

January 2017

Obama vs. Trump in the Minds of Millennials

A summary of key findings from the first-of-its-kind monthly survey of racially and ethnically diverse young adults

Cathy J. Cohen, Matthew D. Luttig, and Jon C. Rogowski

Gen FORWARD



black youth project

Obama vs. Trump in the Minds of Millennials

GenForward: A survey of the Black Youth Project with the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Cathy J. Cohen, Matthew D. Luttig, and Jon C. Rogowski

Reports and topline of the GenForward surveys by the Black Youth Project are available at:

www.GenForwardSurvey.com

Media inquiries:

> Mark Peters | 773-702-8356 | petersm@uchicago.edu

Preferred citation:

GenForward: A survey of the Black Youth Project with the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. About the Black Youth Project and GenForward Surveys
- II. Key Findings
- III. Introduction
- IV. Barack Obama's Legacy
- V. Expectations and Concerns about Donald Trump's Presidency
- VI. Survey Methodology

I. Black Youth Project and the GenForward Survey

For over 10 years, the Black Youth Project (BYP), housed at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago, has dedicated its work to understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by young people of color in the contemporary United States. We are committed to disaggregating the larger category often labeled Millennials because our previous research has shown important differences in lived experiences and political attitudes among young adults of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.¹ We continue this mission with our GenForward surveys.

GenForward is a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The GenForward Survey is the first of its kind—a nationally representative survey of over 1750 young adults ages 18-30 conducted bimonthly that pays special attention to how race and ethnicity influence how young adults or Millennials experience and think about the world. Given the importance of race and ethnicity for shaping the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of young people, we believe researchers make a mistake when they present data on young adults in a manner that assumes a monolithic Millennial generation and young adult vote.

Millennials now represent the largest generation of Americans, and they are by far the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the country.² About 19 percent of millennials identify as Latino or Hispanic, 13 percent as Black or African American, and 6 percent as Asian American. Thus, to fully understand how young adults think about elections and politicians, issues such as terrorism or gun violence, as well as their economic futures and race relations, we have to apply an intersectional lens and pay attention to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. In this report, we provide an extensive analysis of young adults' interpretation of the 2016 presidential election, their expectations, hopes and fears about Donald Trump's presidency, and their evaluations of Barack Obama's legacy.

The report reflects the Black Youth Project's sustained commitment to *knowledge*, *voice* and *action* among young people, in particular young people of color. We create *knowledge* by detailing the real-life experiences of young people and how their perspectives and preferences differ based on their race and ethnicity. We help amplify

¹ See, for example, our previous report, *Black Millennials in America* (available at http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP_ReportDesign04b_Dec03_HiRes.pdf).

² See: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/31/10-demographic-trends-that-are-shaping-the-u-s-and-the-world/>.

their *voices* by providing platforms and opportunities for young people to weigh in on the issues most important to them. Finally, we present our data in an accessible form to multiple constituencies with the hope that our findings will contribute to a call to *action* to bring about change rooted in the ways young people of color experience contemporary America and imagine a more equal and just future.

II. Key Findings



- > Majorities of young adults in each racial and ethnic group approve of Barack Obama's performance as president over the past 8 years.
- > Young people of color overwhelmingly approve of Barack Obama's handling of numerous public policy issues. By contrast, the only issue for which a majority of young whites approve of Barack Obama's performance is gay rights.
- > A majority of African Americans (60%), along with a plurality of Asian Americans (40%) and Latino/as (38%), say that Barack Obama will go down in history as a **great president**; only 19% of white young adults agree.
- > Disgust, fear, and anger are at the top of the list of emotions expressed by African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans after the election of Donald Trump. Young whites also express disgust and fear, but a substantial number also mention hope as the strongest emotion they felt following the election of Donald Trump.
- > Millennials of all racial and ethnic groups believe that the lives of people of color are going to get worse under a Trump presidency, while the lives of whites will improve.
- > Millennials express a great deal of concern about Trump's commitment to democracy. Majorities of African Americans (76%), Asian Americans (77%), Latino/as (76%), and whites (67%) believe that Trump is unlikely to respect those with whom he disagrees. Majorities of African Americans (59%), Asian Americans (60%), Latino/as (66%), and whites (54%) also say that Trump is likely to make it harder for individuals and groups to exercise their right to dissent and protest.
- > Large majorities of African Americans (67%), Asian Americans (63%), Latino/as (65%), and whites (73%) say they lack trust in media organizations to fully, accurately, and fairly report the news.

III. Introduction



The upcoming transition of the presidency from Barack Obama to Donald Trump represents a considerable change in American politics. The two presidents have divergent backgrounds, personalities, governing philosophies, and policy preferences. The impact of this transition will be especially influential in the lives of young Americans, whose future will be directly impacted by what remains of Barack Obama’s initiatives and by the decisions Donald Trump makes in his new administration.

In this report, we examine what young adults of different racial and ethnic backgrounds think about both the legacy of Barack Obama and their expectations—including their hopes and fears—of Donald Trump’s presidency. Our data suggests there is a deep divide between young adults of color and young whites in their evaluations of the first African American president, particularly with respect to his policy agenda. This racial and ethnic divide is even more pronounced in views about Donald Trump and his administration.

Our report provides the first extensive data on how Millennials of different racial and ethnic backgrounds perceive both the Obama legacy and the future under President-elect Donald Trump. We highlight the precarious environment under which this presidential transition takes place, with many young people expressing concern about the impact of Donald Trump’s policies on their lives and fearful that his presidency will lead to the erosion of the democratic norms that are central to our polity. This report is the first of many reports from GenForward on young adults’ opinions about and reactions to the presidency of Donald Trump. But before we turn to president-elect Trump, let’s review how President Obama’s legacy is viewed by Millennials.

IV. Barack Obama's Legacy

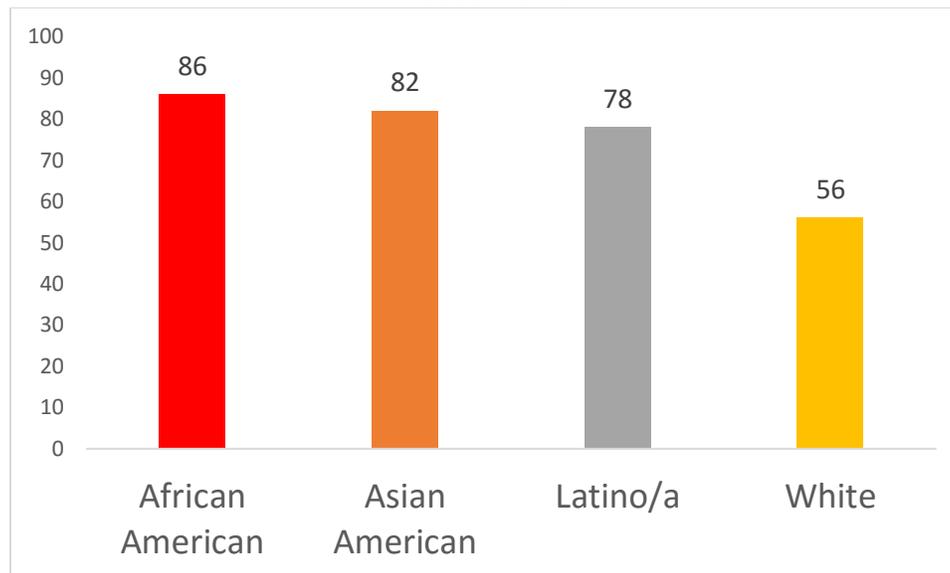
Barack Obama's election and presidency was in many ways monumental. Barack Obama will of course always be remembered as the first African American president in American history. His presidency also produced sweeping changes in many areas of public policy, including health care, gay rights, taxes and spending, and foreign policy. But as the Republican Party is slated to control the Senate, House, and the presidency, many aspects of President Obama's legacy may be dismantled by the incoming Republican administration.³

So what is President Obama's legacy in the minds of Millennials? And how does his legacy vary across race and ethnicity? Our data provides a unique opportunity for documenting how the nation's young adults, many of whom have grown up with Barack Obama as their first president in their adult years, evaluate the legacy of Barack Obama. We find divergent perspectives on President Obama's legacy across racial and ethnic groups.

When considering his performance as president as a whole, there is widespread approval of Barack Obama across all racial and ethnic groups. Figure 1 presents the percentage of respondents who say they somewhat or strongly approve of the way Barack Obama has handled his job as president *over the last 8 years*.

