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Young People Speak Out about the 2016 Campaign and their Economic Futures

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

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

GenFORWARD



black youth project

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

www.GenForwardSurvey.com

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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 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, their thoughts about the economy, the barriers young people face in achieving their economic goals, and their optimism about the future. 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 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 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.

II. Introduction

“It’s the economy, stupid” has become the catchphrase analysts use to describe the importance of the economy to election outcomes. Economic issues in the 2016 election are also sure to be hugely influential. Issues like wages, trade, and income inequality are central this election cycle and more broadly for the debate about how to move America forward. Our survey provides a timely look at what young adults—particularly young adults of color—think about the economy and their economic future. We provide the most comprehensive collection of data about the economic policy preferences of young Americans, their evaluations of the current economy, the vulnerabilities and challenges they face in trying to get ahead, and their optimism about their economic future. Our survey identifies an *economic vulnerability gap* between young adults of color and young whites which reveals the challenges young adults of color face in the economy. We present data on these and a host of other issues to bring the views of young adults into these debates.

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.¹

Young adults 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 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.

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/>.

Key Findings

- ▶ A majority of 18-30-year-old African Americans (55%) and Asian Americans (52%), along with 43% of Latino/as, today say they will vote for Hillary Clinton in November.
- ▶ Whites 18-30 are evenly divided in their support for Hillary Clinton (27%) and Donald Trump (27%).
- ▶ Third party candidates Gary Johnson (11%) and Jill Stein (4%) receive less support from young adults than reported in other polls.
- ▶ President Obama remains very popular among young adults of color: 78% of African Americans, 73% of Asian Americans, 70% of Latino/as, and 49% of whites support Barack Obama.
- ▶ The three most important economic issues for the next President to address across all racial and ethnic groups are: student debt, wages, and income inequality.
- ▶ Young adults of color feel more vulnerable in terms of their household finances and economic security compared to whites. For example, 57% of African Americans, 59% of Asian Americans, and 57% of Latino/as are concerned about someone in their household being laid off from work, compared to 41% of whites.
- ▶ African American (42%) and Latino/a (46%) youth would have less help from family to pay an unexpected bill of \$1,000 than Asian Americans (64%) and whites (65%).
- ▶ Forty-eight percent of African Americans report having experienced discrimination based on their race in looking for a job, compared to 31% of Asian Americans, 30% of Latino/as, and 10% of whites.
- ▶ Young adults—particularly young adults of color—remain very optimistic about the future. Sixty-three percent of African Americans and Asian Americans, 68% of Latino/as, and 46% of whites believe that their generation will have a better life than their parents.

Young Adults' Voting Preferences in 2016

Will Millennial voters prove decisive in the 2016 elections? Young voters—particularly African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as—were certainly an important part of Barack Obama's winning coalition in 2008 and 2012. And the Millennial generation now matches Baby Boomers as the largest generation of those eligible to vote.³ Millennials are also the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in America. The September 2016 GenForward survey provides an extensive analysis of the voting preferences of young adults across racial and ethnic identification and evaluates the potential turnout of Millennials in the 2016 elections. Our data show large differences across race and ethnicity in candidate preference. Young adults of color overwhelmingly support Hillary Clinton, while young whites are evenly divided in their support for Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Our study suggests that the ability for the candidates to turn out their base of young supporters is likely to have a dramatic effect on the 2016 election outcome.

Our data also suggests that few Millennials plan to vote for third-party candidates Gary Johnson and Jill Stein. This finding provides a correction to recent media reports and polls which state that young voters are increasingly gravitating to Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson and Green Party candidate Jill Stein. For example, a recent Quinnipiac poll reported that 44% of young likely voters 18-34 currently plan to vote for either Gary Johnson or Jill Stein.⁴ Another recent New York Times / CBS News poll reported that 36% of registered voters under 30 currently plan to vote for one of the third-party candidates.⁵ These estimates come from surveys of the general population that have only small samples of young adults.⁶ This means that the margin of error around their estimates of Millennials' support for third party candidates is likely to be quite large.⁷ Moreover, these other surveys do not include adequate numbers of young African Americans, Latino/as, or Asian Americans to accurately represent their vote intention and show whether and how support for third-party candidates varies across race and ethnicity.

The GenForward September 2016 survey contains over 1,800 total young adult respondents ages 18-30 and provides for a more accurate analysis of the voting preferences of Millennials. Our study also contains oversamples of African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans, which enables us to calculate how vote intention varies across race and ethnicity. Given the advantages of our study for understanding the vote intentions of Millennials, we think many of the other polls have it wrong. Specifically, our data suggests that recent reports about Millennials' support for third-party candidates has been overstated, and that the bulk of support for these candidates that does exist is limited to young whites.

3 See, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/16/millennials-match-baby-boomers-as-largest-generation-in-u-s-electorate-but-will-they-vote/>

4 See <https://www.qu.edu/news-and-events/quinnipiac-university-poll/national/release-detail?ReleaseID=2378>

5 <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/16/us/politics/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-poll.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&r=0>

6 For example, the total sample for the Quinnipiac poll is 960 likely voters, and the total sample for the New York Times / CBS News Poll is 1,753.

7 In fact, the Quinnipiac poll estimates a margin of error of about 10.27% among 18-34 year olds.

Table 1 presents our analysis of the voting preferences of young adults by race and ethnicity. Overall, 36% of young adults currently support Hillary Clinton, compared to 18% for Donald Trump. However, as Table 1 clearly shows, there are large differences in the youth vote across race and ethnicity. **African Americans (55%), Asian Americans (52%), and Latino/as (43%) are much more supportive of Hillary Clinton than any other candidate. Young whites, however, are evenly divided between Hillary Clinton (27%) and Donald Trump (27%).**

Table 1. Support for the 2016 Presidential Candidates

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	All Adults 18-30
Hillary Clinton	55	52	43	27	36
Donald Trump	1	12	11	27	18
Gary Johnson	4	6	8	15	11
Jill Stein	2	4	4	4	4
Someone else	8	4	5	5	5
Will probably not vote	18	14	21	14	16
Undecided	10	8	8	9	9
<i>N</i> =	501	261	517	530	1,851

Question: If the general election were held today, and the candidates were Hillary Clinton for the Democrats, Donald Trump for the Republicans, Gary Johnson for the Libertarian Party, and Jill Stein for the Green Party, for whom would you vote? N = 1,851. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Our results do suggest that there has been a slight decline in Hillary Clinton’s support from Millennials over the past month, especially among African Americans and Latino/as. Figure 1 below plots the percentage of young adults in each racial and ethnic group who report an intention to vote for Hillary Clinton between July and September.

As shown in Figure 1, Clinton’s support rose slightly among all groups between July and August. But between our August and September survey, her support has slightly declined, especially among African Americans (-5%) and Latino/as (-6%). However, we point out that these differences are not statistically significant, and we do not wish to overstate the results of a single poll. More generally, we point out that Hillary Clinton continues to hold a commanding lead in support particularly among young adults of color. Thus, media reports of widespread defection from Clinton among Millennials are at best premature and at worst inaccurate.

Figure 2 presents the trend line for Donald Trump between July and September. The results in Figure 2 suggest that Donald Trump’s support has been relatively stable over the past few months. What this figure clearly shows, though, is the very low level of support Donald Trump has consistently received from young adults of color, especially African Americans.

Figure 1. Young Adults' Support for Hillary Clinton, July - September

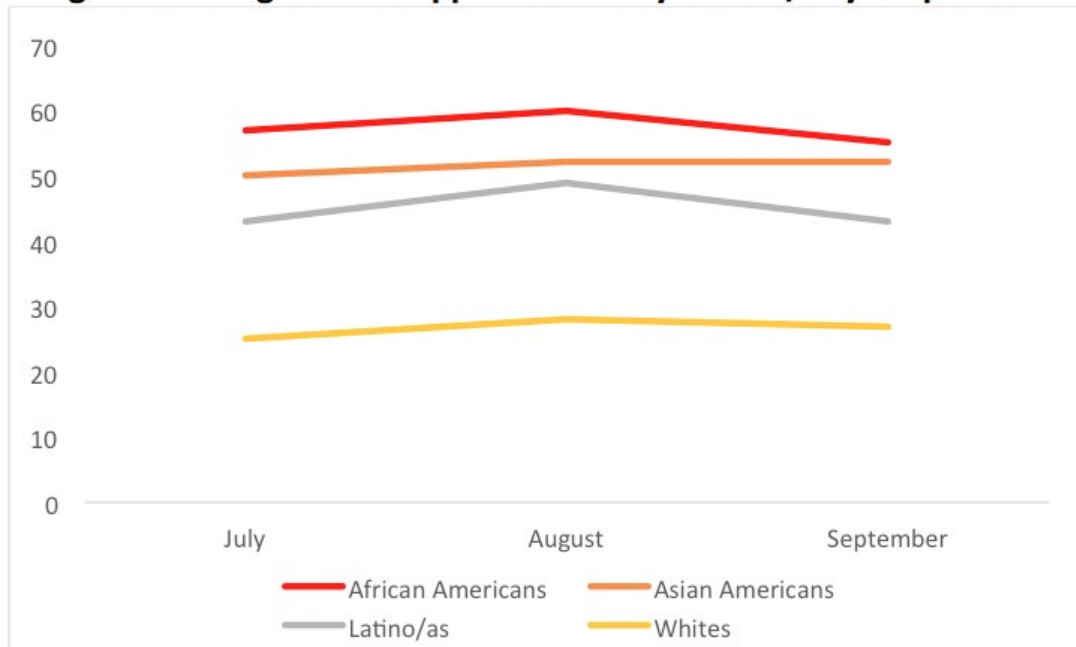
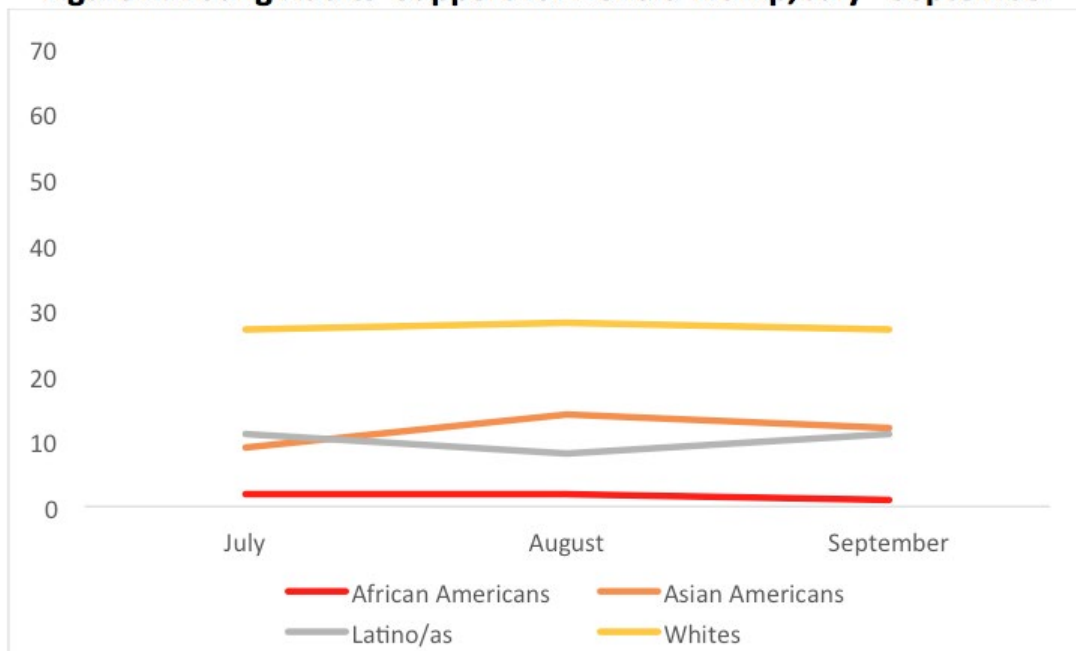


Figure 2. Young Adults' Support for Donald Trump, July - September



In contrast to Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton is doing much better among young adults of color than young whites. And while Hillary Clinton clearly gets more support from young African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans, her registered support among these groups is lower than their support for Barack Obama in 2008. This suggests that the Clinton campaign has considerable work to do to bring these potential voters into the fold.

