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## GenForward June 2016 Survey Report:

Topics covered include the 2016 Campaign, Policy Attitudes, and Perceptions of Race and Racism

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**The first of its kind monthly survey of racially and ethnically diverse young adults**

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GenForward is a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

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All reference to our report and data need to be cited. Here is the preferred citation: GenForward: a survey of the Black Youth Project with the AP-NORC center for Public Affairs Research

Reports and topline of the GenForward Surveys by the Black Youth Project are available at [GenForwardSurvey.com](http://GenForwardSurvey.com)

## **Black Youth Project and GenForward Survey**

For over 10 years, the Black Youth Project, 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 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 monthly that pays special attention to how race and ethnicity shape how respondents experience and think about the world.

In this report, we document what young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans and Whites are thinking about: the 2016 presidential election, the political and economic environment, the major issues animating the 2016 political campaigns, and race and racism in America. 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 experiences differ based on their race and ethnicity. We help amplify their *voices* by providing platforms and opportunities for young people to weigh in on the issues most important to them. We present our data in a form and 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.

## Introduction

The 2008 and 2012 presidential elections were watershed moments for young people's involvement in electoral politics. It is impossible to understand Barack Obama's success in the election without considering the role of young African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans, who exhibited record levels of turnout and granted strong support for his candidacy. How will young people engage in the 2016 presidential election? Without the country's first major-party African American candidate on the ballot, will young African American adults be interested in and mobilized by electoral politics? Can Hillary Clinton successfully draw upon the Obama coalition of young voters of color? And how well does Donald Trump's messages around immigration, gun violence, criminal justice, and the economy resonate with young people?

The GenForward Survey is the first of its kind—a nationally representative survey of over 1750 young adults ages 18-30 conducted monthly that pays special attention to how race and ethnicity shape how respondents 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 young adult vote. 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.<sup>1</sup>

Young adults now represent the largest generation of Americans, and they are by far the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the country.<sup>2</sup> 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 people think about the upcoming election, issues such as terrorism or gun violence, as well as their economic futures, we have to pay attention to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Our mission is to document the political views of young people, especially young people of color.

In this report, we document what young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans<sup>3</sup> and Whites are thinking about: the 2016 presidential election, the political and economic environment, the major issues animating the 2016 political campaigns, and race and racism in America.

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<sup>1</sup> See our previous report, *Black Millennials in America* (available at [http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP\\_ReportDesign04b\\_Dec03\\_HiRes.pdf](http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP_ReportDesign04b_Dec03_HiRes.pdf)).

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

<sup>3</sup> We have limited coverage of the Asian American population because our surveys were conducted only in English and Spanish. Our sample of Asian Americans is therefore not fully representative of that community. For a report on the challenges of polling Asian Americans, see: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/11/the-challenges-of-polling-asian-americans/>.

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## Key Findings

- ❖ Any talk of a monolithic youth vote is uninformed. There are vast differences in who young adults plan to vote for in November based on race and ethnicity.
- ❖ Young African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans overwhelmingly prefer Clinton to Trump, while young Whites are evenly split between the two.
- ❖ The Clinton campaign has work to do to motivate the young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans, and Whites who helped Barack Obama form a winning coalition in 2008 and 2012.
- ❖ Hillary Clinton is perceived as dishonest by nearly a majority of all young adults: 48% of African Americans, 57% of Asian Americans, 64% of Latino/as, and 82% of Whites believe that Hillary Clinton is not honest and trustworthy.
- ❖ Donald Trump is viewed very negatively by young people. For example, majorities of African Americans (77%), Asian Americans (78%), Latino/as (81%), and Whites (58%) believe that Donald Trump is a racist.
- ❖ The candidate that most appeals to young adults of all races and ethnicities, even as the primary campaigns wind down, is Bernie Sanders. Majorities of young African Americans (60%), Asian Americans (69%), Latino/as (68%), and Whites (59%) chose Bernie Sanders over both Clinton and Trump as the candidate who best understands the problems of people like them.
- ❖ Among African American young adults who indicated they voted in the primaries, a majority, 54%, said they voted for Bernie Sanders.
- ❖ Most young adults oppose many of Donald Trump's immigration proposals and support Bernie Sanders's economic proposals. But we find large differences across racial and ethnic groups in attitudes towards these and many other policy issues.
- ❖ There are also large racial differences in the issues that matter to how young people plan to vote. For example, 30% of Latinos rate immigration as one of the three most important issues to them in choosing which candidate to support, much higher than any other racial group. Among African Americans, 21% rate police brutality as one of the three most important issues to them.
- ❖ There continues to be a deep divide between young African Americans and Whites in views about race and racism in America. For example, 80% of African Americans believe that racism remains a major problem, while only 54% of Whites agree.