³ See, for example: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/opinion/sunday/the-wreckage-of-obamas-legacy.html>

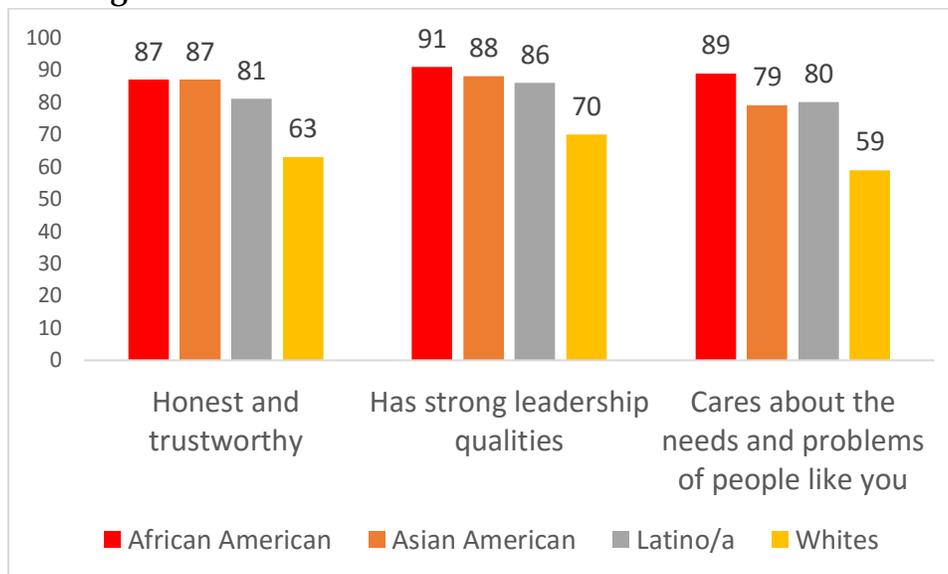
Figure 1. Percent Approval of Barack Obama’s Performance as President Over the Last 8 Years



As Figure 1 shows, **majorities of African Americans (86%), Asian Americans (82%), Latino/as (78%), and whites (56%) approve of Barack Obama’s handling of the job of president over the course of his presidency.** The immediate legacy of Barack Obama in the minds of a majority of Millennials is one approving of his overall performance as president.

These approval ratings are buttressed by young adults’ perception that Barack Obama is honest and trustworthy, has strong leadership qualities, and cares for people like them. These data are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Evaluations of Barack Obama as an Individual



As Figure 2 shows, Barack Obama himself is widely viewed positively among young adults across all racial and ethnic groups. It is particularly noteworthy that young African Americans (89%), Asian Americans (79%), Latino/as (80%), and whites (59%) all agree that Barack Obama has cared about people like them. On these dimensions—honesty, leadership, and caring about people—President Obama’s legacy seems to be in good standing among all Millennials.

However, when we analyze approval of President Obama’s handling of various policy issues, we find starker divisions by race and ethnicity. We asked respondents whether they approved, disapproved, or neither approved nor disapproved of President Obama’s handling of various policy issues including: the economy, health care, gay rights, gun control, immigration, terrorism, education, and criminal justice.

Overall, President Obama receives much higher marks in his handling of these issues among youth of color—African Americans in particular—than among young whites.

In Figures 3 and 4 we present the percentage of each group who approve of President Obama's handling of each of these issues. We highlight here the best and worst marks President Obama receives among each racial and ethnic group.

Among African Americans, President Obama's highest approval ratings come from his handling of the economy (77%), health care (75%), and education (73%). President Obama's lowest ratings come on the issues of gun control (55%), criminal justice (55%) and gay rights (58%). But for each issue, there is a majority of African Americans who approve of President Obama's actions on these policy issues.

Among Asian Americans, approval is highest for President Obama's handling of the issues of gay rights (75%), the economy (70%), and health care (68%). The issues where Asian American Millennials are least approving of President Obama's performance include gun control (42%), immigration (53%) and criminal justice (54%). Again, we find that nearly a majority of Asian Americans support his handling of even those issues for which he receives the lowest evaluation.

President Obama's highest marks among Latino/as come on the issues of the economy (67%), gay rights (65%), and health care (62%). Latino/as give President Obama his lowest marks on the issues of gun control (44%), criminal justice (52%), and terrorism (54%). Once again, majorities support his handling of most issues, even two of the three for which he received his lowest support.

Finally, in contrast to the consistently high evaluations President Obama received from Millennials of color, **the only issue for which a majority of whites approve of Barack Obama's actions is gay rights (60%)**. The economy (46%) and health care (42%) are the two other issue areas that generate the *highest* approval among young whites. The issues for which Obama's approval is lowest among white Millennials include immigration (33%), gun control (33%), and criminal justice (36%).

Figure 3. Approval of President Obama’s Handling of the Economy, Health Care, Gay Rights, and Gun Control

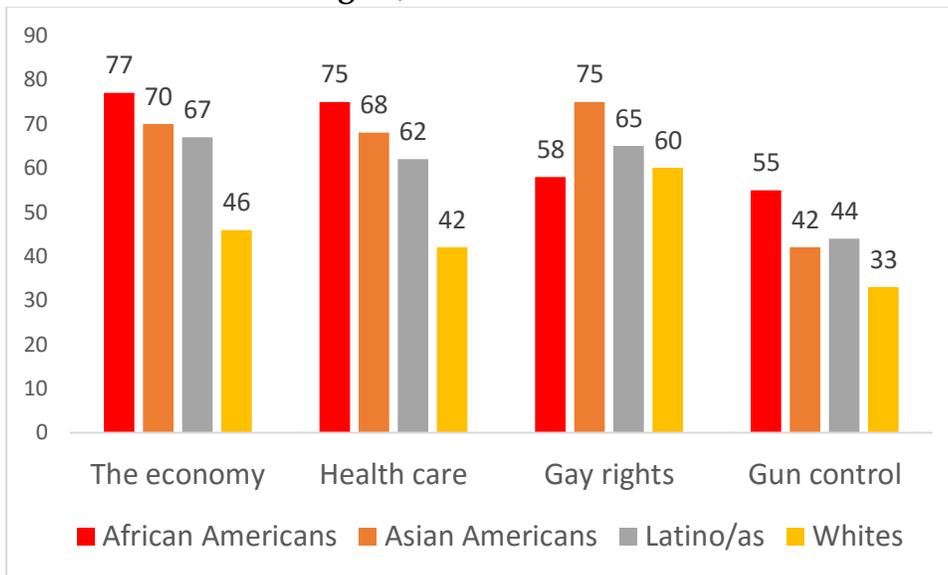
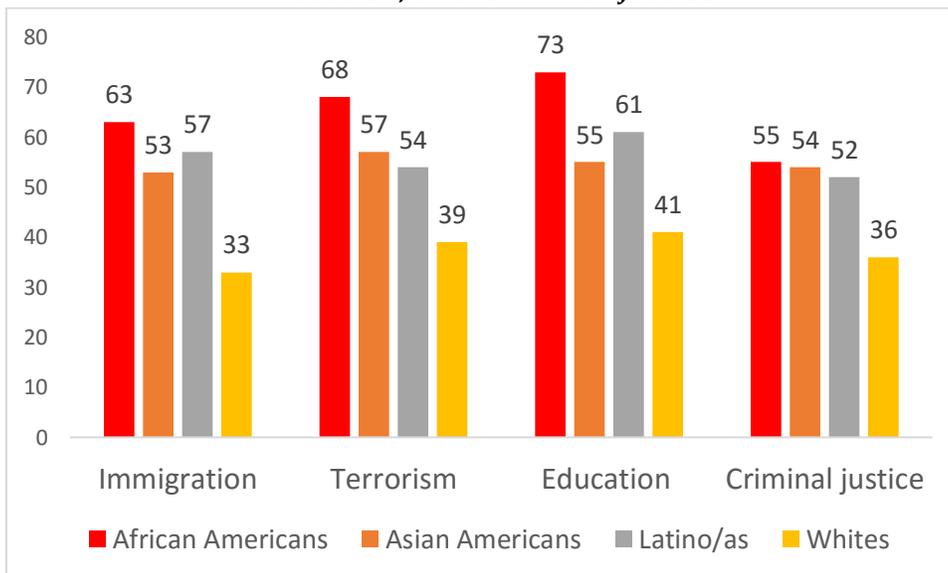


Figure 4. Approval of President Obama’s Handling of Immigration, Terrorism, Education, and Criminal Justice



As reported above and illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, approval of President Obama’s handling of various policy issues is much more divided by race and ethnicity than evaluations of Barack Obama as an individual. Young adults of color are much more likely than young whites to approve of the policy initiatives advanced by the Obama administration. That division was reflected in the 2016 vote where the plurality of young whites voted for Trump while significant majorities of African American, Latino/a and Asian American Millennials voted for Clinton who promised a continuation of the Obama agenda.

Beyond policy, there were also expectations—fair or not—that President Obama would both advance the interests of Black people and unite the country. Evaluations of President Obama on both of these dimensions will be central to his eventual legacy.

We asked our sample of young adults whether or not they think Barack Obama has succeeded in advancing the interests of Black people. As we present in Table 1, **African Americans are the most likely to say that President Obama has made progress advancing the interests of Black people (60%),** followed by Latino/as (50%), Asian Americans (48%), and whites (43%). By contrast, **whites are the most likely to respond that President Obama has made Black people worse off (12%),** while only 3-4% of youth of color agree with this response. In short, again there are sharply different perspectives across race and ethnicity over the consequences of Barack Obama’s presidency for advancing the interests of Black people.