Third-Party Candidates:

Despite Clinton's struggles with young adults relative to her predecessor, we do not find strong support for the argument that third-party candidates are winning the hearts and minds of Millennials. Gary Johnson receives 15% of the youth vote among whites, but remains in the single digits among African Americans (4%), Asian Americans (6%) and Latino/as (8%). Jill Stein's support is in the low single-digits within each racial and ethnic group. These levels of support for the third-party candidates have held steady since July.⁸ **Our findings suggest that third-party candidates have only a limited appeal to Millennials, and to the extent that these candidates are popular, it is mostly among young whites and possibly in a few distinct swing states like Colorado.** Given the larger numbers and greater racial and ethnic diversity of young adults in our sample, we believe that recently published previous polls overstate the extent to which young adults are gravitating towards third-party candidates.

Perhaps a bigger challenge for the major-party candidates to winning the youth vote is motivating Millennials to vote at all. As can be seen in Table 1, substantial numbers of young African Americans (18%), Asian Americans (14%), Latino/as (21%), and whites (14%) say that they will probably not vote in the election. Many young voters appear to be disinterested in voting for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, or either of the third-party candidates.

Voting Preferences of Young Likely Voters

While it is important to report the vote intentions of all Millennials, we also want to focus on those who are most likely to vote on Election Day. What does the youth vote look like among those who are most likely to vote? To identify "likely voters," we use guidelines developed by the Pew Research Center.⁹ First, we ask respondents a series of four questions about their likelihood of voting in November, their interest in news about the election, their history of voting in the 2012 presidential election, and how often they typically vote. We use responses to these questions to help determine who is a "likely" voter come November 8th.¹⁰ Table 2 presents the voting preferences among young likely voters across race and ethnicity.

⁷ In July, Gary Johnson received 8% of the vote from all young adults, Jill Stein received 4%. In August, Johnson received 10% of support among all young adults, and Stein received 3%. See our earlier reports at www.genforwardsurvey.com.

⁹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/2016/01/07/can-likely-voter-models-be-improved/>

¹⁰ Those who say they definitely will not vote to Question 7 or who say they probably will not vote to Question 1 are automatically coded as unlikely voters. We then create a scale combining these four questions, and coding those who were not eligible to vote in-between those who did vote and those who did not. We then draw cut-offs based on estimates of voting rates in 2012 from CIRCLE's tabulation of the Current Population Survey Voting and Registration supplement to determine the number of likely voters in each racial and ethnic group (see, http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CIRCLE_2013FS_outhVoting2012FINAL.pdf, page 5). Data from the 2012 CPS shows that 54% of African Americans, 46% of Whites, 36% of Asian Americans, and 37% of Latino/as 18-29 voted in 2012. We assume that voting rates will be similar in 2016. Therefore, we code African Americans and Whites in the top 50% of our scale as "likely" voters, and top 36% of Latino/as and Asian Americans as likely voters. Using these cut-offs gives us a total voter turnout rate of approximately 45% among young voters 18-30.

Table 2: Support for the 2016 Presidential Candidates among Likely Voters

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	All Adults 18-30
Hillary Clinton	74	71	64	41	51
Donald Trump	2	6	9	31	22
Gary Johnson	4	7	10	15	12
Jill Stein	3	3	10	4	5
Someone else	10	6	3	2	4
Undecided	6	6	4	7	6
<i>N</i> =	262	108	192	279	841

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* = 841. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As Table 2 shows, Hillary Clinton’s support appears higher among likely voters when compared to young adults overall. A slight majority (51%) of likely young voters currently say they plan to vote for Hillary Clinton, compared to the 22% support Donald Trump receives from this group. This is a substantial improvement for Clinton when compared to the 36% support she receives from all young adults, but it is still a deficit to the approximately 60% of the youth vote that Barack Obama received in 2012.¹¹ The data in Table 2 also indicate that media reports on Hillary Clinton’s struggles to win the Millennial vote overlook the fact that Clinton’s struggles are really concentrated among young whites. Clinton has room to improve her numbers among young likely voters of color, but at this point is poised to win a majority of votes from African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as. Trump on the other hand has yet to convince a majority of any racial or ethnic group of Millennials to vote for him.

Despite the increase in support for Clinton when we consider likely voters, her level of support still lags behind what Barack Obama received in 2012 from each racial and ethnic group. In 2012, Barack Obama received approximately 91% of the young African American vote, 74% of the Latino/a vote, 86% of the Asian American vote, and 44% of the young white vote.¹² As Table 2 shows, Clinton currently receives the support of 74% of likely African American young voters, 64% of Latino/a likely voters, 71% of Asian American likely voters, as well as 41% of white likely voters. **Clinton’s current support among young voters appears to be lacking among young voters of color, who do not currently give Clinton the same level of support that they gave Barack Obama in 2012.**

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

¹² Data for African Americans, Latino/as, and whites are from exit polls and can be seen here: <http://www.people-press.org/2012/11/26/young-voters-supported-obama-less-but-may-have-mattered-more/>. The Asian American youth vote is from a report developed by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund using data from the 2012 Multilingual Presidential exit poll (see, <http://aaldef.org/AALDEF%20Asian%20American%20Exit%20Poll%20Presentation%202012.pdf>).

The biggest change between young white likely voters in 2016 relative to 2012 is the support given to the Republican candidate. In 2012, approximately 51% of young whites voted for Mitt Romney. This is much higher than the 31% support Donald Trump currently receives among young white likely voters. It is not just Hillary Clinton who is struggling to receive the votes her predecessor received among young adults. **Donald Trump too is struggling with young white voters**, whose support for Mitt Romney helped make the 2012 campaign more competitive than in 2008 when a majority of young white voters supported Barack Obama.¹³

Candidate Evaluations

Beyond vote intention, we also asked young adults in our sample about different characteristics of the candidates running for president. These other measures of candidate evaluations further reveal the lukewarm support both candidates are receiving among young adults as well as the stark differences in feelings about these candidates across race and ethnicity. Table 3 presents the percentage of respondents who view the candidates as qualified, and Table 4 the percentage of respondents who view the candidates as honest and trustworthy.

Table 3. Are Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton Qualified to be President?

	African American adults 18-30		Asian American adults 18-30		Latino/a adults 18-30		Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	
	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton
Percent who view candidate as Qualified to be President	11	77	14	63	15	58	30	50
<i>N</i> =	501		261		517		530	

Question: Is [Hillary Clinton / Donald Trump] qualified to be President of the United States? *N* = 1,809.

As Table 3 shows, **Hillary Clinton is viewed by adults of all races and ethnicities as the candidate most qualified for the presidency, while far fewer consider Donald Trump to be qualified.** Majorities of African Americans (77%), Asian Americans (63%), Latino/as (58%), and whites (50%) view Hillary Clinton as qualified to be president. Many fewer African Americans (11%), Asian Americans (14%), Latino/as (15%), and whites (30%) view Donald Trump as qualified for the presidency.

¹³ Approximately 54% of young white voters voted for Barack Obama in 2008. (Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/2008/11/13/young-voters-in-the-2008-election/>).

However, we also find in Table 4 that **both candidates struggle with young voters' evaluations of their honesty and trustworthiness**. Hillary Clinton is viewed as honest by only 21% of young whites, 32% of Asian Americans, and 37% of Latino/as. A more substantial 50% of African Americans view Hillary Clinton as honest and trustworthy. But even though Clinton struggles in terms of her perception as honest and trustworthy, **Donald Trump does even worse in evaluations of trust and honesty among young adults of color**. Only 5% of African Americans, 9% of Asian Americans, and 13% of Latino/as view Donald Trump as honest and trustworthy. Among young whites (26%) Donald Trump is viewed as slightly more trustworthy than Hillary Clinton.

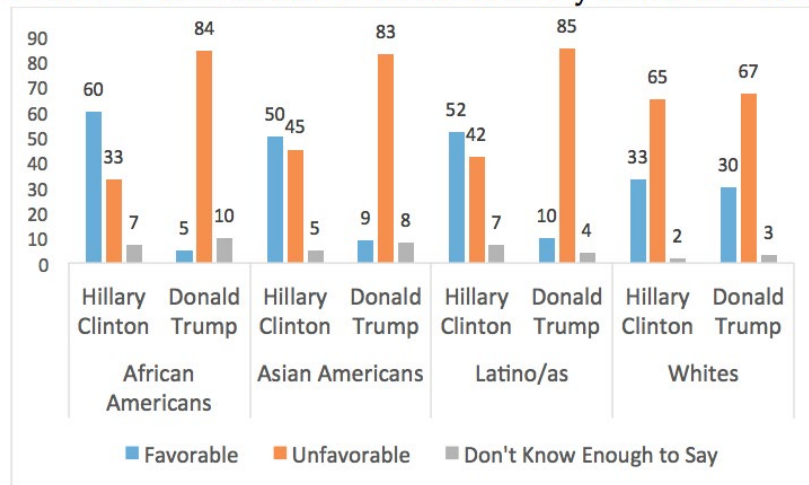
Table 4. Are Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton Honest and Trustworthy?

	African American adults 18-30		Asian American adults 18-30		Latino/a adults 18-30		Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	
	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton
Percent who view candidate as Honest and Trustworthy	5	50	9	32	13	37	26	21
N=	501		261		517		530	

Question: Do you think the following presidential candidates are honest and trustworthy, or not? Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump. N = 1,809.

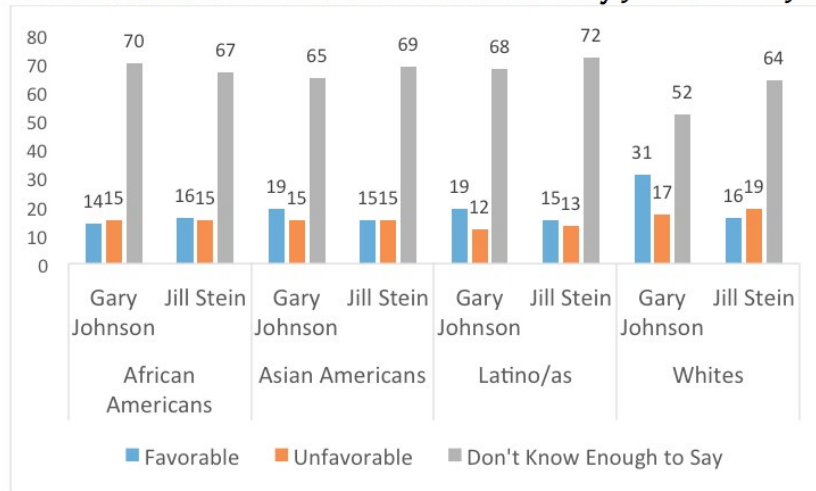
As one final indicator of candidate evaluations, we present in Figure 3 the favorable and unfavorable ratings of both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump across each racial and ethnic group. As Figure 3 shows, Clinton's favorable numbers outpace her unfavorable numbers for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as. On the other hand, Donald Trump's unfavorable numbers far exceed his favorable numbers among young adults of color. For young whites, both candidates have higher unfavorable than favorable ratings. These results underscore the important differences across race and ethnicity in evaluations of the two major-party candidates.

Figure 3. Favorable / Unfavorable Evaluations of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump



In addition to the major-party candidates, we also examine the favorability ratings of Gary Johnson and Jill Stein to further analyze the extent to which these third-party candidates appeal to Millennials. We present these results in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Favorable / Unfavorable Evaluations of Gary Johnson and Jill Stein



As Figure 4 makes clear, majorities of young adults of all racial and ethnic groups simply do not know enough about either Gary Johnson or Jill Stein to view them either favorably or unfavorably. These data reinforce our analysis of vote intention: there are real limits to the ability of either third-party candidate to generate large support from Millennials as many simply do not know very much about either of these candidates.