## The Youth Vote in the 2016 General Elections

The general instinct from commentators is to report the overall level of support for each of the candidates among young people. Data from our June survey indicate that 38% of young voters would cast a ballot for Hillary Clinton if the vote were today and 17% would vote for Donald Trump. Only 7% of young voters say they are undecided. The remaining respondents either support someone else (22%) or currently say they will not vote on election day (16%). Among undecided voters, Clinton continues to maintain an edge over Trump: 31 to 15 percent. **But to proceed with only the numbers for young adults generally would be a huge mistake.** These numbers obscure large differences in how support for the candidates varies by race and ethnicity.

As Table 1 shows, if the election were today, support for Hillary Clinton would be strongest among African American (52%) and Asian American (55%) young adults, more than of half whom said they would vote for Clinton. Support for Clinton was somewhat lower among Latino/as, with 42% reporting they would vote for Clinton. White young adults provided significantly lower support for Hillary Clinton, as only 30% said they would vote for her.

Support for Donald Trump is found largely among Whites. Again, data from our June survey shows that only 2% of Blacks, 8% of Latino/a, and 6% of Asian Americans say they would vote for Trump if the election were today. Trump's support is limited mostly to young Whites, 26% of whom said they would vote for Donald Trump if the election were held today. But even this number is troubling for Donald Trump, as 51% of Whites under 30 supported Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election.<sup>4</sup> Donald Trump's appeal to young White voters is substantially more limited, while he has almost completely turned off young voters of color.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.people-press.org/2012/11/26/young-voters-supported-obama-less-but-may-have-mattered-more/>

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**Table 1: Support for the 2016 Presidential Candidates**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Hillary Clinton	52	55	42	30
Donald Trump	2	6	8	26
Someone else	18	18	26	22
Will probably not vote	17	14	17	15
Undecided	10	8	6	6

*Question:* If the 2016 presidential election were between Hillary Clinton for the Democrats and Donald Trump for the Republicans, would you vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, someone else, or probably not vote? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

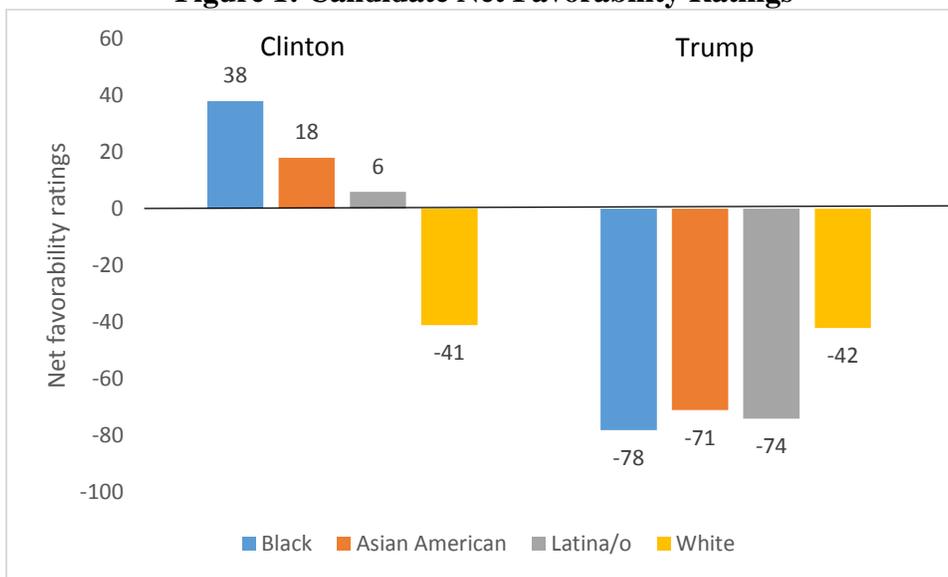
Our data also indicate that young adults—especially African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as—have deep reservations about Donald Trump. Only 8% of African Americans think that Donald Trump is **qualified to be president**. His numbers are not great among other groups either with only 13% of Asian Americans, 14% of Latino/as, and 28% of Whites agreeing that Donald Trump is qualified to be president.

Donald Trump is also widely perceived to be **untrustworthy**: 91% of African Americans, 87% of Asian Americans, 86% of Latino/as, and 74% of Whites in our survey report they believe that Donald Trump is *not* honest and trustworthy. Majorities across race and ethnicity also think that Donald Trump is a **racist**: 77% of African Americans, 78% of Asian Americans, 81% of Latino/as and 58% of Whites think that Donald Trump is a racist.

