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UMass Lowell/Odyssey Millennials Poll

October 10-13, 2016

N=1247 American Adults age 18-35; 966 Registered Voters; 680 Likely Voters

Credibility Intervals – All +/-3.2%; RVs +/-3.6%; LVs +/- 4.3%

See <http://uml.edu/polls> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

HIGHLIGHTS

Millennials Poll – Scope of the Project

This collaboration is the first in what will be a series of polls about the attitudes of Millennials co-sponsored by the [UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion](#) and [Odyssey](#).

The people we interact with every day, either on campus or online, are primarily “millennials” – those ranging in age from 18 to 35. We have been listening to them and we think you should hear what they have to say. Here, we highlight several of the important findings from our inaugural Millennials Poll.

UMass Lowell is a national research university located on a high-energy campus in the heart of a global community. The university offers its more than 17,500 students bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in business, education, engineering, fine arts, health, humanities, sciences and social sciences. UMass Lowell delivers high-quality educational programs, vigorous hands-on learning and personal attention from leading faculty and staff, all of which prepare graduates to be ready for work, for life and for all the world offers.

Odyssey democratizes content to bring new, meaningful ideas to the world. Launched in 2014, the social media platform empowers more than 14,000 local, millennial creators to express what's important to them and share it organically across their own social networks. As a result, Odyssey exposes its readers—more than 30 million strong and growing rapidly—to broader, more honest perspectives on topics they care about. For advertisers, that means building relationships with more engaged audiences. For more information, visit <http://www.theodysseyonline.com>.



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Presidential Horserace Analysis

By a 3 to 1 margin, likely millennial voters prefer Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump in the race for President of the United States. Among likely voters, Clinton leads 66% to Trump's 22% with 12% undecided. When third-party candidates are added to the mix, Clinton takes 61%, Trump stays at 22%, Libertarian Gary Johnson takes 9%, Green Party candidate Jill Stein gets 5%, and only 3% remain undecided. Clinton does best among the likely voter sample, indicating that those most likely to vote are breaking for Clinton. Among those unlikely to vote, however, only a little over half of voters would choose one of the two major-party candidates (39% Clinton and 19% Trump). The other 41% of voters would pick Johnson (12%) or Stein (5%), with 25% undecided. Historically, research has shown that voter turnout rates are among the lowest of any age group for young voters¹ and a key theme in this report is that many millennials are not happy with their choices in this election.

When examining likely voters, we find that most minds are made up – 87% of Clinton voters and 81% of Trump voters say that they have made up their mind on who they will vote for on Election Day. Further, about two-thirds of voters report positive rather than negative reasons for their vote choice: 66% of Clinton supporters say that their vote is for Clinton, rather than against Trump, and 59% of Trump supporters say they are voting for Trump rather than against Clinton.

As has been reported widely in other surveys, one of Trump's critical problems is that he is experiencing a great deal of attrition from Republicans. Only 68% of Republican millennials express an intent to vote for Trump with 16% saying they will vote for Clinton, 9% Johnson and 1% Stein. Clinton's partisan loyalty is 10 points higher, with 78% of Democratic millennials saying they will vote for their party's nominee. But an even bigger problem for Trump lies in millennial party identification. Among registered voters, 61% of millennials are Democrats (includes Independents who lean Democratic) and 23% are Republicans (including leaners), with the remaining 15% identifying as purely Independent or something else. This gap in party identification among young people, which appears to have started in 2008, seems to persist. Broken down by age, 58% of 18- to 24-year-olds, 61% of 25- to 29-year-olds and 64% of 30-to 35-year-olds identify as Democrats. To the extent that party identification is something acquired at a young age that persists throughout the life cycle, the GOP has a serious electoral problem with millennials.

Respondents in our survey were also queried with two hypothetical electoral scenarios. First, we asked respondents who they would vote for if Bernie Sanders and not Hillary Clinton were the Democratic candidate for President. In the head-to-head race, Sanders leads Trump 67% to 23% among likely millennial voters, with 10% undecided. Note that this is the exact same margin by which Clinton leads Trump in the head-to-head matchup among likely voters. However, among those surveyed who were identified as "unlikely voters," we find a markedly different story. Clinton leads Trump 42% to 21% among unlikely voters, with 37% undecided; however, Sanders leads Trump among this same group 63% to 15%, with 22% undecided. It is unclear to what extent some millennials have decided not to vote

¹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/16/millennials-match-baby-boomers-as-largest-generation-in-u-s-electorate-but-will-they-vote/>



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because Sanders is not on the ticket, but it is clear that among Sanders supporters who intend to vote, their votes are overwhelmingly going to Hillary Clinton and not to Donald Trump.

