



black youth project

Black Millennials In America



**Documenting the experiences,
voices and political future of young
Black Americans**

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For 10 years, the Black Youth Project, 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 in this study of Black millennials.

This report, “Black Millennials in America,” reflects our commitment to knowledge, voice and action. We create knowledge by detailing the real-life experiences of young Black people and identifying how these experiences distinguish them from their peers. We help amplify their voices by providing platforms and opportunities for young people to weigh in on the issues most important to them. We hope the data and findings in this report will contribute to a call to action to bring about change rooted in the ways Black millennials experience contemporary America.

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Who are Black Millennials?

We begin our study of Black millennials with the Pew Research Center's definition of the millennial generation, which includes people between the ages of 18 and 34. Population data from the U.S. Census Bureau project that the "millennial" generation will surpass the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) in population size in 2015. The millennial generation's population increase—to approximately 75.3 million in 2015¹—is due in large part to increasing numbers of immigrants.

We recognize, however, that generational lines are fluid. It is not obvious, for instance, that someone born in 1981 is uniquely "millennial," while someone born in 1980 has had an entirely different set of life experiences. Thus, we focus generally on young people without drawing strong lines in the sand between who is and is not a millennial. This broader approach is of some necessity, as existing data do not always permit comparisons across established generational lines. However, in using a wealth of data that sometimes crosses slightly different age groups, a clear picture emerges, however the generational lines are drawn.

The Pew Research Center describes millennials as "America's most racially diverse generation."² About 40 percent of millennials are non-white, including about 19 percent who identify as Latino or Hispanic, about 13 percent who identify as Black or African American

and about 6 percent identifying as Asian American. Based on immigration and birth rates, people of color are projected to comprise a majority of the millennial generation within several decades. Millennials are also considerably more likely than older generations to identify as LGBT: 6.4 percent of young people ages 18 to 29 identify as LGBT, compared with 3.2 percent of adults between the ages of 30 and 44.

Millennials overwhelmingly live in or near urban areas. Only about 14 percent of millennials live in rural areas, while 54 percent live in suburban areas and 32 percent live in central cities. Millennials also face unique economic challenges. Among millennial households, the median household pre-tax income was \$35,300, or nearly 20 percent lower than the median household income of \$43,900 for young adults in 2001 (adjusted for inflation). Approximately one in five millennials (19.7 percent) lives in poverty, compared with 14.1 percent of young people who lived in poverty in 1980.

Millennials are less connected with traditional institutions than earlier generations. Approximately 29 percent of millennials are religiously unaffiliated, compared with only 21 percent of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and 16 percent of Baby Boomers. Millennials are also marrying at lower rates than earlier generations. About 28 percent of millennials are married, while 38 percent of Generation X and 49

percent of Baby Boomers were married at the same age.

In this report, we move beyond these general characteristics to understand how the millennial experience varies across racial groups, with a particular focus on the Black millennial experience. To do so, we make explicit comparisons and contrasts between Black millennials and young white and Latino adults. Throughout the report, we take care to point out areas of commonality between Black millennials and other young adults, but we also use these comparisons to understand how Black millennials may contrast with respect to white and Latino millennials. The comparisons and contrasts we present in this report further our knowledge about Black millennials in particular, but also provide greater insight into how lived experiences, attitudes and behaviors vary across racial groups.

About the Data

In this report, we have compiled data collected from official government sources, including the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to describe the status of Black millennials in the contemporary United States. These data are collected by government agencies and available from government websites. The authors had no role in collecting, coding or analyzing the data, and thus we are limited to the statistics that are publicly available.

To understand how young people perceive, experience, and think about their social and political environments, we use survey data we have collected over the last 10 years in a series of original public opinion surveys of nationally representative samples. These survey data are publicly available from the Black Youth Project research page (<http://research.blackyouthproject.com>).

Our first survey, the 2005 Black Youth Survey Project, was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. The survey was administered between July and November 2009, and included 1,589 respondents from a nationally representative sampling frame of youth between the ages of 15 and 25. This sampling frame was supplemented with over-samples of young people living in areas with large Latino or Black populations and in the Chicago metropolitan area. Surveys were completed over the phone and the data were weighted to national population parameters. The overall margin of error for this

survey is +/- 2.5 percentage points.

Our second major national survey, the Mobilization and Change project, consisted of three surveys administered in 2008 and 2009. Each of the surveys was conducted by GfK Knowledge Networks using nationally representative samples of U.S. adults 18 years and older, supplemented with over-samples of Black, Latino and Asian American respondents. Households were sampled by KnowledgePanel, a probability-based web panel that is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, and were completed over the Internet. Surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish. Wave 1 was completed between October 17 and November 3, 2008 and included 3,181 respondents. Wave 2 was completed between May 30 and July 24, 2009 and included 2,397 of the respondents who participated in Wave 1 as well as 805 new respondents. Wave 3 was completed between November 24, 2009 and January 19, 2010 and included 2,478 respondents who had participated in Wave 2 as well as 359 new respondents. The overall margins of error for these surveys range from +/- 1.7 to 1.8 percentage points.

Our third set of surveys, the Black Youth Project Surveys, consisted of four surveys conducted between 2012 and 2014. The target population for these surveys was non-institutionalized Black, Latino and white adults residing in the U.S. and between the ages of 18 and 29. Households were sampled by KnowledgePanel. The surveys were conducted in English and Spanish and administered online. The first

survey was administered between November 21 and December 5, 2012 and included 1,522 respondents. The second survey was administered between April 25 and May 13, 2013 and included 1,513 respondents. The third survey was administered between December 12, 2013 and January 16, 2014 and included 1,527 respondents. The fourth survey was administered between June 7 and June 27, 2014, and included 1,556 respondents. The overall margins of error for these surveys are +/- 2.5 percentage points.

All survey results presented in this report are weighted so that the sample reflects the characteristics of the relevant population. These adjustments correct for any differences between the sample and the population that result from survey non-response as well as the over-sampling of Blacks and Latinos. Demographic (i.e., gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income) and geographic (i.e., census region, metropolitan area, primary language by census region) distributions from the most recent Current Population Studies were used as benchmarks in this adjustment.

Our primary interest in presenting these survey results is in comparing the findings for young people across racial groups. In doing so, the margins of error increase because each of these sub-samples represents only a portion of all the respondents included in each survey. Thus, our policy is to highlight differences between racial groups only when the differences are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

Overview:

Black millennials face unique challenges in a range of areas, including employment, education, gun violence, health and criminal justice.

- * In the second quarter of 2015, **unemployment rates were substantially higher for Black youth than for white and Latino youth.** For instance, 16.6% of Black youth between the ages of 20 and 24 were unemployed, compared with 10.3% of Latino youth and 8.5% of white youth in the same age group.
- * Young Black women report experiencing **discrimination in the workplace based on race and/or gender** at considerably higher rates (35.6%) than white women (13.9%) and Latinas (21.2%).
- * In 2013, **32% of Black youth 18 to 24 years of age lived below the poverty line**, compared with 17% of white youth and 21% of Latino youth in this age group.
- * Among students entering high school in the 2011-2012 school year, only **68% of Black youth were expected to graduate** within four years, compared with 76% of Latino youth and 85% of white youth.
- * In recent years, gun-related homicides among Black youth are more than **17 times higher than for white youth** and nearly four times higher than for Latino youth.
- * Black and Latino youth were much more likely to say they were **“very” or “somewhat” afraid of gun violence**: 41.2% and 42.8% respectively, compared with 15.6% of white youth.
- * In 2013, **71.4% of young Black adults** were covered by health insurance, compared with 59.5% of young Latino adults and 79.1% of young white adults.
- * Incarceration rates in 2013 among young Black men 18 and 19 years of age were **seven times higher than they were for young white men** and more than twice as high as for Latino men in the same age group.
- * More than half (54.4%) of Black youth report that they or someone they know was **harassed by or experienced violence from the police**, compared with 32.8% of white youth and 24.8% of Latino youth.



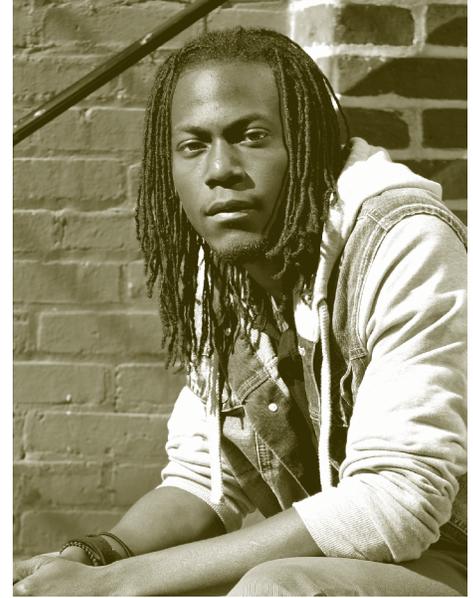
Black millennials are politically engaged, but politicians, political parties, and organizations must commit their attention, time, and resources to ensure their political participation.

- * **Black youth have voted at higher rates than white youth** in the last two presidential elections: 52.3% for Black youth vs. 48.3% for whites in 2008 and 45.9% vs. 41.4% in 2012.
- * **President Obama's success in winning the youth vote in 2012 was due largely to his extremely high levels of support from young people of color**, including support from 95.8% of young Black voters and 76.3% of young Latino voters. Less than half (44.7%) of young white voters supported Obama.
- * **Almost three-fourths of young Black adults said they had been asked for voter identification:** 72.9% of young Black reported this, a disproportionately high rate compared with young whites (50.8%) and Latinos (60.8%).
- * Nearly 40 percent of young Black (37.3%) and white (36.1%) voters and 53.6% of young Latino voters in the 2012 election were **voting for the first time**.

Black millennials have distinct opinions on issues including employment policy, health policy, immigration and LGBT issues.

- * Overwhelming majorities of Black (80.5%) and Latino (75.9%) youth **support increasing the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour**, compared with 61.2% of white youth.
- * Large majorities of young Blacks (76.2%) and Latinos (69.6%) **reported that it is more important to control gun ownership** than to protect the rights of gun owners. In contrast, 57.2% of white youth said that it is more important to protect the rights of gun owners.
- * **More than 81.8% of Black youth approved of the Affordable Care Act**, compared with 51.9% of Latino youth and 34% of white youth.
- * While Black (77.5%) and Latino (89.4%) **youth support reforming immigration with a path to citizenship at much higher rates than white youth** (67.1%), white (58.7%) and Black (52%) youth support the deportation of undocumented immigrants at substantially higher rates than Latino (27.1%) youth.
- * More than a third (35%) of Black youth identified **HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment as the single most important issue for LGBT organizations** to address, while white youth prioritized same-sex marriage (21.3%) and Latino youth (20.1%) said that bullying was the most important issue for the LGBT agenda.

I. Lived Experiences



Economics

Young people confront a different set of economic circumstances than earlier generations. We document how these circumstances present especially difficult challenges for Black millennials.

Employment Status and Job Availability

For many millennials, even entry-level and minimum wage jobs seem difficult to come by. While the national unemployment rate was 5.3 percent in June 2015, the unemployment rate among millennials was considerably higher at 9.6 percent.³

As Table 1.1 shows, unemployment rates vary considerably across racial groups. Based on data from the second quarter of 2015, unemployment rates are substantially higher among Black youth than they are for white and Latino youth. **Nearly a third of Black youth between the ages of 16 and 19 were unemployed, compared with 16.1% of white youth and 19.5% of Latino youth.** Unemployment rates were relatively similar among white and Latino young people in the 20-24 and 25-34 age groups, but remained considerably higher among Black youth in the same age groups.

“Nearly a third of Black youth between the ages of 16 and 19 were unemployed, compared with 16.1% of white youth and 19.5% of Latino youth.”

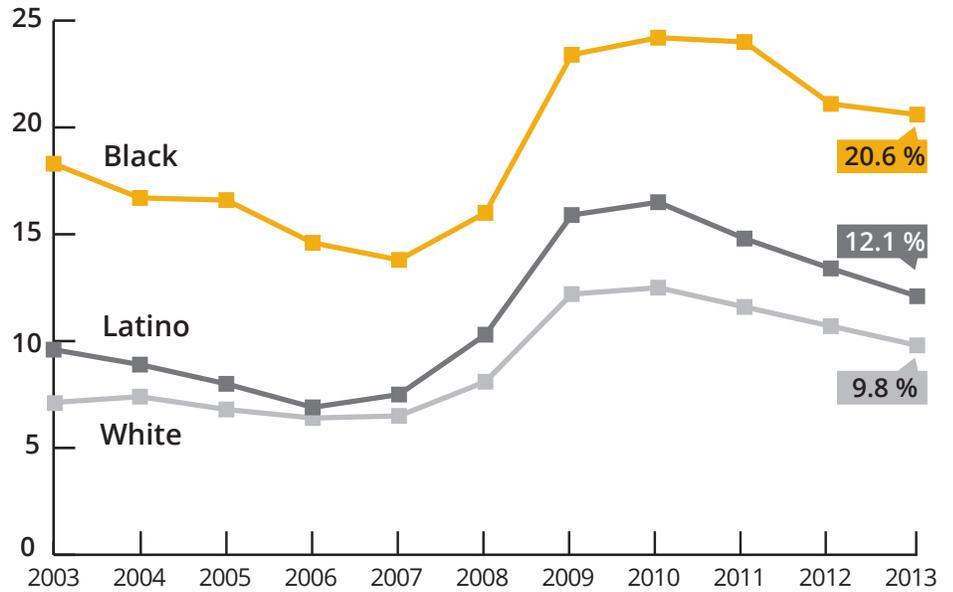
Table 1.1: Millennial Unemployment Rates, Second Quarter (April-June) 2015

| Age | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|-------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 16-19 | 31.5 | 16.1 | 19.5 |
| 20-24 | 16.6 | 8.5 | 10.3 |
| 25-34 | 10.8 | 4.5 | 6.7 |

Source: Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Study, Table E-16, “Unemployment Rates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity” (available at http://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsee_e16.htm; accessed September 30, 2015). Data not seasonally adjusted.

As Figure 1.1 shows, unemployment rates among Black youth have been considerably higher than unemployment for white and Latino youth for the last 10 years. In 2013, the average unemployment rate for Black youth was 20.6%, while unemployment rates for white (9.8%) and Latino (12.1%) youth were substantially lower. Over the last 10 years, unemployment rates among Black youth ranged from around 14% to more than 24%. In fact, over the last decade, the worst year of unemployment figures for white youth (12% in 2010) would have easily been the best unemployment figure for Black youth (14% in 2007).

Figure 1.1: Unemployment Rates among 18 to 29 Year Olds, 2003-2013



Data: Current Population Studies, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Workplace Discrimination and Compensation

We studied millennials’ employment experiences with a nationally representative survey of young people we conducted in June 2014. Our data show that Black millennials report higher rates of workplace discrimination and inadequate pay than other young people.

Table 1.2: Experiences with Employment Racial Discrimination, 18 to 29 Year Olds

| | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|
| Racial discrimination while looking for work | 19.7 | 3.4 | 13.1 |
| Racial discrimination in the workplace | 15.6 | 2.4 | 9.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

In addition to experiencing higher unemployment rates, young people of color, and especially Black youth, report experiencing higher rates of race and sex discrimination while searching for work. As Table 1.2 shows, about one in five Black youth and 13.1% of Latino youth reported experiencing racial discrimination while applying for jobs. Black and Latino youth were also far more likely than whites to report that they have encountered racial discrimination in their workplace.

Table 1.3 shows the percentages of young people by race and sex who reported experiencing employment sex discrimination. Not surprisingly, young women reported higher rates of sex discrimination than young men. Interestingly, however, we do not see evidence of a gender gap in reported levels of workplace discrimination between Latino men and Latina women.

Table 1.3: Experiences with Employment Sex Discrimination, 18 to 29 Year Olds

| | Black Men | Black Women | White Men | White Women | Latino Men | Latina Women |
|---|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Sex discrimination while looking for work | 13.7 | 19.2 | 2.8 | 8.3 | 12.0 | 8.6 |
| Sex discrimination in the workplace | 9.3 | 12.4 | 3.5 | 9.3 | 7.9 | 7.3 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Further examining workplace experiences, we find that young Black women reported being doubly penalized for their race and sex. As Table 1.4 shows, we find that more than a third of young Black women reported experiencing some form of discrimination based on race and/or gender in the workplace, compared with over a quarter of young Black men. Nearly a quarter of both young Latino men and Latina women reported experiencing some form of discrimination, either while searching for work or in the workplace. Young white men and women reported the lowest rates of employment-related discrimination. These data highlight the unique challenges that young Black women face in employment, compared to white youth and to young men overall.

Table 1.4: Experiences with Employment Discrimination, 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Group | Experienced any discrimination (%) |
|---------------------|---|
| Black men | 27.7 |
| Black women | 35.6 |
| White men | 8.8 |
| White women | 13.9 |
| Latino men | 24.3 |
| Latina women | 21.2 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Using a subjective measure of how young people report their workplace compensation, we find that sizable majorities of young people of color believe they are underpaid relative to their job and their accomplishments at work. Table 1.5 displays the data. More than half of Black youth and nearly two-thirds of Latino youth said that they are not paid enough for the work they do and how much they get done, compared with just under half of white youth. As further evidence of these perceived disparities, Black and Latino youth reported that they have difficulty making ends meet: More than half of both groups said that the amount they are paid does not allow them to meet their financial obligations, compared with over a third of white youth.

Table 1.5: Perceptions of Workplace Compensation, 18 to 29 Year Olds

| | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Not paid enough for the work I do and how much I get done | 58.1 | 49.5 | 67.4 |
| The amount I am paid does not allow me to fulfill my financial obligations | 55.4 | 37.6 | 56.2 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Millennials' perceptions of inadequate pay largely reflect real-life differences in pay across race and gender lines. Table 1.6 shows the median weekly pay for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 based on the first quarter averages in 2015. The median weekly pay for young Black men and women is about \$100, or 25 percent, lower than the median weekly pay for young white men and women. Young Black men and women also earn substantially less than young Latino/as. These pay disparities also help explain the patterns shown in the bottom row of Table 1.5, as unequal pay leads to the inability to satisfy financial obligations reported by Black and Latino millennials.