Cumulatively, these perceptions of Donald Trump translate into **very low favorability ratings**: only 6% of African Americans, 12% of Asian Americans, 10% of Latinos, and 27% of young Whites view Donald Trump as either very or somewhat favorable. By comparison, Hillary Clinton is viewed **much more favorably**, particularly among young adults of color with 64% of African Americans, 55% of Asian Americans, 49% of Latino/as, and 26% of Whites viewing Hillary Clinton as either very or somewhat favorable.

In Figure 1 we present the net favorability of both candidates. First, Hillary Clinton is seen much more favorably by African American respondents than by other respondents. Second, all respondents have very unfavorable views of Trump (especially respondents of color). And third, the media narrative that both Clinton and Trump have record levels of negative favorability is true only for our White respondents. Hillary Clinton is viewed more favorably than not by African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as.

**Figure 1: Candidate Net Favorability Ratings**



Data show the percentages of young people with favorable views of the candidates minus the percentages of young people with unfavorable views of the candidates. Positive numbers indicate overall positive views and negative numbers indicate overall negative views.  $N = 1,941$ .

Across the board, Hillary Clinton is viewed more positively than Donald Trump. In Table 2 the data indicate that majorities of African Americans (70%), Asian Americans (63%), Latinos (60%), and a near-majority of Whites (49%), believe that Hillary Clinton is **qualified to be president**. And while perceptions of **trustworthiness** may be Hillary Clinton's biggest weakness, even in this area Clinton does much better than Trump among young adults of color (but not Whites): 50% of African Americans, 40% of Asian Americans, and 35% of Latino/as view Clinton as honest and trustworthy. Whites view Trump as more honest than Hillary Clinton, as only 17% of White young adults believe that Hillary Clinton is honest and trustworthy.

**Table 2. Evaluations of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>		<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>		<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>		<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>	
	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton
Percent who view candidate as Honest and Trustworthy	8	50	13	40	12	35	26	17
Percent who view candidate as Qualified to be President	8	70	13	63	14	60	28	49
Percent who believe candidate is a Racist	77	16	78	18	81	17	58	21
Percent who view candidate favorably	6	64	13	55	10	49	27	27

*Question:* See topline for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### **Young Adults and the Bernie Sanders Phenomenon**

Despite Hillary Clinton’s support relative to Donald Trump, we find that Clinton cannot take young people’s votes for granted. Even Black youth, who turned out in large numbers for Barack Obama, need to be convinced that Hillary Clinton is trustworthy, has their issues at hand, and will pursue a policy agenda that will improve their lives and those in their community.

The media have widely speculated that motivating Bernie Sander’s base of young supporters is a key challenge for the Clinton campaign. Our data show that young people of all races and ethnicities continue to admire Bernie Sanders, even as the primary campaigns wind down. It has been widely documented that Bernie Sanders’ rise was driven in large part by the support of passionate young voters. Our data indicate that in contrast to the overwhelming support Hillary Clinton received from older African American voters, the majority of African American young adult voters supported Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic Party primary.

As the data in Table 3 indicate, a large number of indicators reveal a deep reservoir of support for Bernie Sanders among young adults. First, young people of all races and ethnicities trust Bernie Sanders. African Americans (80%), Asian-Americans (80%), Latino/as (84%), and Whites (73%) believe that Bernie Sanders is **honest and trustworthy**. Compared to Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders is perceived as much more honest and trustworthy by potential young voters. Bernie Sanders is also perceived as the most **qualified for the presidency** with 80% of African Americans, 76% of Asian Americans, 77% of Latino/as, and 67% of Whites believing that Bernie Sanders is qualified to be president. Finally, majorities of

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African Americans (60%), Asian Americans (69%), Latino/as (68%) and Whites (59%) picked Bernie Sanders as the candidate that best **understands the problems of people like them**.

These numbers translate into very positive favorability ratings for Bernie Sanders among young adults: 73% of African Americans, 78% of Asian Americans, 73% Latino/as, and 55% of Whites view Bernie Sanders as very or somewhat favorable. In many ways, our data suggests that Bernie Sanders appealed to Obama's coalition of young voters of color better than Hillary Clinton did.

Can Hillary Clinton get these Bernie supporters to vote for her in the Fall? We asked those Democrats who favored Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination whether they will or will not support Clinton in the general election in November. We find that bare majorities of African American (53%), Asian American (55%), Latino/as (51%), and White (50%) Sanders supporters are currently willing to support the Clinton campaign in the Fall. Many young African Americans (26%), Asian Americans (28%), Latino/as (27%) and Whites (18%) have not yet made up their mind about whether or not they will support Clinton in the Fall. The Clinton campaign has an opportunity, and some work to do, to win over large numbers of Bernie Sanders supporters.