Perhaps just as interesting is when respondents were asked who they would vote for if the candidates were Hillary Clinton and Mike Pence. Clinton leads Pence among likely voters 63% to 21%, a margin that is almost identical to her lead over Trump. What all of this says is that regardless of who the candidates are, the preferences of millennial voters are structured by party identification and millennials are identifying as Democrats by nearly a 3-to-1 margin, dating back until at least 2000, when the oldest respondents in our survey could vote for the first time.

Candidate Characteristics

Millennials do not like Donald Trump, but they are relatively lukewarm to Hillary Clinton as well.

Trump is viewed favorably by only 25% of registered voters in our survey, compared to 72% who view him unfavorably. On candidate qualities (we asked respondents to rate each candidate on 12 characteristics including honesty, level-headedness, leadership, qualifications, intelligence, experience, takes responsibility for mistakes, would bring change, etc.), Trump does no better than 35% on any single rating. Only 19% view him as level-headed, 20% think he has the right kind of experience to be President, and 23% think he “cares about people like you.” He’s also viewed by large majorities as dishonest, lacking leadership and someone who would not bring the right kind of change to the country.

All but 8% of likely voters (15% of all millennials) have heard the controversial remarks made by Trump in a recently leaked tape from an “Access Hollywood” bus. Almost half (46%) of millennials (56% of likely voters) have heard/seen the conversation, and 41% say it makes them less likely to support Trump. Interestingly, 11% of respondents say hearing the tape makes them more likely to support Trump, including 18% of white men.

Most telling, 66% of all millennials (65% of RVs; 63% of LVs) think that Trump should drop out of the Presidential race. This includes one third (33%) of Republicans identifiers and 43% who are ideologically conservative!

While Trump is viewed very negatively by millennials on every metric that was measured in this survey, Hillary Clinton is a liked, but not a well-liked alternative. Most national polls have Clinton’s approval rating at around 40% and Clinton is viewed favorably by 56% of millennial registered voters. Her approval rating is just 1 point above former President Clinton’s (55%), but falls well short of the approval rating of both Bernie Sanders (73% favorable) and Barack Obama (71% favorable).

On candidate characteristics, her biggest liability is her honesty; only 36% say she is honest, 43% say she “means what she says and says what she means” and 46% say “she takes responsibility for her mistakes.” Millennial registered voters see many virtues in Clinton: 71% say she is intelligent (compared to 35% for Trump), 67% say she has the right experience to be President (compared to 20% for Trump), 60% say she is level-headed (compared to 19% for Trump) and 60% say she has good leadership skills (compared to 33% for Trump). But millennials who overwhelmingly support her in this election are split



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on whether she cares about people like you (55% yes to 45% no) and whether she would bring the right kind of change to the country (51% yes to 49% no).

To get at whether the preference for Clinton was seen as a vote for the “lesser of two evils,” we asked voters to rank order their preference for five different outcomes: (1) a Clinton Presidency, (2) a Trump Presidency, (3) Obama appointing himself to a life term as President, (4) A giant meteor strikes the earth and extinguishes all human life and (5) the President is selected by a random lottery from among all U.S. citizens. Clinton gets the plurality of first choice votes, with 33%, followed closely by a life term for Obama at 27%. Trump comes in at third with 16%, while equal numbers (12% respectively) prefer a giant meteor and a random lottery.

In terms of pairwise comparisons, 39% of millennials prefer that Obama serve a life term as President rather than have either a Clinton or Trump Presidency, 26% prefer a random lottery to either serving as President, and 23% (nearly 1 in 4!) prefer a giant meteor and the extinguishing of human life to either a Clinton or Trump Presidency. Majorities prefer a random lottery (67%), a lifetime Obama Presidency (66%) and a giant meteor (55%) to a Trump Presidency. A majority even prefers that Obama serve a life term as President (51%) to a Clinton Presidency, while 39% prefer a lottery election and 34% prefer a giant meteor to a Clinton Presidency.

We do not take our respondents at their word that they are earnestly interested in seeing the world end, but we do take their willingness to rank two Constitutional crises and a giant meteor ahead of these two candidates with startlingly frequency as a sign of displeasure and disaffection with the candidates and the election of 2016.