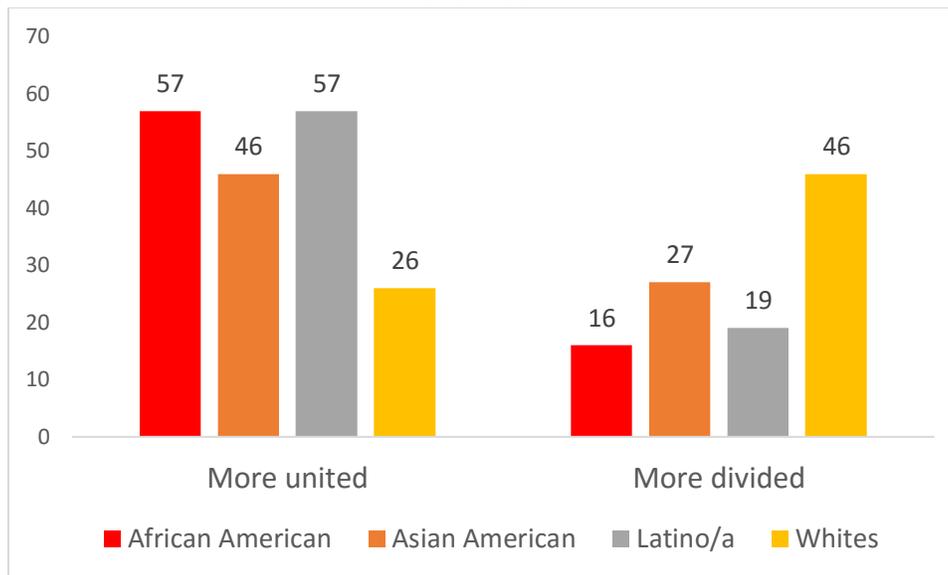
Table 1. Which of the following best describes your evaluation of how Obama has advanced the interests of Black people?

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Has made progress advancing the interests of Black people	60	48	50	43
Has tried but failed to make progress toward advancing the interests of Black people	21	25	27	20
He did not try very often, usually only when pressed by current events	12	19	14	22
Has not addressed the interests of Black people	4	1	5	4
Has made Black people worse off	3	4	3	12
N=	513	271	503	503

Note: Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding

There is also a deep divide across race and ethnicity in perceptions about whether Barack Obama’s presidency made the country more united or more divided. President Obama of course was introduced to the nation at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. It was during his speech at the convention where he positioned himself as a “uniter,” proclaiming that there is not a conservative and liberal or Black, white, Latino, and Asian America, but instead one United States of America. So at the end of eight years in the White House, do young people think President Obama succeeded in uniting the country? Figure 5 presents the results.

Figure 5. Has Barack Obama’s presidency made the country more united or more divided?



As Figure 3 shows, evaluations of political unity and division during Barack Obama’s presidency are again divided across racial and ethnic lines. A majority of African Americans (57%) and Latinos (57%) and a plurality of Asian American (46%) Millennials say that Barack Obama’s presidency has made the country much more or somewhat more united. Only 26% of whites agree that the country has become more united during Barack Obama’s presidency. By contrast, a plurality of whites (46%) say that the country has become more divided during President Obama’s terms in office, a view that is shared by 27% of Asian Americans, 19% of Latino/as and. only 16% of African Americans

Thus, when it comes to President Obama’s policy agenda and evaluations about his successes in advancing the interests of Black people and uniting the country, we see a deep divide across race and ethnicity. The high esteem in which young adults of color hold the President is likely to enhance his legacy in these communities. Meanwhile, young whites’ disapproval of President Obama’s policy agenda and negative evaluations of his efforts to advance the interests of Black people and unite the country are likely to diminish their evaluations of his performance as president.

Indeed, when we ask young adults to give their summary judgment of how Barack Obama will go down in history as a president, we continue to see stark differences across racial and ethnic groups, as presented in Table 2. A majority of African Americans (60%), along with a plurality of Asian Americans (40%) and Latino/as (38%), say that Barack Obama will go down in history as a **great president**; only 19% of white young adults agree. By contrast, **22% of white Millennials say that Barack Obama will go down as a “not very good” or “poor” president**, an assertion that only 3% of African Americans, 6% of Latino/as, and 8% of Asian Americans share.

Table 2. How do you think Barack Obama will go down in history as a president?

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
A great president	60	40	38	19
A good president	28	39	37	30
An average president	8	11	19	28
A not very good president	1	4	4	11
A poor president	2	4	2	11
<i>N</i> =	513	271	503	503

Note: Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding

In sum, our data suggests that President Obama’s legacy is not a straightforward calculation. There are large differences across race and ethnicity and across categories of evaluation. When it comes to Barack Obama personally, we find that large majorities of Millennials from all racial and ethnic backgrounds give President Obama high marks. They believe he is honest and trustworthy, has strong leadership skills and cares about people like them. But when it comes to issues of public policy and broad challenges in American politics including advancing the interests of Black people and uniting the country, evaluations of President Obama are deeply divided across race and ethnicity. For many young adults of color, and African American Millennials in particular, Barack Obama appears well positioned to go down in history as a great president. This, of course, is not the case for young whites who have very mixed feelings about his success as president. Discussions surrounding Barack Obama’s legacy in the months and years

to come would benefit from recognizing these nuances in Millennials' perceptions of his presidency.

V. Expectations and Concerns about Donald Trump's Presidency

As Donald Trump prepares to take office, a lot has been written anecdotally about what people have been feeling about the election and their beliefs, hopes and fears under this new administration. Our survey provides a unique opportunity for an empirical understanding of the views of the Millennial generation and young adults of color in particular regarding the Trump win and expectations regarding his presidency. We consider young people's assessment of the political landscape in America following the 2016 elections, their beliefs about who will benefit and lose during this new administration, their perceptions of Donald Trump's ideology and policy agenda, and finally their concerns about whether or not Donald Trump will respect the norms of our democracy and if the media is capable of holding him accountable. We start with young people's descriptions of the current political landscape and their emotions following the heated 2016 election.

The Political Landscape Following the 2016 Elections

Donald Trump's electoral victory has been greeted by controversy from the start. Defying most analysts' expectations, President-elect Trump won in the electoral college while losing the popular vote. Concerns about Russian interference in the election continue to cast a shadow over the incoming president. These controversies present a complicated environment as we usher in the new administration.

We wanted to know what young people's thoughts were about the election and the environment in which Donald Trump is set to take office. One question we find particularly interesting asked respondents to report the *strongest emotion* they felt after finding out that Donald Trump won the election. Table 3 lists the three most commonly mentioned emotions following the election of Donald Trump among each racial and ethnic group.

Table 3. The Three Most Common Emotions Following Donald Trump’s Election Victory, by Race and Ethnicity

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Most cited emotion	Disgusted (25%)	Fearful (19%)	Disgusted (20%)	Disgusted (17%)
Second most cited emotion	Fearful (14%)	Disgusted (18%)	Fearful (15%)	Hopeful (12%)
Third most cited emotion	Angry (11%)	Depressed (11%)	Angry (10%)	Fearful (12%)
N=	513	271	503	503

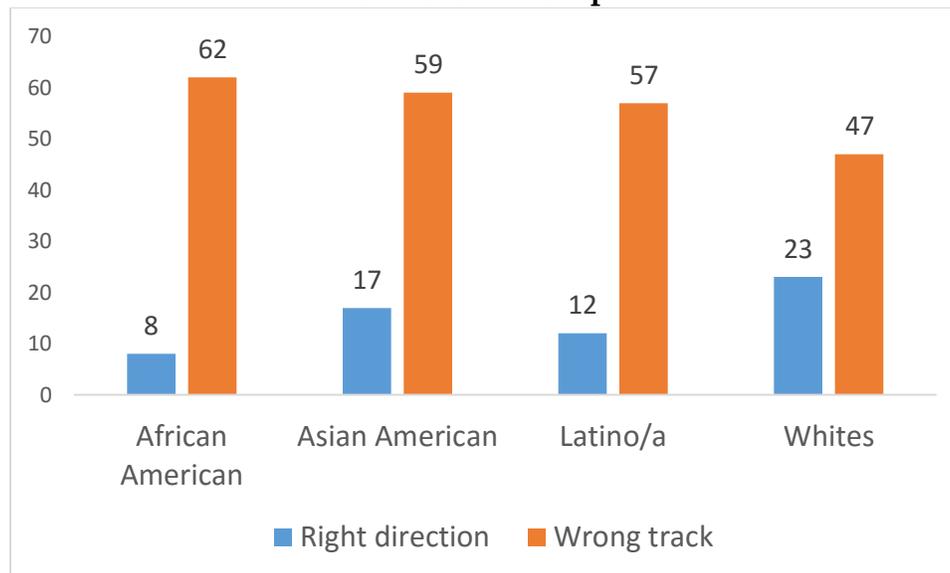
Question: After the results of the presidential election people felt various emotions. Please check the one emotion below that represents the strongest emotion you felt after finding out that Donald Trump won the election. Respondents select one from a list of 14 emotions (see the topline). *N* = 1,823. The percentage of respondents listing each emotion is listed in parentheses.