Can Donald Trump persuade disaffected Sanders' supporters to vote for him in the Fall? Despite speculation from political observers and those in the media, our data provide little evidence that Donald Trump will draw support from Sanders supporters. Only 4% of African Americans, 4% of Asian Americans, 4% of Latino/as and 7% of Whites have favorable attitudes towards both Trump and Sanders. To the extent Trump may pick up support by appealing to Sanders supporters, our data indicate that this will occur mostly among young Whites and that the opportunity to do so will be relatively limited.

**Table 3. Evaluations of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>		<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>		<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>		<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>	
	Bernie Sanders	Hillary Clinton	Bernie Sanders	Hillary Clinton	Bernie Sanders	Hillary Clinton	Bernie Sanders	Hillary Clinton
Percent (among Democrats) who wanted candidate to win the Democratic nomination	53	39	69	21	71	24	62	32
Percent who view candidate as Honest and Trustworthy	80	50	80	40	84	35	73	17
Percent who view candidate as Qualified to be President	80	70	76	63	77	60	67	49
Percent who state the candidate best understands people like you	60	35	69	20	68	23	59	11
Percent who view candidate favorably	73	64	78	55	73	49	55	27

*Question:* See topline for specific question wordings. N = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### **Feelings Toward the Two-Party System and Perceptions of American Greatness**

The candidacies of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders have been accompanied by calls for political reform. They have each raised questions about the performance of our current political system. In raising these issues, the candidates have tapped into a general sense among young adults that the current system is not working well. Young adults across race and ethnicity report high levels of frustration with the political system. In many cases, young adults are more pessimistic about the political environment than the general adult population. But much of young peoples’ political dissatisfaction seems to stem from the choice of candidates provided to them this election cycle. Compared to older adults, our survey respondents are much more dissatisfied with Clinton and Trump specifically. At the same time, young adults also agree that with some improvements, the two-party system could work well. This suggests that a candidate like Bernie Sanders who inspires affection from young adults and speaks to their concerns may be able to bolster support for the two-party system among young adults.

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The data in Table 4 demonstrates that, when presented with the choice of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as the major party nominees, a substantial majority of African Americans (63%), Asian Americans (67%), Latino/as (72%), and Whites (72%) express a desire for a **third-party candidate** to run in 2016. This level of disaffection is higher than the dissatisfaction found in a recent poll from the Washington Post-ABC News, which found that a majority (51%) of all U.S. adults were generally satisfied with the choice between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in November.<sup>5</sup> Young adults are thus distinctly dissatisfied with the choice of these two candidates and appear open to supporting a third-party candidate in the 2016 general election.

**Table 4. Dissatisfaction with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>	<b>Washington Post-ABC News General Adult Sample, 05/2016</b>
Satisfied	36	33	27	27	51
Want Third Party	63	67	72	72	44

*Question:* Would you be satisfied with the choice of Clinton or Trump, or would you want a third-party candidate to run? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

By contrast, as Table 5 shows, few believe that the two-party system is seriously broken. The majority of young adults of all races and ethnicities believe that the two-party system can still work well with some improvements (only a very small minority think that the two-party system works fairly well). This stance is similar to the levels of dissatisfaction with the two-party system reported in a recent sample of the general adult population. These findings suggest that dissatisfaction with the major party candidates does not translate into wholesale disapproval of the two-party system, and that the nomination of presidential candidates who better speak to the concerns of young people may also further increase their support for the parties.

<sup>5</sup> Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2016/05/22/National-Politics/Polling/release\\_426.xml?tid=a\\_inl](https://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2016/05/22/National-Politics/Polling/release_426.xml?tid=a_inl)

**Table 5. General Feelings about the Two-Party System**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>	<b>AP-NORC General Adult Sample, 05/2016</b>
The two-party system works fairly well.	13	14	15	6	13
The two-party system has real problems, but with some improvements it can still work well.	59	51	55	52	49
The two-party system is seriously broken.	25	35	29	41	38

*Question:* Which of the following statements is closest to your view of how the two-party system works for presidential elections in the United States today? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Donald Trump’s campaign has attempted to capitalize on this dissatisfaction with establishment politicians and parties in America. His campaign theme to “Make America Great Again” seeks to play on a perception that the political system is failing and the country is falling behind. A recent Bloomberg survey reported that the American population agrees with Trump’s implicit assertion that America’s best days are behind it with 72% of U.S. adults reporting that the country is not as great as it used to be.<sup>6</sup>

Do young people feel similarly? And how do perceptions of American greatness vary by race and ethnicity? Given the widely different historical experiences of African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans and Whites in this country, we might expect that the feeling that America is falling behind may be limited to Whites. Certainly many in the media have speculated that perceptions that America is falling behind may be limited to Whites whose relative status in America is changing as the country has become more racially and ethnically diverse and has elected the first African American to be president, a symbol of the growing political power of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as.

