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Why the Politics of Republican Latinos Suggests They Want To Be White

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As our country gears up for another racially fraught presidential election, many political observers are wondering whether the roughly 30 percent of Latinos who voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 will once again support a Republican candidate who is openly xenophobic and anti-Latino. The answer is very likely "yes" because many of these Latinos want to be white—but not in the way that you're thinking.

To understand this Latino puzzle, we must transform our understanding about whiteness in America. Most people view white people as a group whose membership depends on skin color and other observable traits. But there is a more telling, and perhaps more accurate, way of thinking about this group as one whose membership is based on an ideological way of thinking—a worldview that demands both hierarchy and domination of others. Only with this perspective in mind can we begin to better understand Latino Republicans in contemporary times.