Table 1.6: Median Weekly Pay, First Quarter 2015, 16 to 24 Year Olds

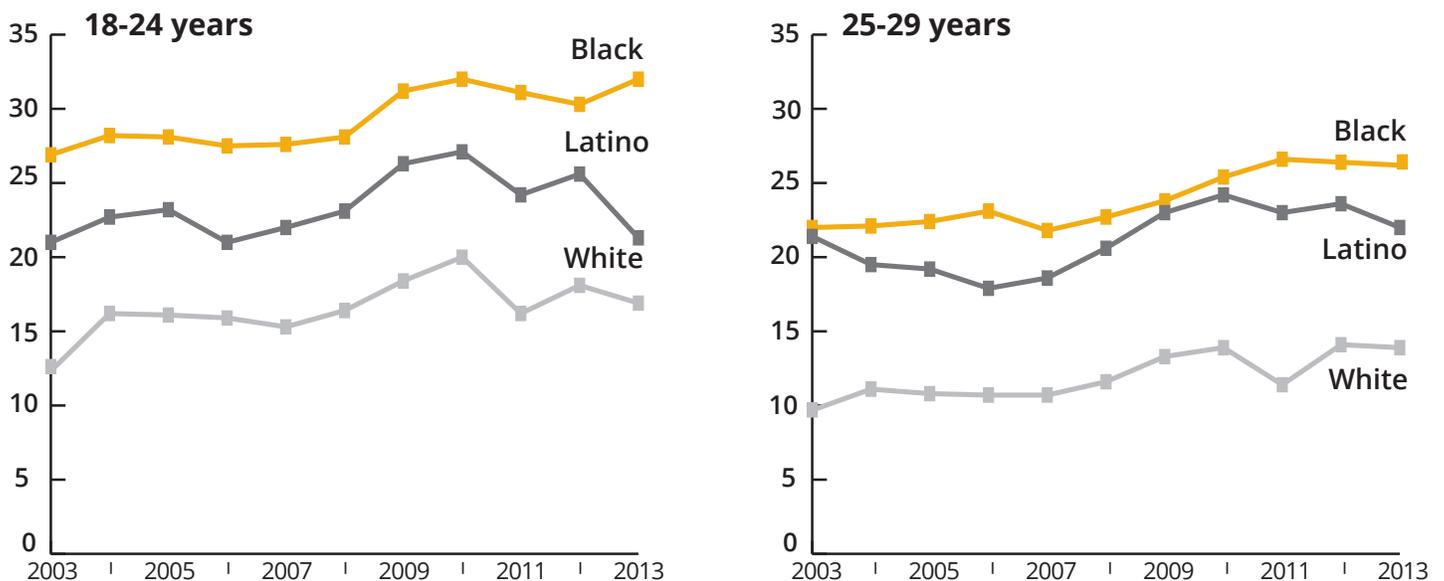
| | Blacks | Whites | Latinos |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| Men | \$398 | \$503 | \$448 |
| Women | \$375 | \$476 | \$415 |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 3: "Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 1st quarter 2015 averages, not seasonally adjusted"; available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.t03.htm> (accessed July 15, 2015).

Poverty and Families

In addition to experiencing greater difficulties in the workplace, Black millennials experience poverty at far greater rates than white and Latino youth. Figure 1.2 below displays the percentage of young people living below the poverty line by age group. We note that young people living in group quarters such as college dormitories are excluded from these calculations. Poverty rates have generally, though not consistently, increased among all racial groups over the last decade. Black youth between the ages of 18 and 24 exhibited the highest poverty rate. Black youth in this age group also experienced a small increase in poverty rates, while poverty declined slightly among white and Latino youth. **In 2013, nearly a third (32.0%) of Black youth 18 to 24 years of age lived below the poverty line**, compared with 16.9% of white youth and 21.3% of Latino youth in this age group. Among young people between the ages of 25 and 29, Black young adults experienced the highest poverty rate in 2013 (26.1%), compared with 13.9% of whites and 22.0% of Latino/as.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of Young People Living in Poverty, 2003-2013

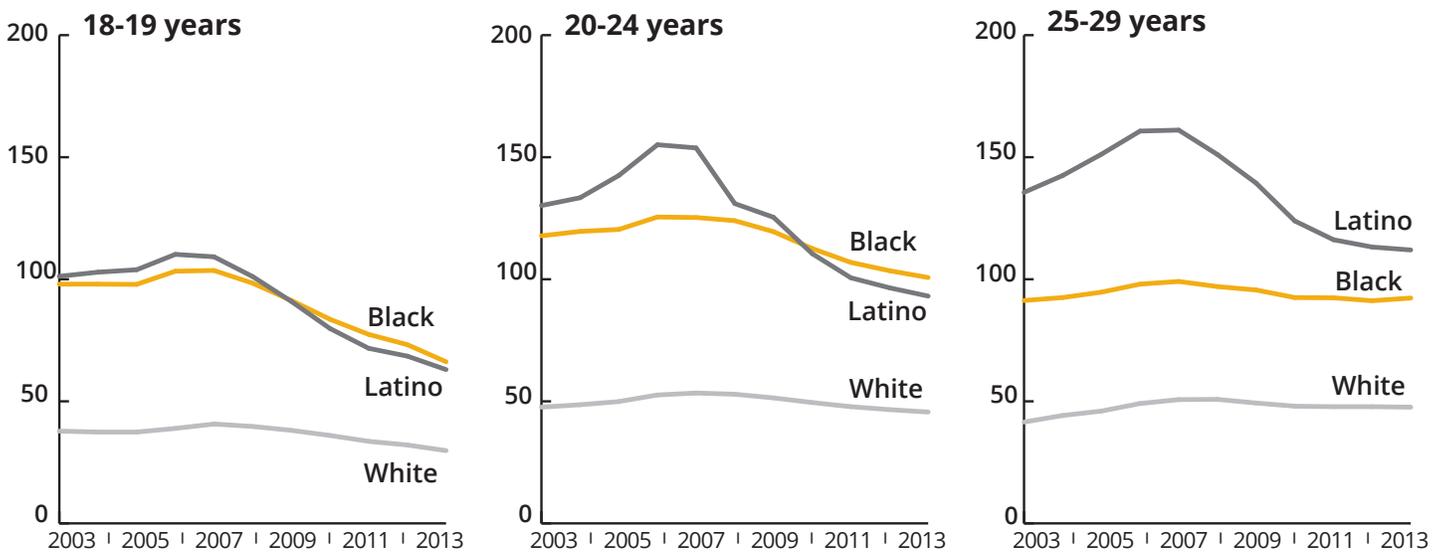


Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table POV01, years 2003-2013.

These economic challenges both reflect and are compounded by very different family structures and birthrates among millennials. Figure 1.3 below shows birthrates among millennial youth for three age groups: 18-19, 20-24 and 25-29. The plots show the number of children born for every 1,000 women in that age and racial group. In general, birthrates are much higher for young people of color than they are for white youth, although birthrates have also declined among Black and Latina women over the last decade. In 2013, 6.6% of Black women 18-19 years of age gave birth, compared with

10.1% of Black women ages 20-24, and 9.2% of Black women ages 25-29. Among white women, 3% of those ages 18 and 19 gave birth in 2013, compared with 4.6% between the ages of 20 and 24 and 4.8% between the ages of 25 and 29. Finally, among Latina women, 6.3% of women ages 18 and 19 gave birth in 2013, compared with 9.3% of women between 20 and 24, and 11.2% of women between 25 and 29.

Figure 1.3: Birthrates among 18 to 29 Year Old Women, 2003-2013



Source: National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 64, No. 1, January 15, 2015, Table 16.

Education

Education is one of the most important predictors of personal success and life satisfaction. Social mobility depends in part on the ability of younger generations to obtain greater educational outcomes than their parents' and grandparents' generations.

A report on ethnic and racial disparities in education issued in 2012 by the American Psychological Association concluded:

[Ethnic and racial] educational disparities (1) mirror ethnic and racial disparities in socio-economic status as well as health outcomes and healthcare, (2) are evident early in childhood and persist through the K-12 education, and (3) are reflected in . . . drop-out and graduation rates, . . . , enrollment in higher education, as well as in behavioral markers of adjustment, including rates of being disciplined, suspended, and expelled from schools.⁴

In this section we document the educational experiences and outcomes of millennials. The Pew Research Center reports that high school completion rates in 2013 were substantially lower among millennials of color than they were for white youth. Their analysis shows that 79% of Latinos and 82% of Blacks between the ages of 18 and 24 had high school degrees, compared with 89% of white youth in the same age group.⁵

We note, however, that these average statistics obscure regional and geographic variation in high school completion rates. Graduation rates are substantially lower in major cities, and especially in major cities with sizable populations of people of color.⁶ Table 1.7 shows the four-year graduation rates for public schools in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles for students who entered high school in the 2010-2011 school year. In each city, four-year graduation rates were substantially lower for Black students (60%, 54% and 71%, respectively) than they were for white students (78%, 74% and 84%, respectively). In Chicago and Los Angeles, Black graduation rates were also lower than Latino graduation rates (67% and 76%, respectively).

Table 1.7: Four-Year High School Graduation Rates among Freshmen Entering High School in the 2010-2011 School Year

| Racial Group | New York (%) | Chicago (%) | Los Angeles (%) |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Black | 60 | 54 | 71 |
| White | 78 | 74 | 84 |
| Latino | 57 | 67 | 76 |

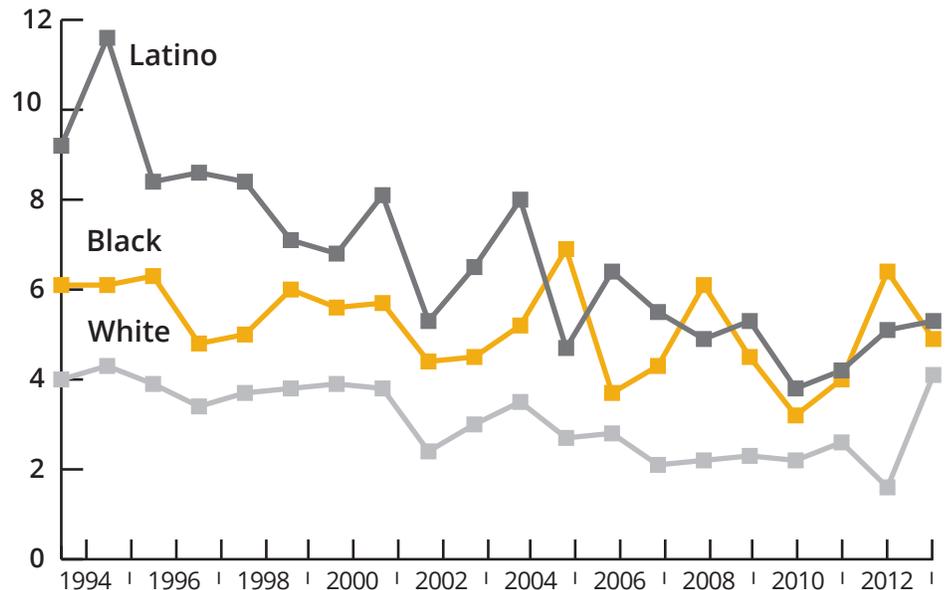
Data: New York Department of Education, available at http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/04A151BF-F9E4-4960-8881-E1B07AA57DF8/184213/Graduation_Rates_Public_Citywide.xlsx; Chicago Public Schools, available at http://schoolreports.cps.edu/cpsedu/schooldata/website_cohort_4Yrand5Yr_citywide_1999through2014.xlsx; Los Angeles Unified School District, available at <http://home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/414445> (all accessed September 30, 2015).

Figure 1.4 below shows annual high school dropout rates among 15- to 24-year-olds from 1994 to 2013. Dropout rates among Black youth have been consistently higher than dropout rates among white youth. The data do contain some good news, however. Though dropout rates among Black youth have been somewhat variable, in general they have decreased in recent years, reaching a low of 3.2% in 2010. Disparities in dropout rates between Black and white youth decreased as well. In 1994, the first year of data below, the Black dropout rate was 6.1% compared to 4% for white youth, but by 2013, Black (4.9%) and white (4.1%) youth had nearly identical dropout rates. The relatively high variability in Black dropout rates suggests, however, that we should interpret the data points from any one year with some degree of caution.

At the same time, dropout disparities between Latino and Black youth have basically disappeared. In 1994, the

Latino dropout rate was 9.2%, while the Black dropout rate was 6.1%. Since then, the Latino dropout rate has steadily declined and by 2013, fell to 5.3%, compared with 4.9% for Black youth. Thus, while Latino youth have made systematic advances in reducing this educational disparity, dropout rates have been more stubborn among Black youth.

Figure 1.4: Annual High School Dropout Rates of 15 to 24 Year Olds, 1994-2013



Data: Census Bureau, School Enrollment, Current Population Survey Historical Tables on School Enrollment, Table A-4, "Annual High School Dropout Rates by Sex, Race, Grade, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013."

Black four-year graduation rates are substantially lower for Black youth than they are for either white or Latino/a youth.

Graduation rates reveal more significant differences across racial groups. Table 1.8 below shows the percentages of entering high school freshman who graduated within four years. Black four-year graduation rates are substantially lower for Black youth than they are for either white or Latino/a youth. **The average freshman graduation rate for students who entered high school in the 2011/2012 school year was 68% for Black youth, compared with 76% for Latino youth and 85% for white youth.**

Table 1.8: Percentage of Entering High School Freshman Graduating Within Four Years, 2007-2012

| Year | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 2007/2008 | 61 | 81 | 64 |
| 2008/2009 | 63 | 82 | 65 |
| 2009/2010 | 66 | 83 | 71 |
| 2010/2011 | 67 | 84 | 75 |
| 2011/2012 | 68 | 85 | 76 |

Data: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data State Dropout and Graduation Rate Data file," School Year 2011-12, Preliminary Version 1a; School Year 2010-11, Provisional 1a; School Year 2009-10, 1a; School Year 2008-09, 1a; School Year 2007-08, 1b. Table from the National Center for Educational Statistics; available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/AFGR0812.asp> (accessed July 15, 2015).

Trends in high school dropout rates also obscure differences in when young people complete high school and what they do afterward. Table 1.9 provides a snapshot of school enrollment data for 18- and 19-year-olds from 2013. Black youth in this age group were mostly likely to still be in high school, and least likely to be enrolled in college. Nearly 30% of Black youth were still in high school at 18 and 19, compared with 20 percent or less of white and Latino/a youth. The dropout rate was highest among Latino/a youth at this age, with 9.7% of Latino/as reported dropping out of school, compared with 7.1% of Black youth and 5.3% of white youth.

The largest difference is in college enrollment: More than half of white youth were enrolled in college, compared with slightly more than a third of Black youth and Latino youth.

Table 1.9: Enrollment Status of 18- and 19-Year-Olds, 2013

| | Still in high school (%) | Dropped out (%) | High school graduate (%) | Enrolled in college (%) |
|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Black | 29.6 | 7.1 | 28.8 | 34.6 |
| White | 18.4 | 5.3 | 25.0 | 51.2 |
| Latino | 20.8 | 9.7 | 31.0 | 38.5 |

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table A-5b. The Population 18 and 19 Years Old by School Enrollment Status, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013"; available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/historical/TableA-5b.xls> (accessed July 15, 2015).

College Attendance

As Table 1.10 shows, college attendance rates among Black youth have generally increased over the last decade, but there are still important differences between Black youth and white and Latino youth. Over this time period, between 55% and 70% of Black youth enrolled in college immediately following high school graduation. In five of the nine years, the rate of college enrollment immediately after high school graduation was lowest for Black youth. For instance, in 2013, the most recent year for which data are available, 68.8% of white youth who graduated high school in 2013 enrolled in college that fall, compared with 56.7% of Black youth and 59.8% of Latino youth.

Figure 1.5 provides a wider view on differences in college enrollment among young people, and displays the percentages of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who were enrolled in college over the last 20 years. College enrollment rates among Black youth have risen sharply over this time period. In 1993, 24.5% of Black youth 18 to 24 years of age were enrolled in college. This increased to 31.9% by 2002 and 36.4% in 2012. Latino college enrollment rates have risen even more strongly, from 21.7% in 1993 to 37.5% by 2012.

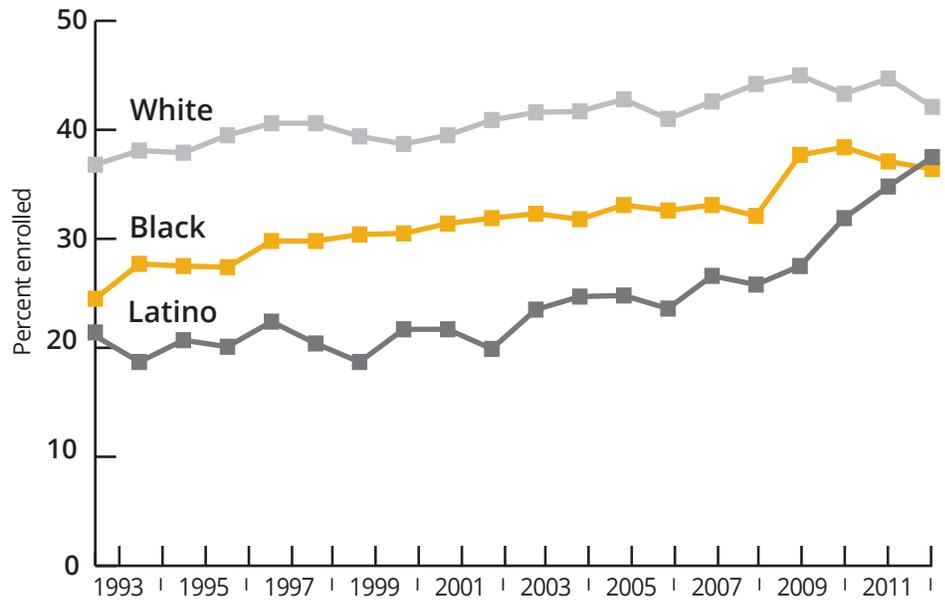
Table 1.10: Percentage of High School Completers Who Immediately Enrolled in College, 2005-2012

| Year | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 2005 | 55.7 | 73.2 | 54.0 |
| 2006 | 55.5 | 68.5 | 57.9 |
| 2007 | 55.7 | 69.5 | 64.0 |
| 2008 | 55.7 | 71.7 | 63.9 |
| 2009 | 69.5 | 71.3 | 59.3 |
| 2010 | 62.0 | 70.5 | 59.7 |
| 2011 | 67.1 | 68.3 | 66.6 |
| 2012 | 56.4 | 65.7 | 70.3 |
| 2013 | 56.7 | 68.8 | 59.8 |

Data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. Table 302.20, "Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2013"; available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_302.20.asp (accessed July 16, 2015).

