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Among White Millennials, Feelings of Economic and Social Vulnerability were Significant Predictors of Support for Trump

The findings indicate that any explanation of the election should consider a variety of factors connected to attitudes on race, gender, and the economy

CHICAGO, Dec. 6, 2016—Two new [GenForward](#) surveys released today show that young white adults' beliefs about social and economic vulnerability were strong predictors of their support for Donald Trump. Black Youth Project researchers Cathy Cohen, Matt Luttig, and Jon Rogowski created a new measure of white vulnerability. Using this measure, they found that young whites who felt most vulnerable favored Trump (52 percent) to Hillary Clinton (20 percent). In contrast, whites who felt least vulnerable were more likely to support Clinton (43 percent) over Trump (6 percent). Moreover, the results suggest that explanations of the election need to consider racial resentment, sexism, and economic anxiety together as components of a larger sense of vulnerability in today's increasingly racially and ethnically diverse and economically competitive society.

The GenForward survey from the [Black Youth Project](#) at the University of Chicago with [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) examines how young people feel about the 2016 presidential campaign and provides comprehensive data on how young people perceive the candidates.

"For whites, feelings of vulnerability stood out as a prominent factor driving support for Donald Trump," said Cathy Cohen, a professor of political science and founder of the Black Youth Project and GenForward survey at the University of Chicago. "We confirmed that contrary to some pundits who make a distinction between president-elect Trump's economic message and his statements about race, young whites often hear messages of economic vulnerability through the lens of race and gender."

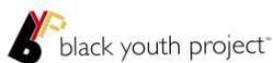
The two GenForward surveys conducted in October also highlight several other factors related to young adults' support for the presidential candidates.

Feeling politically alienated was tied to lower support for Clinton with Asian Americans and Latino/as. For example, 72 percent of Latino/as who felt least politically alienated supported Clinton compared with 44 percent of Latino/as who felt most politically alienated.

At the same time, perceptions that the country was making progress on political equality were linked with greater support for Clinton among African Americans and whites. Positive feelings toward President Barack Obama were also associated with support for Clinton among young adults of all racial and ethnic groups.

Some of the key findings from the two nationally representative surveys of young people age 18-30 are:

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- While many analysts have focused separately on the roles of economic anxiety, racial resentment, or modern sexism in explaining the Trump vote, our findings suggest these factors were closely related and intersect. Based on a new measure we created to assess these multiple factors, we find that Trump’s appeal is not exclusively rooted in economic populism or white nationalism or even modern sexism, but is a blend of all three that appears to manifest in a feeling among some whites—even those who are Millennials—of economic and social vulnerability.
- Specifically, white individuals with the highest levels of perceived white vulnerability were 46 percentage points more likely to support Trump than individuals with the lowest levels of white vulnerability.
- Regarding support for Clinton, we find across all racial and ethnic groups that warm or positive feelings toward Obama were linked to greater support for Clinton.
- Young Asian Americans and Latino/as who felt most politically alienated were less likely to support Clinton than those who felt least alienated.
- Perceptions that the country was moving toward greater political equality were associated with increased support for Clinton among young African Americans and whites.

“The six GenForward surveys conducted in the months leading up the presidential election highlight many important racial and ethnic differences in young people’s views about the candidates, campaigns, and public policies,” said Trevor Thompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “In the months ahead, it will be critical to track whether and how young people’s attitudes evolve under a new presidential administration.”

About the Surveys

Data come from GenForward, a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The first survey was with a nationally representative sample of 1,832 adults age 18-30 years old. Interviews were completed online and using landlines and cell phones October 1-14, 2016. Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points.

The second survey was with a nationally representative sample of 1,843 adults age 18-30 years old. Interviews were completed online and using landlines and cell phones from October 20 to November 3, 2016. Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.7 percentage points.

More information about the survey and reports can be found at www.GenForwardSurvey.com.

The proper description of the survey’s authorship is as follows: GenForward is a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About the Black Youth Project

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The Black Youth Project (BYP) began as a national survey research project led by Dr. Cathy Cohen in 2005 and has since grown into an organization committed to: 1) producing research about the ideas, attitudes, decision-making, and lived experiences of youth and young adults, especially from communities of color, 2) amplifying the perspectives of young people daily without censorship or control via the BYP website, and 3) providing resources to encourage civic engagement and media literacy among youth and young adults.

BYP has both developed and fielded new national surveys that provide insight into the concerns of young Americans, detailing their policy preferences, participatory practices, and views about their communities and the country. Recent media citations include MSNBC, Politico, CNN, National Public Radio, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, The Associated Press, and Reuters.

<http://blackyouthproject.com>

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

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