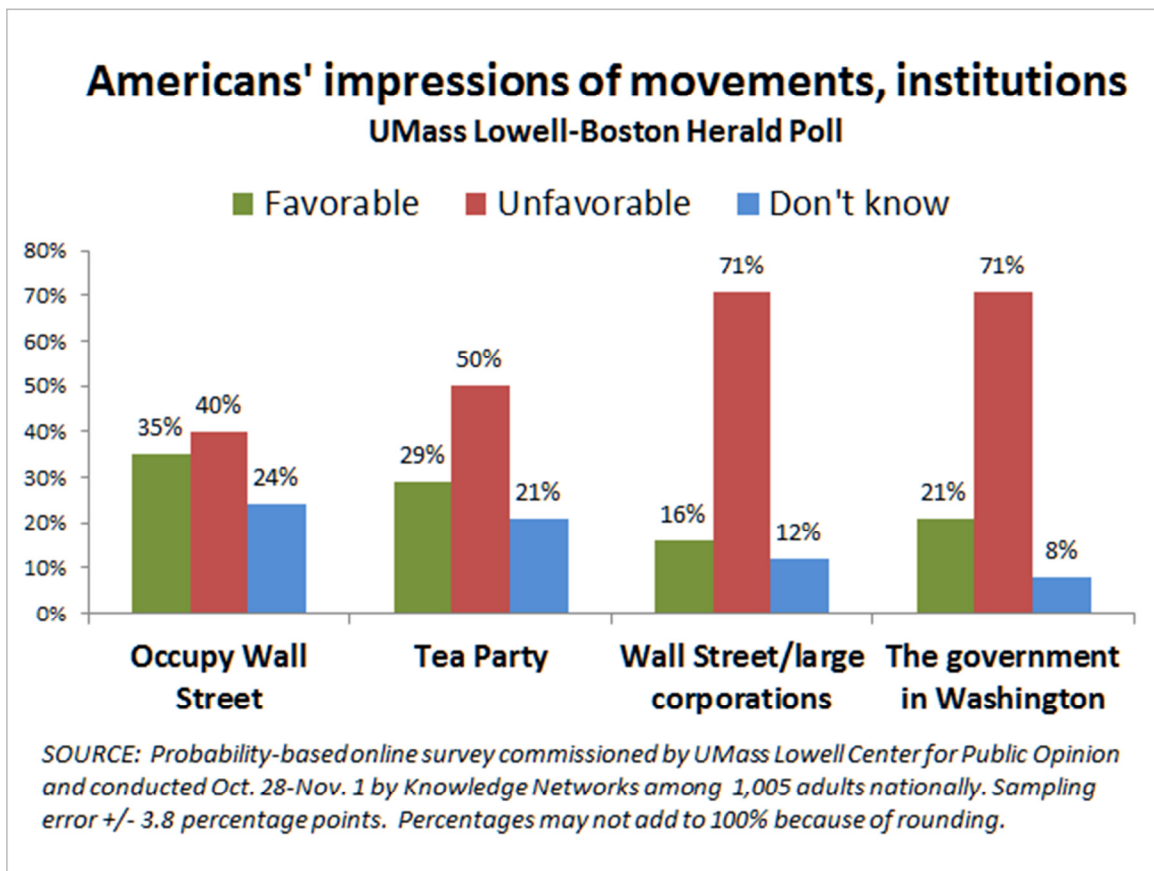


Poll: Some Common Ground Between Occupy, Tea Party

Backers of Opposing Groups Largely Share Dislike of Government, Corporations

Slightly more Americans view the Occupy Wall Street movement unfavorably than favorably, while perceptions are more sharply negative against the Tea Party, according to a new UMass Lowell-Boston Herald national poll. At the same time, the survey finds that Americans with positive impressions of each movement – despite little overlap and vast ideological differences between them – largely find common ground in thinking that Wall Street and political action committees have too much political influence while people who are not wealthy have too little.