At the same time, however, increases in college enrollment among youth of color have not eliminated the disparity between white youth and young people of color. Over the entire time period, college enrollment was significantly higher for white youth than for young people of color. To put this into perspective, **only in a few recent years (2009-2011) were college enrollment rates among Black youth higher than they were for white youth in 1993.** Thus, despite the steady increase in college enrollment rates among young people of color, significant disparities in college attendance remain.

Figure 1.5: Percentage of 18 to 24 Year Olds Enrolled in College, 1993-2012



Data: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Young people who pursue higher education often have very different educational experiences based on race and ethnicity. Table 1.11 shows enrollment rates in 2013 across different kinds of higher education settings. Black and Latino youth enroll in higher education at significantly lower rates: Close to half of white high school graduates were enrolled in two-year or four-year colleges, graduate school, or vocational school in 2013, compared with 43.1% of Black youth and 44.2% of Latino youth. While two-year college enrollment rates were higher among Latino youth than for either Black or white youth, white youth had higher enrollment rates at four-year colleges than either Blacks or Latinos. Finally, among high school graduates who were not enrolled in an institution of higher learning, employment rates varied substantially. Nearly a quarter of Black high school graduates were neither enrolled in school or employed, compared with 13.4% of white youth and 19.1% of Latino youth.

Table 1.11: Enrollment Status of High School Graduates Ages 15 to 24, 2013

| | Two-year college | | Four-year college | | Graduate School | Vocational School | Not enrolled | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Full-time (%) | Part-time (%) | Full-time (%) | Part-time (%) | (%) | (%) | Employed (%) | Not Employed (%) |
| Black | 9.7 | 2.8 | 23.3 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 1.6 | 33.5 | 23.4 |
| White | 8.7 | 2.8 | 28.7 | 2.6 | 4.3 | 0.9 | 38.7 | 13.4 |
| Latino/a | 11.7 | 5.9 | 18.7 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 1.2 | 36.7 | 19.1 |

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 7. Enrollment Status of High School Graduates 15 to 24 Years Old, by Type of School, Attendance Status, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 2013"; available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/school/data/cps/2013/tables.html> (accessed July 15, 2015).

Not only do college enrollment rates differ across racial groups, but so do college graduation rates. Table 1.12 below shows college graduation rates among young people who first enrolled in college between 2002 and 2006. During this time period, approximately 20% of Black youth who enrolled in college completed their college education. Graduation rates were somewhat higher for Latino youth, ranging from 26.4% among students entering college in fall 2002 to 29.2% among people who enrolled in college beginning in 2006. Graduation rates were substantially higher among white youth, however – approximately twice as high as graduation rates among Black youth. College graduation rates among white youth ranged from 39.3% among students who enrolled in 2002 to 42.6% for students who first enrolled in 2006.

It is again worth pointing out that the numbers in Table 1.12

Table 1.12: College Graduation Rates for 2002-2006 Entering Cohorts

| Year entered college | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2002 | 20.4 | 39.3 | 26.4 |
| 2003 | 19.9 | 40.0 | 26.5 |
| 2004 | 20.4 | 41.1 | 27.9 |
| 2005 | 20.8 | 41.9 | 28.6 |
| 2006 | 20.5 | 42.6 | 29.2 |

Data: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System, Spring 2007-Spring 2013. Table 326.10: Graduation rates of first-time, full-time Bachelor's Degree-seeking students at four-year post-secondary institutions.

Table 1.13: Post-College Student Loan Debt Burden, 2009

| | \$0 | \$1-11,599 | \$11,600-19,999 | \$20,000-34,999 | \$35,000+ |
|--------|------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Black | 3.2% | 15.2% | 14.7% | 31.2% | 35.7% |
| White | 5.7 | 23.6 | 22.4 | 25.1 | 23.3 |
| Latino | 6.7 | 29.5 | 17.6 | 24.1 | 22.1 |

Data: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System, 2008/12 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Survey.

do not fully portray the full extent of disparities related to college graduation. The data discussed above indicate that Black youth attend college at considerably lower rates than white youth. Thus, when evaluating the numbers in Table 1.12, it is important to remember that differences in college enrollment plus differences in college graduation rates result in huge differences across racial groups in the percentages of young people who receive a college degree.

Finally, even among young people who do attend and graduate from college, Black youth experience significantly larger financial burdens than white youth. Table 1.13 provides a snapshot of student loan debt among those who graduated from college. Approximately two-thirds of Black college graduates—66.9%—had more than \$20,000 in student loan debt. Less than half of white youth (48.4%) and Latino youth (46.4%) graduated with similar debt burdens. The differences are especially large at the top end of the scale. More than a third of Black youth had \$35,000 or more in student loan debt, compared with less than a quarter of white youth and Latino youth.

These differences in student loan debt are important because this financial burden impacts the opportunities that young people have after graduating from college. They also provide insight into the barriers Black millennials face when it comes to saving money for home ownership and retirement. These disparities in the educational system are also indicative of the problem Black millennials face in accumulating wealth at the same rate as white youth.

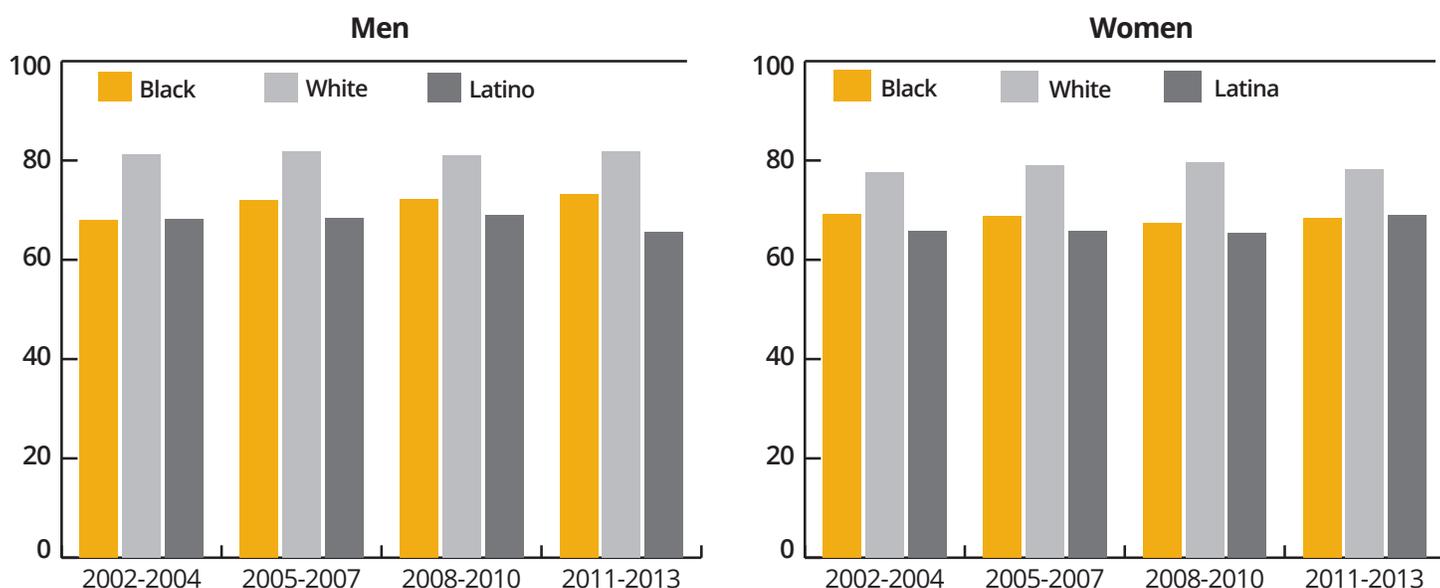
The data presented in this section demonstrate the myriad ways in which people of color, and Black youth in particular, experience the educational system very differently from white youth. As the other sections in this report indicate, these educational disparities mirror disparities in employment and health. In addition, these education disparities have long-lasting implications for young people of color. Though Black youth have made many strides in education over the last several decades, considerable work remains to be done to close the gaps in educational opportunities and achievement.

Health Care & Gun Violence

Young people confront different challenges and have vastly different experiences with their health and the health care system. Figure 1.6 below displays data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how young people evaluate their health. The figure shows the percentage of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who reported that their health is “excellent” or “very good.” (The other response options were “good,” “fair” or “poor.”)

Young people of color report substantially lower evaluations of their health compared to white youth. In each year, about 80% of young white men and young white women reported that their health was “excellent” or “very good.” In comparison, between 65% and 70% of young Black men and young Black women rated their health similarly. We also find these patterns among young Latino men and women.

Figure 1.6: Percentage of 18 to 24 Year Olds Who Rate Their Health as “Excellent” or “Very Good”, 2002-2013



Data: National Health and Nutritional Exam Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Health Markers and Outcomes

Young people’s lifestyles vary tremendously across race and sex or gender. Figure 1.7 below shows the percentages of young people ages 18 to 24 who met federal recommendations for physical activity. The federal government recommends 75 minutes per week of “vigorous” aerobic or muscle-strengthening activity, or 150 minutes per week of “moderate” aerobic or muscle-strengthening activity.

First, across all racial groups and years, men exhibited substantially higher rates of physical activity than women. Young Black men reported engaging in physical activity at more than three times the rates of young Black women. Young

Latino men reported meeting federal guidelines for physical activity at more than twice the rates of young Latina women. Similarly, young white men reported consistently higher levels of physical activity than young white women.

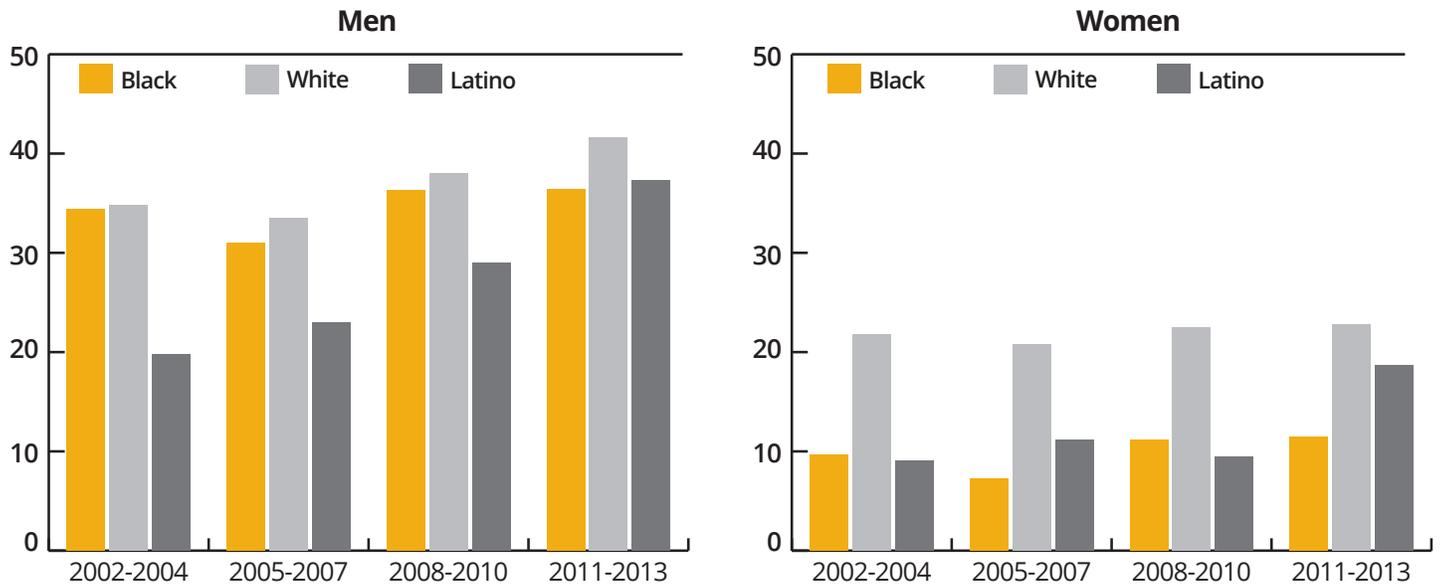
Second, Figure 1.7 shows that rates of physical activity differed by race as well as sex. Among men, the differences were relatively small between Black and white youth, but the differences were generally larger when we compared Black and white men to young Latino men. With the exception of 2011-2013, when the differences were small across each racial group, young Latino men reported substantially lower rates of physical activity. Young women of color, however, consistently reported lower rates of physical activity than

young white women. Across both race and sex, young Black and Latina women reported the lowest rates of physical activity.

The data clearly demonstrate that both race and sex are associated with how young people engage in healthy behaviors. Though physical activity is certainly not the only measure of healthfulness, it is an important leading indicator

of health challenges that young people may face down the road. First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” initiative is an important campaign for helping to establish healthful routines among young people. At the same time, improving the health of our young people requires acknowledging that young people differ in the challenges they face for engaging in healthful behaviors.

Figure 1.7: Percentage of 18 to 24 Year Olds Who Met Federal Guidelines for Physical Activity, 2002-2013



Data: National Health and Nutritional Exam Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Table 1.14 below shows the most recent data available on obesity rates among young people between the ages of 20 and 39.⁷ The numbers in the table show the percentages of young people who are characterized as obese, which is indicated by a body-mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. The percentages in Table 1.14 reflect the patterns for physical activity we showed in the figures above. Among both young men and young women, white youth exhibited substantially lower rates of obesity than young people of color. About a quarter of young white men were considered obese, compared with a third or more of young Black and Latino men. Young white women also exhibited lower obesity rates than young Latina women, while the obesity rate of young Black women, at 55.8%, was nearly double the obesity rate among young white women and more than 20 percentage points higher than the rate for young Black men. Because obesity is associated with a range of health-related issues, the data

in this table indicate that Black and Latino millennials, and especially young Black women, face a unique set of health challenges.

Table 1.14: Obesity Rates among 20 to 39 Year Olds, 2011-2012

| Sex | Blacks (%) | Whites (%) | Latinos (%) |
|-------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Men | 34.9 | 24.6 | 42.0 |
| Women | 55.8 | 27.8 | 35.8 |

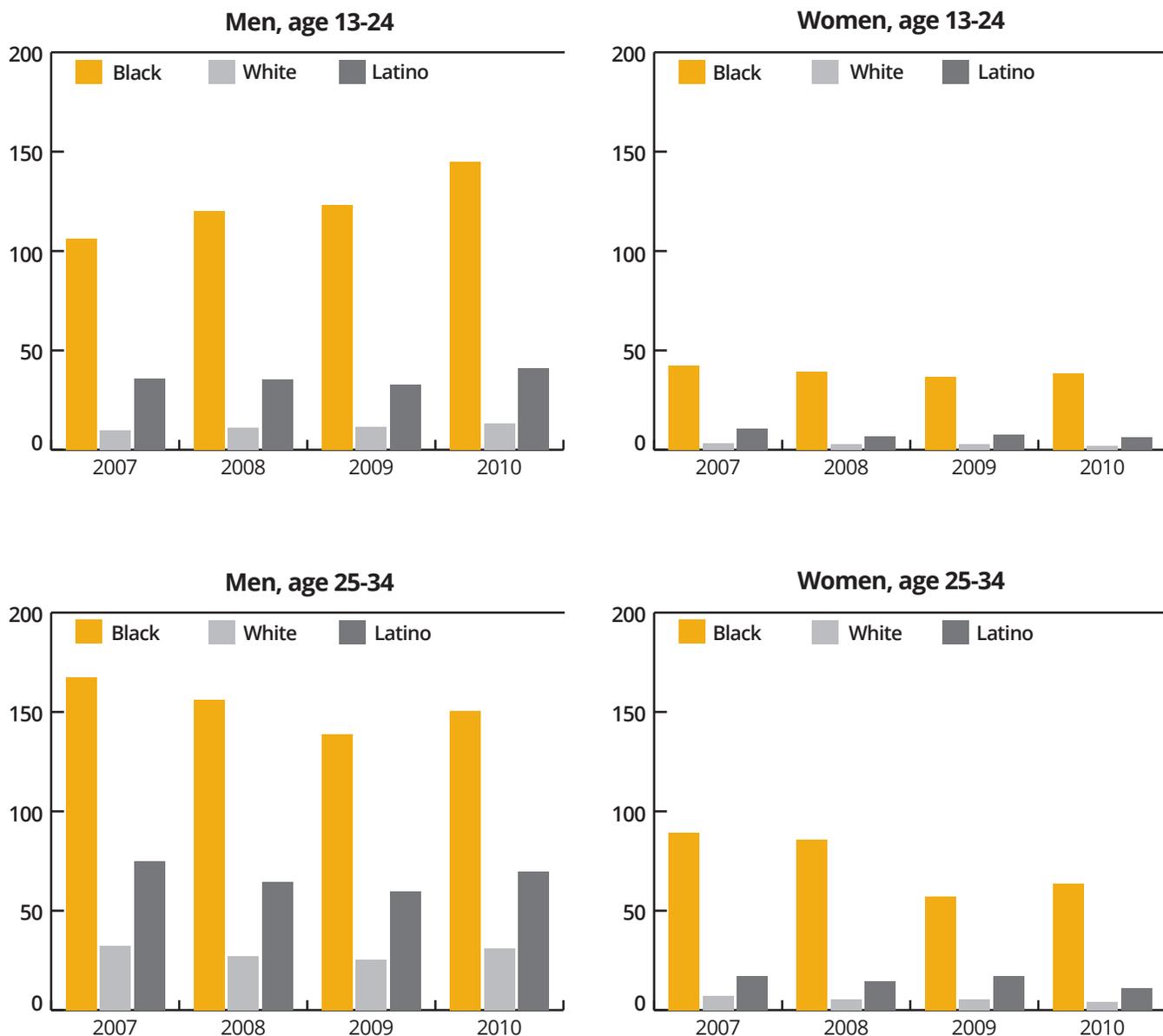
Data: National Health and Nutritional Exam Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reported in Cynthia L. Ogden, Margaret Carroll, Brian Kit, and Katherine Flegel, “Prevalence of Childhood and Adult Obesity in the United States, 2011-2012,” Journal of the American Medical Association (2014), 311: 806-814.

