of political news

64% of registered Latino voters said they got election information from YouTube--including 74% of Hispanic voters in Florida.
In rare Election Day takeover of the YouTube homepage, Trump featured Latino-themed ad his second-most-watched video of all time. Jorge Masvidal ad his second-most-watched video of all time.
What's next
1. Additional post-mortem polling and focus groups in key states + national

2. Ongoing focus groups post-mortem survey

3. 2020 vote estimates, polling analysis and modeling assessment (w/ Catalyst)

4. Study of media consumption habits on YouTube

5. 2021/2022 horserace polling beginning in summer

Additional post-mortem research from Equils
About the data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Sizes</th>
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- Equis Research operates a subscription model to provide high-quality polling of Latino voters to advocacy, civic engagement and electoral organizations.
- The 2019-2020 polling was conducted in partnership with GBAO, Matt Barreto & Co., EMC Research, CSG, Myers Research & TargetSmart.
- The 2019-2020 survey was a mix of SMS/text & live calls.
- All polls were multi-modal (live interviews via multi-modal recruitment methods). Calls were made by bilingual callers who offered a choice of interview language.
- 40,880 total interviews from July 2019 to October 2020.
- 40,880 total interviews from July 2019 to October 2020.
Thank you!