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2016 Election

2016 Millennial Poll Analysis

An in-depth look at youth attitudes,
tendencies, and ideology

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Introduction and Key Findings

Millennials are the most diverse generation in American history. Their multifaceted diversity shapes their pathways to civic and political engagement, and it results in sometimes dramatically different political views and experiences. It also impacts how young people are reacting to and engaging with this year's historic presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

We previously released analysis from this poll about Millennial presidential candidate support, attention to the 2016 elections, and party/campaign contact of Millennials. That analysis, which includes important differences in battleground states and by gender, can be found [here](#).

Today's release looks even more deeply at the Millennial generation and at differences within the generation. Two major themes emerge: first, Millennials across the board share a deep skepticism of most major political and public institutions, and less than half of Millennials believe they have a legitimate voice in the political process. Second, there are significant differences by race and ethnicity, gender, religion, and educational attainment that shape young people's worldviews and, in turn, their candidate of choice in the 2016 presidential election. In fact, our analysis allows us to provide some context about who the Millennial supporters of each candidate are, and what they believe in.

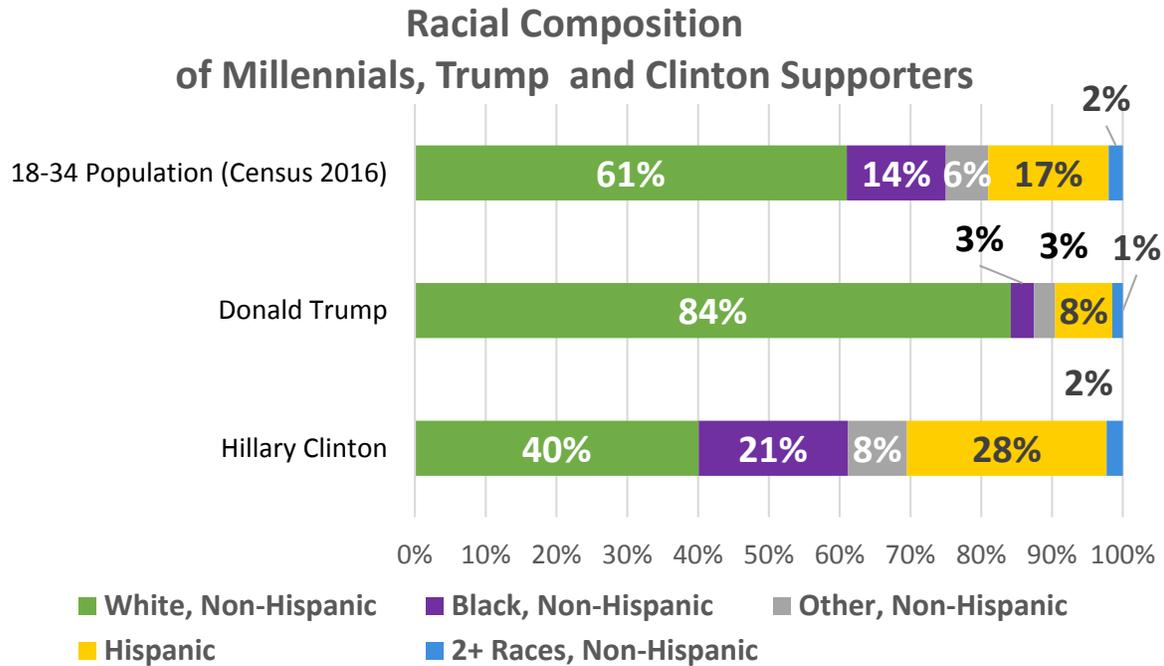
Major findings about Millennial Trump supporters include:

- ❖ 57% are men, 84% White (non-Hispanic), 39% Protestant, 21% Catholic, and 23% not affiliated with a religion. A larger share of Trump supporters are Protestants than among Clinton supporters (24%).
- ❖ Their household income, on average, is higher than the average household income of Clinton supporters. Most live in single-family homes.
- ❖ 85% are dissatisfied with the way things are going for the country, and they are far more likely than Clinton supporters to believe that the country's best days are behind us.
- ❖ Trump supporters are less experienced with various types of political engagement, and more likely than Clinton supporters to say that they would "never, under any circumstances" do things like volunteer for a campaign or attend a political rally, suggesting that Trump supporters are overall less likely to be politically engaged.
- ❖ Trump supporters are not necessarily "less educated" than Clinton supporters. Although they are slightly less likely to have completed college (24% of Trump supporters and 29% of Clinton supporters), Trump supporters are also slightly more likely to have at least some college experience (64% among Trump supporters and 61% among Clinton supporters).