Confronting HIV/AIDS remains an important challenge for communities of color. Figure 1.8 below shows the number of new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 people in recent years. The data reveal several important patterns. First, HIV rates are highest among young Black men. Among young Black men between the ages of 13 and 24, HIV diagnoses significantly increased between 2007 and 2010, from 114.1 per 100,000 to 144.9 per 100,000. Over this same time period, HIV diagnoses also increased among white and Latino men in the same age ranges, though the infection rates were substantially lower than they were for Black youth. Among young men be-

tween the ages of 13 and 24, white HIV rates increased from 9.7 to 13.1 per 100,000 and Latino HIV infections increased from 35.8 to 41.4 per 100,000.

We find similar racial differences among young men between the ages of 25 and 34, though infection rates have decreased slightly in this age group. In 2010, 31.1 out of every 100,000 white men were diagnosed with HIV, and HIV diagnosis rates were more than double (69.7 per 100,000) among Latino men and nearly five times as high among Black men (150.5 per 100,000).

Figure 1.8: HIV Incidence Rates per 100,000 among 13 to 34 Year Olds, 2007-2010



Data: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Estimated HIV Incidence in the United States, 2007-2010. HIV Surveillance Supplemental Report 2012: 17; available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports#supplemental> (accessed February 17, 2015).

On the whole, HIV infection rates were substantially lower among young women than among young men. However, young Black women experienced HIV at disproportionately high rates compared with young white and Latino women. Between 2007 and 2010, the rate of new HIV infections was more than 13 times higher for Black women between the ages of 13 and 24 than it was for white women in the same age group. Among Black women between the ages of 25 and 34, the HIV infection rate was more than 11 times higher than it was for white women of the same age. Young Latino women also experienced HIV infections at two to three times the rates for young white women.

...HIV disproportionately affects young people of color, and especially young Black men and women.

Though many medical advances have been made in recent years to treat individuals with HIV/AIDS, it continues to be an extremely serious health condition. It requires constant management and expensive, potentially disruptive treatments. Though the media often focuses primarily on gay white men when discussing HIV rates, the data here show that HIV disproportionately affects young people of color, and especially young Black men and women. Disparities in HIV rates thus present another indicator of the unique health challenges that Black millennials face.

Table 1.15 below summarizes the top five leading causes of death among young people between the ages of 18 and 29. Homicide, unintentional injuries, suicide, heart disease and cancer were the top five leading causes of death for each racial group, yet these causes of death affected young people at very different rates across racial groups. Over 40 percent of all deaths among Black youth were due to homicide. Homicide was also responsible for almost a quarter of deaths among Latino youth, but less than 5 percent of deaths among white youth. Over half of deaths among white youth were due to unintentional injuries, such as car accidents, compared with about a quarter of Black youth and less than half of Latino youth. In contrast, suicide accounted for a considerably larger percentage of deaths among white youth (15.0%) than it did for either Black (5.5%) or Latino (9.3%) youth. However, recent research suggests that suicide rates have increased recently among Black youth, and es-

pecially among young Black men, possibly due to changing norms of suicide acceptability and especially harsh childhood experiences with poverty.⁸ Though not a large number overall, deaths from heart disease occurred at greater rates among Black youth than white or Latino youth, while cancer was a more prevalent factor in deaths among Latino youth than Black and white youth, (although these differences are relatively small).

Table 1.15: Leading Causes of Death among 18 to 29 Year Olds, 2007

| Cause | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Homicide | 43.7 | 4.8 | 22.8 |
| Unintentional injury | 23.5 | 56.3 | 44.2 |
| Suicide | 5.5 | 15.0 | 9.3 |
| Heart Disease | 4.8 | 2.9 | 2.6 |
| Cancer | 3.6 | 4.9 | 6.1 |

Data: Centers for Disease Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System; available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/facts.html> (accessed July 16, 2015).



Health Care Coverage

Given the conditions outlined above, access to health care is important for all millennials, and for Black millennials in particular. As Table 1.16 shows, young people of color between the ages of 18 and 24 have substantially lower rates of health insurance coverage than white youth in the same age group. Over the last several years, however, health insurance coverage rates have increased among Black youth, to 71.4% in 2013, but remain lower than health insurance rates for white youth, which rose to 79.1% over the same time period. Health insurance rates for Latino youth are lowest: While coverage has increased to just under 60% in 2013, Latino youth continue to lag far behind Black and, especially, white youth.

Table 1.17 shows that the source of health insurance coverage varies considerably among young people. Black youth exhibit the highest rates of Medicaid coverage, as 29.4% of Black youth between 18 and 24 years of age were covered by Medicaid in 2013. Nearly a quarter of Latino youth were covered by Medicaid in 2013, which was up slightly from 2010. Medicaid coverage rates among white youth were considerably lower, by about 10 percentage points or more during the time period.

Table 1.16: Health Insurance Coverage Rates among 18 to 24 Year Olds

| Year | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2009 | 65.9 | 73.5 | 51.4 |
| 2010 | 66.4 | 73.2 | 51.8 |
| 2011 | 69.8 | 77.1 | 56.0 |
| 2012 | 70.8 | 78.4 | 58.0 |
| 2013 | 71.4 | 79.1 | 59.5 |

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, "Health Insurance Coverage Status By Age" (Tables B27001A, B27001B, and B27001I); available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/data/acs/aff-2012.html> (accessed July 17, 2015).

Table 1.17: Medicaid Coverage Rates among 18 to 24 Year Olds

| Year | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2009 | 26.6 | 13.0 | * |
| 2010 | 24.8 | 13.4 | 19.4 |
| 2011 | 24.9 | 14.2 | 20.7 |
| 2012 | 25.1 | 13.5 | 20.5 |
| 2013 | 29.4 | 11.6 | 23.9 |

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, Annual Social and Economic Supplement; available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/hlthins/data/incpovhlth/index.html> and http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032014/health/h01_000.htm (accessed July 17, 2015). * figures were unavailable.

Evaluations of the Health Care System

Table 1.18 reports the results of a survey we conducted in January 2014 among young people between the ages of 18 and 29 who were asked about their experiences with the health care system. Black youth provided consistently lower evaluations of the health care system than white youth. Just more than half of Black and Latino youth rated the health care they received as "excellent" or "good," compared with 61.3% of white youth. Fewer Black youth (19.8%) than white youth (22.0%) rated the quality of health care in this country as "excellent" or "good," though this difference is not statistically significant. Interestingly, though Latino youth are less likely to have health care coverage than Black and white youth (see Table 1.16), considerably larger proportions of Latino (31.0%) youth rated the quality of U.S. health care as "excellent" or "good." We also find important differences in how young people rate the quality of their health care coverage. Nearly half of white youth say they have "excellent" or "very good" health care coverage, compared with only 35.7% of Black youth and 38.8% of Latino youth. Thus,

compared with white youth, young people of color report receiving both lower quality health care and lower quality health care coverage.

As the data above show, Black millennials confront a unique set of health challenges and have lower rates of health insurance coverage than other young people. These factors have important consequences for the quality of young people’s health and the health care they receive.

Table 1.18: Assessments of the Health Care System among 18 to 29 Year Olds, 2014

| | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Rate the quality of the health care I receive as excellent or very good | 52.1 | 61.3 | 50.8 |
| Rate the quality of health care in this county as excellent or very good | 19.8 | 22.0 | 31.0 |
| Rate the quality of my health care coverage as excellent or very good | 35.7 | 47.8 | 38.8 |

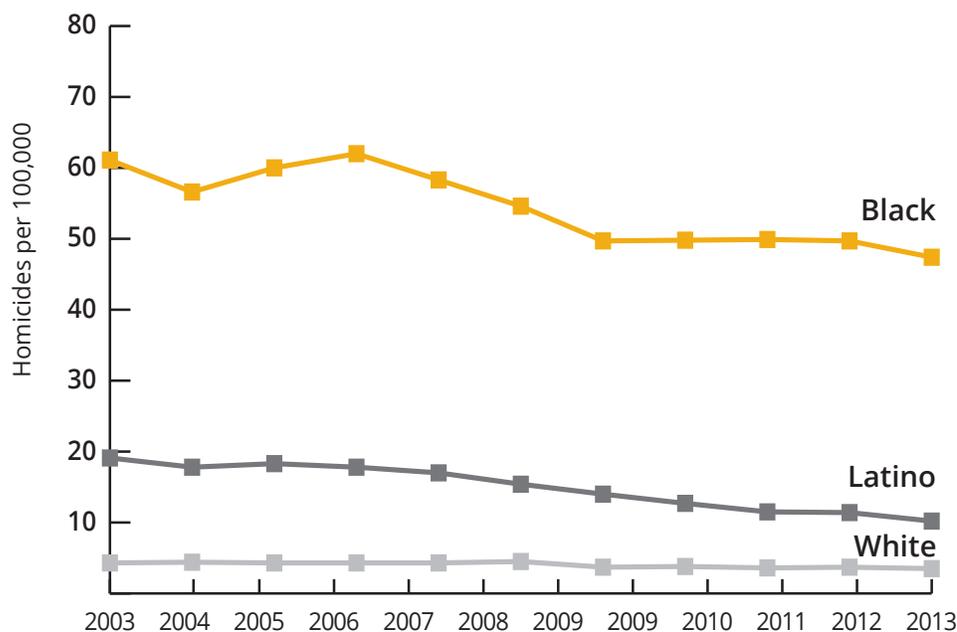
Source: Black Youth Project Survey, January 2014.

Gun Violence and Homicide

In the wake of surges of homicides in cities like St. Louis and mass shootings like those in Charleston, South Carolina, the issue of gun violence has again risen to the forefront of current events. As Figure 1.9 makes clear, Black youth between the ages of 18 and 29 are disproportionate homicide victims. In 2013, for instance, the homicide rate was more than 13 times higher for Black millennials than it was for white millennials, and nearly five times higher than it was for Latino millennials.

Racial disparity in homicides is largely a result of disparities in homicides from gun violence. Table 1.19 shows homicide rates

Figure 1.9: Homicide Rates among Young People (ages 18-29), 2003—2013



Data: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.⁹

from firearms among young people between the ages of 18 and 29. It is important to point out that this is a slightly different age group than what is shown about in Figure 1.9, which explains why the figures may not be comparable. **Gun-related homicides among Black youth are more than 17 times higher than they are for white youth, and nearly four times higher than they are for Latino youth.** Gun-related homicides are also about five times higher for Latino youth than they are for white youth. Young millennials of color, and Black youth in particular, are victims of gun violence at substantially higher rates than white youth.

Table 1.19: Homicide Rates from Firearms among 18-29 Year Olds, 2003-2007

| Year | Black (# per 100K) | White (# per 100K) | Latino (# per 100K) |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 2003 | 54.0 | 2.9 | 15.2 |
| 2004 | 50.4 | 2.7 | 13.8 |
| 2005 | 53.8 | 2.8 | 14.3 |
| 2006 | 55.8 | 2.8 | 14.2 |
| 2007 | 52.3 | 3.1 | 13.4 |

Data: Centers for Disease Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System; available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/facts.html> (accessed July 16, 2015).

Experiences with Gun Violence

We find in our own surveys that, consistent with the statistics presented above, young people do indeed have very different experiences with guns and gun violence. These data are shown in Table 1.20. Contrary to popular perceptions, and perhaps as a consequence of geographic segregation between urban and rural areas, young whites reported carrying or knowing someone who carried a gun at substantially higher rates than either young Blacks or young Latinos.

Black youth, however, were considerably more likely to report having experienced gun violence, as the bottom row of Table 1.20 shows. Nearly a quarter of Black youth reported that either they or someone they knew experienced gun violence

(for instance, being threatened with a gun or being the victim of a shooting) in the last year, compared with 14.5% of Latino youth and 8.3% of white youth.

These differences were further magnified when we asked young people whether they were concerned about being a victim of gun violence. We asked respondents to indicate whether they are afraid that either themselves, a member of their family, or a close friend might be the victim of gun violence in the coming year. Table 1.21 displays the results. **More than 40 percent of Black and Latino youth said they were “very” or “somewhat” afraid of gun violence, compared with 15.6% of white youth.** Moreover, only 28.7% each of Black and Latino youth said that they were “not afraid,” compared with more than half of white youth.

Table 1.20: Personal Experiences with Guns among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Experience | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| You or someone you know carried a gun in the last month | 24.4 | 46.2 | 22.2 |
| You or someone you know experienced gun violence in the last year | 22.5 | 8.3 | 14.5 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

Table 1.21: Fear of Victimization from Gun Violence among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| How afraid are you that a member of your family, or a close friend, or you yourself might be the victim of gun violence during the coming year? | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Very afraid | 17.4 | 2.1 | 21.6 |
| Somewhat afraid | 24.7 | 13.5 | 21.2 |
| A little afraid | 29.2 | 31.6 | 28.6 |
| Not afraid | 28.7 | 52.8 | 28.7 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

As Table 1.22 shows, youth of color were much more likely than white youth to report that gun violence is a problem in the neighborhood where they live. More than 30 percent of Black youth said that gun violence is either a “big problem” or “somewhat of a problem,” and nearly a quarter of Latino youth reported the same. In contrast, considerably fewer white youth indicated that gun violence is either a “big problem” or “somewhat of a problem” in their neighborhood. These data indicate quite strikingly that youth of color, and especially Black youth, have far more concern about, and fear of, guns and gun violence compared with white youth.

Table 1.22: Threat of Neighborhood Gun Violence among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| In your neighborhood, how much of a problem is gun violence? | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Big problem | 10.3 | 0.9 | 5.6 |
| Somewhat of a problem | 20.2 | 6.5 | 18.3 |
| Not much of a problem | 30.1 | 27.6 | 37.3 |
| Not a problem | 39.4 | 65.0 | 38.8 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

Young Blacks and Latinos are more likely than white youth to report experiencing gun violence first-hand or second-hand and in their neighborhoods. These lived experiences likely contribute to distinct perspectives on the causes of, and potential solutions to, gun violence, particularly among Black youth.

Incarceration & The Police

The cases of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Natasha McKenna, Islan Nettles, Mya Hall, and countless other young men and women of color have focused increased attention on racial disparities and discrimination in the American justice system. In this section we document Black millennials' experience with and attitudes toward the criminal justice system.

Incarceration Rates

Figure 1.10 below show incarceration rates from 2003 to 2013 among young people by age, racial group and sex or gender. We point out that the scale on the vertical axes varies across plots because incarceration rates vary tremendously across these groups. **Within each age group and in every year, incarceration rates were significantly higher for young Black men and women.** In 2013, for instance, 1,092 out of every 100,000 Black men 18 and 19 years of age was incarcerated, compared with 115 young white men and 412 young Latino men at those ages. There are similar disparities for other age groups. For instance, nearly 4% of Black men between the ages of 20 and 24 were incarcerated in 2013, compared with 0.6% of white men and 1.6% of Latino men between the ages of 18 and 24. Nearly six percent (5.7%) of Black men between the ages of 25 and 29 were incarcerated, compared with 1% of white men and 2.3% of Latino men in this same age group.

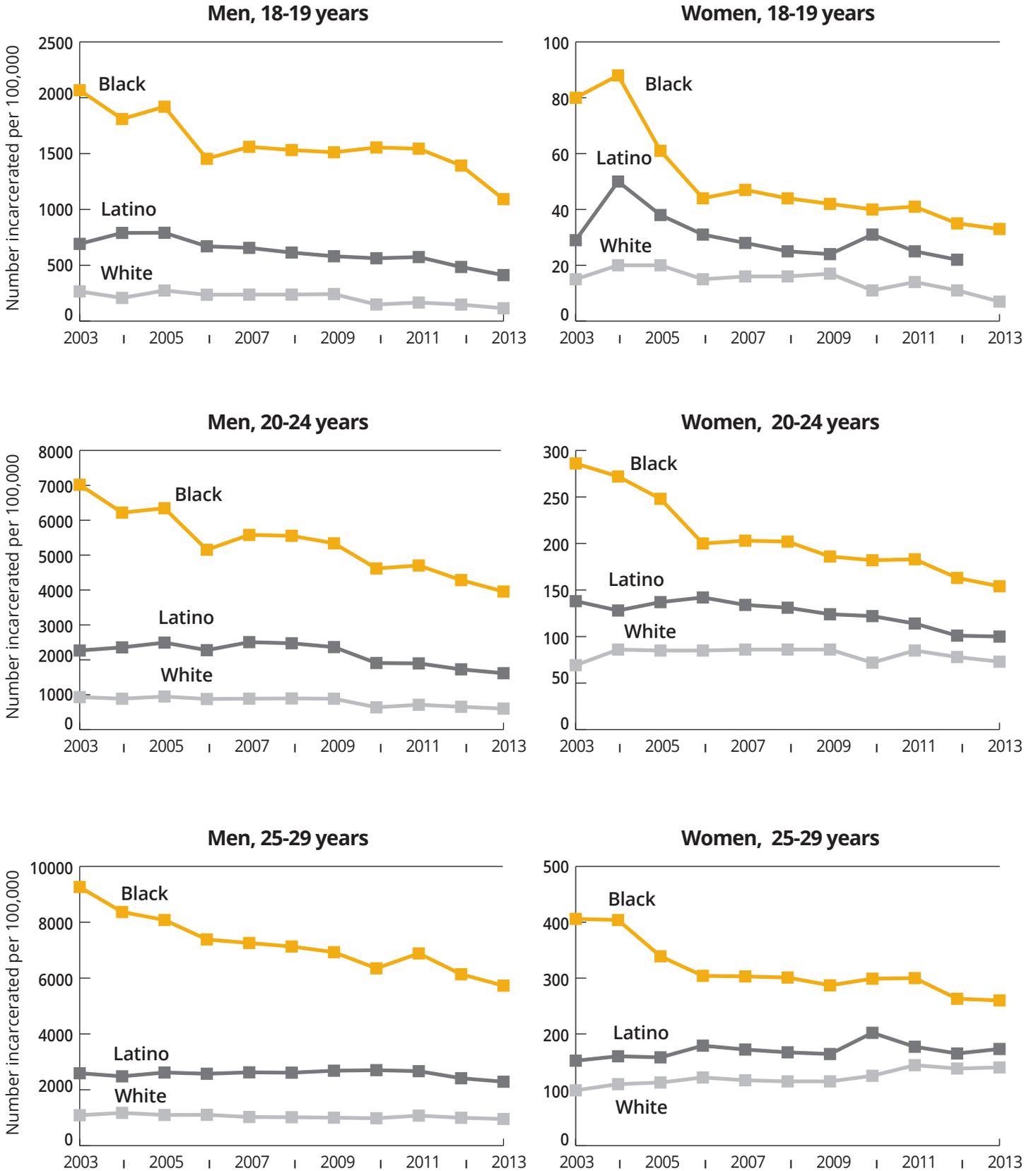
Young Black women are also incarcerated at significantly higher rates than young white and Latina women. Among women 18 and 19 years of age in 2013, Black women were incarcerated at a rate of 33 per 100,000, compared with 7 per 100,000 for white women and 17 per 100,000 for Latina women. Overall incarceration rates for women rise between the ages of 20 and 24, yet racial disparities persist: 133 Black women per 100,000 were incarcerated in 2013, compared with 73 white women and 100 Latina women. Among women ages 25 to 29, 260 Black women per 100,000 were incarcerated, compared with 140 white women and 173 Latina women.