As Table 3 shows, negative emotions dominate the feelings that young adults express about the election of Donald Trump, particularly young adults of color. Disgust, fear, and anger are at the top of the list of emotions expressed by African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans. Young whites also express disgust and fear, but a substantial number also mention hope as the strongest emotion they felt following the election of Donald Trump (12%). Thus, **youth of color felt uniformly negative emotions in response to the election of Donald Trump, while young whites exhibit a bit more ambivalence and even some hope about the prospects of a Trump presidency.**⁴

These differences across race and ethnicity are further reflected in young adults’ perceptions about whether, with the election of Donald Trump, the country today is on the right or wrong track. Figure 6 presents the percentage of respondents who say either that the election of Donald Trump moves the country in the right direction, or puts it on the wrong track, by race and ethnicity.

⁴ 14% of African Americans, Latino/as, and whites, as well as 15% of Asian Americans, said they were unsure about what their strongest emotion was following the election.

Figure 6. Are things Heading in the Right Direction or Wrong Track with the Election of Donald Trump?



As Figure 6 illustrates, **there are widespread concerns that the election of Donald Trump moves the country on the wrong track.** A majority of African Americans (62%), Asian Americans (59%), and Latino/as (57%), say that the country is on the wrong track, and a plurality of young whites (47%) agree. At the same time, and echoing our finding above that whites are the most ambivalent about the election of Donald Trump, white young adults are also the most likely to say that the country is now moving in the right direction (23%), an opinion shared by only 8% of African Americans, 12% of Latino/as, and 17% of Asian Americans.

Our data also suggest that young people today perceive the biggest source of division in the country to revolve around race. We asked our sample of over 1,800 young adults to identify the biggest source of division in America today from a list that included partisanship, ideology, class, religion, gender and race. As Table 4 below shows, race was mentioned more than any other option for each racial and ethnic group. Even if one were to combine partisanship and ideology, race would still stand out as the biggest perceived source of division in America.

Table 4. Of these, which do you think is the biggest source of division in America today?

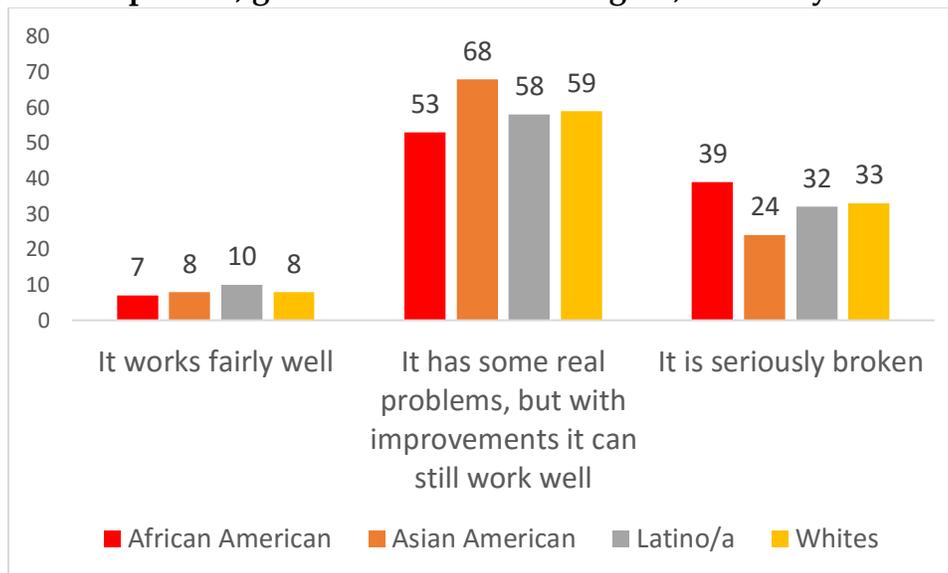
	African American adults 18- 30	Asian American adults 18- 30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18- 30
Race	62	45	53	37
Partisanship	3	7	5	12
Ideology	9	17	17	18
Class	14	17	11	17
Religion	4	2	4	6
Gender	1	1	2	1
None of the above	6	11	6	7
N=	513	271	503	503

Note: Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding

Thus, not only is Trump stepping into an environment where the emotional reactions and beliefs about the direction of the country differ by race and ethnicity with Millennials of color much more consistently negative about a Trump presidency than young whites, but young people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds also recognize the racial divide as the biggest source of the country’s divisions right now. These data points all suggest that as Trump ascends the presidency, the current political landscape—at least among young adults—is fraught with tension and the possibility for further divisions, especially based on race and ethnicity.

But there is perhaps a silver lining and opportunity for some political unity across racial and ethnic groups evident in our data. Specifically, while few young people say that the current political system in Washington D.C. works great, most believe that with improvements it can still work well. This data is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Which of the following statements is closest to your view of the state of politics, government and Washington, DC today?



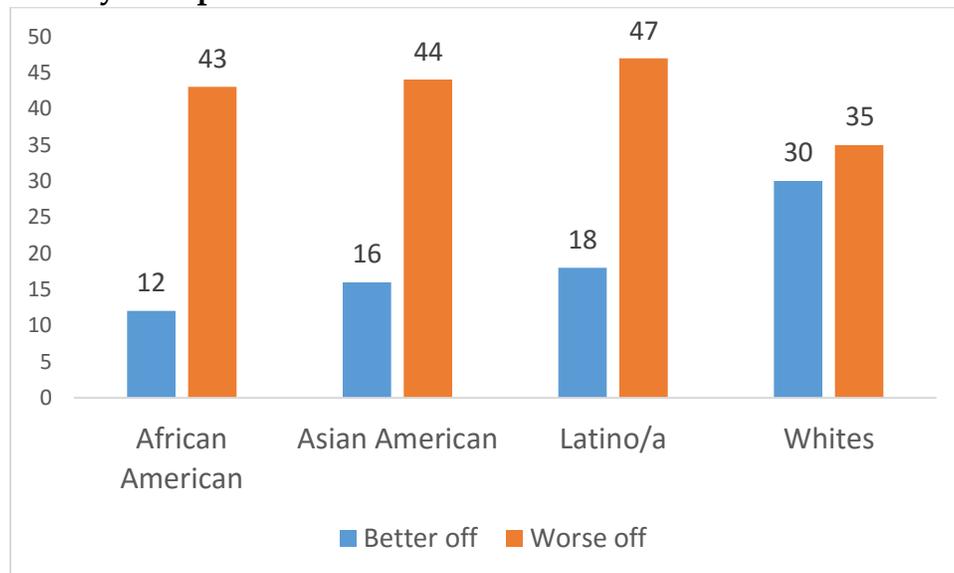
As Figure 7 shows, a majority of African Americans (53%), Asian Americans (68%), Latino/as (58%), and whites (59%) all agree that, **with improvements, the political system in Washington can be improved**. Thus, even though many young people are divided on the basis of race and ethnicity in their reaction to Donald Trump’s election and their evaluation of the current political landscape, they all suggest that with improvements to the political system the government in Washington DC can work better. Of course, it is highly probable that the types of improvement they want to see may also differ by race and ethnicity.

Perceptions of Winners and Losers Under a Trump Presidency

Despite being open to improvements in the political system, our data also suggest that young people have fairly firm beliefs about the groups that are likely to benefit and lose under Trump’s presidency. For starters, we find that young adults of color uniformly believe that they will be *worse off* in four years, while whites are more ambivalent.

We present the data on young people’s beliefs about how the election of Donald Trump will impact them personally in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Do you Expect that You will be Better Off or Worse Off in Four Years?



As Figure 8 shows, youth of color are much more likely to say that they will be worse in four years than say they will be better off. By contrast, about an equal number of whites say they will be better off as say that they will be worse off.