Congressional Voting

The media has raised the question of whether voters, in particular Republicans, will engage in split-ticket voting. To explore this question we asked our respondents who they planned to vote for in the congressional elections this Fall. Specifically, we asked a generic question about whether they would vote for the Democratic Party’s nominee, the Republican Party’s nominee, or neither if the election for Congress were held today. Table 5 below presents the results from all young adults, and Table 6 presents the results from likely voters.

Table 5. Congressional Vote Intention, all Young Adults

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Democratic Party’s candidate	67	58	56	34
Republican Party’s candidate	7	12	11	31
Neither	14	12	14	13
Unsure	12	18	19	22
N=	501	261	517	530

Question: If the election for Congress were being held today, which party’s candidate would you vote for in your congressional district – the Democratic Party’s candidate or the Republican Party’s candidate? N = 1,851 (841). Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 6. Congressional Vote Intention, Likely Voters

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Democratic Party's candidate	86	80	70	43
Republican Party's candidate	7	8	12	36
Neither	2	5	7	8
Unsure	5	5	11	13
N=	262	108	192	279

Question: If the election for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district – the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate? N = 841. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Like voting in the presidential election, the results in Tables 5 and 6 indicate that vote choice in congressional elections will also be highly structured by race and ethnicity. A majority of young American Americans (67%), Asian Americans (58%), and Latino/as (56%) say they will vote for the Democratic Party's candidate. Young whites, by contrast, are evenly divided between the Democratic Party's candidate (34%) and the Republican Party's candidate (31%).

We also find very little evidence that young voters plan to split their ticket between their vote for Congress and the President this year. Table 7 presents the percentage of all young adults, and Table 8 among likely voters, who indicate they will be split-ticket voting (i.e., voting for a different party for Congress than for President). A split-ticket voter is identified if a Donald Trump supporter says that they plan to vote for the Democratic Party's candidate or if a Hillary Clinton supporter says that they plan to vote for the Republican Party's candidate. We combine Clinton and Trump supporters because we find few differences between Clinton and Trump supporters in levels of split-ticket voting.

Table 7. Split-Ticket Voting, all Young Adults

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Consistent Partisan Voter	95	98	92	98
Split-Ticket Voter	5	2	8	2
N=	501	261	517	530

Question: If the election for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district – the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate? N = 1,851 (841). Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As Tables 7 and 8 clearly show, the vast majority of young adults plan to vote for the same party in the presidential and congressional elections. This finding reinforces the importance of each party getting out the vote in the 2016 elections. To the extent that the candidates fail to mobilize their

core supporters—young voters of color for Hillary Clinton, young whites for Donald Trump—there could be down-ticket consequences. Of course, it is also possible that down-ballot candidates could mobilize support for candidates at the top of the ticket. For instance, to the extent that young adults are motivated to turn out for candidates like Rob Portman, Marco Rubio, or Russ Feingold, this could affect the presidential election in key battleground states.

Table 8. Split-Ticket Voting, Likely Voters

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	White adults 18-30
Consistent Partisan Voter	94	100	96	99
Split-Ticket Voter	4	0	4	1
N=	262	108	192	279

Question: If the election for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district – the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate? N = 841. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Most Important Problem

One way the candidates can try to mobilize young adults is to emphasize the issues that they care about. Our survey suggests that young adults' issue priorities vary substantially across race and ethnicity. Table 9 highlights the three most frequently listed "most important problems" within each racial and ethnic group.

Table 9. The Three Most Important Problems, by Race and Ethnicity

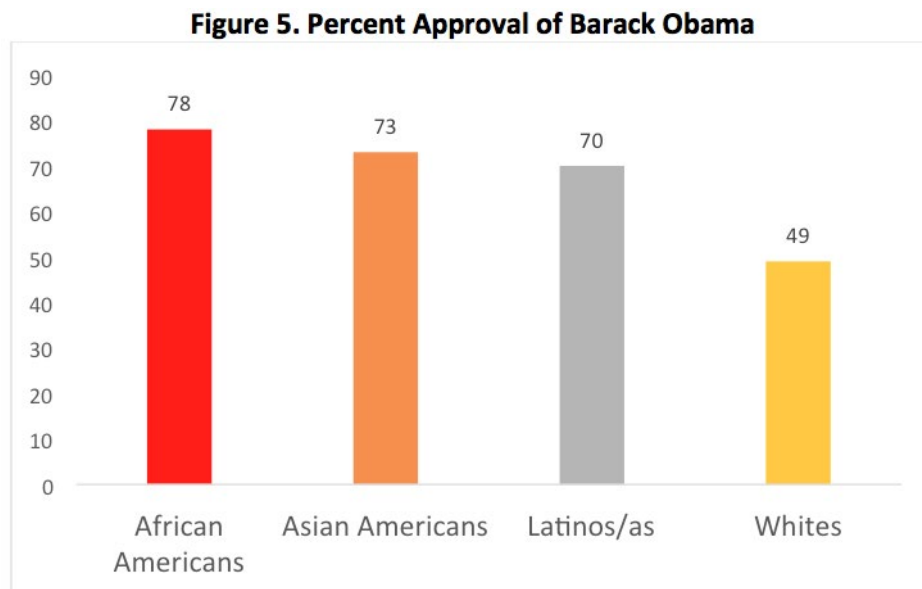
	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Most cited problem	Racism (43%)	Education (29%)	Immigration (36%)	Terrorism and Homeland Security (30%)
Second most cited problem	Police Brutality (38%)	Unemployment (27%)	Terrorism and Homeland Security (30%)	Health Care (26%)
Third most cited problem	Education and Gun Control (25% each)	Health Care (25%)	Racism (28%)	Education (22%)
N=	501	261	517	530

Question: What do you think are the three most important problems facing this country today? Respondents select three from a list of 22 issues (see the toplines). N = 1,809. The percentage of respondents listing each issue as one of the three most important problems is listed in parentheses.

As Table 9 shows, the issues that young adults care most about varies by race and ethnicity. The most frequently cited problem identified by African Americans is racism (43%), followed by police brutality (38%), with gun control and education tied as the third most cited problems (25% each). Among Asian Americans, education is the most frequently cited problem (29%), followed by unemployment (27%), and health care (25%). Latino/as' most frequently cited problem is immigration (36%), followed by terrorism and homeland security (30%), and racism (28%). And finally, young whites identify terrorism and homeland security most frequently (30%), followed by health care (26%), and education (22%). **Millennials are not a monolithic group, and the differences in this age group become especially clear when looking at how race and ethnicity structures their issue priorities.** The candidates' response to events over the last month of the campaign – including recent bomb attacks in New Jersey and New York, and police shootings of Black men in Charlotte and Tulsa – could shape how young adults evaluate the candidates and if they are willing to go and vote.

President Obama's Approval Rating

Perhaps the greatest mobilizing tool available to Hillary Clinton is the popularity of President Obama among young adults of color. Figure 5 presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who somewhat or strongly approve of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President.



President Obama clearly remains extraordinarily popular among young African Americans (78% approval), Asian Americans (73%), and Latino/as (70%). Among young whites, Obama is not nearly as popular, as only 49% of whites currently approve of the President. Given the announcement that President Obama will be campaigning 1-2 days a week in October for Hillary Clinton, it seems that her campaign believes the President could play a key role in mobilizing young adults of color to turn out and support Hillary Clinton.

IV. Young Adults and Their Economic Future

Since the election of Bill Clinton the importance of the economy on vote choice could be summed in the statement “it’s the economy stupid!” This year is no different. Economic issues from trade to wages are central to this election. Despite the importance of economic issues, there seems to be less reporting of the opinions of the general public on the economy. In this report we turn our attention to Millennials’ perception of the economy and their economic future. Our GenForward September 2016 survey provides the most comprehensive data on young people’s perceptions of their economic future.

In the following sections, we provide a detailed analysis of young people’s views of the economy, their personal financial situation, the factors they believe make it easier or harder to succeed financially, and their optimism or pessimism about their economic future. Throughout this section we focus on the different economic perceptions, experiences, and values of young adults of different racial and ethnic groups and, in some cases, the differences that also exist between men and women in the economy. These data indicate that young adults face a number of unique economic challenges and that young adults of color often face what we call an *economic opportunity gap*. However, young people—particularly young adults of color—also exhibit a surprising amount of optimism about their economic future.

Young People’s Economy and The Next President

In this section of the report we focus on young people’s economic policy preferences and their views about which of the presidential candidates will best address the central economic challenges faced by young Americans today.

Most Important Economic Issues for the Next President:

We first wanted to know which economic issues young adults think are the most important ones for the next president of the United States to address. From a list of 16 issues, which includes a variety of economic programs such as reducing the federal budget deficit, changing to a green economy, and reducing the unemployment rate, we asked respondents to identify what they think are the three most important economic issues for the next president. Table 10 presents the results across each racial and ethnic group.

As Table 10 shows, while there are some variations across race and ethnicity in views about the most important economic issues facing the next president, we find that three sets of issues are generally at the top of young adults’ of all racial and ethnic groups concerns: **reducing student debt**, **increasing wages**, and **reducing income inequality**. Forty-one percent of African Americans, 35% of Asian Americans, 32% of Latino/as, and 30% of whites identify reducing student debt as the most important economic issue for the next president.

Along with decreasing debt from student loans, many young people also identify increased wages as a key economic priority. Increased wages are especially important to young people of color. Overall, 35% of African Americans, 28% of Asian Americans, and 32% of Latino/as reported that the next president should prioritize increased wages so that incomes keep up with higher costs of living. Large percentages of African Americans (32%) and Latino/as (28%) prioritized increasing the federal minimum wage, while fewer whites (16%) and Asian Americans (15%) identify this as one of the most important issues for the next president. This difference in emphasis on the minimum wage could reflect the fact that African Americans and Latino/as are overrepresented in minimum wage jobs.¹⁴

Finally, reducing the gap between rich and poor is listed as one of the three most important problems by Asian Americans (33%) and whites (25%). But while not rising to one of the top three concerns for African Americans and Latino/as, this issue does not lag far behind, as 26% of African Americans and 28% of Latino/as identify reducing the gap between rich and poor as one of the most important for the next president to address.

Table 10. Most Important Economic Issues for the Next President to Address, 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 economic issue	Reducing student debt (41%)	Reducing student debt (35%)	Increasing job growth (33%)	Reducing student debt <i>and</i> increasing job growth (30% each)
Second most cited economic issue	Increasing wages to keep up with the cost of living (35%)	Reducing the gap between the rich and poor (33%)	Increasing wages to keep up with the cost of living <i>and</i> reducing student debt (32% each)	Protecting the future of Social Security (26%)
Third most cited economic issue	Increasing minimum wage (32%)	Increasing wages to keep up with the cost of living (28%)	Increasing minimum wage (30%)	Reducing the gap between the rich and poor (25%)
<i>N</i> =	501	261	517	530

Question: Which 3 do you think are the most important for the next president of the United States to deal with? *N* = 1,801. The percentage of respondents listing each issue as one of the three most important problems is listed in parentheses.