Meanwhile, Millennial supporters of Secretary Clinton:

- ❖ 54% are female, 40% White (non-Hispanic), 28% Hispanic, and 21% African-American.
- ❖ 52% live in single-family homes, and 29% live in apartments. Their average income is lower than that of young Trump supporters.
- ❖ 42% are satisfied with the state of the country (compared to just 15% of Trump supporters), and 38% believe that the country's best days are yet to come (compared to 21% among Trump supporters).

- ❖ Twice as likely as Trump supporters (35% vs. 17%) to name “violence against people of color” as one of the top three problems in the country. Similarly, 38% recognize prejudice against people of different ethnicities as an important issue, compared to 12% of Trump supporters.



CIRCLE developed this survey¹ and the polling firm GfK collected the data from their nationally representative panel of respondents between September 21 and October 3, 2016. The study surveyed a total of 1,605 people aged 18 to 34 in the U.S., with representative over-samples of Black and Latino youth (N =160 and N=354, respectively), and those who are living in potential swing states (AZ, FL,GA, IA, IN, MO, NC, NH, NV, OH, PA, and UT). The national sample has 1,410 Millennials, with oversampling in the swing states (N =805 in “safe states,” and N =605 in swing states). The margin of error is +/-3.0 percentage points. Unless mentioned otherwise, data below are for all Millennials in our sample.

Racially Diverse, United on a Few Fronts, but Divided by Race on Many²

Although Millennials as a whole prefer Clinton by a large margin, 47% to 24%³, White Millennials slightly favor Donald Trump, 35% to 33%. Additionally, a substantial minority of White Millennials (17%) say they support Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson.

¹ We would like to thank Chris Wells and Dhavan Shah of University of Wisconsin-Madison, Esther Thorson of Missouri State University, Leticia Bode of Georgetown University, Kjersten Thorson of Michigan State University, Stephanie Edgerly of Northwestern University, and Esther Vraga of George Mason University, for their partnership and assistance in the development of this survey. Their input and expertise were instrumental in improving its quality.

² This poll did not include an oversample of Asian American youth; however, those data can be found in the [October GenForward Survey](#).

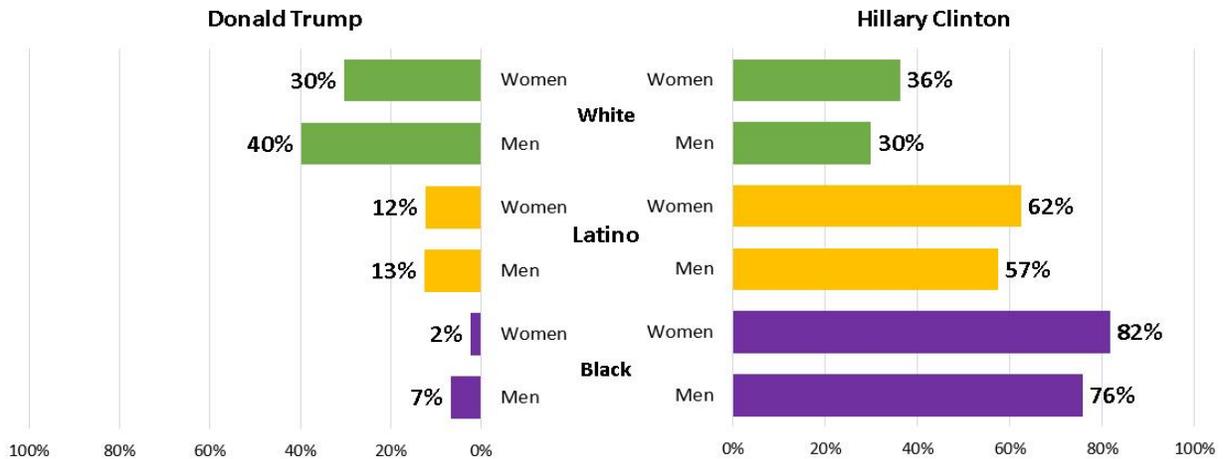
³ This figure includes those who did not say they were “extremely” or “very likely” to vote on November 8.