We also find that **members of all racial and ethnic groups believe that the lives of people of color are going to get worse under a Trump presidency, while the lives of whites will improve.** We present this data in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Will the Lives of People of Color and Whites Improve with the Election of Donald Trump? (% saying yes)

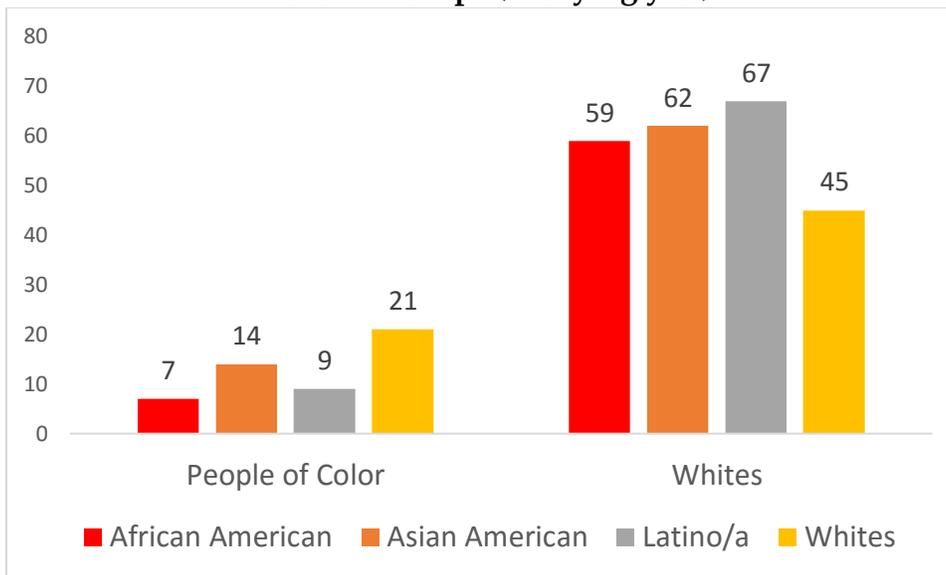
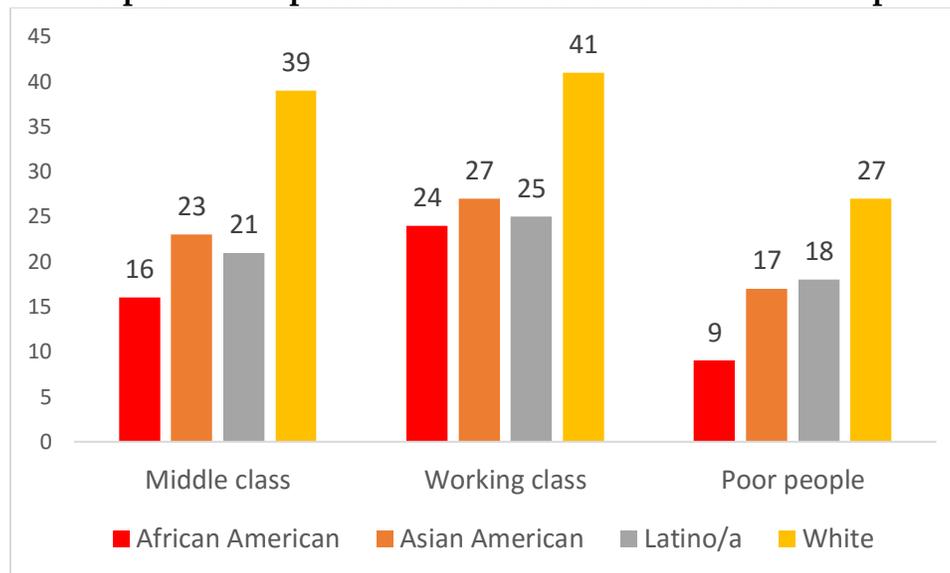


Figure 9 presents the data on perceptions of how Trump’s presidency will impact the lives of people of color and whites. As Figure 9 shows, very few young people say that **lives of people of color will improve under Trump’s presidency**, a view expressed by only 7% of African Americans, 14% of Asian Americans, 9% of Latino/as, and 21% of whites. Most say instead that the lives of people of color will become worse under Trump’s presidency. By contrast, majorities of African Americans (59%), Asian Americans (62%), Latino/as (67%), and a plurality of whites (45%) say that **the lives of whites will improve because of Trump’s election**. These results suggest that perceptions about the racial divide in American politics — presented in Table 4 above — may deepen during Trump’s presidency.

Figure 10 presents the percentage of young people who believe that Trump’s presidency will improve the lives of the middle class, working class, and poor people. As the data in Figure 10 suggests, there are large differences across race and ethnicity in perceptions of how Trump’s presidency will impact people at the middle and lower ends of the income distribution.

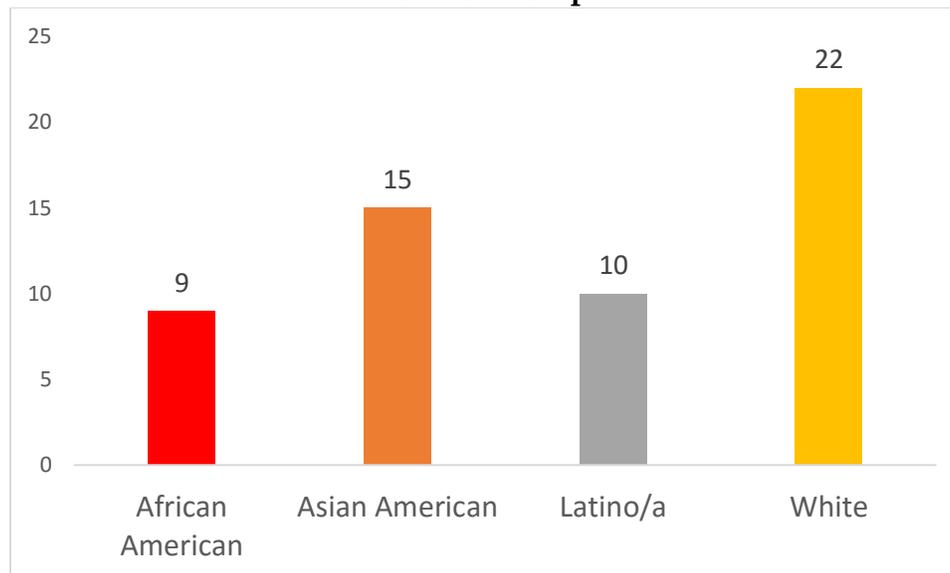
Figure 10. Do you Believe that the Lives of the Middle Class, Working Class and Poor People Will Improve with the Election of Donald Trump?



As Figure 10 shows, **whites are substantially more likely than people of color to say that Donald Trump’s election will improve the lives of the middle class and working class.** Trump’s appeals to white working class and middle class voters seem to have resonated with many young whites, who think that his presidency will improve the lives of individuals in these two groups. But young people of color appear far more skeptical of Donald Trump’s ability to improve the lives of middle and working class Americans. Finally, we note that **few young people of all the racial and ethnic groups we survey think that Donald Trump’s presidency will improve the lives of poor people.** Even among whites, whom many think that Trump can help the working class, there are far fewer who think that Trump will help people who are already poor.

Finally, we also asked our respondents to indicate whether they think that Donald Trump’s election will benefit or hinder women. Figure 11 presents the percentage of respondents who say that Trump’s presidency will improve the lives of women.

Figure 11. Do you Believe that the Lives of Women Will Improve with the Election of Donald Trump?



As Figure 11 shows, **few people within each racial and ethnic group say that Trump’s presidency will make the lives of women better.** Most say instead that the lives of women will become worse because of Donald Trump’s election.

In sum, young people see Trump’s presidency as helping whites and hurting people of color, poor people and women. That said, evaluations of how Trump’s presidency will affect individuals at different levels of the income distribution varies across race and ethnicity. Whites think that Trump can help the middle and working class, while African American, Latino/a and Asian American young adults are far more skeptical about whether Trump’s presidency can the improve the lives of middle and working class individuals.

All of these results underscore the differences we observe between young adults of color and young whites in their evaluations about the consequences of Donald Trump’s presidency. Young people of color are overwhelmingly concerned that the election of Donald Trump will negatively impact their lives, while young whites are more ambivalent and many are hopeful that Donald Trump’s election will help them.

Evaluations of Donald Trump’s Agenda

What do young people expect Donald Trump to do as president? We asked respondents to indicate the likelihood that Donald Trump will take a number of different possible actions as president, including following through on his campaign promises of building a wall along the Mexican border, improving trade deals, defeating ISIS, as well as concerns expressed by Trump’s critics like using the office of presidency to enrich his family and friends. Below in Tables 5 and 6 we present the three most and three least likely activities that respondents say “definitely will” or “probably will” happen during Trump’s presidency.

Table 5. Most Likely Actions Donald Trump will take as President

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18- 30
Most likely to happen	Enrich Friends (74%)	Enrich Friends (80%)	Repeal Obamacare (71%)	Repeal Obamacare (73%)
Second most likely to happen	Repeal Obamacare (65%)	Cut Taxes for Rich (78%)	Enrich Friends (68%)	Cut Taxes for Rich (71%)
Third most likely to happen	Cut Taxes for Rich (62%)	Repeal Obamacare (70%)	Cut Taxes for Rich (66%)	Enrich Friends (63%)
N=	513	271	503	503

Question: How likely is Donald Trump to do the following things as president? *N* = 1,823. The percentage of respondents who say the activity “definitely will” or “probably will” happen is listed in parentheses.

Table 6. Least Likely Actions Donald Trump will take as President

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18- 30
Most likely to happen	Defeat ISIS (24%)	Defeat ISIS (32%)	Defeat ISIS (23%)	“Drain the Swamp” (33%)
Second most likely to happen	Cut Taxes for the Middle Class (32%)	Build a Wall along the Mexican Border (38%)	Cut Taxes for the Middle Class (30%)	Defeat ISIS (34%)
Third most likely to happen	“Drain the Swamp” (36%)	Cut Taxes for the Middle Class (44%)	Improve America’s Trade Deals (44%)	Build a Wall along the Mexican Border (34%)
N=	513	271	503	503

Question: How likely is Donald Trump to do the following things as president? *N* = 1,823. The percentage of respondents who say the activity “definitely will” or “probably will” happen is listed in parentheses.