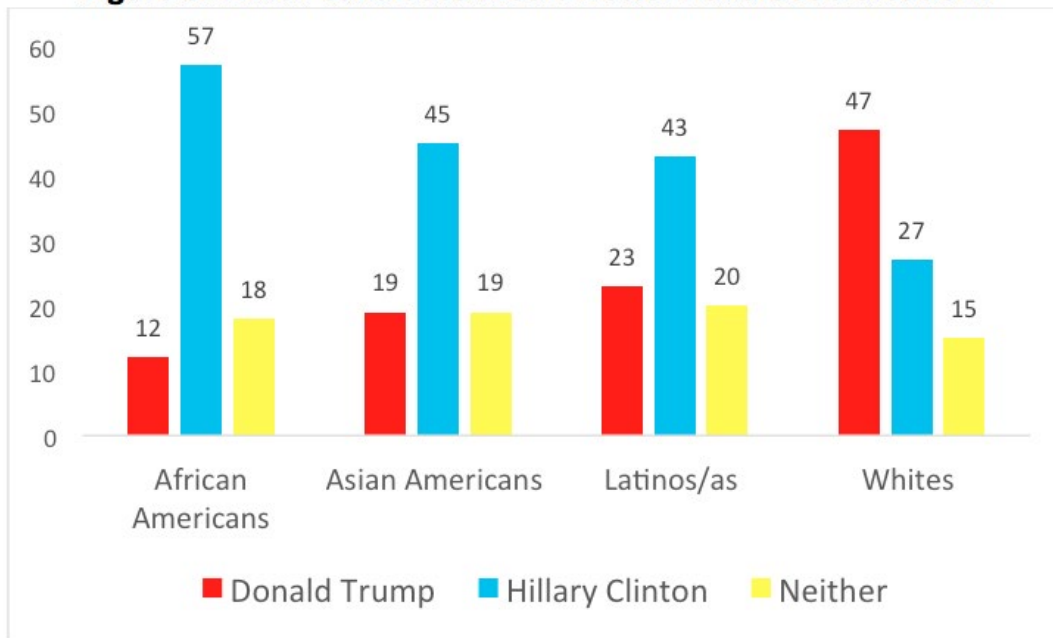
¹⁴ See, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/10/upshot/minimum-wage.html?_r=0

Best Candidate to Handle Economic Issues:

Which political candidate, Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, do young adults believe would better handle the economy for the next four years? We asked our sample of respondents which candidate they think would better handle a host of economic issues: creating jobs, their personal financial situation, income inequality, and increasing wages.

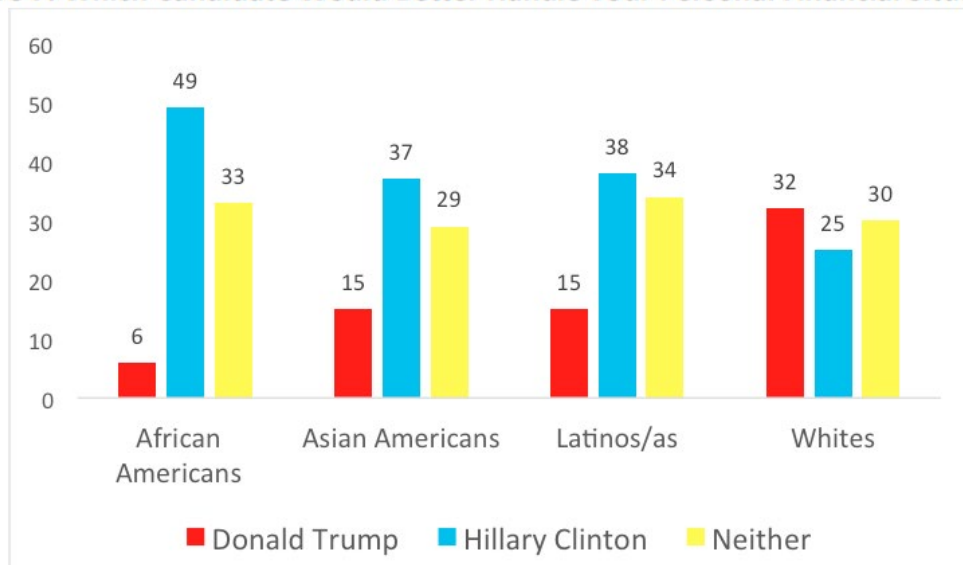
Figure 6 presents the results about which candidate would best create jobs. For young whites, Donald Trump is perceived as the better job creator (47%). For young African Americans (57%), Asian Americans (45%), and Latino/as (43%), Hillary Clinton is viewed as the best candidate for addressing job creation.

Figure 6. Which Candidate Would Better Handle Job Creation?



Young adults are somewhat less certain about which – if any – of the presidential candidates will best address their personal financial situation. Figure 7 shows that more whites believe Trump will help them (32%) than Clinton (25%), while African Americans (49%), Latino/as (38%), and Asian Americans (37%), are more likely to believe that Clinton will better help them financially. But notably, large percentages of African Americans (33%), Asian Americans (29%), Latino/as (34%), and whites (30%) say that **neither** candidate will better address their personal financial situation.

Figure 7. Which Candidate Would Better Handle Your Personal Financial Situation?



When it comes to two additional issues—reducing income inequality and increasing wages—we find in Figures 8 and 9 that Hillary Clinton is viewed as the best candidate among all racial and ethnic groups. In sum, young whites believe that Donald Trump will best create jobs and help them personally, but prefer Hillary Clinton to deal with income inequality and increasing wages. Young adults of color overwhelmingly believe that Hillary Clinton is the better candidate for addressing all of these issues. It is important to highlight, however, that on all of these issues many of our respondents selected “neither” candidate as best equipped to deal with these economic concerns. Many Millennials are skeptical that the current candidates prioritize or share their views on the economic issues that they care about.

Figure 8. Which Candidate Would Better Handle Income Inequality?

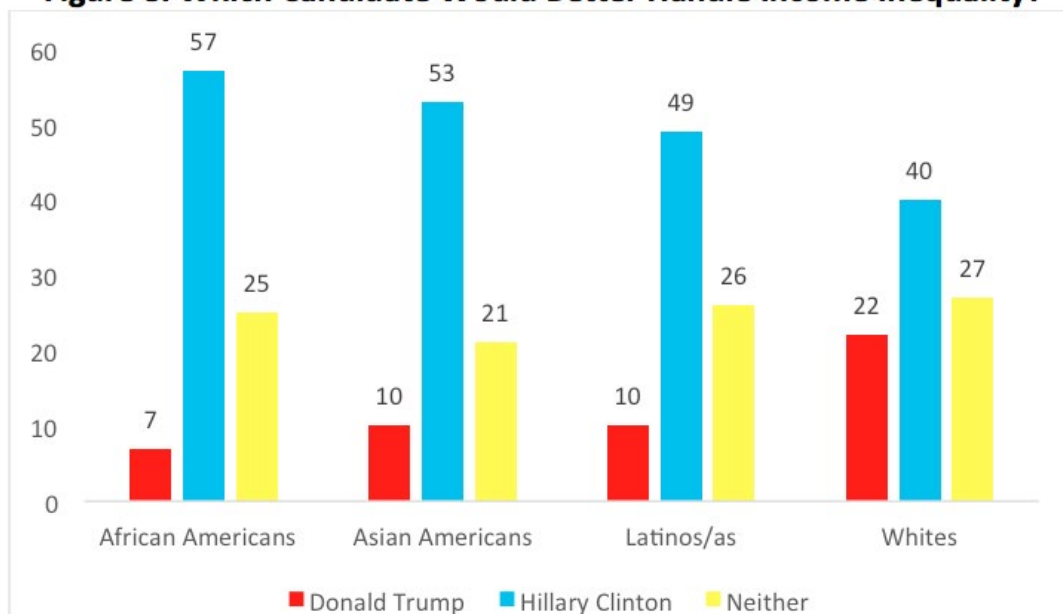
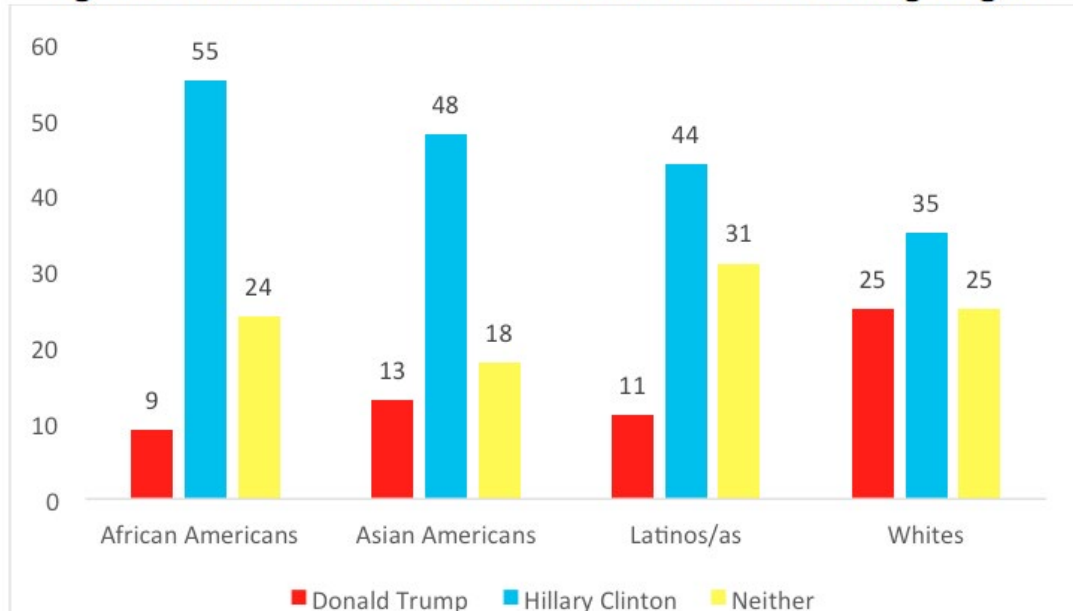


Figure 9. Which Candidate Would Better Handle Increasing Wages?



Economic Policy Issues:

We also asked our respondents about their views on a few key policy issues that are central to the contemporary political debate over the economy: free trade, raising taxes on millionaires, and whether the government has done enough to regulate corporations and address income inequality. In Table 11, we present the responses to two separate questions about free trade. The first asks respondents their attitudes about whether free trade with other countries is generally good or bad for the American economy. As shown in Table X, very few African American (19%), Asian American (17%), Latino/a (18%) or white (22%) respondents said that free trade was generally bad for the American economy. **Even when political candidates including Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump, and to a lesser extent Hillary Clinton, are running against free trade, it is striking how few young adults think free trade in the abstract is bad for the American economy.**

Table 11. View on Free Trade, by Race and Ethnicity

	African Americans (% agree)	Asian Americans (% agree)	Latinos/as (% agree)	Whites (% agree)
Free trade agreements are bad for the American economy	19	17	18	22
More important to protect jobs by limiting imports than allow free trade for cheaper products	53	37	53	57
N=	501	261	517	530

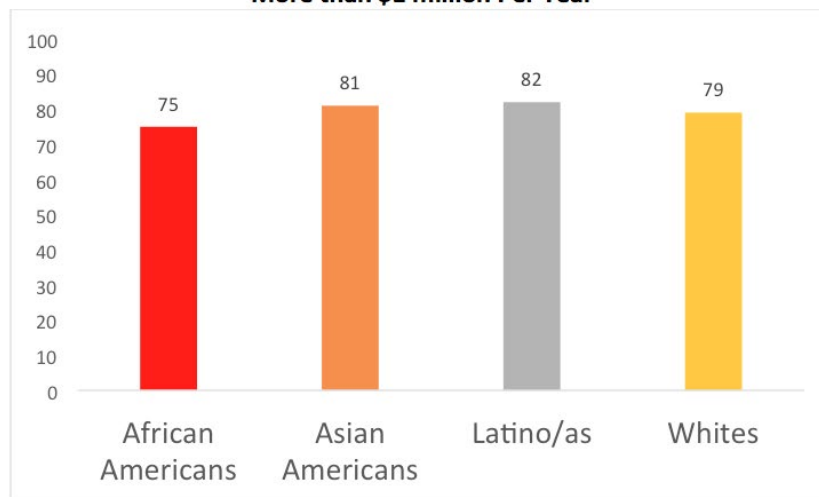
Question: See topline for specific question wording. N = 1,801.