On the other hand, among Black Millennials, 80% support Clinton and only 4% support Trump (4% Johnson, 5% Green Party nominee Jill Stein, and 7% "other"⁴). Latinos also prefer Clinton, with 60% supporting her and 12% favoring Trump (10% Johnson, 7% Stein, and 10% other). Within each racial and ethnic subgroup, White and African-American men tend to support Trump more than their female counterparts.

The racial divide is also clear in the racial composition of each candidate's supporters. Clinton's support base is just 40% non-Hispanic White, compared to 84% of Trump's supporters. The racial and ethnic composition of Millennial Clinton supporters resembles the projected [U.S. population demographic of 2050](#), while Millennial Trump supporters match the [racial composition of the current senior population](#), 85% of whom are non-Hispanic Whites.



Candidate Support among Millennials



Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Pre-election poll

These stark differences also manifest in how Millennials view different institutions. Young people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds report varying levels of trust in the President (56% among African Americans, 45% among Latinos, and 35% among Whites), the police (63% among Whites, 47% among Latinos, and 23% among African Americans), and the military (60% among Whites, 44% among African Americans, and 43% among Latinos).⁵ The differences are less stark for Congress, state government and the Republican Party, where trust is generally low among all Millennials.

These differences are additionally reflected in self-reported support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Among Millennials, 68% of African Americans support it or consider themselves part of it, compared to 31% of Latinos and only 21% of Whites. In fact, more White Millennials (33%)

⁴ The respondents who chose the "other" option were asked to explain their answers. Among likely voters, many of those who responded "other" said they had not decided whom to vote for yet, and some expressed their ongoing dissent from the major party candidates by writing "Bernie Sanders" or "Not Trump, not Clinton." When we include respondents who were not at least "very likely" to vote, the proportion of "other" gets bigger, and a majority of respondents who chose "other," and were not sure about voting, wrote in "Bernie Sanders."

⁵ The percentages refer to respondents who answered either "trust somewhat" or "trust completely" for each of these institutions.

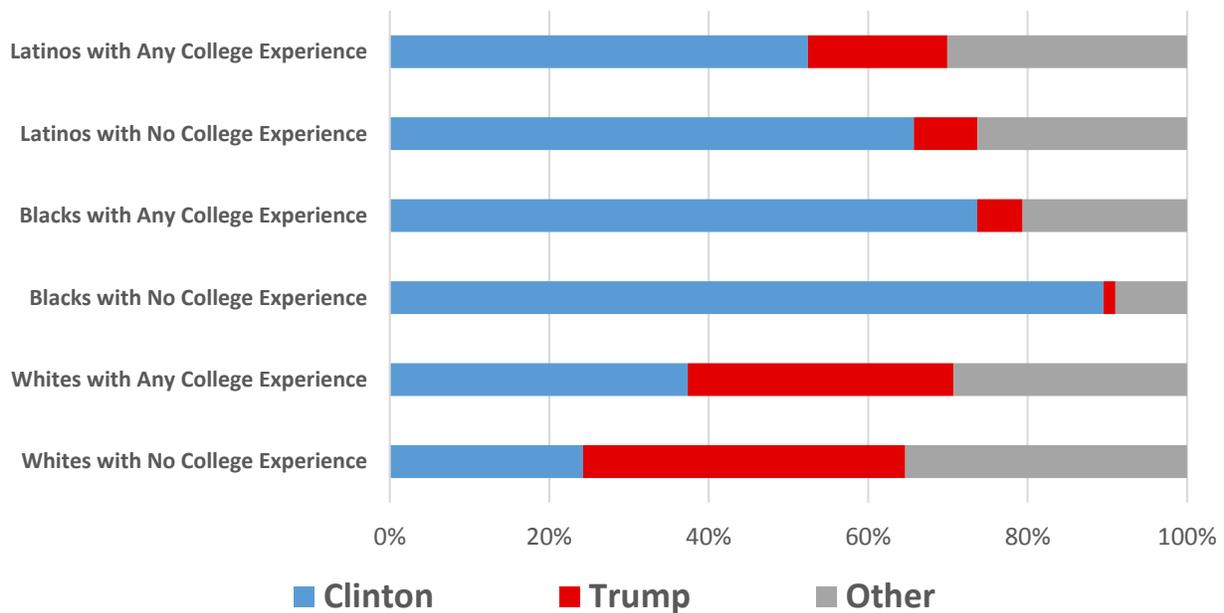
say they oppose Black Lives Matter. These differences are substantial, and persist even when controlling for related factors like educational experience, indicating that the disparities by race cannot be explained by existing educational and socioeconomic inequalities alone.