Yet, as we report in Table 6, while young Whites widely agree that America is falling behind or failing, majorities of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as agree. Only 24% of African Americans, 27% of Asian Americans, 24% of Latino/as, and 13% of Whites believe that America is better off or equally great today than in the past. Similarly, a majority of all young adults believe that America is falling behind or failing: 66% of African Americans, 66% of Asian Americans, 67% of Latino/as and 84% of Whites. In short, there does seem to be a general pessimism about the current state of America, and this pessimism exists across age groups and across race and ethnicity as is evident in Table 6.

<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-09-24/most-agree-with-trump-on-america-s-lost-greatness-bloomberg-poll-finds>

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**Table 6. Young Adults of all Races and Ethnicities Believe that America is Falling Behind or Failing**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Greater than it has ever been	8	6	7	2
Equally great as it has been in the past	16	21	17	11
Falling behind	43	52	47	56
Failing	23	14	20	28

*Question:* Do you think America is...? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### **Young People and Public Policy Attitudes**

The 2016 presidential campaigns have focused on a number of issues including immigration, gun control, foreign policy, and income inequality. What do young people think about these issues? Do they support Trump’s hardline stance against immigrants or support building a wall along the Mexican border? In the wake of the Orlando shooting, what do young people think about gun control and the banning of Muslims who are not U.S. citizens from entering into the United States? How supportive are young people of Bernie Sanders’ proposals for reducing income inequality and providing people with free tuition at public colleges? And how does opinion on these issues break down by race and ethnicity?

#### *Immigration*

The different life experiences of young adults based on race and ethnicity is likely to lead to distinct attitudes about many of these public policy issues. We start with the issue of immigration, which may be most tangible in the lives of young Latino/as and Asian Americans. Indeed, as Table 7 shows, large majorities of Latino/as (79%) and Asian Americans (75%) are opposed to deporting immigrants who are in the United States illegally. Among African Americans, 67% oppose deporting immigrants in the United States illegally. A majority of Whites take the opposite view, however, as 51% support deporting immigrants who are in the country illegally.

We also find strong opposition to two of Mr. Trump’s ideas about immigration, particularly among people of color. An overwhelming number of young people oppose the idea of building a wall along the Mexican border. Specifically, 85% of Latinos, 82% of Asian Americans, 74% of African Americans, and 64% of Whites oppose building a wall along the Mexican border to stop illegal immigration. Regarding Mr. Trump’s suggestion that we ban Muslims who are not from the U.S. from immigrating to the United States, again there is significant opposition among young adults with 79% of Asian Americans, 74% of African Americans, 67% of Latino/as, and 66% of Whites opposing this proposal. Moreover, young people are far more opposed to this proposal than the general adult population. A 2015 CBS news poll of all U.S. adults reported

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that only 58% of the country in general opposes banning Muslims from other countries from entering the United States.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 7: Attitudes toward Immigration**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Support building a wall along the Mexico border	25	17	15	36
Favor a temporary ban on Muslims who are not U.S. citizens from entering the country	25	20	32	32
Support deporting immigrants currently living in this country illegally	32	25	18	51

*Question:* See toplines for specific question wordings. N = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In addition to being the most opposed to the immigration proposals floated by Donald Trump, Latino/as also prioritize immigration to a significantly greater degree than other young adults. Thirty percent of Latino/as report that immigration is one of the three most important issues to them when deciding which candidate to support in the 2016 election. By comparison, immigration ranks as one of the three most important issues to only 13% of Asian Americans, 10% of African Americans, and 8% of Whites. Immigration is clearly an issue at the top of the agenda for many young Latino/as.

### *Gun Control*

The issue of guns was discussed regularly during the Democratic primary, with Hillary Clinton repeatedly drawing attention to Senator Sanders’s lukewarm support for gun control. The topic of gun control continues to be a regular point of political contention and focus, as mass killings (like those in Orlando) and continued gun violence in cities like Chicago regularly draw attention to the issue. As we might expect—given that gun violence disproportionately affects young people of color<sup>8</sup>—young adults are divided by race and ethnicity in their attitudes toward this critical issue. As Table 8 shows, majorities of African Americans (58%), Asian Americans (83%), and Latino/as (56%) think that it is more important to control gun ownership than to protect the right of Americans to own guns. In contrast, a majority of Whites take the opposite

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-solid-opposition-to-ban-on-muslims-entering-us/>

<sup>8</sup> For example, the homicide rate was 13 times higher for African American millennials than White millennials in 2013. Source: *Black Millennials in America*.