Our second question on free trade asked respondents whether it is more important to allow free trade so people can purchase goods cheaply or to protect American jobs by limiting imports from other countries. As the bottom row in Table 11 shows, we found that **majorities of African Americans (53%), Latino/as (53%), and whites (57%) all said it is more important to protect American jobs.** Only among Asian Americans (63%) was the response to allow free trade more popular than the response to protect American jobs. These results suggest that young adults are accepting of free trade in the abstract, but when framed as a potential loss to American jobs many young adults become less supportive of free trade.

The final policy question we asked was about young adults support or opposition to raising taxes on millionaires. Figure 10 presents the percentage of respondents who somewhat or strongly favor raising taxes on people earning more than \$1 million per year.

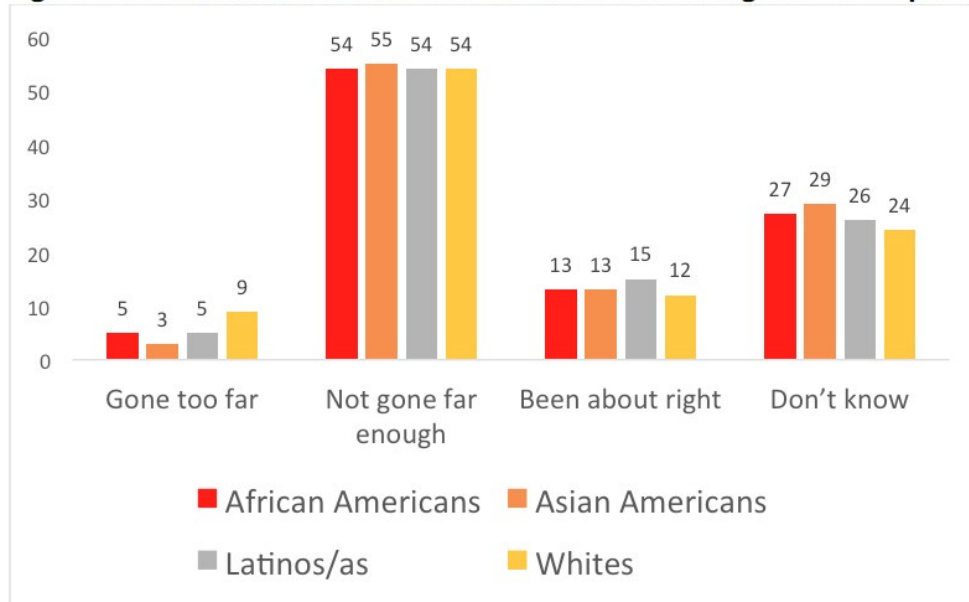
As Figure 10 shows, young adults are in widespread agreement about raising taxes on millionaires, with large majorities of African Americans (75%), Asian Americans (81%), Latino/as (82%), and whites (79%) in favor. **Young adults have come of age in an era of tremendous economic inequality, and this is reflected in both their issue priorities and their strong support for raising taxes on millionaires.**

Figure 10. Percentage of Those Who Strongly or Somewhat Favor Raising Taxes on People Earning More than \$1 million Per Year



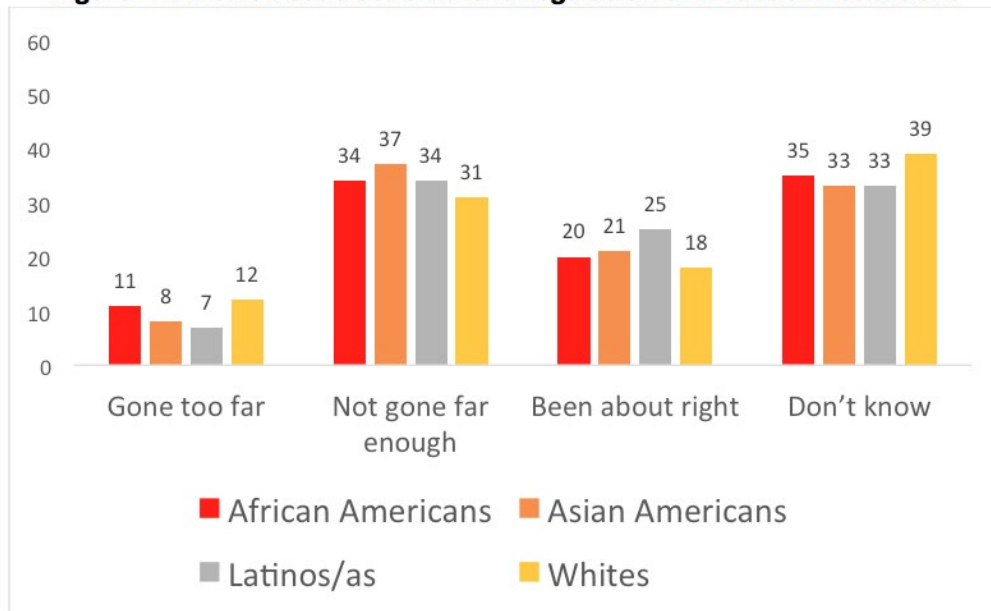
As noted above, reducing the gap between rich and poor is a political priority for many young adults. This position is evident in Figure 11 below. Specifically, we asked respondents if they thought that the government has done enough to address income inequality. As seen in Figure 1, African Americans, (54%), Asian Americans (55%), Latino/as (54%), and whites (54%) state that the government has not gone far enough to address income inequality.

Figure 11. Views about the Government’s Role in Addressing Income Inequality



While most young adults believe we must do more to address income inequality, millennials are less unified in their opinion about government regulation of financial institutions, as seen in Figure 12. In response to this issue, only a minority of African Americans (34%), Asian Americans (37%), Latino/as (34%), and whites (31%) think that the government has not gone far enough. It is possible that their expressed attitudes toward this issue reflect a lack of knowledge about government regulation—in fact, more young adults responded “don’t know” to this question than any other response option. This difference in attitudes toward government regulation vis-à-vis income inequality serve to reinforce the interpretation from the results above that income inequality is an especially salient economic issue to all Millennials.

Figure 12. Views about Government Regulation of Financial Institutions

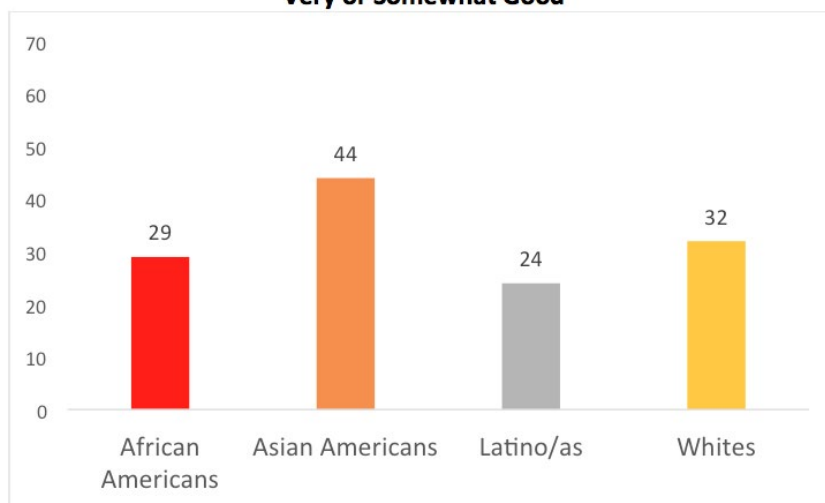


Current Evaluations of the National Economy

What do young adults think about the state of the economy today? Is today's economy good or poor, and to what extent has the economy recovered from the Great Recession? **Our data indicates that young people have a number of negative evaluations about the state of the current national economy.**

First, Figure 13 shows the percentage of respondents who think that the nation's economy these days is very or somewhat good. As Figure 13 makes clear, only a minority of young adults in each racial and ethnic group describe the economy today as being in good shape. Most say the economy today is either poor or in-between as neither good nor poor. **Millennials' perceptions of the current national economy are not very positive.**

Figure 13. Percentage of Respondents Who Describe the Nation's Economy as Very or Somewhat Good



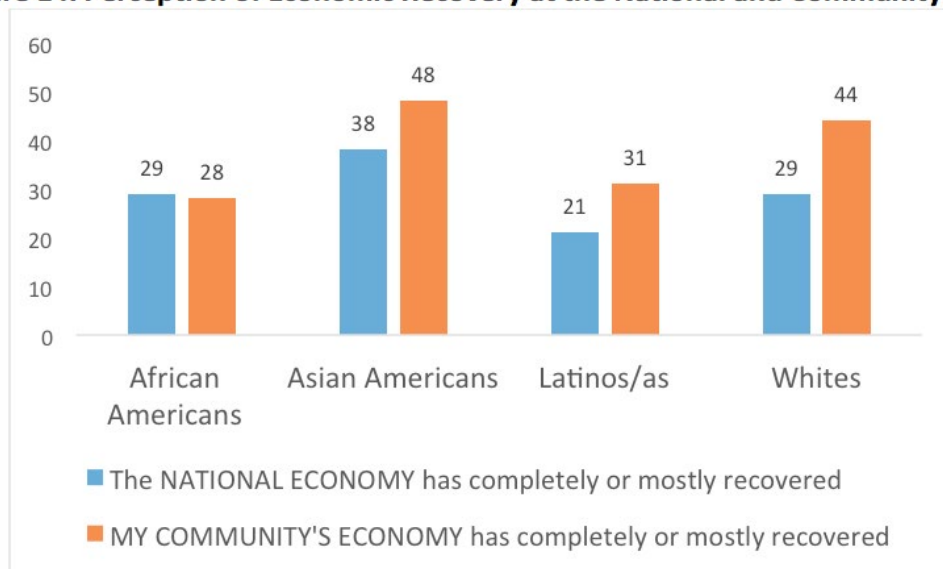
These negative evaluations extend as well to Millennials' evaluation of the economy's recovery from the financial crisis and Great Recession in 2008. The percentage of respondents who say that the national (in blue in Figure 14) and their community's (in orange in Figure 14) economy has completely or mostly recovered from the 2008 financial crisis is presented in Figure 14.

In evaluations of both the national and one's community's economy, only a minority of young adults believe that either economy is fully recovered from the recession in 2008.

There is, however, some discrepancy among Millennials in perceptions of the national and local economy. In general, more people see their community's economy as better recovered from the Great Recession than see the national economy as recovered. For example, 48% of Asian Americans see their community's economy as recovered from 2008, compared to 38% who see the national economy as recovered. This difference in perceptions of the local and national economy is evident among whites and Latino/as as well.