In the eyes of African Americans, Trump’s presidency is most likely to include the following actions: using the office to enrich family and friends (74%), repealing Obamacare (65%), and cutting taxes for the rich (62%). The three least likely activities that African Americans think will happen under Trump include: defeating ISIS (24%), cutting taxes for the middle class (32%) and “draining the swamp” of traditional politicians and lobbyists (36%).

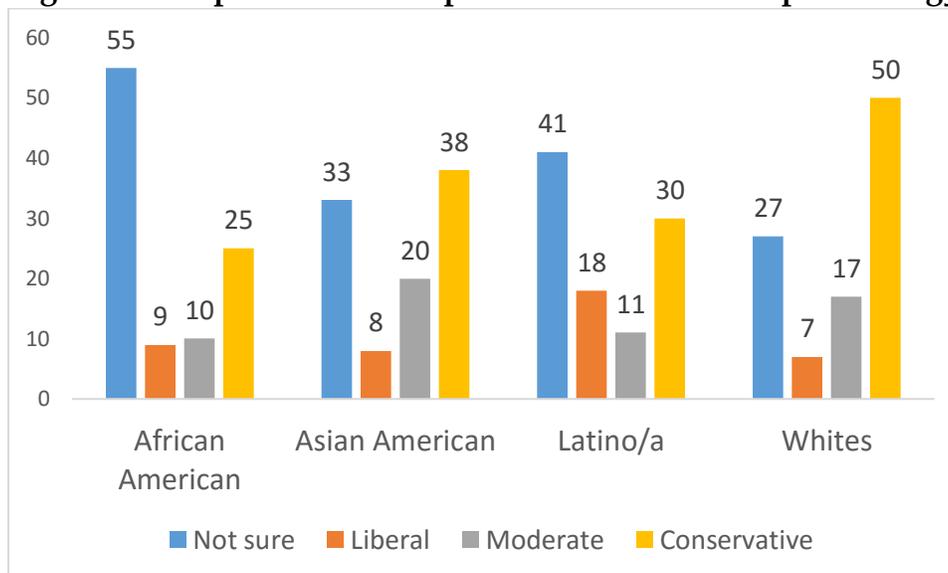
According to Asian American Millennial, the most likely actions to occur under a Trump presidency are: using the office to enrich family and friends (80%), cutting taxes for the rich (78%), and repealing Obamacare (70%). The least likely activities Asian Americans see Donald Trump undertaking are: defeating ISIS (32%), building a wall along the Mexican border (38%), and cutting taxes for the middle class (44%).

Latino/as think that Trump’s presidency is most likely to include: a repeal of Obamacare (71%), use of the office to enrich family and friends (68%), and cutting taxes for the rich (66%). Latino/as also think that Trump’s presidency is least likely to result in: defeating ISIS (23%), cutting taxes for the middle class (30%), and improving America’s trade deals (44%).

Finally, whites believe that Donald Trump will repeal Obamacare (73%), cut taxes for the rich (71%), and use the office to enrich family and friends (63%). The activities that whites believe are least likely once Trump is president include: draining the swamp of traditional politicians and lobbyists (33%), defeating ISIS (34%), and building a wall along the Mexican border (34%). One interesting finding is the consistency across Millennials of different racial and ethnic groups. Many agree that President Trump will repeal Obamacare, cut taxes for the rich and use the presidency to enrich family and friends.

We also wanted to know what young people perceived to be Donald Trump’s ideology. We find that many Millennials—and young adults of color especially—are not sure where Donald Trump stands ideologically. Figure 12 presents the percentage of respondents who indicate that they are “not sure” how to describe Donald Trump’s ideology, as well as the percentage of respondents who describe Trump as a liberal, moderate or conservative

Figure 12. Respondents’ Perceptions of Donald Trump’s Ideology



As Figure 12 shows, a majority of African Americans (55%) along with 41% of Latino/as, 33% of Asian Americans, and 27% of whites do not know whether to describe Donald Trump as a liberal, a moderate, or a conservative. This uncertainty about Donald Trump’s ideology likely reflects Trump’s ideological inconsistency in his position on

different issues over time. It also suggests that many Millennials lack clarity about the policy positions Trump intends to advance as president.

Finally, we wanted to know what young people think are the three most important issues or challenges for Donald Trump to address when he takes office. We present the three most frequently identified issues by racial and ethnic group in Table 7 below.

Table 7. The Three Most Important Issues or Challenges for Donald Trump to Address When He Takes Office

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Most cited issue or challenge	Race Relations / Equal Rights (30%)	Healthcare (23%)	Immigration (33%)	Healthcare (27%)
Second most cited issue or challenge	Jobs / Unemployment (18%)	Race Relations / Equal Rights (22%)	Terrorism (21%)	The economy (22%)
Third most cited issue or challenge	Uniting Americans (18%)	The economy (21%)	Race Relations / Equal Rights (19%)	Jobs / Unemployment & Immigration (both 17%)
N=	513	271	503	503

Question: What do you think are the three most important issues or challenges for Donald Trump to address when he takes office in January? Respondents select three from a list of 37 issues (see the topline). *N* = 1,823. The percentage of respondents listing each issue as one of the three most important is listed in parentheses.

As Table 7 illustrates, there are important similarities and differences across race and ethnicity in beliefs about the most important challenges for Donald Trump to tackle as he ascends to the presidency. For example, every group of young adults mentions something related to the economy—jobs, unemployment or the broader economy. In terms of differences, African Americans are most likely to identify race relations (30%), jobs and unemployment (18%) and uniting Americans (18%) as the biggest issues for Donald Trump come January 20th. Asian Americans also identify race relations as a primary issue but also add healthcare (23%) and the economy as pressing issues for a Trump administration. **One-third of all young Latino/as identify immigration as the biggest issue for Donald Trump to address**, along with terrorism (21%), and race

relations (19%). Finally, whites identify the biggest issues to be healthcare (27%), the economy (22%), and jobs/unemployment and immigration listed third (both at 17%).

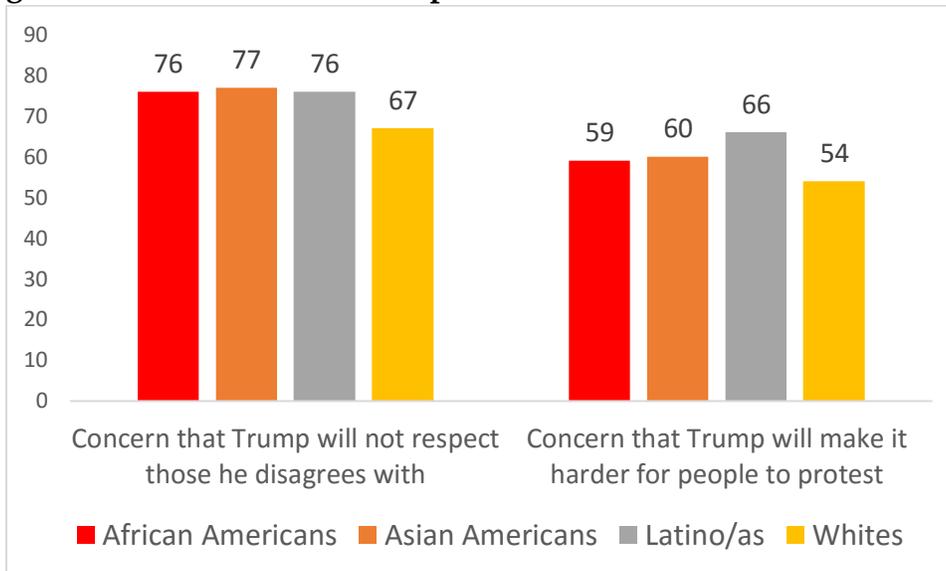
It is notable that for young adults of color, the biggest challenges they see for Trump to address in his administration include both race relations and the economy, while for young whites economic issues dominate the top of the beliefs about the biggest challenges in the country. Thus, African Americans, Latino/as and Asian American Millennials have different beliefs about the issues that should dominate Trump's agenda compared to young whites, and they see matters of race relations as representing one of the biggest challenges in the years ahead.

Is Donald Trump a Threat to Democracy?

Some political analysts have used the language of fascism and authoritarianism to describe Donald Trump. From his cozy relations with Vladimir Putin to his uneasy relations with the media, to his knee-jerk suggestions of severe punishment for those that dissent, many fear that a Trump administration represents a challenge not only to expansive policies like the Affordable Care Act but also to the norms of American democracy itself. We wanted to know whether young people similarly have fears about the Trump administration's commitment to democratic institutions and democratic norms.

We asked our sample to evaluate Trump's commitment to two democratic norms: respecting people he disagrees with and tolerating dissent and protest. The percentage of respondents who express concern about Trump's commitment to these values are illustrated below in Figure 13. Specifically, we display the percentage of people who are "not too confident" or "not at all confident" that Trump will show respect for people he disagrees with on the left side of the figure. On the right side, we display the percentage of respondent who are "very" or "somewhat confident" that Trump will make it harder for people to dissent and protest.