In a representative sampling of 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov.1, 35 percent have a favorable impression of Occupy Wall Street and 40 percent unfavorable, compared to 29 percent favorable and 50 percent unfavorable toward the Tea Party. Ten percent view both movements favorably and 22 percent have unfavorable impressions of both; 24 percent gave no opinion about Occupy Wall Street, 21 percent about the Tea Party. Impressions of big business and the government in Washington were far more negative:



Intensity of opinion is more negative against the Tea Party, which arose in early 2009 mainly in response to federal actions on the economy and health care and has had notable impact on American electoral politics, than against the newer Occupy Wall Street movement. In all, strongly unfavorable views outnumber strongly favorable opinions of the Tea Party by 3-to-1 (31 percent to 10 percent); 21 percent have a strongly favorable impression and 13 percent strongly unfavorable of Occupy Wall Street.

Overall, what is your impression of:

	FAVORABLE			UNFAVORABLE			Don't know
	<i>NET</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>NET</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	
The Occupy Wall Street movement	35%	13%	23%	40%	20%	21%	24%
The Tea Party movement	29%	10%	19%	50%	19%	31%	21%
Wall Street and large corporations	16%	1%	15%	71%	33%	38%	12%
The government in Washington	21%	2%	19%	71%	35%	36%	8%

SOURCE: UMass Lowell-Boston Herald poll, 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2011. Probability-based online poll conducted by Knowledge Networks. Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The poll was commissioned by the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion in advance of a Nov. 8 student forum on the Occupy Wall Street movement, which began with street protests in New York City on Sept. 17 mainly against wealth inequality. The protests since have spread to many other cities, including Boston and elsewhere in Massachusetts.

Earlier national polls have found initial assessments of Occupy Wall Street to be at least slightly more positive than negative. It is impossible to know whether the new UMass Lowell poll – which began a few days after widely broadcast images of street clashes in Oakland after police raided an Occupy encampment – has detected a shift in opinion about the movement. There are many other possible causes for the differences, including poll methods – this survey was conducted online (by Knowledge Networks of Palo Alto, Calif., among a probability-based sample of Americans) while earlier polls were done by telephone with live interviewers.

Other polls have asked whether respondents “support or oppose” the Occupy movement, agree or disagree with its goals, and other wording variations, some of which omit the Occupy name. There are early indications that more Americans sympathize with the movement’s broad views, particularly on wealth inequality, than its tactics; the UML-Herald poll question did not make this distinction but asked for an overall favorable or unfavorable impression. Different wordings and interviewing practices also prompt widely varying numbers of respondents to offer no opinion.

The UML-Herald poll also found that 74 percent of Americans say people who are not wealthy have too little influence on American politics today, while at least as many said political action committees (74 percent) and Wall Street and large corporations (80%) have too much influence. Those views were shared by large majorities of those with positive views of Occupy Wall Street (82 percent) or the Tea Party (67 percent). Views of the political influence of labor unions split more evenly and are strongly related to party identification and ideology.

Generally speaking, how much influence would you say the following have on American politics today:

	Too little influence	About the right amount	Too much influence
People who are not wealthy	74%	15%	9%
Labor unions	22%	38%	39%
Political action committees, which finance political campaigns	7%	19%	74%
Wall Street and large corporations	4%	15%	80%

SOURCE: UMass Lowell-Boston Herald poll, 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2011.

Both protest movements have sprung up in a society that is deeply divided over the role of government: 51% of Americans say government should do more to solve problems, 48% say it's doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals. Nearly two-thirds, 64 percent, of those who view Occupy Wall Street favorably say government should do more to solve problems, while 81 percent with a positive impression of the Tea Party saying government is doing too much.

Yet large majorities of both groups share negative views of Wall Street and large corporations and of the government in Washington:

Overall, what is your impression of:

	Wall Street and large corporations: UNFAVORABLE			The government in Washington: UNFAVORABLE		
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat
Occupy Wall Street: FAVORABLE	85%	56%	28%	72%	32%	40%
Tea Party: FAVORABLE	64%	30%	34%	86%	56%	29%

SOURCE: UMass Lowell-Boston Herald poll, 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2011.

Other key findings:

DEMOGRAPHICS: As with so much else in American politics, partisanship and ideology are key drivers of opinion about Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party, with liberals and Democrats most strongly favoring the former (strong Democrats by 49 percent favorable to 34 percent unfavorable) and conservatives and Republicans most solidly behind the latter (strong Republicans by 64 percent favorable to 20 percent unfavorable).

Older people view the Tea Party more positively, with favorability peaking at 44 percent among those age 65-74; they're also more Republican these days. And the youngest people are most positive about the Occupy movement, with favorability peaking at 44 percent among those age 18-24 (though it's 43 percent among people age 55-64).