It is important to point out that these significant racial differences in incarceration rates remain, despite a considerable decline in incarceration rates among both young Black men and women over the last decade.

Within each age group and in every year, incarceration rates were significantly higher for young Black men and women.



Figure 1.10: Incarceration Rates among Young People, 2003-2013



Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Prisoners in [Year]" (annual publication).

Experiences with the Police

Black millennials also have a distinct set of experiences with the police. Table 1.22 reports the results, for people between the ages of 18 and 29, of a national survey we conducted in 2009—long before the killings of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and others called national attention to police violence. We asked young people several questions about their evaluations of and experiences with the police. As Table 1.23 shows, Black youth reported the highest rates of harassment or violence from the police, and experienced it at nearly twice the rate of other young people. More than half of Black youth said that either they or someone they know was harassed or experienced violence from the police, compared with a third of white youth and a quarter of Latino youth. Clearly, any harassment or violence from police is too much. But the data indicate that Black youth experience it at disproportionately high rates compared to young people from other groups.

The differences across racial and ethnic groups in how young people view the police are similarly dramatic. Compared with white and Latino/a youth, Black youth are far less trusting of the police and less likely to view the police as a resource for protection. Less than half of Black adults under the age of 30 reported having trust in the police, compared with almost 60 percent of Latino youth and over 70 percent of white youth. About two-thirds of Black youth believe the police in their neighborhood are there to protect them, compared to three-fourths of Latino youth and just over 80% of white youth.

In their everyday lives, Black youth are deeply ambivalent—if not outright cynical—about the police who patrol their communities. These attitudes are widespread among Black Youth, and were present even before the national news was dominated by events like those in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Charleston.

Table 1.23: Experiences with and Assessments of the Police (ages 18-29)

| | Black (% yes) | White (% yes) | Latino (% yes) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Have you or anyone you know experienced harassment or violence at the hands of the police? | 54.4 | 32.8 | 24.8 |
| Do you trust the police? | 44.2 | 71.5 | 59.6 |
| Do you believe the police in your neighborhood are there to protect you? | 66.1 | 80.3 | 74.4 |

Source: 2009 Mobilization and Change survey.

II. Political Engagement and Attitudes

Voter Turnout & Mobilization



Young people of color – and especially Black youth – have played pivotal roles in the last two presidential elections. Motivated in part by the presence of the first Black major party presidential candidate, young people of color were difference-makers for President Obama. In this section, we study patterns of voter turnout and mobilization among young people of color.

Historical Differences in Voter Turnout

Turnout among young people has increased over the last two decades, with the largest increases occurring among Black youth. Table 2.1 displays data from the U.S. Census Bureau on turnout rates among young people between the ages of 18 and 24. In the 1996 presidential election, only about a third of young people in this age group turned out to vote. White youth (36.9%) voted at higher rates than both Black (32.4%) and Latino (15.1%) youth. Turnout among all groups increased in both the 2000 and 2004 elections. By 2004, 44% of Black youth, 48.5% of white youth and 20.4% of Latino youth turned out to vote.

Though young people were widely credited with making the difference for President Obama in the 2008 election, Table 2.1 clearly shows that young people of color were the difference-makers. Black youth turnout increased eight percentage points between 2004 and 2008 to 52.3%, the highest rate among young people. Latino youth turnout increased by seven percentage points to 27.4%. Turnout among white youth, on the other hand, was virtually unchanged, at 48.3% in 2008.

Young people did not turn out to vote in 2012 at the same rates as in 2008, but Black youth again turned out at the

highest levels. The turnout rate among Black youth was 45.9%, compared with 41.4% of white youth and 26.7% of Latino youth. Thus, contrary to the media's emphasis on the "youth vote," the data show that **Black youth have turned out to vote in recent elections at higher rates than white and Latino youth, and that increases in turnout among young people in recent elections have been driven by Black and Latino youth.**

Table 2.1: Voter Turnout among Youth (ages 18–24), 1996–2012

| Year | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1996 | 32.4 | 36.9 | 15.1 |
| 2000 | 33.9 | 37.2 | 15.4 |
| 2004 | 44.0 | 48.5 | 20.4 |
| 2008 | 52.3 | 48.3 | 27.4 |
| 2012 | 45.9 | 41.4 | 26.7 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration, Historical Time Series Tables", <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/historical/> (accessed January 22, 2015).

Reasons for Not Voting

Using data from a nationally representative survey of young people we conducted in November 2012, Table 2.2 shows the reasons young people gave for not turning out to vote. The most common explanations for not voting were that youth were not registered to vote, were disinterested in politics or didn't like the candidates. Many young nonvoters said that they did not vote because they lacked the proper identification.

Table 2.2 reveals important differences across racial groups in the reasons for non-voting. While not being registered to vote was the most common response across all three racial groups, Black and Latino youth were much less likely than white youth to report that they did not vote because they were disinterested in politics or did not like the candidates. In contrast, Black youth reported that they could not find their local polling place at much higher rates (11.4%) than white (4.4%) and Latino (2.9%) youth. As President Obama mentioned in his victory speech, long voting lines were observed across the country on Election Day. Higher percentages of Black youth (8.5%) than both white (2.3%) and Latino (1.7%) youth cited long lines as the reason for not voting.

Since the 2008 election, a number of states passed legislation that required voters to show some form of identification before casting a valid ballot. Moreover, many of these states required voters to show a state-issued photo ID before voting. As Table 2.3 below indicates, substantial numbers of young people reported being asked to show some form of identification before voting, with important differences across racial groups. Young Black voters reported being asked to show identification at considerably higher rates (72.9%) than both young whites (50.8%) and Latinos (60.8%). **Black youth reported being asked for identification at**

There are other substantial differences across racial groups, and many of these differences implicate state voting laws. For instance, less than five percent of young white non-voters said that voter identification requirements deterred them from voting, while 17.3% of young Black non-voters and 8.1% of young Latino non-voters said that the reason they did not vote was because they did not have the proper identification. These findings suggest that voter identification laws have a racially disparate impact in reducing turnout among young people of color.

Table 2.2: Common Explanations for Non-voting among Youth (Ages 18-29) (Non-voters Only)

| Reason for not voting | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Not registered to vote | 55.0 | 61.4 | 45.0 |
| Didn't have proper ID | 17.3 | 4.7 | 8.1 |
| Disinterested in politics | 13.2 | 23.9 | 13.2 |
| Didn't like candidates | 11.3 | 19.8 | 11.3 |
| Couldn't find polling place | 11.4 | 4.4 | 2.9 |
| Lines were too long | 8.5 | 2.3 | 1.7 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012. Respondents had the option to choose multiple responses so column totals sum to more than 100 percent.

significantly higher rates than white and Latino youth even in states with no identification laws. The differences are similarly striking for the percentage of youth asked to show photo identification—64.5% of Black youth said they were asked to show photo ID, compared with 42.2% of white youth and 57% of Latino youth. These differences hold up even while accounting for the differences in state identification laws.

Table 2.3: Percentage of Young Voters (ages 18-29) Asked for Identification

| Form of ID | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Any identification | 72.9 | 50.8 | 60.8 |
| Asked to show ID in state without ID law | 68.4 | 46.4 | 59.5 |
| Photo identification | 64.5 | 42.2 | 57 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

These data show that voter identification laws appear to be applied disproportionately across racial groups. Among youth, people of color—young Blacks especially—are considerably more likely to be asked for identification in order to vote. The uneven application of these laws suggests that polling place workers exercise a high level of discretion in requesting ID from potential voters. Unless all polling places—and all poll workers—apply voting laws in a consistent manner, the very existence of identification laws implies that young people of color are more likely than white youth to be asked to prove their identify before being allowed to vote.

Black Youth Mobilized by Democrats, Community Organizations

Mobilization efforts are one of the most important factors to consider when explaining voter turnout. People are more likely to turn out to vote when they have been asked to do so. The increased mobilization of young people, and especially young people of color, is commonly cited as one of the main reasons behind high levels of youth turnout in 2008 and 2012.¹⁰

Table 2.4 below shows the percentages of youth ages 18–29 who reported being contacted to vote in the four most recent presidential elections. For the most part, white youth reported being contacted more frequently than black and Latino youth, especially for contact by political parties. However, the gaps between racial groups closed significantly over this time period. Contact rates among white youth remained relatively stable over this period; among black youth, the rate of contact by political parties doubled between 2004 and 2008 and increased again in 2012. Almost twice as many Latino youth reported being contacted by a party in the 2008 election compared with 2000, and this figure doubled again in the 2012 election. These data perhaps indicate the importance

of the Latino vote to the campaigns in 2012.

Non-party sources of mobilization, such as community organizations, also have increased in prominence. Nearly 16% of black youth reported being mobilized by a non-party source in 2008, though this dropped slightly in 2012. Contact rates have more than tripled for Latino youth between 2000 and 2012, from 6.5% to 22.1%. Contacts made by these non-party groups have increased, yet the groups still reach out to only a small number of persons in this age group. This type of contact often depends on whether a group can secure funding to pursue such efforts.

Table 2.4: Youth Mobilization in Presidential Elections by Race, 2000–2012

| Year | Political Party contact | | | Non-party contact (e.g., community organization) | | |
|------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|--|-----------|------------|
| | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
| 2000 | 17.6 | 25.3 | 9.7 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 6.5 |
| 2004 | 15.6 | 30.3 | 20.5 | 15.2 | 12.2 | 7.7 |
| 2008 | 31.5 | 24.1 | 17.2 | 15.7 | 7.4 | 13.8 |
| 2012 | 36.3 | 24.7 | 38.6 | 14.0 | 12.8 | 22.1 |

Source: American National Election Studies.

Using the survey we conducted in November 2012, we studied the sources of youth mobilization more closely. These data are shown in Table 2.5 below, where we again find important differences across racial groups. Nearly half of Black youth reported being contacted by the Democratic Party, while Latino and white youth were mobilized by the Democratic Party at substantially lower rates. The Republican Party, meanwhile, mobilized considerably larger proportions of young whites than either Black or Latino youth. Similar patterns are found when examining mobilization patterns by the two presidential campaigns. More Black youth than white and Latino youth reported being contacted by the Obama campaign, while white youth reported being contacted by the Mitt Romney campaign at considerably higher rates than Black and Latino youth.

Community organizations and local institutions also played an important role in mobilizing youth during the 2012 election, though their reach was more limited than the major parties and presidential campaigns. As Table 2.6 shows, local organizations mobilized smaller but still critical percentages of youth. Mobilization rates, however, again varied by racial group. White youth were contacted at higher rates by social and recreational groups than either Black or Latino youth. Groups devoted to Latino interests were larger sources of mobilization for Latino youth than groups devoted to Black interests were for Black youth. However, Black youth were contacted at greater rates than both Latinos and whites by

Table 2.5: Young People Mobilized by Parties and Campaigns in the 2012 election

| Source | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Democratic Party | 47.5 | 30.4 | 33.6 |
| Republican Party | 10.6 | 29.9 | 17.2 |
| Obama campaign | 31.7 | 20.8 | 23.6 |
| Romney campaign | 7.2 | 17.4 | 9.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

youth groups, religious institutions and especially community organizations.

We know that part of the reason for increased turnout among Black youth in the last two elections was the money allocated to mobilizing these young people. In addition to the Democratic Party and the Obama campaign, community organizations, hip hop artists and social media also helped to mobilize and energize Black youth in 2008 and 2012.

Table 2.6: Young People Mobilized by Organizations and Groups in the 2012 Election

| Source | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Social/recreational group | 3.5 | 7.7 | 6.1 |
| Group promoting racial interests | 4.1 | 1.8 | 6.5 |
| Youth group | 7.3 | 2.2 | 3.3 |
| Church/place of worship | 4.3 | 2.8 | 2.9 |
| Neighborhood/community organization | 15.7 | 4.6 | 2.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

In 2016, will the campaigns and parties once again invest in Black youth and their political participation? Are funders prepared to direct money to poor and marginal populations so that community groups can facilitate the participation of young people, especially young people of color? Young people of color have shown that they are willing and interested in expressing their political voices and can help make the difference on Election Day. Will political parties and funders make them a priority?

Partisanship & Vote Choice

What do Black millennials want from the political system? To understand this question, in this section we study young people's evaluations of the major political parties and voting decisions in presidential elections. Partisanship is one of the most stable features of American politics. Indeed, most Americans tend to stick with one party for most of their adult lives. Partisanship is also closely related to vote choice. By examining how young people align with political parties and candidates, we can better evaluate what young people hope to achieve by participating in electoral politics.

Millennials and Partisanship

To measure young people's attitudes toward the political parties, we used what is called a feeling thermometer. The feeling thermometer asks survey respondents to rate the parties on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, where larger numbers represent more positive evaluations. These questions were presented to a nationally representative sample of young people between the ages of 18 and 29 in June 2014.

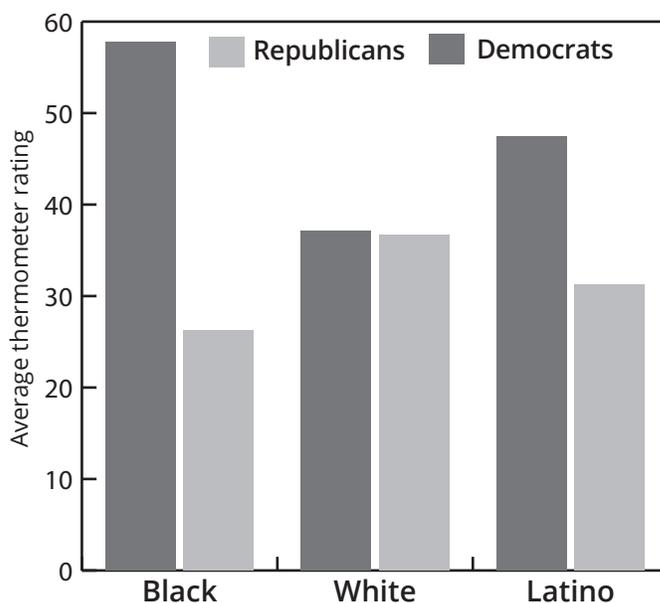
The data are displayed in Figure 2.1. Young voters are often believed to be overwhelmingly Democratic, but the figure shows important differences in feelings toward the political parties across racial groups. Black youth (average rating=57.8) provided the most positive assessment of the Democratic Party, followed by Latino youth (47.5) and white youth (37.1). Thus, Black youth prefer the Democratic Party at considerably higher levels than white youth.

Figure 2.1 also shows varying levels of polarization in party preferences among young people. Black youth exhibit a strong preference for Democrats over Republicans. Across all racial and ethnic groups, Black youth reported the highest average rating for Democrats (57.8) and the lowest average rating for Republicans (26.3). Latino youth also report a relatively strong preference for Democrats, though they provided lower assessments of Democrats (47.5) and slightly more positive evaluations of Republicans (31.3) than Black youth. White youth, however, are relatively equally divided and do not appear to think positively of either political party. Their average rating of Democrats is 37.1, compared with an average rating of 36.7 for Republicans.

These data have important implications for how millennials

figure into electoral politics. While white youth tend to be closely divided between the Republican and Democratic parties, Latino youth and especially Black youth have stronger loyalties to and more positive evaluations of the Democratic Party. In the previous sections, we showed that turnout and other forms of political participation have increased among Black and Latino youth in recent elections, but has remained stable (or even declined slightly) among white youth. Thus, differences in young people's party allegiances and willingness to vote continue to create conditions in which young people of color can play a key role in electoral politics.

Figure 2.1: Young People's Evaluations of the Political Parties, 2014



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014. Bars represent the average feeling thermometer ratings for the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Vote Choice: 2012

Young people are not defined by a singular political opinion. In fact, young people of different racial groups had very different assessments of the 2012 presidential candidates. Figure 2.2 below shows the average “feeling thermometer” evaluations of each of the presidential and vice presidential candidates, where higher numbers represent more positive evaluations.

Young adults generally gave Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney fairly low assessments. Black youth gave Romney an average score of 9.2, compared with 41.3 for white youth and 22.3 among Latino youth. Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan fared similarly. Black youth provided an average score of 11.9, compared to 37.5 for white youth and 19.8 for Latino youth. Clearly, the Republican ticket did not resonate well with youth people, and particularly not with young people of color.