In contrast, we do not find any differences in perceptions of the national and local economy among African Americans. Twenty-nine percent of African Americans say the national economy is completely or mostly recovered, and 28% say that their community's economy is completely or mostly recovered. The more positive feelings that young whites, Asian Americans, and Latino/as extend to their local economy does not translate to African Americans. This could reflect the different economic opportunities available to young African American adults. For example, current estimates suggest that the unemployment rate for African Americans 20-24 years old is 16.3%. Unemployment is much lower among whites (7.2%), Asian Americans (7.4%), and Latino/as (8.4%) in the same age group.¹⁵

Figure 14. Perception of Economic Recovery at the National and Community Level



Vulnerabilities and Challenges: Young People's View of Their Own Economic Situation

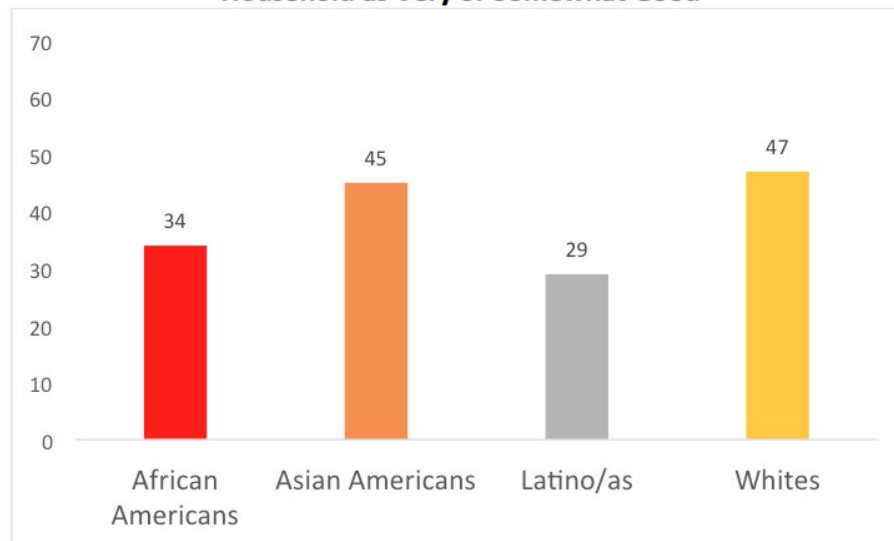
The Economies: National, Community and Personal:

Young adults' attitudes about their current financial situation are also fairly negative, much like their perceptions of the national economy. Figure 15 presents the percentage of respondents who describe the financial situation in their own household as very or somewhat good.

In general, we find that relatively small percentages of young adults have positive overall impressions of their household's financial situation. There are, however, interesting differences across racial and ethnic groups. African Americans (34%) and Latino/as (29%) were less positive about their household's financial situation than Asian Americans (45%) and whites (47%).

¹⁵ Source: http://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsee_e16.htm

Figure 15. Percentage of Respondents Who Describe the Financial Situation in their Own Household as Very or Somewhat Good



Young adults' negative perceptions of their household finances generally match their perceptions of the national economy (see Figure 13). For African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans, there are only slight differences in perceptions of one's financial situation relative to perceptions of the national economy. Specifically, marginally more young people of color see their household's financial situation in a more positive light than see the national economy. There is a larger discrepancy among young whites in their views of their personal household finances and the national economy. Forty-seven percent of young whites describe the financial situation of their household as very or somewhat good, a 15 percentage point increase from the 32% who describe the national economy as somewhat or very good.

These data start to give us a sense of the different economic standing and experiences of young adults based on their race and ethnicity. Below we delve deeper into the challenges and vulnerabilities of young people in the economy, and examine how race and ethnicity are perceived by young people to structure their economic opportunities and vulnerabilities.

Economic Vulnerability Gap:

Table 12 presents data on the percentage of young people in each racial and ethnic group who are concerned about someone in their household being laid off from work and being forced to work reduced hours or take a cut in pay.

Table 12 indicates that there is a clear divide between young people of color and young whites in their level of economic anxiety over employment. Majorities of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as are concerned about both someone in their household being laid off from work and being forced to take a cut in pay. Only a minority of whites express concern over both possibilities.

These differences across race and ethnicity suggest that **young people of color feel more vulnerable in terms of their household security in the workforce than young whites.**

Table 12. How concerned are you about you or someone in your household...

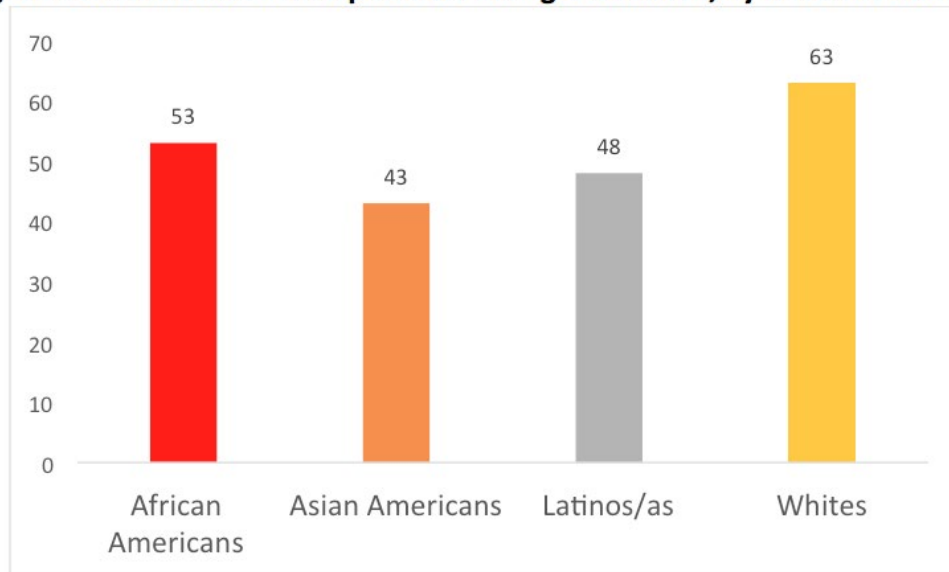
(Percentage Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Concerned)	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
Being laid off from work	57	59	57	41
Being forced to work reduced hours or take a cut in pay	56	59	59	42

Question: See toplines for specific question wording? N = 1,801.

We also see what we call an *economic vulnerability gap* between young whites and young people of color in their level of confidence that, if they needed, they could find a good job today. Figure 16 below present the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who say they are very or somewhat confident they could find a good job if they needed to.

As Figure 16 shows, young whites stand out as the most confident in their ability to find a good job (63%). A majority of African Americans (53%) also say they could find a good job if needed, followed by Latino/as (48%) and Asian Americans (43%). These results once again suggest that **there is greater uncertainty in the job market for young adults of color than for young whites.**

Figure 16. Confidence in Prospects of Finding a Good Job, by Race and Ethnicity



The Difficulty of Paying a Bill:

Consistent with the economic and workplace vulnerability shown above, our data suggest that many young people are relatively unprepared to shoulder unexpected expenses. Table 13 below presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who tell us that an unexpected bill of \$1,000 would present them with “a lot” of financial difficulty.

As Table 13 shows, majorities of African Americans (59%), Latino/as (64%), and whites (50%), say that an unexpected bill of \$1,000 would give them “a lot” of financial difficulty. Asian Americans appear more financially secure, as only 39% said such a bill would give them a lot of difficulty. These findings suggest that **many young adults are financially unprepared for unexpected expenses.**

To what extent can young people rely on their family to help them with unexpected bills or other expenses needed to secure their economic future, like help with student loans or a down-payment on a house or condo? Figure 17 b presents the percentage of young adults in each racial and ethnic group who say it is somewhat or very likely that they could get help from their family in paying these different types of expenses.

Table 13. How Much Financial Difficulty Would You Have if You Had to Pay an Unexpected Bill of \$1,000 Right Away?

	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
A Lot	59	39	64	50
N	501	261	517	530

Question: How much financial difficulty would you have if you had to pay an unexpected bill of \$1,000 right away? N = 1,801.

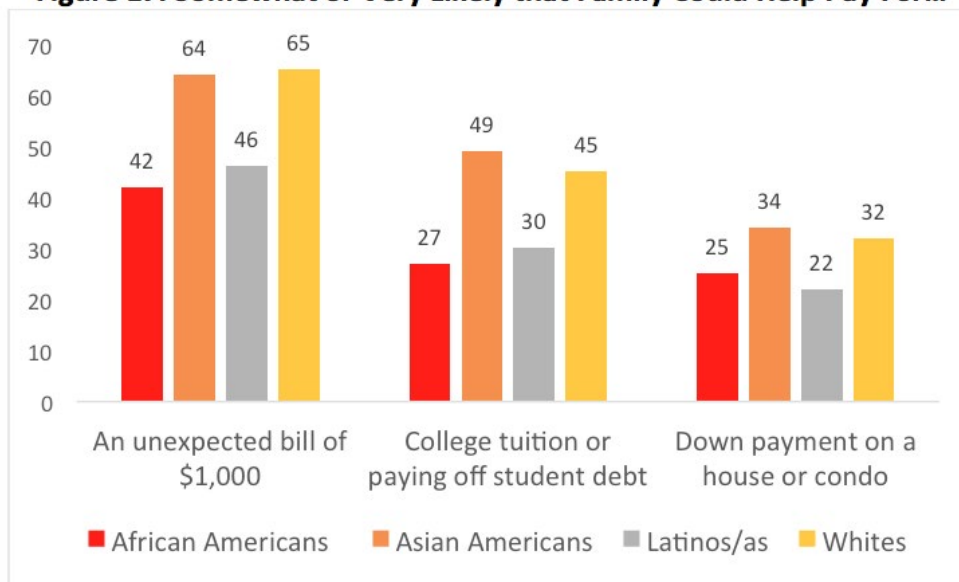
The data in Figure 17 underscores the wide divide across race and ethnicity in levels of family financial support available to young adults. Asian Americans and whites consistently say they are more likely to receive help from their family in making payments on unexpected bills, student loans, or down payments on a house or condo. African American and Latino/a young adults tell us they have much less financial support from their families in making these payments.

In sum, in terms of securing and maintaining employment, developing a financial cushion for unexpected bills, and relying on family to help pay for large expenses, we continually find that **African Americans and Latino/as have the least economic security.** These data also highlight the uneven footing of young people as they attempt to accumulate wealth and build their economic futures. Data from the Census Bureau indicate that home ownership rates are considerably higher among white (71.5%) adults than they are for African Americans (41.7%), Latino/as (45.3%), and Asian Americans (53.7%),¹⁶ which contributes to the large and growing differences in wealth across

¹⁶ See <http://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/files/currenthvspress.pdf>.

racial and ethnic groups.¹⁷ For young adults, uneven access to family resources for capital is likely to extend these differences.

Figure 17. Somewhat or Very Likely that Family Could Help Pay For...



Barriers to Economic Success:

What factors do young adults perceive as impeding their economic progress? Table 14 presents the percentage of respondents who rate the lack of jobs in the community, insufficient education or technical skills, and stagnant wages, as high or very high barriers to achieving their economic goals.

Table 14 shows, first, that **African Americans (41%) are more likely than Asian Americans (23%), Latino/as (27%), and whites (19%) to say that a lack of jobs in the community is a high barrier to achieving their economic goals.** This finding is similar to that reported above that African Americans are the least likely to say that their local economy is recovered from the Great Recession in 2008. Together, these results suggest that young **African Americans are less likely than other groups to have economic opportunities available to them in their community.**

We also find that African Americans (49%) and Latino/as (46%) perceive stagnant wages as a high or very high economic barrier, compared to smaller percentages of Asian Americans and whites (35% each). As noted above, African Americans and Latino/as are overrepresented in minimum wage jobs, and this possibly affects the priority given to minimum wage as a political issue (Table 10) and the perception that wages are a barrier to achieving one’s economic goals.

¹⁷ See, e.g., <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gaps-great-recession/>; <http://www.forbes.com/sites/laura-shin/2015/03/26/the-racial-wealth-gap-why-a-typical-white-household-has-16-times-the-wealth-of-a-black-one/#2cf758776c5b>; <http://money.cnn.com/2016/01/25/news/economy/racial-wealth-gap/>.

Finally, we find less stark differences across race and ethnicity in the perception that a lack of education or technical skills is a barrier to achieving economic goals for African Americans (35%), Asian Americans (30%), Latino/as (31%), and whites (24%). Few young adults overall perceive not having enough education or technical skills as a high economic barrier. **Low wages stand out overall as the most frequently cited challenge to young adults in their efforts to achieve their economic goals.**

Table 14. Perceptions of the Following as High or Very High Barriers to Achieving One’s Economic Goals

	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
Lack of jobs in the community	41	23	27	19
Wages not increasing fast enough to get ahead	49	35	46	35
Not having a high enough level of education or technical skills	35	30	31	24
N	501	261	517	530

Question: See toplines for specific question wording. N = 1,801.