Policy Attitudes

Respondents in our survey were asked several policy attitudes ranging from abortion to health insurance, immigration, political correctness, police shootings and marijuana. We find split opinions, with large numbers of individuals placing themselves in the middle on a seven-point scale. For instance, 41% of respondents said that government insurance should cover all medical expenses compared to 37% that said private insurance should cover medical expenses; 22% were ambivalent or undecided. Interestingly, 30% said that the number of immigrants should be increased, 41% said the number of immigrants should be decreased and 29% place themselves in the middle as undecided or unsure. Given that this has been such a central part of Donald Trump’s campaign, it’s clear that his tenor and style are affecting his potential to attract young voters, perhaps more of whom agree with him on the issue of immigration from a policy perspective, but not from a rhetorical perspective. However, on seven policy questions, the clear result is a great degree of uncertainty and ambivalence among millennials. The only issue that a clear majority of 18- to 35-year-olds agree on is supporting the legalization and usage of recreational marijuana use (58%).

One of the things that this points to is that millennials are extremely partisan, but not necessarily ideological. On the traditional ideology scale, 37% identify as liberal or slightly liberal, 46% identify as moderate and 17% identify as conservative or slightly conservative. These numbers are predictably higher among likely voters: 49% liberal, 34% moderate and 17% conservative. Interestingly, we also see



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that millennials are at least familiar and identify themselves with one or more non-traditional ideological movements. 73% of likely voters in the sample identify themselves as a progressive, 34% identify with the alt-right, and 23% identify with the Tea Party. This is consistent with other evidence showing that, even among self-identified conservatives, people who identify with the Tea Party tend to be older Americans. While the alt-right is clearly more popular with millennials than the Tea Party, there are a number of people in the sample who identified themselves as both alt-right and progressive, suggesting that non-traditional ideological labels lack consistent meaning among millennials.

Social and Political Trust

Trust in government institutions overall is low, but millennials have higher levels of trust in the parts of government with which they are most likely to have personal experience. Of the 25 institutions we asked about, the only government institutions or groups that a majority of millennials say they can trust “most of the time” or “just about always” were teachers, universities, the military, police, and fire departments. The only non-governmental institution that received a similar majority was Google.

In addition to their distrust of government, millennials score very low on indicators of social trust or trust in others, especially strangers. Social trust is often talked about in academia as relating to social capital, and being an important building block of a well-functioning society. Millennials do not believe you can be too careful in dealing with others (58%), think that people are mostly looking out for themselves (55%) and that most people would take advantage if they got the chance (70%).

It remains to be seen if these low levels of social and political trust have been precipitated by the tone, tenor and utterly bizarre 2016 Presidential Election, but for now, we will call it a plausibility.

Millennials, Diversity and Race

Millennials, as a group, are more racially and ethnically diverse than the rest of the population. The 2016 Current Population Survey estimates that 56% of 18- to 35-year-olds are white (not Hispanic), 21% are Hispanic (any race), 13% are black, and 10% are another race or identify with multiple races.

Our survey asked a number of questions that deal with issues of race, including about how various political and social institutions treat blacks as compared to whites, as well questions about affirmative action, and feelings towards Colin Kaepernick, who has been engaged in a national anthem protest throughout the 2016 NFL season in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Few respondents see institutions and groups as treating whites better than blacks. However, the interesting question breakdowns are between those who say that various institutions treat whites better than blacks as opposed to treating them about the same. For instance, with regards to the federal government, 46% of all millennials say that the federal government treats whites better than blacks, compared to 44% who say the federal government treats them about the same. In contrast, among white respondents, 49% say that whites and black are treated the same while 38% say that the government treats whites better than blacks. But among non-white respondents, 37% say that whites and blacks are treated the same while 55% say that whites are treated better than blacks. These racial disparities are evident throughout question responses on state government, local government, police, landlords and notably, the Republican party. This indicates very



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different perspective on racial discrimination between white and non-white millennials. In a similar vein, Colin Kaepernick, the quarterback from the San Francisco 49ers who has been kneeling rather than standing during the playing of the National Anthem before games, is disliked by 46% of whites compared to only 21% of blacks. Indeed, the group that dislikes Kaepernick the most are Trump voters – 58% of them indicate dislike for Kaepernick, including 32% who dislike Kaepernick “a lot.” Finally, on the question of affirmative action and employment, 53% of white millennials indicate that it is likely that whites will be unable to find a job because employers are hiring minority job candidates instead.