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view with 55% of Whites indicating that they believe it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns than to control gun ownership.

**Table 8: Attitudes toward Gun Control**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Protect right to own guns	41	17	43	55
Control gun ownership	58	83	56	44

*Question:* What do you think is more important – to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### *Police Brutality*

The issue of police brutality has also drawn the attention of the public as The Movement for Black Lives and The Black Lives Matter Movement have demanded that the country acknowledge and address the killing of primarily young black people by the police. This is an issue that historically many African Americans understood to be critical, but videos of such abuse along with organizations now mobilized around the issue have drawn increased public attention to this topic. It is perhaps not surprising that 21% of African Americans rate the issue of police brutality as one of the three most important issues to them in deciding which candidate to support in the election. By comparison, only 2% of Asian Americans, 6% of Latinos, and 6% of Whites rate police brutality as one of the three most important issues to them.

### *Foreign Policy*

When it comes to foreign policy, we also find distinct differences based on race. As we report in Table 9, the data indicate that young Whites are the most hawkish group of young adults when it comes to dealing with the threat of the Islamic State (ISIS), particularly through airstrikes, with 63% of Whites favoring airstrikes against ISIS. Young people of color are less supportive of this policy, with only 39% of African Americans, 44% of Asian Americans, and 42% of Latino/as supporting airstrikes against ISIS. There is more consensus among young people against deploying troops on the ground to fight ISIS, as only 25% of African Americans, 26% of Asian Americans, 37% of Latino/as and 38% of Whites support deploying troops on the ground to fight ISIS.

**Table 9: Attitudes toward Fighting ISIS**

	<b>African Americans Adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian Americans Adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latina/os Adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Support airstrikes against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria	39	44	42	63
Support deploying ground troops against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria	25	26	37	38

*Question:* See toplines for specific question wordings. N = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### *Economic Policy and Income Inequality*

Finally, we consider the issues of economic policy and income inequality. Unemployment and economic growth are regular topics of contention in presidential elections—and both issues were considered important to young adults across race and ethnicity in our survey. For example, 20% of African Americans, 13% of both Asian Americans and Latino/as, and 11% of Whites rated **unemployment** as one of the three most important issues in the election. Given the high rates of unemployment among African American young adults, which run almost double to those for young Whites, it is not surprising that African Americans are the most likely to rate unemployment as an important issue. Many young adults also rate economic growth as an important issue to them in the 2016 election, with Asian Americans (31%) and Whites (27%) saying that economic growth is one of three most important issues to them to a somewhat greater degree than African Americans (22%) and Latino/as (16%).

In addition to these conventional issues about the economy, Bernie Sanders’s campaign focused heavily on the issue of income inequality. As the Sanders campaign frequently emphasized throughout their campaign, the distribution of wealth and income in America has become increasingly unequal over the past few decades. The rich are getting richer, while the incomes of the poor and middle class have been relatively stagnant. This has created a large and growing divide across socioeconomic class in America. Moreover, there continues to be large racial differences in access to wealth in America, as young African Americans and Latino/as are much more likely to live in poverty than young Whites.<sup>9</sup> Given these socioeconomic realities and the rise of a presidential candidate who ran a platform against economic inequality, how important is this issue to young adults? And do they agree with Bernie Sanders that wealth should be more evenly distributed and support policies to achieve that goal?

We find that income inequality continues to lag behind unemployment and economic growth in young adults’ issue priorities, but only very slightly. Our data indicate that 18% of African

<sup>9</sup> Source: *Black Millennials in America*.

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Americans, 17% of Asian Americans, 16% of Latino/as, and 19% of Whites rate **income inequality** as one of the three most important issues to them in the campaign.

When it comes to their general views about income inequality and policy preferences that could address the issue, we find that Bernie Sanders has tapped into an issue where young adults—across race and ethnicity—hold quite progressive positions. In many cases, young adults’ preferences are notably more progressive than the general population. For example, 66% of the general adult population polled in a June 2015 New York Times / CBS news survey believed that the distribution of wealth in the country should be more evenly distributed.<sup>10</sup> As we report in Table 10, our survey respondents—especially people of color—are much more likely to take this stance: 88% of African Americans, 78% of Asian Americans, 79% of Latino/as, and 67% of Whites believe that **wealth in this country should be more evenly distributed**.

When it comes to policy issues that would redistribute wealth from rich to poor, we find that young people are broadly in favor of such proposals. For example, some politicians have suggested that one way we might generate more revenue for poor and working-class families is to **increase taxes on those making more than \$1 million per year**. We find our respondents are more supportive of this policy recommendation than the US adult population generally, 68% of whom favor raising taxes on millionaires.<sup>11</sup> Among our survey respondents, 76% of African Americans, 85% of Asian Americans, 82% of Latino/as, and 77% of Whites support raising taxes on people earning more than \$1 million per year.