Discrimination and Advantage

The results reported above indicate that young adults of color—particularly African Americans and Latino/as—feel economically vulnerable and experience greater financial challenges than young whites (and to some extent Asian Americans). There are a number of possible explanations for these different economic experiences, one of which is different rates of discrimination in the economy.

In this section we explore the extent to which young adults of different racial and ethnic groups report experiencing discrimination in looking for employment and in the workforce, and the extent that they perceive different groups as having an advantage in the economy. Our survey provides some of the most comprehensive data on young adults’ perceptions of economic discrimination and their thoughts about which groups have an advantage in getting ahead. The data suggest that some of the economic vulnerability gap between young people of color and young whites is a product of different rates of discrimination.

We start with young adults’ reported experiences of discrimination based on race and ethnicity in looking for a job and in the workplace, as presented in Table 15. Forty-eight percent of African Americans say that they have experienced discrimination based on their race in both looking for a job and in the workplace. This is higher than all other racial and ethnic groups, and is much higher than the 10% of whites who say they have experienced racial discrimination in both of these domains.

Approximately 30% of Latino/as and Asian Americans also say they have experienced discrimination in looking for a job and in the workplace.

Table 15. Experience with Economic Discrimination Based on Race and Ethnicity

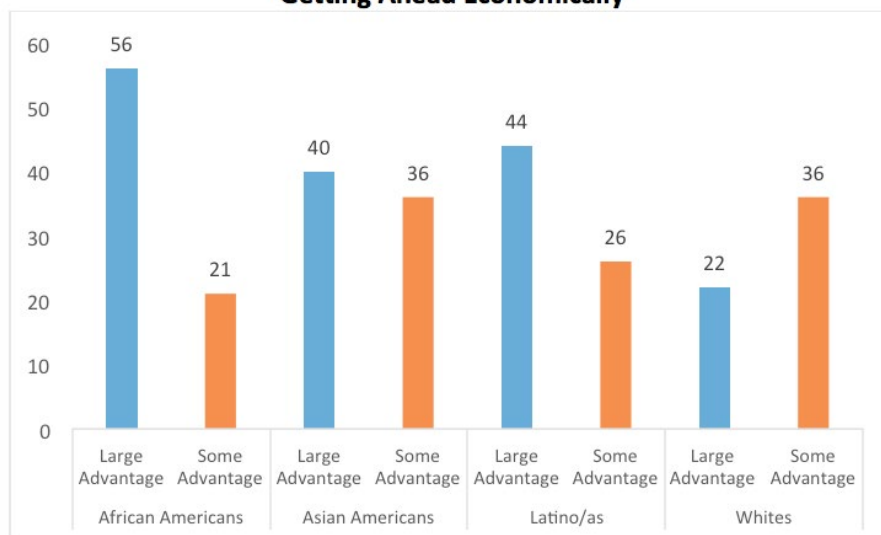
	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
Experienced Discrimination based on race in looking for a job	48	31	30	10
Experienced discrimination based on race in the workplace	48	29	29	10
<i>N</i>	501	261	517	530

Question: See topline for specific question wording. *N* = 1,801.

We also asked our respondents whether white people have an advantage or disadvantage for getting ahead economically. Figure 18 presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who said that whites have “some” or “a large” economic advantage.

As shown in Figure 18, majorities of all Millennials (African Americans (77%), Asian Americans (76%), Latino/as (70%), and whites (58%)) say that white people have a large or some advantage in getting ahead economically. But while even whites agree that they have an advantage, they tend to disagree over the magnitude of that advantage. Many more young adults of color say whites have a large advantage compared to the 22% of whites who believe that they have a large advantage.

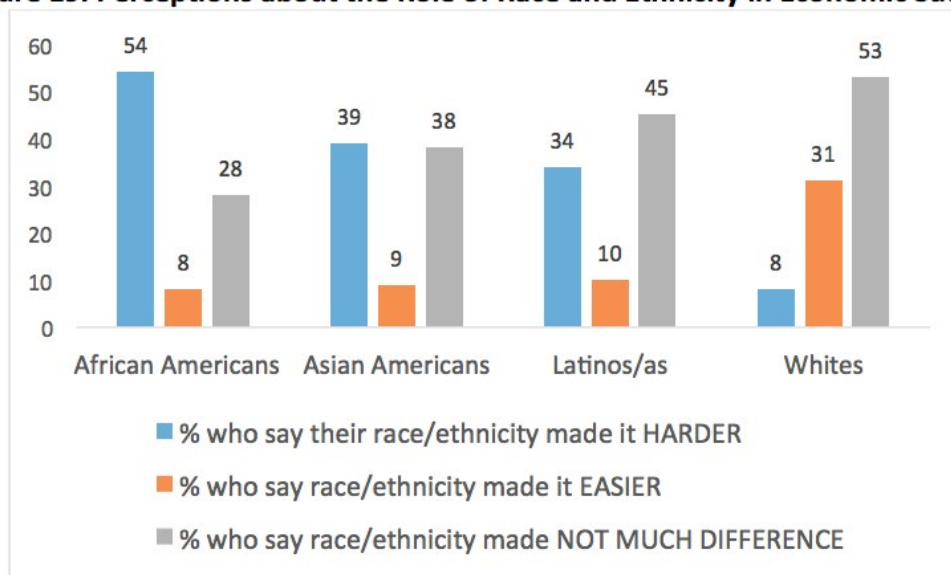
Figure 18. Percentage of Respondents who say Whites have a Large or Some Advantage for Getting Ahead Economically



These different rates of reported economic discrimination and perceptions of white advantage correspond with varying perceptions about the importance of race and ethnicity in making it easy or difficult to succeed economically. Figure 19 below presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who say their race had an impact on achieving economic success.

As shown in Figure 19, a majority of African Americans (54%) say their race has made it harder to succeed economically, 8% say their race has made it easier, and 28% say it does not make much difference. Whites have different opinions about the importance of their race in achieving economic success: only 8% say their race has made it harder, 31% say their race has made it easier, and a majority (53%) say their race has not made much difference either way.

Figure 19. Perceptions about the Role of Race and Ethnicity in Economic Success



Asian Americans are most likely to say that their race has made it harder (39%), followed closely by the percentage who say their race has not made much of a difference (38%), and only 9% say their race has made it easier. Latino/as are most likely to say their race has not made much of a difference (45%), followed by those who say their race has made it harder (34%), and only 10% say their race has made it easier.

These data provide an extensive look at the differences among young adults across race and ethnicity in the belief about the importance of race in structuring economic opportunity and advantage. All told, they show that young adults of color—African Americans especially—report experiencing more discrimination and perceive their race as making it more difficult for them to succeed economically.

In addition to race and ethnicity, we also asked our sample about discrimination against women in the economy, the advantages given to men, and the role of gender in achieving economic success.

Table 16 presents the percentage of young adults—broken down by **both race and sex**—who say they have experienced discrimination based on gender in looking for a job or in the workplace.

Table 16 shows that women report experiencing more economic discrimination than men. But the difference between men and women in their experience of economic discrimination is especially pronounced among whites and Asian Americans. White and Asian American women are much more likely to say they have experienced discrimination in looking for a job and in the workplace compared to white and Asian American men.

For African Americans and Latino/as the differences between men and women in gender-based discrimination are less stark. Among African Americans in particular, men and women are equally as likely to say that they have experienced gender-based discrimination in looking for a job and in the workplace. African American men stand out from men of other racial and ethnic groups in reporting that they have experienced economic discrimination based on their gender. These experiences are consistent with studies showing that young black men experience discrimination in the economy. For example, in an experimental study that holds things like an applicant’s qualifications constant, Pager (2013) shows that young black men are much less likely to find employment than a white man with identical qualifications.¹⁸

Table 16. Experience with Economic Discrimination Based on One’s Gender

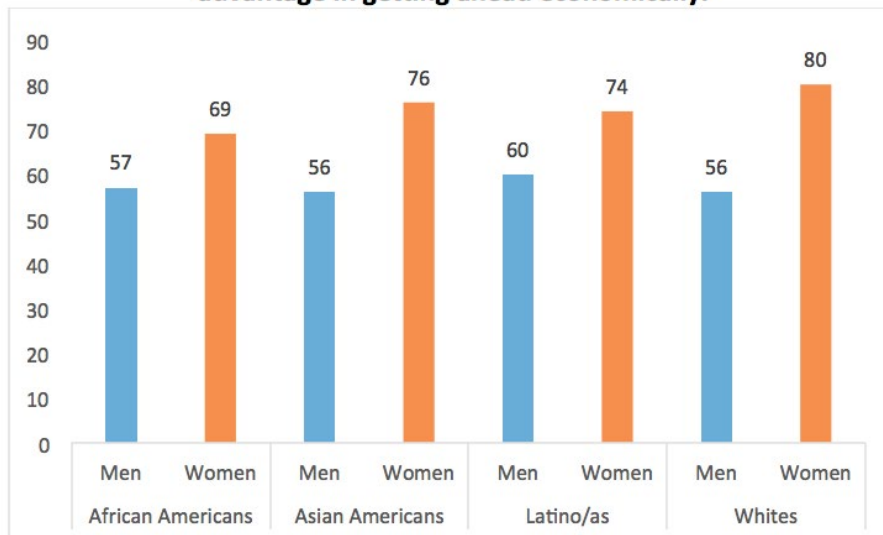
	African Americans		Asian Americans		Latinos/as		Whites	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Experienced Discrimination based on gender in looking for a job	32	35	16	29	22	28	9	31
Experienced discrimination based on gender in the workplace	33	33	12	25	14	26	10	33
N	501		261		517		530	

We also asked our respondents about the extent to which men have an advantage in getting ahead economically. Figure 20 presents the percentage of respondents who say the men have either some or a large advantage, broken down by both race and sex.

We note two main findings from Figure 20. First, majorities of men and women in each racial and ethnic group agree that men have some or a large advantage in the economy. Second, women consistently are more likely than men to say that men have some advantage to get ahead economically. **Perceptions of men’s economic advantage are widespread, but are more common among women than men.**

¹⁸ Pager, Devah. 2007. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

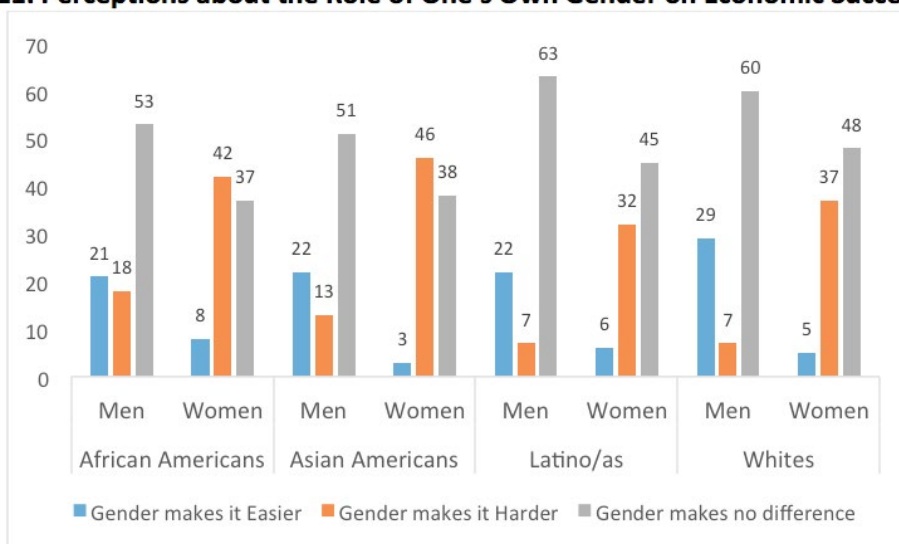
Figure 20. Percentage of Respondents, by race and sex, who say men have some or a large advantage in getting ahead economically.



Finally, we ask young adults about the extent to which their gender affects their ability to achieve economic success in life. Figure 21 presents the percentage of respondents, broken down again by race/ethnicity and sex, who say that their gender makes it harder, does not make a difference, or makes it easier to achieve economic success.