It is important to note that there are a few issues and movements that Millennials of all racial backgrounds support at similar levels. For example, 35% of Latinos, 34% of African Americans, and 28% of Whites say they supported or were a part of Senator Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign. Additionally, 48% of Latinos, 40% of Whites, and 39% of Black Millennials say they are a part of or support the environmental movement.

These major racial differences in candidate support, trust in institutions, and support for social movements reflect how racialized American politics have become even among Millennials, the country's most diverse and inclusive generation.

In addition to race and ethnicity, educational attainment is a strong predictor of youth candidate choice; though taken as a whole, Millennial Trump and Clinton supporters don't show dramatic disparities in formal educational experience. When we look among Millennials, however, these data suggest that support for Donald Trump is much higher among White Millennials who do not have college experience (40%) than among those with college experience (33%). On the other hand, Black and Hispanic youth with college experience are relatively more likely to support Trump than those without college experience (though a majority of each group support Clinton).

Presidential Candidate Support Among Millennials, by Education and Race



Millennials are also fairly united (60% overall), regardless of educational attainment and race, in believing that this election will have an impact on everyday issues such as schools and police. That belief is especially prevalent among likely voters (67% vs. 46% among Millennials who report being unlikely to vote). Yet overall, only 32% of Millennials believe they "have a legitimate voice

in the political process,” and on that question differences according to race and education do emerge. For example, Black Millennials with college experience were most likely to agree that they have a voice in the process (46%), followed by Black Millennials with no college experience (38%), and Latino Millennials with college experience (37%). Meanwhile, White Millennials with no college experience were the least likely to agree with this statement (25%).

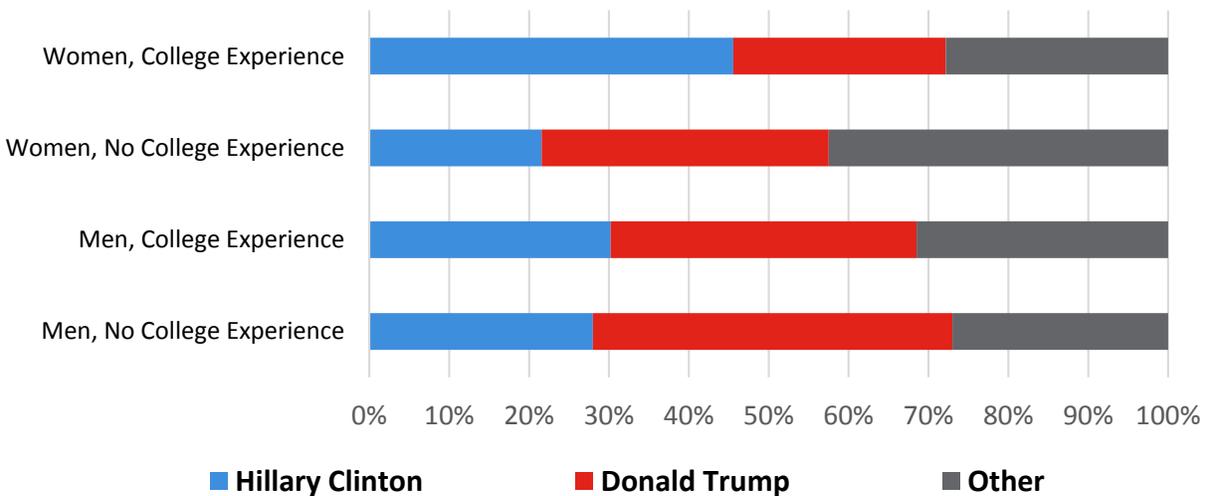
White Millennials: A Battleground

While the Millennial generation is more diverse than older generations, several battleground states have Millennial populations that are predominantly White. These include presidential battlegrounds like Iowa and Ohio, and Senate battlegrounds like Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Indiana, and Missouri. White Millennials make up a large group and their opinions and candidate support vary greatly by gender, educational attainment, religious affiliation, and geography. For this reason, the label “White Millennial” says little about their ideology and vote choice, and candidates and campaigns must consider deeper factors to earn this group’s votes. White Millennials are, in a sense, themselves a “battleground,” and this section focuses on the variations within this group.