**Table 10. Views about Wealth Distribution and Raising Taxes on Millionaires**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30	New York Times/CBS General Adult Sample, 06/ 2015
Wealth should be more evenly distributed	88	78	79	67	66
Favor raising taxes on millionaires	76	85	82	77	68

*Question:* See toplines for specific question wordings. N = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Similarly, a number of political organizations have pushed to raise **the minimum wage** as an attempt to aid those who are poor or working-class. As Table 11 shows, there is strong support for such an increase, particularly among young people of color with 88% of African Americans, 73% of Asian Americans, and 79% of Latinos supporting an increase in the minimum wage to between \$12 and \$20 per hour, compared with 59% of Whites. Finally, borrowing a policy

<sup>10</sup> Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/03/business/income-inequality-workers-rights-international-trade-poll.html>

<sup>11</sup> Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/03/business/income-inequality-workers-rights-international-trade-poll.html>

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initiative directly from Bernie Sanders, 91% of African Americans, 80% of Asian Americans, 87% of Latinos, and 66% of Whites support **free tuition at public colleges** as is evident in Table 12.

**Table 11: Support for Minimum Wage Reform**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latina/o adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Should be eliminated	3	4	3	8
Keep where it is	9	23	17	33
Raise to \$12.00/hour	49	45	49	39
Raise to \$15.00/hour	25	23	21	16
Raise to \$20.00/hour	14	5	9	4

*Question:* As you may know, the federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 an hour. Which of the following best reflects your view about the minimum wage? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Table 12. Support for Free Tuition at Public Colleges**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Strongly support	77	56	66	39
Somewhat support	14	24	21	27
Somewhat oppose	5	13	9	14
Strongly oppose	3	7	4	19

*Question:* Do you support or oppose free tuition at public colleges? *N*= 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Young adults, and individuals of color in particular, care about income inequality, think that the distribution of income in America should be more evenly distributed, and support a number of policy proposals that might reduce the income and wealth gap between rich and poor. All of these indicators suggest that income inequality is an issue that is likely to continue to be on the political agenda in the future and is one that could motivate young adults to turn out to the polls on election day.

### **Young African Americans and Whites Are Deeply Divided on Issues of Race and Racism**

It has been widely documented that Whites and African Americans have different perspectives when it comes to issues of race and racism in America. But after the election of Barack Obama as the country’s first African-American president, numerous commentators predicted that we were now entering a post-racial era where race would be less important in determining one’s treatment and experience in life. Even more specifically, many argued that millennials in particular would be more tolerant than their forebears and would, thus usher in a post-racial Reports and toplines of the GenForward Surveys by the Black Youth Project are available at [GenForwardSurvey.com](http://GenForwardSurvey.com)

American society. Our data and the lived experience of any number of young African American, Latino/a and youth of color make clear that race is still a factor in determining one’s lot in life as well as how young adults see the political, economic and social world.

First, we note that **approval of Barack Obama**—whose approval has been deeply divided by race throughout his presidency—is also deeply divided by race and ethnicity among young adults. As Table 13 shows, 86% of African Americans approve strongly or somewhat strongly of Barack Obama’s handling of his job as president, compared to just 47% of Whites. Asian Americans (74%) and Latino/as (70%) approval ratings fall between these two poles.

**Table 13: Approval of Barack Obama**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30</b>
Approve strongly	63	39	39	20
Approve somewhat	23	35	31	27
Neither approve nor disapprove	8	17	16	13
Disapprove somewhat	3	5	8	18
Disapprove strongly	3	5	6	22

*Question:* Overall, do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As a more direct indicator of perceptions of racism in America, we asked our respondents whether **racism still exists and is a problem in American society and politics**. In Table 14 we find a stark racial divide in responses to this question with 80% of African Americans saying that racism is a major problem, compared to just 54% of Whites. Again, Asian Americans (64%) and Latino/as (74%) fall between these two extremes.

**Table 14: Perceptions of Racism in American Society and Politics**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic White adults 18-30
Racism remains a major problem in our society	80	64	74	54
Racism exists today but it is not a major problem	16	30	22	41
Racism once existed but no longer exists in our society	2	6	2	4
Racism has never been a major problem in our society	1	0	1	1

*Question:* Some people say that racism no longer exists in American society and politics. Would you say that...? *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The Black Lives Matter movement rose to combat racism and specifically police and vigilante brutality against African Americans. Since its conception, the organizations that constitute this movement have confronted all of the major nominees for president this election season. Given the racial divides that have historically existed around movements for civil rights and black power, it is perhaps not surprising that we find a deep split between Whites and African Americans in **support for the Black Lives Matter Movement**. As reported in Table 15, 85% of African Americans support the Black Lives Matter Movement, compared to just 41% of Whites. Asian Americans (68%) and Latino/as (53%) once again take a stand in-between these two groups.