There are a few clear patterns evident in Figure 21. First, men (of all racial and ethnic groups) report at much higher rates than women that their gender has not made much of a difference towards achieving economic success, although Black men are more likely than any other group of men to say that their gender has made it harder for them. Second, women are much more likely than men across the board to say that their gender makes it harder for them to succeed economically, and are much less likely to say that their gender makes it easier. Third, while Latinas and white women are more likely to say their gender has more often made it harder than easier to secure economic success, they are more likely in general to report that their gender has had no impact on their economic success.

Figure 21. Perceptions about the Role of One's Own Gender on Economic Success in Life

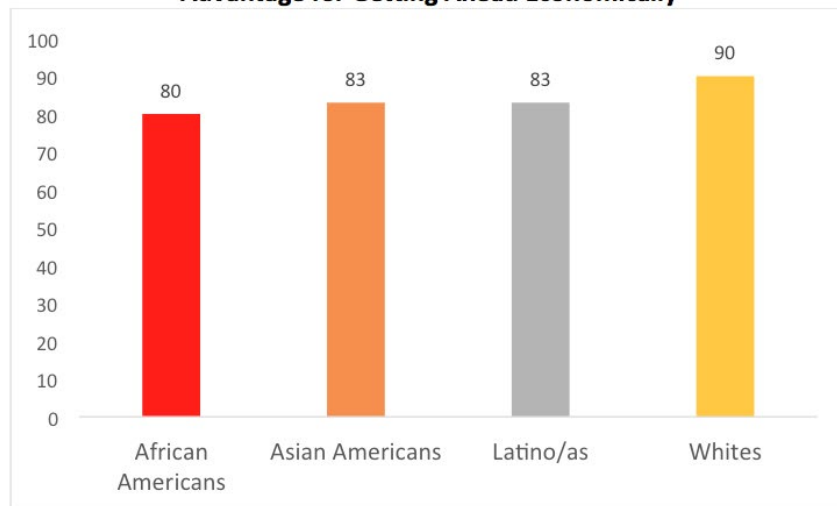


All told, these findings underscore the importance of gender in structuring economic opportunities and experiences among young adults. Young women—of all racial and ethnic groups—are more likely to report having experienced gender-based economic discrimination and to say that men have an advantage in the economy. African American and Asian American women (and to a lesser extent Latinas and white women) also believe that their gender makes it harder to achieve their economic goals.

Of course, race and gender are not the only factors that affect an individual’s economic experiences and opportunities. Class background too can give individuals a decided advantage in the economy. Do young adults of different racial and ethnic backgrounds perceive people from wealthy families as having an economic advantage? Figure 22 presents the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who say that people from wealthy families have some or a large advantage in the economy.

As is clear in Figure 22, large majorities of African Americans (80%), Asian Americans (83%), Latino/as (83%), and whites (90%) perceive people from wealthy families as have an economic advantage. These percentages are greater across the board than the advantage that young people see coming from being either white (Figure 18) or male (Figure 19).

Figure 22. Percentage of Respondents Who Perceive People from Wealthy Families as Having an Advantage for Getting Ahead Economically



In terms of getting a leg up, young people believe—and recent economic statistics would bolster this interpretation—that people from wealthy families have distinct advantages.¹⁹ Perhaps these perceived advantages of the wealthy help explain why the growing gap between rich and poor is such a central political issue to young adults, and is one of their top priorities for the next president to address.

¹⁹ For example, recent evidence suggests that the gap in educational outcomes between children from wealthy and poor families has grown significantly over the past 45 years (source: http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf)

Optimism for their Economic Future

Despite their negative overall views of the current economy and the challenges young people face in achieving financial security, surprisingly, we find that young adults are quite optimistic about their economic future. For example, while Millennials are on the whole doubtful that Social Security will be available to them in the future, they nonetheless believe that they will have enough retirement savings to be able to retire when they want to. And most young adults—especially African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as—believe that they will have a better quality of life than their parents.

Tables 17 and 18 present the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who say they are very or somewhat confident in the future of Social Security and in having enough financial resources to retire when they want to.

As shown in Table 17, few young adults are confident about the future of Social Security. Only 42% of African Americans, 35% of Asian Americans, 36% of Latino/as, and 29% of whites say they are very or somewhat confident about Social Security in the future. Yet, as Table 18 shows, in spite of their pessimism about the future of Social Security, many young adults also believe that they will have enough savings and resources to retire when they want to: 53% of African Americans, 55% of Asian Americans, 43% of Latino/as, and 56% of whites. These are not overwhelming majorities, but they suggest that many young adults are confident about their ability to retire when they want without the help of Social Security.

Table 17. Perceptions of Confidence in the Future of the Social Security System.

(% Confident)	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
In the future of Social Security	42	35	36	29
<i>N</i>	501	261	517	530

Question: How much confidence do you have in the future of the Social Security system? *N* = 1,801.

Table 18. Perceptions of Confidence in Future Ability to Retire When Desired

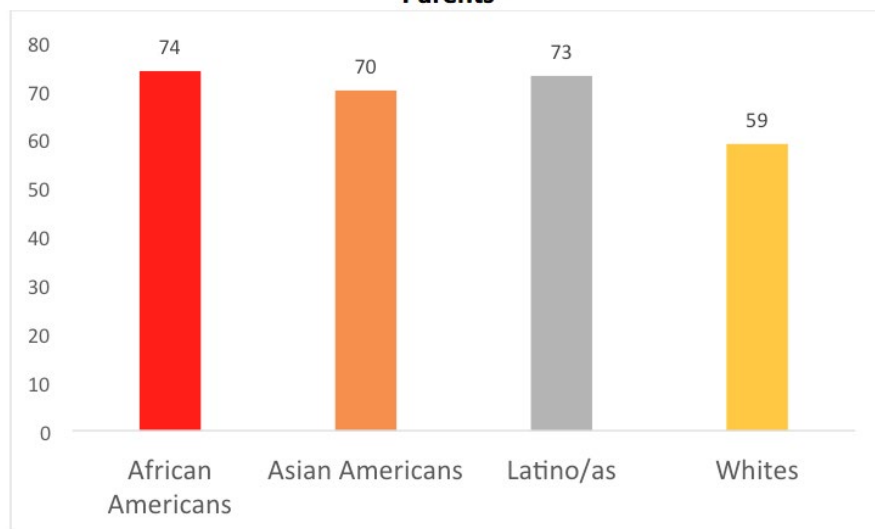
(% Confident)	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
That they will have enough retirement savings to retire when they want	53	55	43	56
<i>N</i>	501	261	517	530

Question: How confident are you that you will have enough retirement savings to be able to retire when you want to? *N* = 1,801.

This finding that young adults feel secure in their ability to finance their retirement reinforces the overall optimism they express about their ability to achieve economic success and a high quality of life. In Figure 23 we present the percentage of respondents in each racial and ethnic group who tell us that they will do better than their parents in terms of their household finances.

As is clear in Figure 23, majorities of African Americans (74%), Asian Americans (70%), Latino/as (73%), and whites (59%) all think that they will do better than their parents financially. It is striking how many young adults are confident about their financial future in light of their current negative evaluations of the economy. It is also notable that while a majority of young whites are optimistic that they will do better financially than their parents, they have the lowest percentage of any group to register such optimism. Thus, compared to young adults of color, young whites are the least likely to say that they will do better than their parents financially.

Figure 23. Percentage of Young Adults Who Think They Will Do Better Financially than Their Parents



Young adults are also optimistic about their personal future when it comes to things like finding and keeping a good job, paying off student debts, and being able to afford the lifestyle they want. Table X below presents the percentage of respondents who say they are optimistic about their personal future.

Table 19 shows that large majorities of African Americans (82%), Asian Americans (76%), Latino/as (79%), and whites (79%) say they are optimistic about their personal future. Again, despite Millennials' economic challenges and worries, recorded earlier in this report, most remain upbeat about their personal future.

Table 19. Percentage of Young Adults Optimistic about Their Personal Future

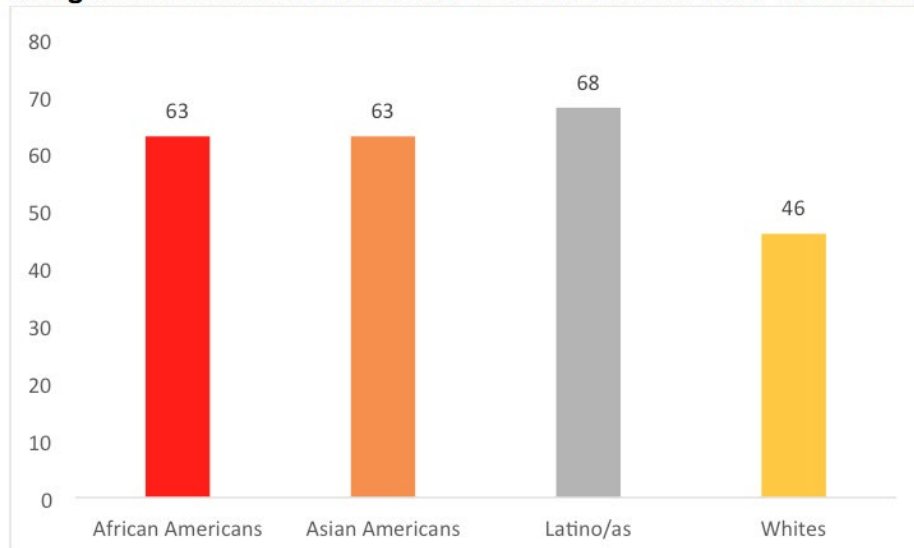
	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos/as	Whites
Percent optimistic about personal future	82	76	79	79
N=	501	261	517	530


Question: Generally speaking, how optimistic are you about your personal future? Think about things like finding and keeping a good job, paying off your student loan debt, and being able to afford the lifestyle you want.

However, Millennials' thoughts about their generation's future well-being is not as rosy as their personal assessments of future economic success. Figure 24 presents the percentage of young adults who say it is very or somewhat likely that their generation will have a better life than their parents, with a better living standard, better homes, a better education, and so on. Figure 24 shows that majorities of African Americans (63%), Asian Americans (63%), and Latino/as (68%) think it is likely that their generation will have a better life than their parents, but only a minority of young whites (46%) agree.

Similar to their perception of their own financial well-being relative to their parents, young whites are the least likely to think that their generation will do better than their parent's generation. Perhaps part of these differences are a product of the position of whites as best off in the current economic landscape. The different reference points of young whites compared to young adults of color may translate into different levels of optimism about the future. The building narrative about the economic vulnerability of whites may also be a reason why young whites are the least economically optimistic group of millennials. This lack of optimism may be partly behind some young whites' support for Donald Trump.

Figure 24. Young Adults Believe that Their Generation Will have a Better Life Than Their Parents





In sum, these analyses suggest that Millennials remain confident and optimistic about their economic future. Despite their perception that the economy is currently not doing very well, and their numerous economic vulnerabilities and challenges, most young people are optimistic about their future life chances. This is especially the case for young adults of color. African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans are the most optimistic about their economic future and their ability to live a better life than their parents.

V. Survey Methodology

The September 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 1,851 interviews were conducted between September 1 and 14, 2016 with adults ages 18-30 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including completed interviews with 501 African American young adults, 261 Asian American young adults, 517 Latino/a young adults, 530 white young adults, and 42 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-four 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-six 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 1,851 completed interviews in the September GenForward survey, 91 percent were completed by web and 9 percent by telephone. The survey completion rate is 38.2 percent. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 16.1 percent and the weighted household panel retention rate is 94.6 percent, for a cumulative AAPOR Response Rate 3 of 5.8 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 +/- 5.9 percentage points for African Americans, +/- 8.6 percentage points for Asian Americans, +/- 6.4 percentage points for Latino/as, and +/- 5.7 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.