The Democratic candidates fared much better, although there was still considerable variation. Black youth rated President Obama highest, with an average rating of 81.7, compared with 68.5 among Latino youth and 43.9 among white youth. Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden fared considerably worse compared to President Obama among all racial groups, with an average of 58.7 from Black youth, 36.2

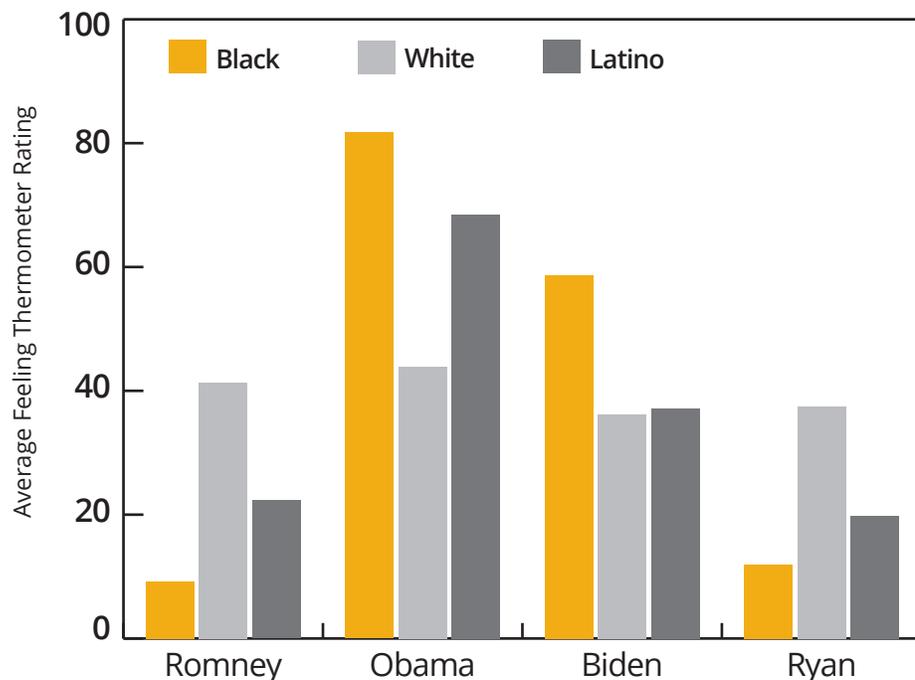
among white youth and 37.2 among Latino youth.

These evaluations reveal that Black youth and, to a lesser extent, Latino youth, had highly polarized views about the two major parties’ tickets, whereas white youth were much more conflicted, granting nearly equivalent ratings to both parties’ nominees.

These differences are even more striking when examining how young people cast their ballots. Overall, a strong majority—58.7%—of youth voted for President Obama. However, this figure masks significant differences across racial groups. Young Blacks were virtually unanimous in their support of President Obama (95.8%), and young Latinos also granted very strong support (76.3%) to Obama. Less than half (44.7%) of white youth, however, voted for Obama. Thus, Obama’s success in winning the youth vote was due largely to his extremely high levels of support from young people of color.

Table 2.7 compares the percentage of respondents who voted for Obama across demographic categories. While there was no major gender gap in voter turnout, as we showed earlier in this report, there was a significant gender gap in vote choice. Overall, young women reported voting for Obama at higher rates (61.5%) than young men (55.8%). The gender gap was smallest among Black youth, where 96.0% of women and 93.2% of men reported voting for President Obama. The gap was slightly larger among white youth, among whom

Figure 2.2: Evaluations of 2012 Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

46.7% of women and 42.8% of men voted for Obama. The gender gap was largest among young Latino/as. Though Latino/as strongly supported Obama overall, 80% of young Latina women reported casting votes for President Obama, compared with 72.9% of young Latino men.

There are also some interesting differences by education level. Overall, young people who did not attend college were slightly more supportive of President Obama (60.3%) compared with those who attended college or obtained a college degree (57.8%). These patterns again varied by racial group. Black youth who did not attend college were somewhat more supportive

of Obama (97.9%) than Black youth who attended college (92%). We see the opposite relationship among white youth, as those who attended college were much more supportive of President Obama (47.5%) than those who did not (37.9%), although in neither group did a majority of youth support Obama. The differences were much smaller among Latino youth: 75.8% of college attendees supported Obama, compared with 76.8% of those who did not attend college.

Finally, there were also substantial differences by age cohort. Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 were a bit less supportive of President Obama (56.4%) than young people between the ages of 25 and 29 (61.9%). The differences between age group

and vote choice were smallest among Black youth, with 93.1% of Black youth under 25 voting for Obama compared with 97.4% of Black youth between 25 and 29 years of age. While only 41.3% of white youth between 18 and 24 years of age supported Obama, somewhat larger numbers (49.1%) of white youth between 25 and 29 years of age voted for the President. The largest age differences are found among Latino youth. Although large majorities of both age groups supported Obama, 72.1% of Latinos under 25 supported Obama, compared with 84.9% of Latinos between 25 and 29 years of age.

Thus, **contrary to media representations of a monolithic “youth vote,” it is clear that vote choice differed considerably across racial groups and other demographic categories.**

Table 2.7: Rates of Voting for Obama among Young People in 2012

| Group | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Women | 96.0 | 46.7 | 79.9 |
| Men | 93.2 | 42.8 | 72.9 |
| HS Diploma or Less | 97.9 | 37.9 | 76.8 |
| Some College or College Grad | 92.0 | 47.5 | 75.8 |
| Age 18-24 | 93.1 | 41.3 | 72.1 |
| Age 25-29 | 97.4 | 49.1 | 84.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

Presidential Approval

We compared young people's evaluations of President Obama in 2012 and 2014. The results are shown below in Figure 2.3. In 2012, as shown above, young people of color had extremely positive evaluations of President Obama, with an average rating of 81.7 from Black youth and 68.5 from Latino youth. In contrast, white youth felt somewhat negatively toward the president, with an average rating of 43.9.

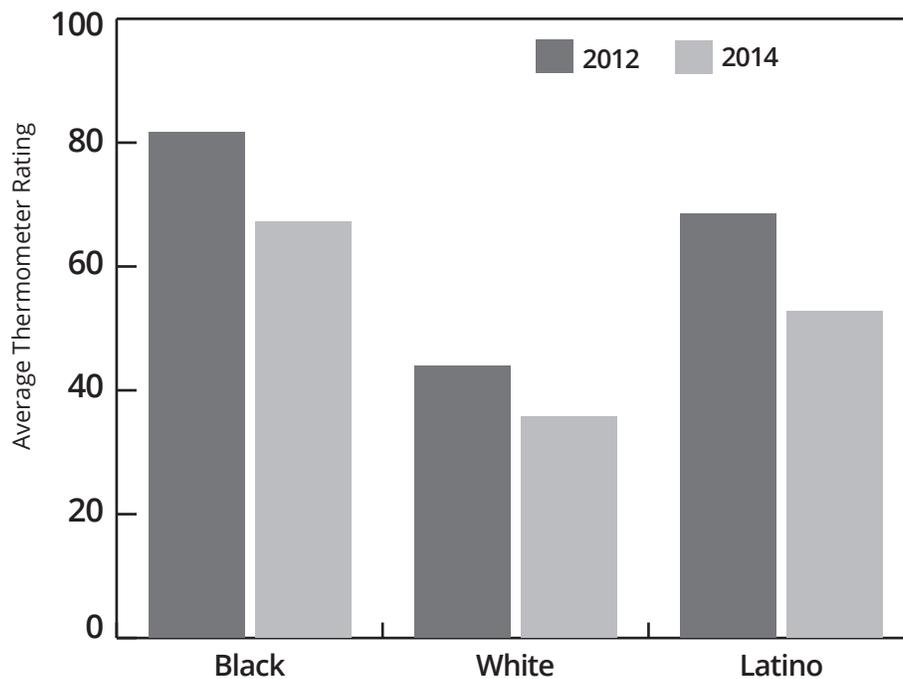
Between 2012 and 2014, however, young people's evaluations of President Obama substantially decreased. Black youth continued to exhibit the most positive evaluations, with an average rating of 67.2, though this represents a drop of 14 percentage points since 2012. Latino youth reported a slightly positive evaluation on balance, with an average rating of 52.8, a decline of almost 16 percentage points. White youth's evaluations of the president, however, were squarely negative, with an average rating of 35.8—a decrease of 8 percentage points.

Thus, while young people of color, especially Black youth, continue to grant the highest levels of approval to President

Obama, their evaluations of the President have also declined the most over the two years since being re-elected. While it is difficult to attribute these declines to any one particular cause, young people may be responding to the stubbornly high unemployment rates among young people of color and frustration with the president's inability to secure comprehensive immigration reform.

As this section has shown, there is considerable variation across racial groups in partisanship, vote choice and evaluations of the president. However, within each racial group, these associations remain relatively stable across time. These findings cast doubt on the idea that all youth consistently support the Democratic Party and its candidates. To be sure, large numbers of youth do identify as Democrats and go to the polls to vote for Democratic candidates, but the candidates and the party cannot take these voters for granted.

Figure 2.3: Young People's Evaluations of President Obama, 2012 and 2014



Sources: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012 and June 2014. Bars represent the average feeling thermometer ratings for President Obama during the 2012 presidential and 2014 midterm elections.

Participatory Politics: Political Engagement Beyond Voting

Political participation does not begin and end with voting, and voting is not the only way in which young people can express their political voices. In this section, we examine other ways in which young people engaged with politics during the 2012 election. We also explore the ways in which young people are using new media to participate in politics, which we call participatory politics. By participatory politics, we mean the ways young people seek to exert voice and influence on issues of public concern by taking advantages of new opportunities available through the use of new media. Young people engage in participatory politics by collecting and consuming information distributed through non-traditional sources, commenting on or providing feedback on political issues through digital means, circulating information and opinions, producing original online content and mobilizing their communities and members of their digital networks.

Political Engagement in the 2012 Election

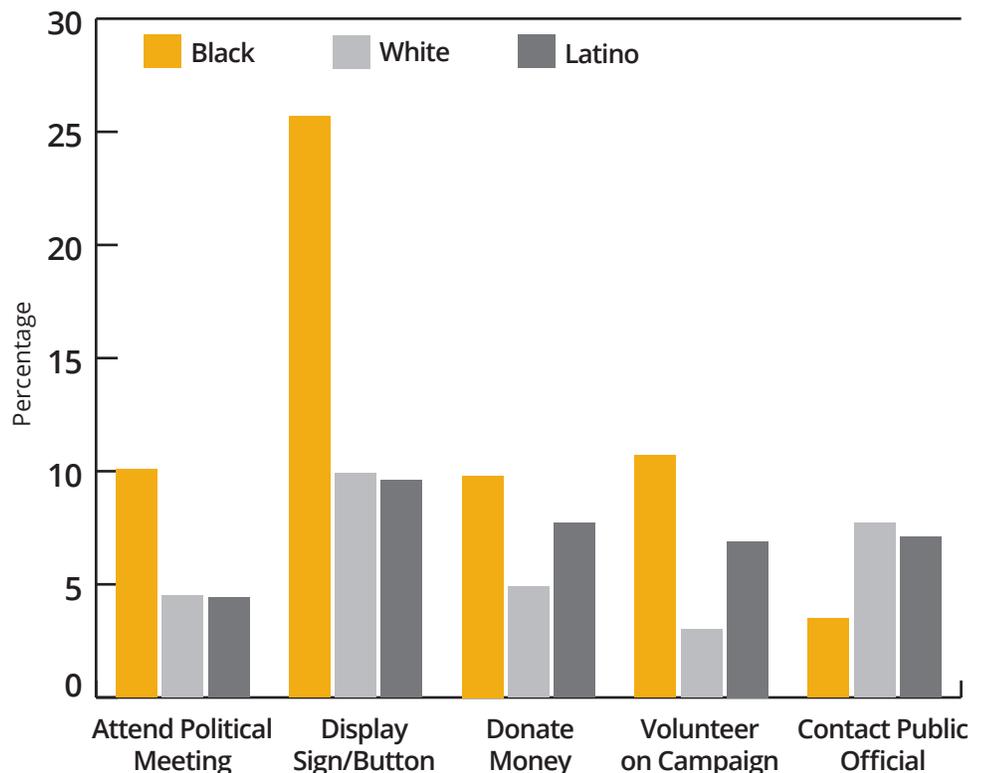
Using a survey we conducted in November 2012 with a nationally representative sample of young adults ages 18 to 29, we examined five behaviors traditionally used to assess non-voting forms of political activity. These measures include: attending a political meeting or rally; displaying a campaign sign, button, or bumper sticker; donating money to a political candidate or campaign; volunteering on a political campaign; and contacting a political office.

These data are shown below in Figure 2.4. While the overall levels of participation in any particular activity were relatively low, they are generally consistent with previous research. Black youth exhibited the highest rates of participation on four of the five activities. Approximately 10 percent of Black youth attended a political meeting or rally, compared with fewer than 5 percent of white or Latino youth. More than a quarter of Black youth displayed a campaign sign, button, or bumper

sticker, compared with 10 percent of white or Latino youth. About 10 percent of Black youth made a political donation or volunteered for a campaign, candidate or party, compared with smaller percentages of white and Latino youth.

White and Latino youth, however, were about twice as likely to contact a public official than Black youth, which could be due to higher levels of alienation toward political officials among Black youth.

Figure 2.4: Political Engagement beyond Voting in 2012



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

On the whole, though, these data show that Black youth not only voted at higher rates than white and Latino youth in 2012, but they also exhibited higher levels of political engagement across all but one of the behaviors we studied.

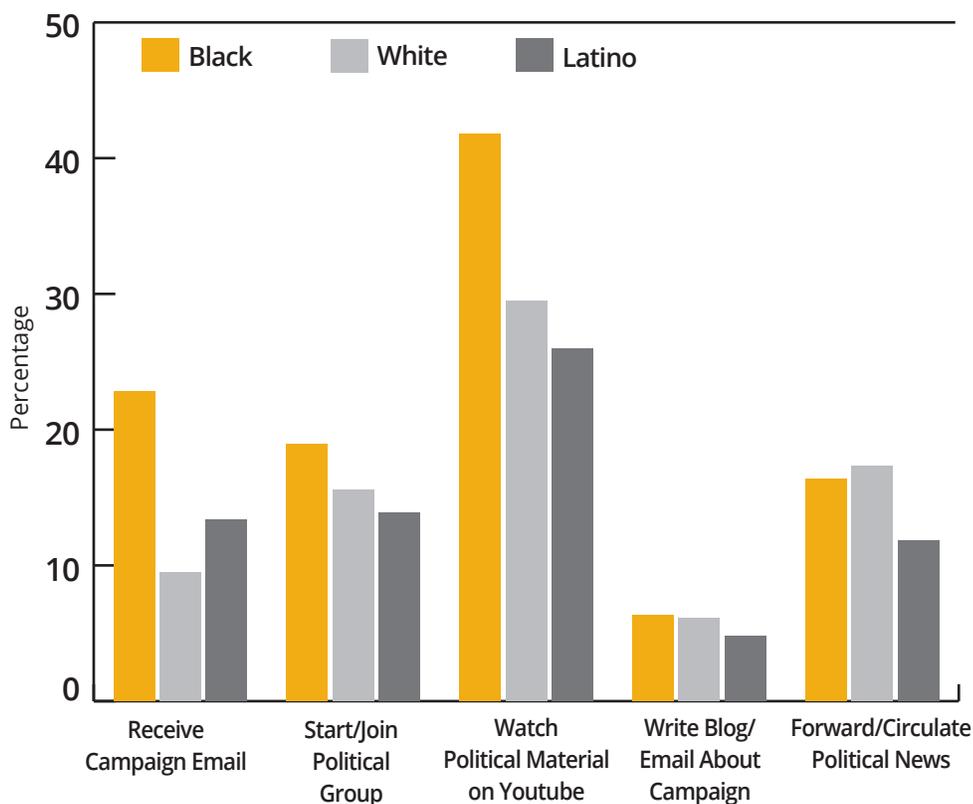
Participatory Politics

The Internet has been an increasingly important component of electoral campaigns. The 2012 election cycle was no exception. Not only did political campaigns and candidates use the Internet to distribute information and reach out to voters, but young people turned to the Internet to both consume information about the election and distribute it to others. Moreover, the Internet has quickly become a leading platform for young people to exercise and develop their political voices. As part of the MacArthur Foundation research network on Youth and Participatory Politics,¹¹ we studied the ways young people engaged with politics over the Internet in the 2012 election.

As Figure 2.5 shows, once again we find wide variation in behavior across racial groups, with Black youth generally engaged in online political activity at higher rates than white and Latino youth. Almost a quarter of Black youth signed up to receive email from a candidate or campaign, compared with 9.5% of white youth and 13.4% of Latino youth. Sizable percentages of youth started or joined a political group on a social networking site (like Facebook), with Black youth doing so at higher rates than Latinos or whites: 18.9 percent, 13.9% and 15.6% respectively.

Over 40 percent of Black youth viewed campaign materials (such as the presidential debates) on a website like YouTube, compared with 29.5% of white

Figure 2.5: Online Activity during the 2012 Election



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, November 2012.

youth and slightly fewer (26.0%) Latino youth. Overall, few youth contributed an original blog piece or online opinion article about a candidate or campaign, but Black youth again did so at higher rates than whites and Latinos. Finally, similar percentages of Black (16.4%) and white (17.3%) youth circulated or forwarded an article (by e-mail, for instance) about the campaign, followed by 11.8% of Latino youth. Thus, as these data indicate, not only were young people, and Black youth especially, energized about participating in the democratic process, but this enthusiasm also translated to high levels of political engagement via the Internet.

Accomplishing Political Change

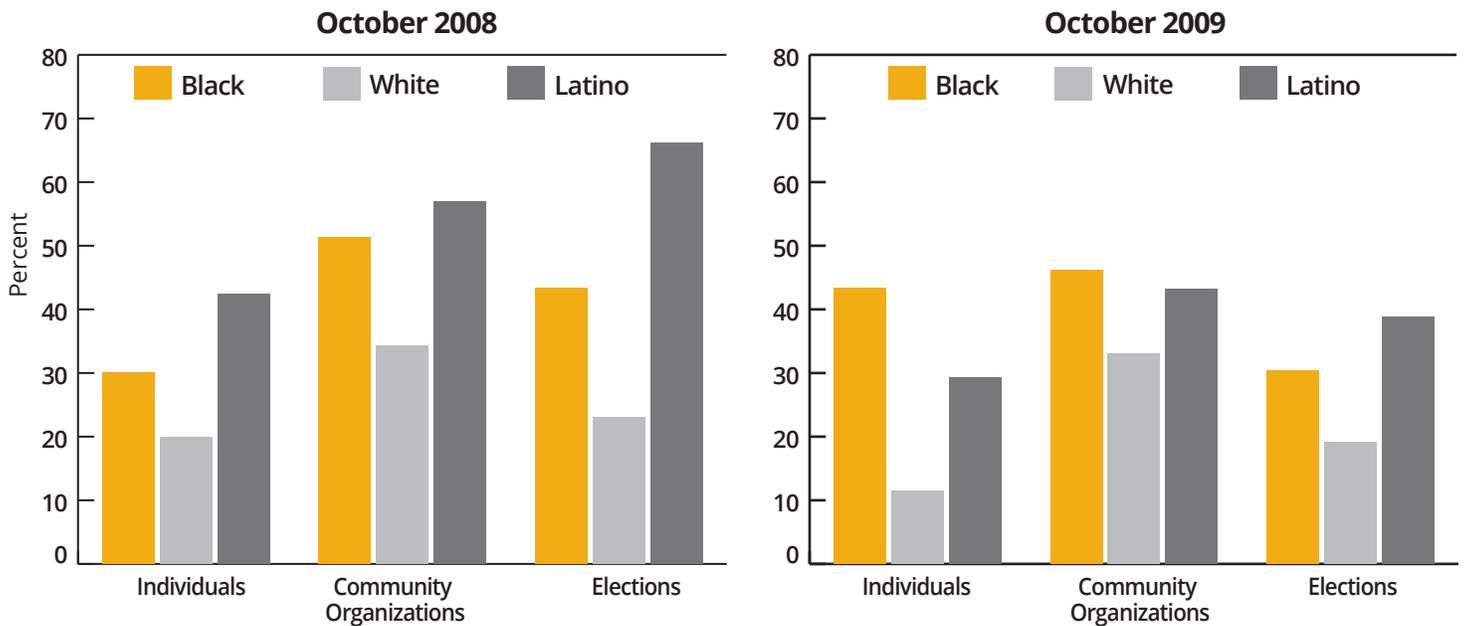
Understanding young people's participation in activities beyond voting is also important for studying how young people can be mobilized to create political change. We asked youth whether they believe individual citizens, community organizations and elections are effective in bringing about change. Figure 2.6 shows the results. In the fall of 2008, larger proportions of black and Latino youth, compared to whites, believed that these instruments for change were effective. Black youth saw community organizations as the most effective means for change, followed closely by elections. The pattern was reversed among Latino youth. Youth were least likely to believe that the actions of individuals could be sufficient to achieve change.

