Who is a real American According to Trump's Immigration Policies?

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Immigration Policy and the Question of Real American Identity

A very important question that needs to be asked after all the fuss created by Trump's immigration policies is: what is a real American? Or what does it take to be a real American? A very straightforward answer to this question can be that a person is regarded as a real American if he was born in America or holds citizenship of the country. But this answer is not satisfactory enough because it does not get along with any of the intangibles associated with the concept of red-blooded Americanness ("Real Americans").

A survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute asked a couple of questions regarding what makes an American a real American. This research question and the idea of real Americans were based on four basic qualities. These conditions included speaking English, having a belief in God, being born in the USA, and being a Christian. This survey was conducted to examine how important these qualities were in categorizing a person as a Real American. An overwhelming majority of the people, almost 89%, stated that speaking English is important for being a real American ("What It Takes To Be A Real American, According To Real Americans"). It makes some sense because language is one of the basic requirements for becoming a naturalized citizen.

Similarly, almost 69% of the respondents also stated that believing in God is also a significant attribute for becoming a true American. The naturalized citizens of the country have to swear an oath of faithfulness to the United States of America, which consists of the phrase "So help me God." The people who do not agree with this language are permitted to swear on a modified version of the oath. However, 12% of Americans in the population do not believe in God, according to the Gallup survey ("What It Takes To Be A Real American, According To Real Americans").

Birthplace, Citizenship, and Public Attitudes

Toward Belonging

Moreover, 58% of Americans were of the view that it is necessary to be born in America to be a real American, according to the Public Religion Poll. However, 12.9% of the American population was not born in America, as stated by the Brookings Institution (“Real Americans”). In the end, 53% of respondents replied to the question by selecting the quality of being Christian as a preference for being a true American. There is a strong generational divide on these four issues, but mostly they are the main qualities of being a real American, with some secondary conditions like celebrating American festivals (“Real Americans”).

Immigrants who apply for citizenship in America are also a part of the country’s system and culture because they obey all the rules and regulations of the country and are faithful to them. But the term “Real Americans” is specific for those citizens who were born and brought up in America. Their roots are American, and they do not have any association with other cultures, unlike immigrants who possess their culture but have merged with American culture as well. They are well aware of American history and values and have adhered to them since birth. It is obvious that in any country, the people who were born in the country and are rightful citizens of the country will be designated as real Americans (“Real Americans”).

Secondly, there is another feature that seems to be important enough to be a real American, and that is being a Christian. A major portion of the American population follows Christianity as the main religion. After being born in a country, the second significant characteristic of being a native citizen of the country is following the religion that is mostly followed in the country. Religion plays a crucial role after citizenship for the real identity of belonging to a country. In America, it is Christianity that is commonly followed. This is the reason that 53% of the respondents in the survey claimed that being Christian is necessary for being a Real American (“Real Americans”).

Language, Culture, and Competing Measures of American Identity

Thirdly, language plays a significant role in defining the identity of a person as a real American. Almost two-thirds of the American population speaks English very well, and even though English is not an official language in the country, it is still commonly spoken in the country. Keeping this aspect in consideration, speaking English is regarded as an important feature of being a true American. This is the reason that 83% of the respondents claimed that speaking English is a must-have quality for true American identity (“What It Takes To Be A ‘Real’ American « All About America”). Furthermore, there is one characteristic that can be incorporated into the checklist for being a real American, which is a belief in God. More than half of the respondents, approximately 69%, claimed that believing in God makes an individual a true American.

These four basic qualities were the predominant features used to answer the research question: what is a real American? There are some secondary attributes too that are related to these primary qualities. They include celebrating the festivals and holidays that are solely American. For example, Thanksgiving Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Independence Day, which is celebrated on the 4th of July, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, etc. All these days are a characteristic feature of American culture, and the person who will be a real American will value these holidays and celebrate them with all the enthusiasm ("What It Takes To Be A Real American, According To Real Americans").

In short, the idea of a real American is a compilation of many qualities, and a person possessing all these qualities will be regarded as a Real American. The primary qualities are being born in America, speaking English, believing in God, and being a Christian. Secondary conditions involve adhering to cultural values and traditions. So a person who meets these criteria will be a real American.

Works Cited

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