White Millennials’ candidate choice varies by formal educational attainment and gender. College experience is associated with far stronger support for Secretary Clinton among White women. In turn, White men with no college experience are the most decidedly pro-Trump group among all Millennials by education and gender, with 45% supporting the Republican nominee.



Candidate Support among White Millennials, by Gender and Education



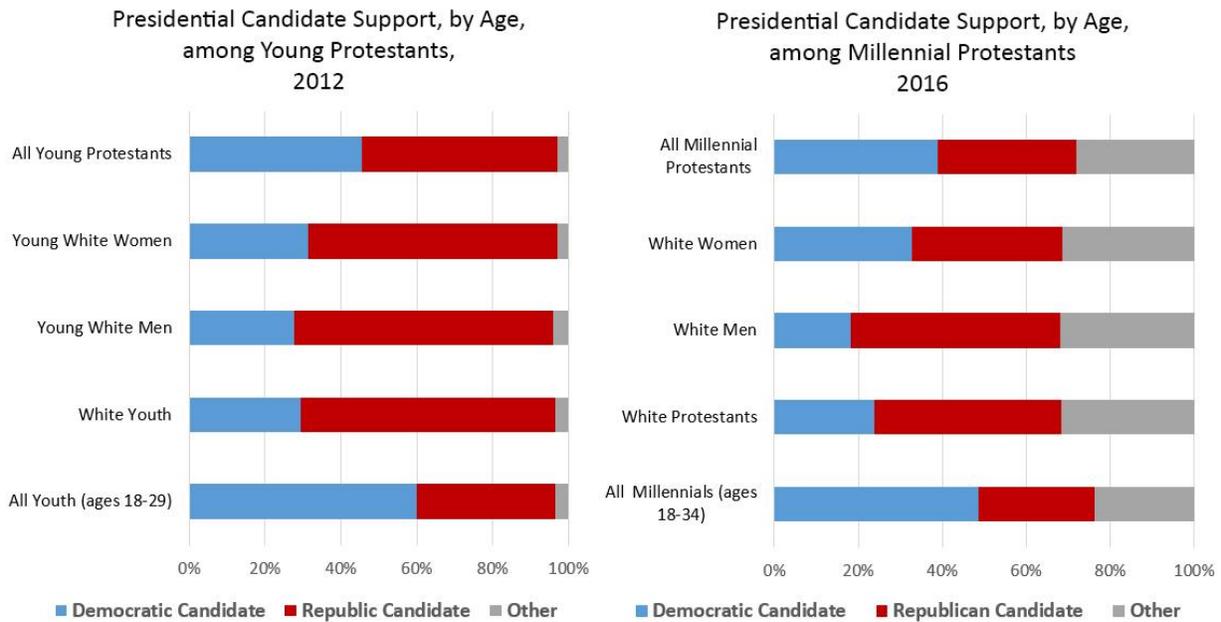
Overall, 40% of Millennial, registered independent men have received some kind of contact while just 18% of Millennial, registered independent women have been contacted. This trend also applies to White Millennials: 43% of independent White men have been contacted, but only 26% independent White women were. This level of targeted outreach directed at unaffiliated voters is likely a unique feature of the 2016 election. Research repeatedly finds that registered voters who are affiliated with a major party receive significantly more attention from parties and campaigns. While Millennial women registered as Democrats are also contacted at a similar

rate (39% across all racial and ethnic groups combined; 38% among Whites only), this is expected. The increase in attention to White, unaffiliated Millennial men suggests that they're an especially critical constituency in this election.

White Protestant⁶ Millennials' Support, for Trump and Ideology, Differ by Gender

Another developing trend concerns differences in candidate support by white Evangelical or Protestant Christian youth (referred to as "Protestants" hereafter). Young white Protestants have been a powerful conservative-leaning voting bloc in the past, but they are by and large choosing not to support the Republican nominee this year.

According to the national exit poll in 2012, 47% of under-30 voters identified as Protestant, and 60% of those voters were white. That year, young white Protestants were almost twice as supportive of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney as the youth electorate overall. In 2016, however, our poll finds white Protestant Millennials, usually a very reliable Republican voting group, are split by gender and are lending less support to the Republican presidential candidate than they did in 2012.



White Protestant Millennials (44%) were more likely to support Trump than all Protestant Millennials (35%). Furthermore, among White Protestants, men were far more likely to support Trump than White Protestant women. White Protestant Millennials' support for Trump is far below the support each group gave Romney, and about one-third of white Protestant women report supporting Hillary Clinton. White Protestant Millennials are also divided ideologically, with 60% of men identifying as conservative (including "lean conservative"), while just 34% of women do so. In short, white Protestants, once a solidly Republican voting bloc, are now split into a predominantly male conservative group and a predominantly female moderate/liberal group.