**Table 15: Support for Black Lives Matter Movement**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Strongly support the movement	63	25	27	17
Somewhat support the movement	22	43	26	24
Somewhat oppose the movement	6	11	11	19
Strongly oppose the movement	4	8	8	26
Haven't heard enough about it	5	14	27	14

*Question:* From what you have read or heard about the movement call #BlackLivesMatter, do you... *N* = 1,941. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As a final indicator of the differing views on race and racism in America among young adults in this country, we note that 34% of African Americans report that **racism** is one of the three most important issues in deciding which candidate they will support in 2016. That is compared to just 5% of Whites, 14% of Asian Americans and 16% of Latino/as. Across all of these indicators we continue to find stark differences between millennial Whites and African Americans. The United States has much progress to make to achieve a more racially progressive society.

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## Conclusion

The GenForward June survey provides the first rigorous, systematic and comprehensive characterization of young people's attitudes as we approach the 2016 presidential election. Our findings challenge many of the dominant narratives that have emerged from speculation among media outlets, political candidates, and talking heads about how young people view the important issues of our day and the role they will play in November's election. Young African Americans and Latina/os provided considerably stronger support for Bernie Sanders than the media have reported, while Donald Trump stands little chance of picking up support from alienated Sanders supporters. At the same time, while Hillary Clinton is supported by large percentages of young people, our data show that her campaign has important work to do to convince young people, and especially young Blacks and Latino/as, of her commitment to the issues and priorities that most affect their lives and their communities.

The inability of the two nominated candidates to address the issues and concerns that young adults of color care about has contributed to a desire for a third party candidate to run in 2016 and a widespread sense that America's best days are behind it. To appeal to the increasingly critical coalition of young African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/as, and liberal whites that helped elect Barack Obama twice, our survey indicates that political candidates need to speak to a wide range of issues that differentially matter to various groups based on their race and ethnicity. Asian Americans and, especially, Latino/as, care about and have a distinctly expansive stance on policies addressing immigration. African Americans care most about unemployment and issues of police brutality. And young adults of all races and ethnicities care about the topic of income inequality. On this issue, Bernie Sander's appealed to a widespread sense among young adults that the distribution of wealth in America should be more equal. Our data indicate that majorities of young adults favor a variety of policies to achieve that end. On issues touching directly on race and racism, White and African American millennials continue to be deeply divided. The media narrative of a tolerant generation of young adults—much of which was spun in response to young people's widespread acceptance of people based on their sexual orientation—does not easily apply as well to race.

Each month we will be issuing a new report that will both continue tracking our young adults' attitudes on this election as well as numerous other topics of the day. We hope that our work to each month report on the attitudes of young people, especially young people of color, will expand the political discourse, helping to include the preferences and positions of more, often marginalized, members of our political community.

## Study Methodology

The June GenForward 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 GenForward®, 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 1,965 interviews were conducted between June 14 and 27, 2016 with adults ages 18-30 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including completed interviews with 510 African American young adults, 321 Asian American young adults, 511 Hispanic young adults, 599 non-Hispanic white young adults, and 24 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:

- Forty five 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).
- Fifty five percent of the completed interviews are sourced from a panel of young adults custom built by NORC. The Young Adult 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, Hispanics, and Asians 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 Young Adult and AmeriSpeak panels are invited to register for the panel via the web or by telephone to participate in public opinion surveys.

Of the 1,965 completed interviews in the June GenForward survey, 91% were completed by web and 9% by telephone. The survey completion rate is 45.9 percent. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 8.9 percent and the weighted household panel retention rate is 91.5 percent, for a cumulative AAPOR Response Rate 3 of 3.7 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8 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 +/- 6.4 percentage points for African Americans, +/- 8.8 percentage points for Asian Americans, +/- 6.5 percentage points for Hispanics, and +/- 5.8 percentage points for non-Hispanic whites.

To encourage cooperation, respondents were offered the cash-equivalent of \$5 for completing the survey. Toward the end of the field period, the incentive was increased to the cash equivalent of \$10 to boost cooperation.

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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 Young Adult Panel 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, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and non-Hispanic Whites, were used for all analyses.

A topline with complete question wordings is available at <http://GenForwardSurvey.com>. For additional information about this GenForward survey, contact [info@blackyouthproject.com](mailto:info@blackyouthproject.com) or [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).