Curiously, lower-income voters are least favorable toward Occupy Wall Street; among adults with less than \$50,000 in household income last year, 28 percent view the movement positively and 42 percent negatively, while views are split about evenly among those who make more than \$100,000 a year (41 percent favorable, 43 percent unfavorable). Unfavorable views outnumber favorable opinions of the Tea Party pretty evenly across the income spectrum.

Annual household income	OCCUPY WALL STREET			TEA PARTY		
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfav.</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfav.</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
< \$50k	28%	42%	30%	27%	45%	28%
\$50-100k	35%	39%	26%	26%	50%	24%
\$100k+	41%	43%	16%	34%	55%	11%

SOURCE: UMass Lowell-Boston Herald poll, 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2011.

There isn't much difference in perceptions of the Occupy movement by employment status, though – 37 percent favorable among those who are employed, 38 percent among the unemployed and 33 percent among those who are retired, disabled or otherwise not looking for work. But the unemployed are less positive about the Tea Party (16 percent favorable) than those who are employed (27 percent) or retired or otherwise not looking for work (35 percent).

Non-whites view Occupy Wall Street more positively, and the Tea Party far more negatively, than whites do:

Race/ ethnicity	OCCUPY WALL STREET			TEA PARTY		
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfav.</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfav.</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
White	32%	44%	23%	33%	47%	20%
Non-white	42%	32%	26%	19%	56%	25%

SOURCE: UMass Lowell-Boston Herald poll, 1,005 adults nationally Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2011.

By region, positive sentiment about Occupy Wall Street peaks in the Northeast, at 43% (with 36% unfavorable), and is lowest in the South, 31% (vs 45% unfavorable). Favorable views of the Tea Party don't differ as much by region but peaks in the South, at 32%.

Registered voters are less apt to answer "don't know" when asked to rate each movement – and as a result they're more likely than non-voters to give both favorable and unfavorable marks to each. There's not much difference in the balance of opinion toward Occupy and the Tea Party between registered voters and other Americans, though.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Respondents to this survey also provided information about themselves in a previous poll by Knowledge Networks. Among questions they answered was whether they've engaged in a variety of civic or political activities – attending a protest or rally, contacting a government official, volunteering for or giving money to a presidential or other political campaign, writing a letter to the editor or commenting about politics on the Internet.

Most of activities these got no more than 10 percent "yes" but 34 percent said they'd done at least one of them in the prior 12 months. As with being registered to vote, people who are more civically engaged are less likely to say "don't know" when asked their views of Occupy and the Tea Party – and they're more positive towards Occupy (43 percent favorable, 40% unfavorable, compared to 31 percent/41 percent among those who are less engaged civically). Civic engagement made little difference in the balance of views about the Tea Party.

WHAT THEY THINK OF EACH OTHER: There seems to be somewhat less antipathy toward Occupy Wall Street among those who view the Tea Party positively (55 percent see OWS unfavorably) than vice-versa (65 percent of OWS backers have an unfavorable impression of the Tea Party, including 51% whose views are strongly unfavorable).

IDEOLOGY - Among those who view the Occupy movement favorably, 33% say that in general they'd describe their political views as liberal (including 6% very liberal), 48% moderate and 30% conservative. Among those favorably inclined toward the Tea Party, 64% call themselves

conservative (including 23% very conservative). For comparison, this survey found that among all Americans, 30% consider themselves conservative, 48% moderate and 22% liberal.

This survey included an experiment in which half the sample was asked alternative questions about ideology: "On social issues such as gay marriage and abortion," 36% of all Americans call themselves liberal, 30% moderate and 33% conservative; "on fiscal issues such as taxes and spending," 18% are liberal, 44% moderate and 37% conservative.

- Among those who view the Occupy movement favorably, a plurality is moderate on fiscal issues (43%, vs. 31% liberal and 26% conservative) while half call themselves liberal on social issues (51%, vs. 22% moderate and 27% conservative).
- Those favorably inclined toward the Tea Party are far more uniformly conservative - 73% on fiscal issues (vs. 23% moderate and 4% liberal), 67% on social issues (vs. 22% moderate and 11% liberal).

- **Analysis by Mike Mokrzycki for UMass Lowell**