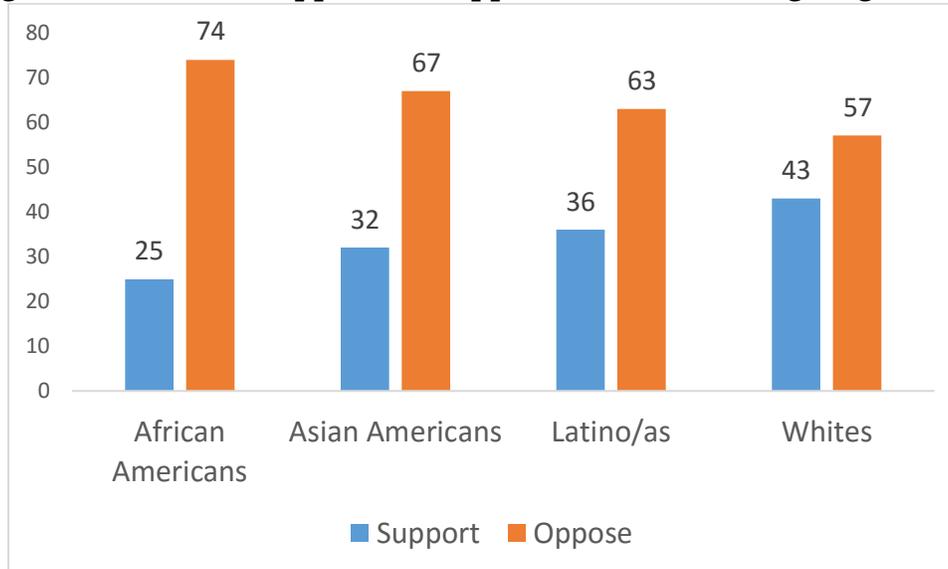
Figure 13. Concern about Trump’s Commitment to Democratic Norms



As Figure 13 illustrates, **Millennials in general express a great deal of concern about Trump’s commitment to democracy.** Majorities of African Americans (76%), Asian Americans (77%), Latino/as (76%), and whites (67%) believe that Trump is unlikely to respect those with whom he disagrees. Majorities of African Americans (59%), Asian Americans (60%), Latino/as (66%), and whites (54%) also say that Trump is likely to make it harder for individuals and groups to exercise their right to dissent and protest.

Donald Trump’s comment shortly following the election that individuals who burn the American flag should be arrested or have their citizenship revoked is one example of the comments he has made leading people to question his commitment to democratic norms of free speech and protest. We wanted to know the extent to which young adults agreed with Trump that flag burners should either have their citizenship revoked or spend a year in jail. The percentage of respondents who strongly or somewhat support and who strongly or somewhat oppose this position is displayed in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Level of Support and Opposition to Punishing Flag-Burners



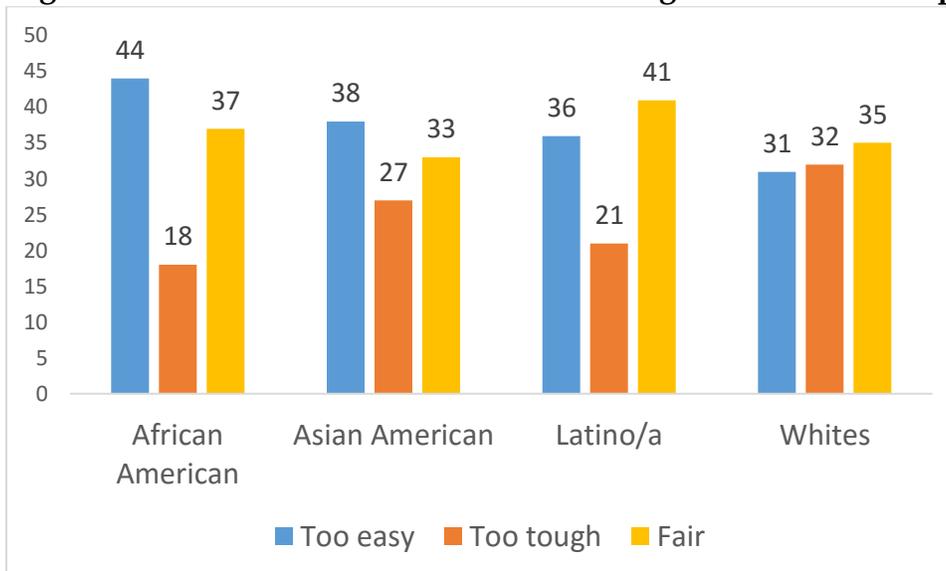
As Figure 14 shows, young adults of color in particular are deeply opposed to Trump’s statement that people who burn the flag should be punished. These young adults have views consistent with the constitution. Young whites, however, are more evenly split in their opinions on this issue, though a majority say that they oppose punishing those who burn the flag. Thus, **Millennials appear to disagree with Trump’s desire to punish those who protest by burning the American flag.**

Trump vs. the Media

In the wake of the 2016 election, greater scrutiny has been directed at the media’s vital role in shedding light on the abuses of government officials and protecting citizens’ rights to dissent and protest. But many have expressed skepticism about the ability for today’s media to effectively exercise this function in their coverage of Donald Trump. How do Millennials evaluate the media’s coverage of Donald Trump thus far, and do they trust the media’s ability to accurately and fairly cover the incoming President and politics more generally?

Figure 15 presents the percentage of respondents in each group who say that the media’s coverage of Donald Trump recently has been too easy, too tough, or fair.

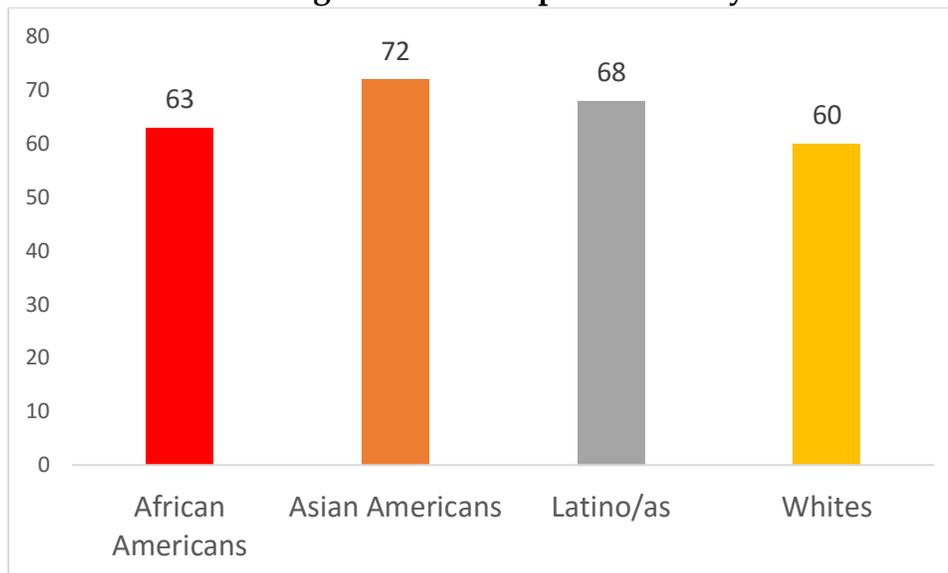
Figure 15. Evaluations of the Media’s Coverage of Donald Trump



The results presented in Figure 15 indicate that **young people have fairly mixed views about the media’s coverage of Donald Trump thus far.** A plurality of African Americans (44%) and Asian Americans (38%) say that the media has been “too easy” in their coverage of Trump. Latino/as (41%) and whites (35%), by contrast, are most likely to say that the media’s coverage of Trump has been fair.

Young people express even greater levels of concern about the ability of the media to fulfill its duties of providing oversight to the public during the Trump administration. The percentage of respondents who are very or somewhat concerned about the media’s ability to exercise their oversight role during Trump’s presidency is presented in Figure 16.

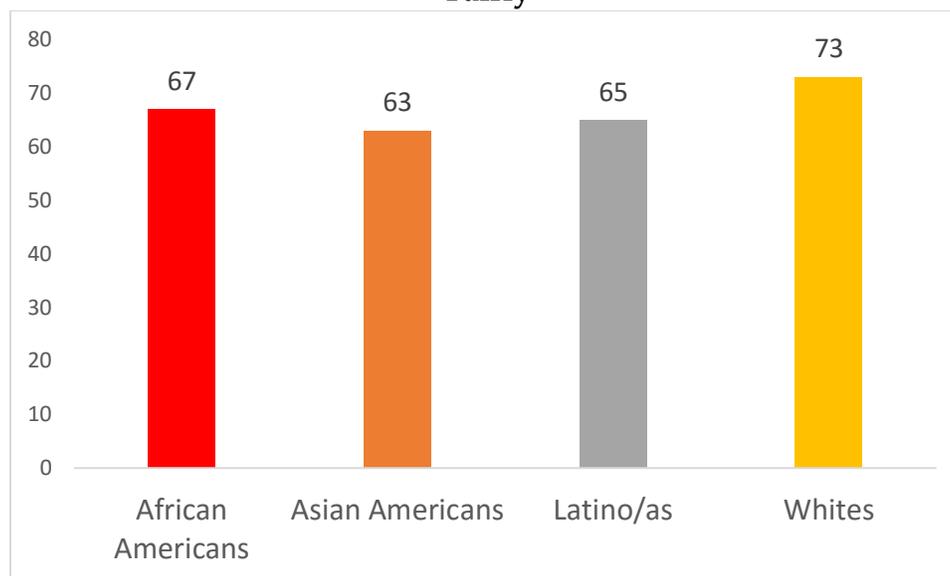
Figure 16. Concern about the Media’s Ability to Provide Oversight to the Public During Donald Trump’s Presidency



As Figure 16 demonstrates, **large majorities of African Americans (63%), Asian Americans (72%), Latino/as (68%), and whites (60%) say they are concerned about the media’s ability to provide the proper level of oversight to the Trump administration.** Media organizations should be aware of the public’s—at least Millennials’—concern about their ability to fulfill their proper functions as we undertake this presidential transition. The public is dependent on many aspects of the media to provide needed information about the functioning of the government. Currently, many Millennials are not convinced that the media is prepared and able to handle their responsibilities.