⁶ This is a demographic question that GfK asks all of their panelists as part of panelist profile. The answer options read: Evangelical or Protestant Christian (Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, Church of Christ).

Additionally, by a large margin, white Protestant men were more likely than white Protestant women to say they have been contacted.

This Year, Gender Really Matters

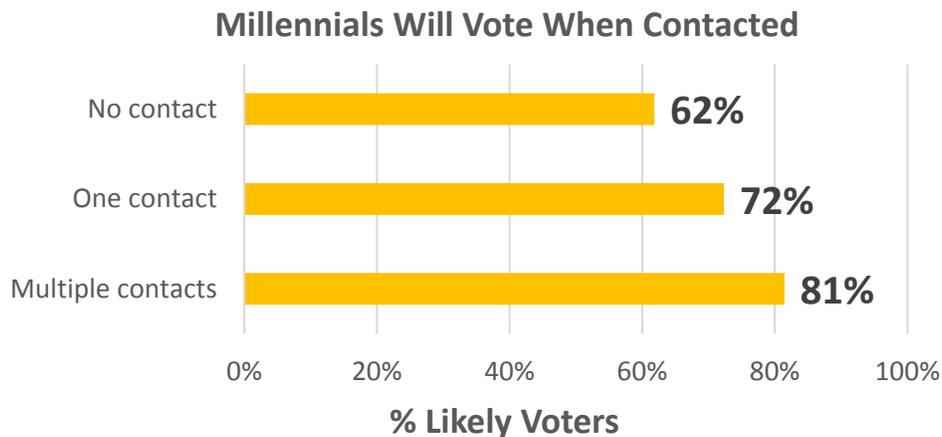
The contrast between the two presidential candidates—one of whom is the first woman to be nominated by a major party, while the other is a man who has made frequent, arguably derogatory comments about women—has triggered more of a gender divide than usual.

Millennial women, regardless of racial or ethnic group, are more likely to support Secretary Clinton than Millennial men. Among White Millennials, Clinton draws stronger support from women than men (36% vs. 30%), whereas support for Trump is far stronger among men than among women (40% vs. 30%).

Millennial Vote Choice, Contact, Voting Intent, and Attention to Presidential Election, by Gender and Race						
Gender and Race		Percentage Supporting Donald Trump	Percentage Supporting Hillary Clinton	Percentage Contacted	Percentage Likely Voters	Percentage Paying Attention to Presidential Election
White	Men	40%	30%	35%	77%	80%
	Women	30%	36%	27%	66%	73%
Black	Men	7%	76%	17%	53%	82%
	Women	2%	82%	42%	70%	78%
Latino	Men	13%	57%	37%	58%	82%
	Women	12%	62%	14%	46%	60%
Total Sample		24%	48%	30%	66%	76%

[Almost three-quarters of Millennials \(70%\) have not heard directly from a campaign](#), and additional analysis shows that gender, along with race, plays a role in whether Millennials have been contacted by a presidential campaign or political party. For example, for white and Latino Millennials, men are more likely to be contacted, but for African American Millennials, women are far more likely to be contacted than their male counterparts. The contact rate ranges from just 14% among Latinas to 42% among African-American women (See Table above).

Our data indicate that Millennials who are contacted are more likely to think they will vote. In fact, Millennial men are more likely to say they will vote than Millennial women across all racial and ethnic groups except among African Americans; young Black women are more likely to say they'll vote than Black men (70% vs. 53%). Millennial White and Latino men are more likely to say they will vote than Millennial White and Latino women by a margin of at least 10 percentage points. This finding is of particular interest, given that the [trend over the past several election cycles](#) has been of young women voting at higher rates than young men.



This tendency is also reflected in the amount of attention that Millennials are paying to the elections. Regardless of race and ethnicity, more Millennial men (80%) are paying attention to the presidential election than Millennial women (72%). In addition, White and Latino Millennial men are also more likely to pay “some” or “a lot” of attention to down-ballot races. For example, 42% of White men and 41% of Latino men are paying attention to Senate races, compared to 24% of White women and 22% of Latinas.