These patterns had changed significantly by the end of 2009. Black and Latino youth both were less likely to believe that elections were effective means of

accomplishing change, and youth of all racial groups believed that community organizations were the most effective way to achieve change (though these numbers dropped among black and Latino youth). Finally, Black youth were much more supportive in 2009 of the effectiveness of individual action than they had been in 2008. Consistent with the analysis discussed above, these patterns further support the idea

that during the first term of the Obama Administration, Black youth in particular moved away from the idea that the nation's institutions and political elites were the central drivers of change and instead embraced the idea that change must also come from the actions of ordinary people and local organizations.

Figure 2.6: Effectiveness of Instruments for Change



Source: 2008 and 2009 Mobilization and Change surveys. Figures reflect the percentages of youth (ages 18–29) who said that individuals, community organizations, and elections were “effective” or “very effective” at producing change.

Voting in elections is not the only way young people participate in politics. As the data above indicate, young people – and especially Black youth – engage in a wide range of other behaviors that also demonstrate political engagement and provide an opportunity to express political voice. Moreover, many young people of color engage in politics via digital platforms, which may provide new opportunities to organize, mobilize and engage with their peers and influence the politi-

cal system. In addition, young Black and Latino adults believe that non-voting forms of participation can be more effective for bringing about political change. These forms of political behavior beyond voting also provide important tools for political mobilization. We hope political and community organizations will harness the potential of new media to engage young people of color as we approach the 2016 presidential election cycle.

Attitudes Toward The Political & Legal Systems

Political participation depends in large part on whether citizens believe that their participation matters. While election campaigns can be exciting and interesting, citizens ultimately participate in politics to help spark political change. After all, in a democracy, elections are the primary way by which citizens' political attitudes can be translated into government policy.

We present three aspects of young people's beliefs about their relationship with government. First, do young people believe that they can make a difference by participating in politics? Second, do young people believe that government cares about people like themselves? And third, how effective do young people believe elections are for bringing about political change? In investigating these questions, we can better understand how young people view the tools of democratic governance.

Political Efficacy among Young People

We assessed two dimensions of young people's beliefs about government, which are commonly referred to as external and internal efficacy. External efficacy is the idea that the political system is responsive to its citizens, and internal efficacy is the belief that an individual has the capacity to effectively make demands of government. We have measured these two dimensions at several points in time over the last 10 years. We display these figures here to evaluate both continuity and change in these attitudes among young people.

Table 2.8 shows levels of political efficacy using a survey of young people between the ages of 15 and 25 we conducted in 2005. As the first row shows, young people of all racial groups believed that they could make a difference by participating in politics. In addition, as the second row shows, no one group of young people believed they held a monopoly on the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in politics. In fact, Black youth expressed the greatest confidence in having the skills and knowledge necessary to participate politically, followed by white youth and Latino youth. **Thus, contrary to common narratives that Black youth do not have enough confidence or capacity to influence and participate in politics, these data indicate that Black youth have similar—or even greater**

Young people of color, and especially Black youth, express feelings of political alienation with the belief that they are relatively powerless to influence government.

Table 2.8: Political Efficacy among Young People (2005)

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I believe that by participating in politics I can make a difference | 79.0 | 79.5 | 76.8 |
| I have the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in politics | 73.8 | 70.4 | 66.5 |
| The leaders in government care very little about people like me | 55.7 | 43.9 | 52.3 |
| The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and their friends | 65.6 | 50.3 | 62.3 |

Source: 2005 Black Youth Project survey.

—levels of internal efficacy compared with white youth.

However, as the third row shows, young people of color—especially Black youth—are more cynical about the responsiveness of government to their concerns. More than half of Black youth expressed the belief that leaders in government do not care much about people like them. A majority of Latino youth expressed similar feelings, compared with less than half of white youth. We again see differences in young people’s beliefs that the government is mostly run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and their friends. Close to two-thirds of Black and Latino youth agreed with this statement, compared with half of white youth.

These two sets of results run counter to conventional understandings of how young people view the political world. While young people of color and white youth exhibit similar levels of interest and confidence in participating in politics, they have very different views about whether the government will listen and respond to their voices. **Young people of color, and especially Black youth, express feelings of political alienation with the belief that they are relatively powerless to influence government.** When people view governing institutions as unresponsive, traditional means of influencing government (through voting, for instance) are less appealing.

Table 2.8 shows levels of political efficacy among young

people ages 18 to 29 four years later, in early 2009. This time period is notable because it corresponds with the excitement that accompanied the election and inauguration of America’s first Black president. Due to differences in the sample and the response options, we caution readers against directly comparing the numbers between Tables 2.8 and 2.9. Instead, we prefer to focus on the relative comparisons among young people.

As the table shows, Black youth again expressed greater confidence in their ability to make a difference by participating in politics than both white and Latino youth. Black youth also believe they have the requisite skills and knowledge to participate in politics at similar or greater degrees than white and Latino youth.

Interestingly, however, with the election of Barack Obama, the data indicate that young people of color expressed greater confidence than white youth in the responsiveness of government. White youth believed that government leaders do not care about people like themselves at substantially higher rates than Black and Latino youth. White youth also expressed the belief that government is run by big interests primarily looking after themselves at much higher levels than Black and Latino youth. While the data are not dispositive, these trends suggest that the election of President Obama may have affected young people’s beliefs about how well government cares about and responds to their voices.

Table 2.9: Political Efficacy among Young People (2009)

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I believe that by participating in politics I can make a difference | 55.6 | 41.6 | 41.4 |
| I have the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in politics | 52.3 | 34.6 | 22.2 |
| The leaders in government care very little about people like me | 30.4 | 48.6 | 46.1 |
| The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and their friends | 45.5 | 61.7 | 43.3 |

Source: 2009 Mobilization and Change survey.

In a third survey, we asked a nationally representative sample of young people (ages 18 to 29) several of these questions in June 2014. These data are shown in Table 2.10. As the first row shows, Black youth exhibited substantially higher levels of internal efficacy, as more than 70.8% of Black youth believed they could make a difference by participating in politics. White (51.8%) and Latino (55.7%) youth were considerably less confident that their political participation could make a difference.

The second row characterizes one dimension of young people's alienation from government. Similar percentages of Black, white and Latino youth agree that leaders in government care little about people like themselves. These numbers are all considerably higher than they were in 2005 and especially 2009, the first several months of the new Obama Administration. The data indicate that young people of all groups perceive that government is disconnected from the interests of people like themselves. The movement among Black and Latino youth is especially notable, given that young people of color appeared to be relatively optimistic about the responsiveness of the political system when surveyed early in the Obama Administration in 2009.

We further explored these beliefs by asking young people whether it matters which party wins elections. Nearly half of Latino youth believe it does not matter which party wins the elections, compared with 38.6% of Black youth and

Table 2.10: Political Efficacy among Young People (2014)

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I believe that by participating in politics I can make a difference | 70.8 | 51.8 | 55.7 |
| The leaders in government care very little about people like me | 68.5 | 74.0 | 68.2 |
| It makes no difference which party wins in the November 2014 elections | 38.6 | 38.1 | 49.0 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

38.1% of white youth. On the whole, these data indicate that while many young people do believe that which party wins elections makes a difference for political outcomes, young people are considerably more pessimistic about whether government leaders respond to their concerns.

Tables 2.9 and 2.10 reveal important changes in political efficacy among young people during the Obama Administration. Between 2009 and 2014, internal efficacy increased substantially—especially among Black youth. In 2014, larger numbers of young people believed that they could make a difference by participating in politics. At the same time, however, young people were considerably more likely to believe that leaders in government do not care about people like themselves. Black youth exhibited the largest decrease in external efficacy.

Perceptions of the Legal System and Political Inclusion

Equal protection under the law is a key component of political equality and human rights. We examined young people's assessments of equal protection by asking them to indicate whether they believe the U.S. legal system treats all groups equally, and whether they themselves feel like a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have. The results are shown in Table 2.11 below.

Though young people in general do not believe that the legal system treats all groups fairly, there are clear differences by race. Across both questions, Black youth consistently reported the least support for the idea that equal protection currently exists in the United States. Only about a quarter of Black youth believed that the American legal system treats all groups fairly. A substantially larger percentage of Latino youth (36.7%) believe that the American legal system treats all groups fairly, and an even higher percentage (41%) of white youth.

In addition, Black and Latino youth reported feeling like a full and equal citizen at considerably lower rates than white youth. Nearly three-quarters of white youth reported that they felt they had all the rights and protections of a full and equal citizen, compared with 60% or so of Black and Latino youth. These clear and consistent differences indicate that perceptions of political inclusion in the United States are very much shaped by race. It would not be surprising to find even lower numbers among Black youth now, and perhaps larger differences across racial groups, given the high visibility of multiple police killings of Black citizens.

Table 2.11: Young People’s Assessments of the Legal System and Political Inclusion

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Generally the American legal system treats all groups equally | 26.8 | 41.0 | 36.7 |
| Generally, I feel like a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have | 60.2 | 72.9 | 64.1 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, January 2014.

Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and other Black victims of police violence again focus our attention on how well law enforcement and the criminal justice system respond to the communities they serve. Our data show that young people’s evaluations of the legal system and the privileges conferred to them by citizenship vary in important ways by race. Young people’s experiences as members of our country and with the legal system are shaped by race, and in turn these experiences shape their attitudes and evaluations.

The data presented in this section demonstrate that young people, and especially Black millennials, are confident in their ability to participate in the political process. They are less certain, however, that political officials have their interests in mind. Our analysis of young people’s attitudes toward the legal system also sheds light on the challenges our nation must address with respect to enabling young people of color to see themselves as full and equal citizens, with the same rights as others. These findings may be especially useful for community groups and other organizations who hope to recruit and mobilize young people around issues that involve working outside the political system.

III. Support For Public Policies



Jobs and Employment

Stimulating the economy and creating new jobs were key issues in the 2012 presidential election and are likely to be important issues again in the 2016 race. Policymakers have discussed a range of approaches for job creation in the years since the Great Recession. In the first section of this report, we detailed how young people experience employment and the workplace in very different ways. Stubbornly high unemployment rates and comparatively high rates of workplace discrimination among young people of color, for instance, translate into differences in young people’s support for federal policies around jobs.

Table 3.1 shows millennials’ support for four commonly discussed employment policies. Young people of color support each of them at substantially greater rates than white youth.

For instance, **overwhelming majorities of Black and Latino youth support increasing the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour.** A smaller percentage, but still a majority, of white youth also support increasing the minimum wage. A majority of Black and Latino youth also strongly support extending unemployment benefits for people who have been out of work for long periods of time, compared with fewer than 40 percent of white youth. Black and Latino youth also support government-funded education and job training programs for the unemployed at higher levels than white youth. We see similar patterns in rates of support for a federal jobs creation bill: Black youth and Latino youth support a jobs bill that would create one million new jobs at higher rates than white youth.

Table 3.1: Support for Employment Policies among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Proposal | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Increase the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour | 80.5 | 61.2 | 75.9 |
| Extend federal unemployment benefits for people who have been out of work for a long time | 69.6 | 38.6 | 56.8 |
| Increase government spending for education and job training programs for the unemployed | 84.5 | 70.5 | 81.5 |
| A federal jobs creation bill that would create one million new jobs | 88.7 | 73.4 | 82.4 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Reducing Gun Violence

Over the last several years, policymakers have discussed a variety of proposals aimed at reducing gun violence. In examining the views of young people toward gun control, we find several important differences across racial groups. Table 3.2 displays these data. Young people of color are substantially more supportive of restrictions on gun ownership than white youth, with Black millennials generally providing the highest rates of support. About two-thirds of Black and Latino youth support a ban on semi-automatic weapons, compared with a bare majority of white youth. Furthermore, while 70 percent or more of both Black and Latino youth support a ban on high-capacity magazines, only 52.2% of white youth agree. We also find that white youth are considerably less supportive of increasing the number of police and armed guards

in public places (64.7%) than either Black (76.3%) or Latino youth (75.0%). While activists rail against the increasing militarization of our schools, especially in urban areas, young Blacks and Latinos support such measures to help ensure students' safety.

We find smaller differences across groups for several other proposals. For instance, large majorities of Black, white and Latino youth support criminal background checks for gun sales as well as improving mental health services to address a root cause of gun violence. Young people of all groups also overwhelmingly supported more punitive measures for people convicted of violating gun laws.

Table 3.2: Support for Gun Control Measures among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Proposal | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Nationwide ban on semi-automatic weapons | 67.6 | 50.8 | 65.2 |
| More police/armed guards in public places like schools and malls | 76.3 | 64.7 | 75.0 |
| Criminal background checks for all gun sales | 89.6 | 89.0 | 88.8 |
| Better mental health screening and treatment | 88.7 | 91.1 | 92.8 |
| Nationwide ban on high-capacity magazines | 74.4 | 52.2 | 70.0 |
| Stiffer penalties for gun law convictions | 86.1 | 89.4 | 86.8 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

Young people exhibit substantial disagreement, however, about their priorities for new gun policies. As Table 3.3 below shows, large majorities of young Blacks and Latinos reported that it is more important to control gun ownership than to protect the rights of gun owners. More than half of white

youth, in contrast, reported that protecting the rights of gun owners is more important.¹²

As the data indicate, young people are strongly supportive of initiatives designed to reduce gun violence, and the support is highest among Blacks and Latinos. Young people—and

especially young people of color—have a powerful perspective to add to this important conversation. Their voices indicate a willingness to try a broad-based approach designed to reduce gun violence, including tough new restrictions on gun ownership. Their futures depend on our success in doing so.

Table 3.3: Opinion on Gun Rights vs. Gun Control among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Priority | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| More important to protect rights of gun owners | 23.8 | 57.2 | 30.4 |
| More important to control gun ownership | 76.2 | 42.8 | 69.6 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

Health Care & The Affordable Care Act

Table 3.4 shows young people’s evaluations of the Affordable Care Act. We find significant racial differences. Black youth exhibit the highest level of approval of the ACA. **More than 81.8% of Black youth approved of the ACA, compared with 51.9% of Latino youth and 34.0% of white youth.** The individual mandate, or the requirement that every person purchase health care coverage or pay a fine instead, is considerably less popular among young people, yet the racial differences persist. Black and Latino youth were considerably more supportive of the individual mandate than white youth. We note that Black and Latino youth were considerably more supportive of the individual mandate and were the groups most likely to be affected by it. Moreover, it is also interesting that Latino youth were considerably less supportive of the ACA in general compared to Black youth, even though fewer Latino youth had health insurance coverage compared to Black youth.

As the bottom row of Table 3.4 indicates, young people of color reported obtaining coverage under the ACA at more than twice the rate of white youth. Several months into the initial enrollment period of the ACA (October 2013 to April 2014), 9.5% of Black youth

and 7.7% of Latino youth reported signing up for coverage under the ACA, compared with 3.5% of white youth. Based on 2012 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, these figures would suggest that more than 2.5 million young people signed up for health coverage under the provisions of the Affordable Care Act shortly after its implementation. These numbers are generally consistent with those provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, which found that about 2.25 million young people signed up for health coverage through the exchange in the initial enrollment period and another 2.6 million young people (ages 19-26) were eligible to remain on their parents’ health insurance plan.¹³

Table 3.4: Young People and the Affordable Care Act

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Approve of the Affordable Care Act | 81.8 | 34.0 | 51.9 |
| Support the individual mandate | 41.4 | 9.4 | 33.4 |
| I have signed up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act | 9.5 | 3.7 | 7.7 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, January 2014.

Table 3.5 below shows young people’s evaluations of the likely impact of the ACA. We again see significant differences by race. **While about two-thirds of Black youth believe the ACA will improve the quality of their own health insurance coverage, less than half of Latino youth and fewer than a quarter of white youth agree.** Interestingly, while many young people may not believe the ACA will improve their own health care coverage, larger percentages—especially of Black and Latino young people— believe that the ACA will improve health care coverage in the country more generally. Thus, not only do young people of color, and Black youth in particular, have the most dire need for improvement to our health care system, but they are also more likely to take advantage of the opportunity to receive coverage they did not already have, and more likely to believe that it will improve the quality of coverage for themselves and the nation as a whole.

While about two-thirds of Black youth believe the ACA will improve the quality of their own health insurance coverage, less than half of Latino youth and fewer than a quarter of white youth agree.

Table 3.5: Beliefs about the Effects of the Affordable Care Act

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The ACA will improve the quality of my health care coverage | 62.4 | 23.8 | 43.6 |
| The ACA will improve the quality of health care coverage in this country | 66.9 | 35.5 | 52.2 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, January 2014.