Indeed, our data suggests that young people possess a more general lack of trust and confidence in media organizations. Figure 17 presents the percentage of respondents who report having “not very much” or “none at all” trust and confidence in the mass media such as newspapers, TV and radio.

Figure 17. Lack of Trust in the Mass Media to Report the News Fully, Accurately, and Fairly



Specifically, **large majorities of African Americans (67%), Asian Americans (63%), Latino/as (65%), and whites (73%) say they lack trust in media organizations to fully, accurately, and fairly report the news.** Given the concerns that many of Trump’s critics have expressed about the President-elect’s commitment to the protection and practice of democratic norms, it is imperative that the media fulfill their role of covering Trump’s presidency fairly and completely. Our data suggest that young people have grave doubts about the ability for the media to achieve these goals effectively.

Obama vs. Trump

Earlier in the report we detailed respondents’ thoughts on whether the country is more divided after eight years of the Obama presidency and how respondents viewed his terms as president. Young whites (46%) more than any other group believed that President Obama is leaving the country more divided. And while majorities of African American, Latino/a and Asian Americans thought President Obama would go down in history as a great or good president, only 49% of young whites agreed with that assessment.

In order to compare the legacy of President Obama and the expectations of a Trump presidency we asked Millennials whether a Trump presidency will leave the country more divided and how they think Donald Trump will be remembered as a president.

Figure 18. Will Donald Trump’s Presidency Lead to the Country Being More United or More Divided?

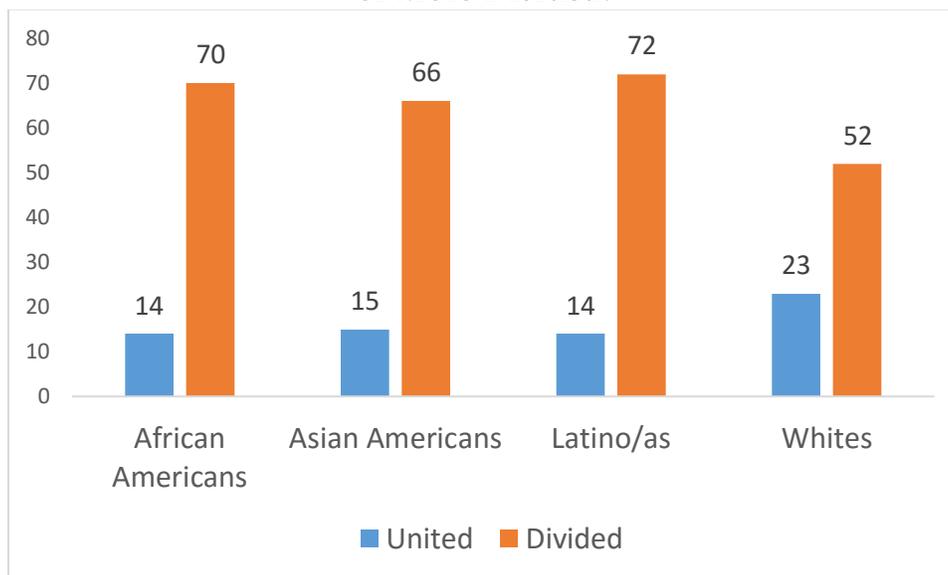


Figure 18 presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who say that they think Donald Trump’s presidency will lead to the country being more united or more divided. As the Figure shows, many more young people—especially young people of color—say that **the country will become more divided than united during Donald Trump’s presidency**. Also, it is important to note that majorities of Millennials across racial and ethnic group believe that President-elect Trump will leave the country more divided in four years. This stands in contrast to evaluations of President Obama, where no majority in any group of Millennials believed that President Obama left the country more divided.

Finally, we wanted to know what young people think Donald Trump’s legacy will eventually be as president. We present responses to this question in Table 8, which shows that **most young people think that Donald Trump will not be a successful**

president. Majorities of African Americans (65%), Asian Americans (63%), and Latino/as (66%) all say that Trump will go down as either a “not very good” or “poor” president; whites are overall more sanguine about Trump’s presidency, but 48% still say Trump will be a not very good or poor president. These evaluations are much lower across the board compared Millennials’ evaluations of Barack Obama’s presidential legacy as detailed previously in Table 2.

Table 8. How do you think Donald Trump will go down in history as a president?

	African American adults 18- 30	Asian American adults 18- 30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18- 30
A great president	2	5	4	10
A good president	11	15	11	17
An average president	22	16	19	24
A not very good president	27	24	30	18
A poor president	38	39	36	30
N=	513	271	503	503

Note: Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding

In sum, this report presents the first extensive data on young people’s thoughts about the incoming Trump administration. As we show, Millennials express a great deal of concern over how Trump’s presidency will affect American politics and their lives. The anxieties surrounding the incoming Trump administration detailed in this report are especially pronounced among young adults of color, who record feeling angry, disgusted and depressed with Trump’s election. Millennials in general are worried about the future and believe that their lives and the lives of people of color, women and the poor will become worse because of Donald Trump’s election.

There is also considerable concern about Trump’s commitment to democratic norms and institutions and the ability for the media to accurately and fully cover Donald Trump during his presidency. These concerns spillover to lead young people to fear that Donald Trump will exacerbate the divisions in America with a majority of Millennials of color and a near majority of white Millennials predicting that Trump’s presidency will be a failure. As we move forward into his administration, GenForward will continue to track how young people—and young people of color in particular—react to the new presidential administration.

V. Survey Methodology

The GenForward December survey is a project of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago, with The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Interviews were conducted with a representative sample from GenForwardSM, a nationally representative survey panel of adults ages 18-30 recruited and administered by NORC at the University of Chicago and funded by grants to the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

A total of 1,823 interviews were conducted between December 9 and December 26, 2016 with adults ages 18-30 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including completed interviews with 513 African American young adults, 271 Asian American young adults, 503 Latino/a young adults, 503 white young adults, and 33 young adults with other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The survey was offered in English and Spanish and via telephone and web modes.

The GenForward survey was built from two sample sources:

- Fifty-three percent of the completed interviews are sourced from NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel. AmeriSpeak is a probability based panel that also uses address-based sample but sourced from the NORC National Frame with enhanced sample coverage. During the initial recruitment phase of the AmeriSpeak panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face).
- Forty-seven percent of the completed interviews are sourced from the Black Youth Project (BYP) panel of young adults recruited by NORC. The BYP sample is from a probability-based household panel that uses an address-based sample from a registered voter database of the entire U.S. Households were selected using

stratified random sampling to support over-sampling of households with African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans ages 18-30. NORC contacted sampled households by U.S. mail and by telephone, inviting them to register and participate in public opinion surveys twice a month.

Panelists on both the BYP and AmeriSpeak panels are invited to register for the panel via the web or by telephone to participate in public opinion surveys.

Of the 1,823 completed interviews in the GenForward December survey, 97 percent were completed by web and 3 percent by telephone. The survey completion rate is 32.9 percent. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 20.4 percent and the weighted household panel retention rate is 94.4 percent, for a cumulative AAPOR Response Rate 3 of 6.3 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. Among subgroups, the margin of sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 6.0 percentage points for African Americans, +/- 7.7 percentage points for Asian Americans, +/- 6.5 percentage points for Latino/as, and +/- 6.4 percentage points for whites.

To encourage cooperation, respondents were offered incentives for completing the survey that ranged from the cash-equivalent of \$3 to the cash-equivalent of \$10.

The interviews from the two probability-based sample sources were combined for statistical weighting and analysis. The combined panel samples provide sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. The statistical weights incorporate the appropriate probability of selection for the BYP and AmeriSpeak samples, nonresponse adjustments, and also, raking ratio adjustments to population benchmarks for 18-30 year old adults. A poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under- and over-sampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. The poststratification process was done separately for each racial/ethnic group and involved the following variables: age, gender, education, and census region. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults ages 18-30, and the 18-30 year-old populations for African

Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans, and non-Latino/a whites, were used for all analyses.