Youth Skeptical about the Political System

In an era of political polarization, unlimited campaign contributions, and a complex and overwhelming media cycle, it is no wonder that Millennials express low levels of trust in various institutions. They also voice a high level of skepticism about the fairness of the election and about how much power they have, especially in relation to the super-wealthy, in determining the future of the country. These attitudes feed directly into concerns about the legitimacy of our democratic system and processes. Millennials who are disconnected from systems and institutions such as colleges, religious congregations, and political parties are more likely to voice these concerns, and in many cases they are also less likely to vote.

Overall, very few Millennials trust political and governmental institutions like Congress (16%), “large corporations” (13%), and major news media (18%). They tend to show more trust in non-political institutions, such as scientific research, police, and the military. Low trust in Congress may partly explain why so few Millennials are interested in the Congressional races in their state.

Many young people question whether they really have the power to help decide the direction of the country, and they believe that elections can be bought and that the political system is broken. For example, only 32% of Millennials think that “people like them” have a legitimate voice in the election, and only 29% feel that they are given a genuine choice in elections “often” or “almost always/always.” Additionally, 80% think that non-establishment candidates

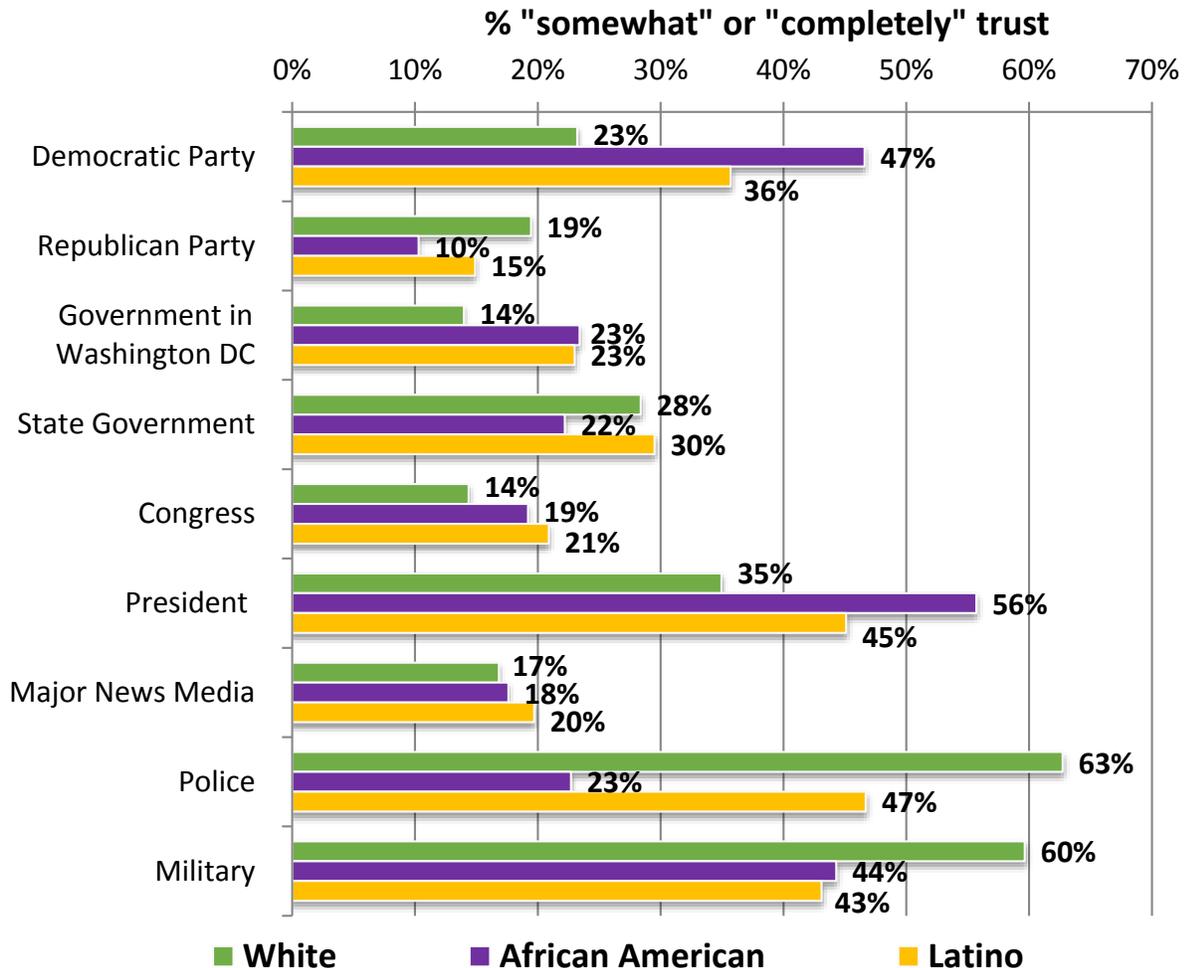
are prevented from running at least "sometimes"—44% think it happens "often" or "always/almost always." Over half of Millennials (53%) believe that the wealthy "buy" elections at least "often." Exactly half believe that journalists provide fair coverage of elections at least "sometimes," but 19% believe this "never" happens.