Immigration Reform

Though immigration reform has been one of the hottest political issues for much of the last decade, there has been little consensus about how best to address it. Recently, presidential candidate Donald Trump has ignited controversy by making his views on deportation and the criminalization of undocumented immigrants a major part of his campaign. From the DREAM Act to the Kids Act, young people have been at the center of discussions about immigration reform. We surveyed a national sample of young people in May 2013 to examine their views about immigration and the possibility of reform.

We find that Latino youth demonstrate the greatest support for comprehensive approaches to reforming the current immigration system, while white youth tend to favor more

punitive and law-and-order approaches. For instance, as Table 3.6 shows, Black and Latino youth support a path to citizenship at higher rates than white youth. Black and Latino youth are also more supportive than white youth of granting citizenship to undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children. Black and Latino youth also express greater support than white youth for extending citizenship to undocumented immigrants who serve in the U.S. military and also support the expansion of guest worker programs at higher rates than white youth. However, Black support of these measures, while higher than among white youth, was noticeably lower than among Latinos.

At the same time, we find greater support among white youth for some of the more punitive approaches to immi-

gration reform. We also find that Black youth are more in step with white youth than with Latino youth on these issues. For instance, large majorities of Black youth support requiring businesses to verify the legal status of new employees, compared with just two-thirds of Latino youth. White and Black youth also support increasing border security at higher rates than Latino youth. Furthermore, white and Black youth support the deportation of undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. illegally at about twice the rate of Latino youth.

Table 3.6: Support for Immigration Measures among 18 to 29 Year Olds

| Proposal | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Require employers to verify that all new hires are living in the U.S. legally | 80.9 | 88.0 | 64.2 |
| Creating a path to citizenship in which law-abiding immigrants currently living in this country illegally are allowed to eventually apply for citizenship | 77.5 | 67.1 | 89.4 |
| Increase government spending on security measures and enforcement at U.S. borders | 64.5 | 67.2 | 57.3 |
| Allow undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to gain citizenship when they receive a degree from a U.S. college or university | 69.1 | 53.3 | 86.8 |
| Grant citizenship to undocumented immigrants who serve in the U.S. military | 73.7 | 64.5 | 85.8 |
| Expand guest worker programs that would give a temporary visa to non-citizens who want to work legally in the United States | 62.2 | 59.9 | 87.9 |
| Identify and deport all immigrants currently living in this country illegally | 52.0 | 58.7 | 27.1 |

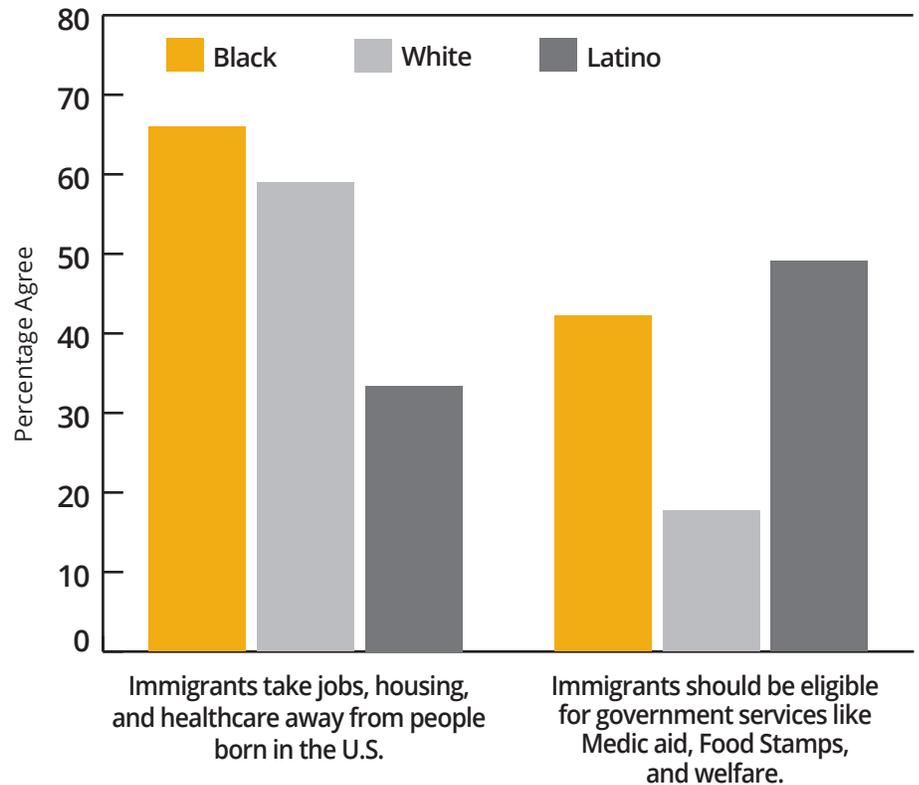
Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

As Figure 3.1 shows, nearly sixty percent of both Black and white youth believe that immigrants take away jobs, housing, and health care from people born in the U.S. Only a third of Latino youth shared this view. Just as white youth supported more punitive measures to fix America's immigration system, white youth also overwhelmingly opposed extending government benefits (including welfare, Medicaid, and food stamps) to immigrants before they become citizens, while larger percentages of Black and Latino youth supported the idea.

Figure 3.2 shows how young people think about the effect of immigrants on American society and culture. Nearly three-quarters of Latino youth believe that immigrants are changing the American way of life for the better, while Black and white youth are much less sanguine about this positive impact. Though Black youth are somewhat more positive than white youth about the contributions of immigrants, the data nevertheless indicate that Black youth have skepticism about the place of immigrants in society. Many observers have raised the possibility of “Black-Brown” coalitions between Black and Latino youth, Black attitudes toward immigrants suggest that much more work needs to be done on this front.

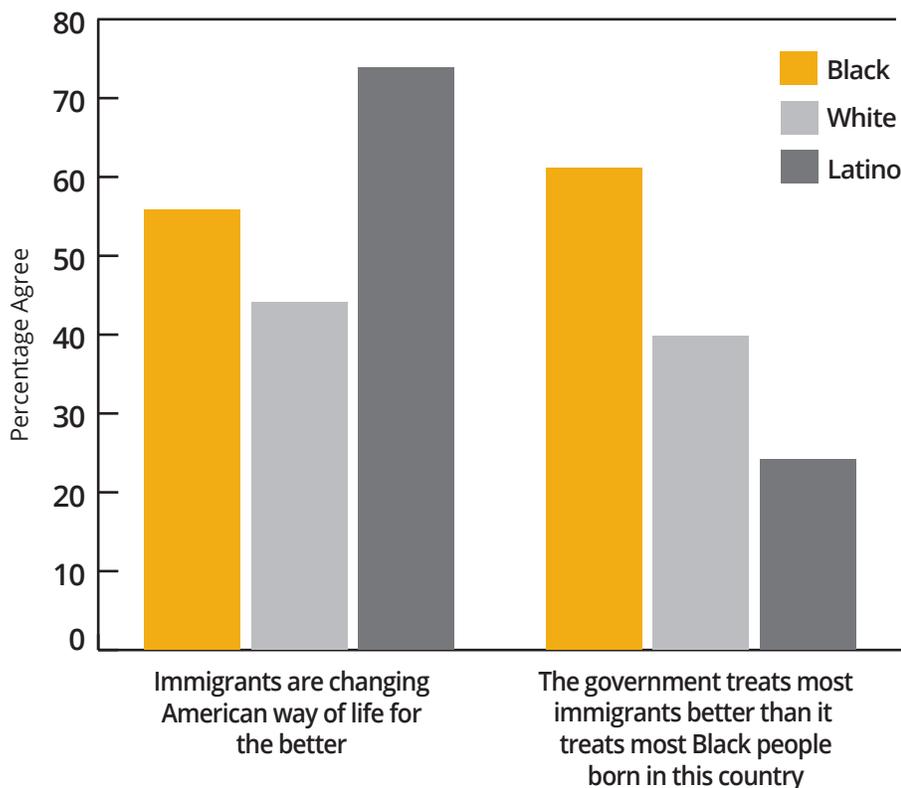
Immigration also raises questions about the established racial order in the United States. We asked young

Figure 3.1: Immigration and Beliefs about Jobs, Health Care, and Government Services



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

Figure 3.2: Youth Beliefs about the Cultural Impact of Immigration



Source: Black Youth Project Survey, April/May 2013.

people to compare the ways immigrants are treated to the ways Black people born in this country are treated. The results are again polarized by racial group. A significant majority of Black youth responded that most immigrants are treated better than most Black people born in this country. In contrast, less than a quarter of Latino youth and about 40 percent of white youth replied that they believe immigrants are treated better.

On the whole, young people—particularly young people of color—are quite supportive of immigration reform. Clear majorities support a variety of proposals that have figured prominently in recent discussions in Washington. A closer look at the data, however, suggests that young people’s beliefs about immigration are more complicated. Our findings point to a deep skepticism among young whites and Blacks about the

effect of immigration on the economy and the nation’s culture. Moreover, though our data suggest that many young Blacks and whites view immigrants as “outsiders” and “foreigners,” many young people—especially young Black adults—also believe that America’s native-born Blacks are treated as second-class citizens relative to immigrants. These data may be important factors to consider when evaluating young people’s support for immigration reform policies and when discussing the possibility of Black-Brown coalition-building.

Securing LGBT Equality

Many have noted the incredible diversity of the millennial generation. One key characteristic has been the number of vocal and visible millennials who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming. In this section we report on millennials’ opinions toward LGBT politics using a nationally representative survey we conducted during June 2014, a year before the Supreme Court’s decision to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide in *Obergefell v. Hodges* was issued in June 2015.

Young people in all racial groups reported strong support for same-sex marriage, as the top row of Table 3.7 shows. Young people express some skepticism, however, that same-sex marriage should have been the top priority for LGBT organizations. **A majority of all young people agree that the push for same-sex marriage took too much focus away from other important LGBT issues.** Black (80.2%) and Latino (74.9%) youth reported the strongest beliefs that an agenda focused on same-sex marriage took away too much attention from other important LGBT concerns.

We also find that young people have mixed opinions toward LGBT organizations, as Table 3.8 shows below. We asked young people whether they believe mainstream LGBT organizations are promoting issues that are important to LGBT persons in communities of color. More than half of Black youth believe that LGBT issues in communities of color differ from the issues that are promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations. While most white and Latino youth believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for their basic rights, they too seem to believe that mainstream LGBT organizations do not advance the rights of LGBT people of color as effectively as they could. These results suggest that many young people, especially Black youth, perceive a disconnect between the priorities they identify for advancing LGBT rights and the priorities expressed by mainstream organizations.

Table 3.7: Marriage Equality and the LGBT Agenda

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Allow same-sex couples to marry legally | 65.6 | 69.0 | 68.8 |
| The push for same-sex marriage has taken too much focus away from other issues important to LGBT people | 80.2 | 64.0 | 74.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Table 3.8: Evaluations of Mainstream LGBT Organizations

| | Black (% agree) | White (% agree) | Latino (% agree) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| All LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for their basic rights | 42.0 | 57.3 | 54.1 |
| The issues confronting LGBT individuals in communities of color are very different that the issues being promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations | 58.0 | 42.7 | 45.9 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

What Young People Want from the LGBT Movement

As Table 3.9 shows, young people reported varying levels of support for LGBT-related policies. For instance, we find that large majorities of young people of all races support policies that guarantee equal employment rights for LGBT persons. Even higher percentages of young people support increased efforts to prevent and treat individuals with HIV/AIDS. As we highlighted earlier in this report, HIV/AIDS infection rates remain extremely high among some groups of young people. Young people also support adoption rights for LGBT individuals at about the same levels as they support same-sex marriage.

We find similar levels of agreement in young people's opinions toward other policies, with Black and Latino youth generally providing slightly more support. For instance, three-fourths or more of Black and Latino youth favor increasing support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth and also support sensitivity training for police around transgender issues. Their support was at slightly higher rates than white youth. Young people of color are somewhat more supportive of efforts to require health insurers to provide coverage for transgender health issues than white youth.

Table 3.9: Youth Support for LGBT Policies

| | Black (% support) | White (% support) | Latino (% support) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Allow gays and lesbians to legally adopt children | 63.7 | 68.9 | 65.4 |
| Equal employment rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals | 84.6 | 83.6 | 81.5 |
| More efforts aimed at prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS | 86.3 | 85.9 | 84.7 |
| Sensitivity training of police around the issues of transgender individuals | 77.8 | 66.2 | 73.2 |
| Support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth | 77.8 | 70.5 | 76.6 |
| Coverage of transgender health issues by health insurance | 64.5 | 56.3 | 65.8 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

Young people also see the fight for LGBT equality very differently, as Table 3.10 shows. More than a third of Black youth identified HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment as the single most important issue for LGBT organizations to address, followed by violence against LGBT individuals and equal employment rights. In contrast, white youth believe that same-sex marriage is the most important issue for LGBT

organizations to address, followed by violence against LGBTs, bullying, and HIV/AIDS. Latino youth, however, say that bullying is the most important issue for organizations to address, followed by HIV/AIDS, violence against LGBTs, equal employment protections, poverty and same-sex marriage.

Table 3.10: Most Important Issue Priority for LGBT Organizations

| Issue | Black (%) | White (%) | Latino (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| HIV/AIDS | 35.0 | 15.6 | 17.8 |
| Violence against LGBTs | 17.0 | 18.0 | 13.3 |
| Equal employment rights | 13.1 | 16.1 | 13.2 |
| Bullying | 11.1 | 15.7 | 20.1 |
| Same-sex marriage | 10.6 | 21.3 | 12.0 |
| Poverty | 7.3 | 5.3 | 12.7 |
| Decriminalization of LGBT youth | 3.5 | 3.8 | 6.5 |
| Services for homeless youth | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.3 |
| Legal adoption | 1.0 | 2.1 | 2.1 |

Source: Black Youth Project Survey, June 2014.

For the last decade, many LGBT organizations have worked tirelessly to expand marriage rights to same-sex couples. During this same time period, the public has become considerably more accepting of same-sex marriage. And over the last several years, LGBT communities around the country have witnessed a string of victories in securing the right to marry.

Young people grant strong support to same-sex marriage, but young people of color in particular also identified several other policies as even greater priorities. Our findings indi-

cate that young people of color are skeptical about whether mainstream LGBT organizations advocate policies that are important for LGBT individuals in communities of color.

We hope that our findings will be of use to organizations that serve young people, and especially young people of color, whose priorities may not always be reflected by mainstream LGBT organizations. These data also provide some guidance about how LGBT organizations may branch out beyond same-sex marriage in advocating on behalf of LGBT youth.

Conclusion

Writing in *The Washington Post* in the wake of the Michael Brown shooting in August 2014, Columbia University professor Frederick Harris asked: “Will Ferguson be a movement or a moment?”¹⁴ Soon thereafter, observing the widespread protests and activism around the country, led largely by young Black adults, the headline of a story published by *The Nation* answered Harris’ question and declared that “Black Millennials Are Emerging as the ‘Movement Generation.’”¹⁵ But though commentators, politicians, activists, and community organizations frequently point to the importance of the Black millennial generation, less attention has been given to documenting the experiences and attitudes that make this generation tick and distinguish it from others.

Based upon the mission of the Black Youth Project, this report aims to help amplify the voices of Black millennials to reach policymakers, community groups, political organizations, journalists, and the wider public. We believe the data that document the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Black millennials in areas including jobs and employment, education, health care, guns and violence and the criminal justice system should be used to inform public policy discussions across these various issue areas. The original survey data we have presented here about young people’s political participation and policy attitudes can be useful for political campaigns and community organizations who seek to mobilize young people around pressing political issues.

Finally, the data contained in this report highlight the diversity of experiences and opinions among the millennial generation. These differences exist not only across racial groups, but are also found among across sex or gender and age groups. But just as there is no monolithic millennial generation, there also is no monolithic Black millennial generation. We hope that the findings in our report will help contribute to an ongoing conversation about how to best address the pressing challenges that confront a diverse nation.

Notes

- ¹ Richard Fry, Pew Research Center, “This year, Millennials will overtake Baby Boomers”, January 16, 2015; available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/16/this-year-millennials-will-overtake-baby-boomers/>.
- ² Pew Research Center, “Millennials in Adulthood”, March 7, 2014; available at http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/03/2014-03-07_generations-report-version-for-web.pdf.
- ³ Table A13, “Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population by age, sex, and race,” Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey; available at <http://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea13.htm> (accessed July 15, 2015).
- ⁴ American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities. 2012. *Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Education: Psychology’s Contributions to Understanding and Reducing Disparities*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ed/resources/racial-disparities.aspx>.
- ⁵ See Richard Fry, “U.S. high school dropout rate reaches record low, driven by improvements among Hispanics, blacks,” available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/02/u-s-high-school-dropout-rate-reaches-record-low-driven-by-improvements-among-hispanics-blacks/> (accessed September 30, 2015).
- ⁶ See “Black Lives Matter: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males,” available at www.blackboysreport.org/2015-black-boys-report.pdf (accessed September 30, 2015).
- ⁷ We note that some experts have been skeptical about the use of obesity rates as important health markers; see, e.g., J. Eric Oliver, *Fat Politics: The Real Story Behind America’s Obesity Epidemic* (2005), New York: Oxford University Press.
- ⁸ See, for instance, research by Sean Joe and his colleagues, including Joe, S., Baser, R., Breeden, G., Neighbors, H., & Jackson, J. (2006). Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Lifetime Suicide Attempts Among Blacks in the United States. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 296 (17), 2112-2123.
- ⁹ See http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_us.html
- ¹⁰ See, e.g., Dan Balz, “How the Obama campaign won the race for voter data,” *Washington Post*, July 28, 2013, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-the-obama-campaign-won-the-race-for-voter-data/2013/07/28/ad-32c7b4-ee4e-11e2-a1f9-ea873b7e0424_story.html (accessed September 30, 2015).
- ¹¹ See <http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/>.
- ¹² Overall, these figures are quite consistent with those reported by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press when the same question is asked of the general public. See, e.g., <http://www.people-press.org/2013/05/23/gun-rights-vs-gun-control/#total>.
- ¹³ See <http://obamacarefacts.com/sign-ups/obamacare-enrollment-numbers/>.
- ¹⁴ http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/will-ferguson-be-a-moment-or-a-movement/2014/08/22/071d4a94-28a8-11e4-8593-da634b334390_story.html.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.thenation.com/article/black-millennials-emerging-movement-generation/>.