While Millennials overall express a deep sense of skepticism, they are also divided in which institutions to trust, and in the level of doubt they express about the fairness of key institutions and systems. These differences are most clearly reflected in the presidential candidate that Millennials are choosing to support.

Clinton and Trump Supporters Differ Sharply in Trust

Millennials of different backgrounds express starkly different levels of trust in the police, and those differences are predictive of presidential candidate support. Millennials who trust the police are almost twice as likely to express support for Trump (30%), as those who distrust the police (16%). On the other hand, support for Clinton is stronger among those who distrust the police (51%), than those who do trust the police (44%).

Levels of Trust Among Millennials, By Race and Ethnicity



The level of trust toward police is also connected to Millennials' diagnosis of the problems facing the country. When asked to identify three major dangers, Millennials who trust the police are far more likely to name "foreign terrorism" and "religious extremism" than those who distrust the police, but much less likely to mention "violence against people of color."⁷

Demographics, trust in institutions, and skepticism about the fairness of the media and electoral process all play intricate roles in shaping young people's choice of candidates. Taken as a whole, they illustrate how far apart Millennials can be in their worldviews and concerns.

For example, Trump supporters are more likely than Clinton supporters to believe that electoral fraud occurs: 73% believe that people vote multiple times or that ineligible people vote at least "sometimes," compared to 41% among Clinton supporters. Trump supporters are also deeply distrustful of the media: 63% believe the media's election coverage is "never" or "rarely" fair, compared to just 31% of Clinton supporters. Additionally, Trump supporters are also less trusting than Clinton supporters of people who are different from them, such as those with a different religion, ethnicity, or nationality.

On the other hand, Clinton supporters are more likely to trust the federal government, Congress, and state government; 59% trust the President, while 18% of Trump supporters do. They are also more likely than Trump supporters to trust colleges and universities (54% vs. 34%), but less likely to trust the military.

Conclusion and Implications

Our initial report from our poll focusing on the levels of campaign contact targeting Millennials revealed worrisome disparities and underscored the need to strengthen youth outreach efforts ahead of Election Day. This report highlights the importance of what we do, collectively, *after* Election Day.

On the one hand, our findings reveal a portrait of an extremely diverse yet polarized generation. We found evidence of racial, gender, and ideological divides, as represented in the candidate Millennials intend to support as well as in general attitudes about trust in institutions, and in different groups of people. Hillary Clinton's Millennial supporters appear to be a racially diverse, and relatively engaged and trusting group of Millennials who believe in a better future, even though many of them [still have reservations about their candidate](#). On the other hand, the much smaller but more energized group of Millennial Trump supporters is overwhelmingly White, male-dominant, and expresses a deep sense of mistrust toward people whose backgrounds differ from their own and toward institutions that they deem out of touch, such as colleges and universities and the federal government.

Given that, for over 16 million young people, this is the first presidential election in which they can cast a ballot, the vitriol and polarization that has dominated this election cycle could have broad negative impacts on civic engagement for years to come. The nominating contests and the presidential election have helped to reveal deep fissures that were not visible to many Americans before; divisions that have left many wondering how the country can come together

⁷ This question was worded as "Below is list of possible dangers in the world. Which THREE of the following do you think are the most serious dangers to the future of the United States?" The options were: "nationalism," "prejudice against people of different ethnicities," "religious extremism," "climate change," "overreliance on technology," "a select few having too much power," "foreign terrorism," "political gridlock in Washington," "violence against people of color," "corruption," and "rise of atheism."

again. By laying bare the connections between outreach, trust, and political engagement, our data point to one possible answer to that question: Strengthening trust in civic and political and promoting a sense of empowerment across youth of all backgrounds is key to securing the health of our democracy.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University.

Learn more at www.civicyouth.org

