DISSATISFACTION AND ANGER IN THE UNITED STATES

The American public is not pleased about how things are going in the United States these days, particularly in the political sphere. There is little enthusiasm about the prospect of either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump as the country’s next leader. And nearly a third of the public holds unfavorable views toward both of the parties’ nominees.

A poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research asked the public how satisfied they are about the state of a number of aspects of life in the United States, ranging from the environment to religion to the news media. To understand the degree of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, we asked people if they were feeling enthusiastic or just satisfied, angry or just dissatisfied.

Three-quarters of Americans are either dissatisfied or angry about the way things are going in the country overall. Even more—about 85 percent—are dissatisfied or angry with the state of politics these days.

Neither major party’s nominee is viewed particularly favorably by the public. However, about 8 in 10 Democrats are at least satisfied with the idea of Hillary Clinton as president, while the thought of Donald Trump’s election makes about 7 in 10 of them angry. Republicans are not quite as positive about their party’s standard bearer or as negative about the Democrat. About two-thirds of Republicans are at least satisfied about Trump’s possible election, while about 55 percent are angry at the prospect of a Clinton administration.

The nationwide poll of 1,008 adults was part of the AmeriSpeak® Omnibus, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC at the University of Chicago’s probability-based panel. Interviews were conducted between June 23 and 27, 2016, online and using landlines and cellphones.

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Issue Brief

Three Things You Should Know about The AP-NORC Poll on American Dissatisfaction and Anger:
Among all American Adults

1) Seventy-four percent are dissatisfied or angry about how things are going in the United States, and 86 percent are dissatisfied or angry about the state of politics.

2) There is ambivalence about conditions in the states, but 69 percent are satisfied or enthusiastic about life in their local community.

3) Fifty-three percent would be dissatisfied or angry if Clinton were elected in November; even more, 70 percent, would be dissatisfied or angry if Trump were elected.
Some of the poll’s key findings are:

- A quarter (26 percent) of the public is angry about how things are going in the country these days, and nearly half (48 percent) is dissatisfied. While Americans are ambivalent about the state of affairs in their own state, 6 in 10 are satisfied with the condition of their local community, and 10 percent are enthusiastic.

- Few members of the public are upbeat about the current state of politics. Four in 10 (41 percent) are angry about American politics, and another 45 percent are dissatisfied. Only 11 percent say they are satisfied, and a mere 2 percent are enthusiastic.

- Nearly half (46 percent) of the public would be angry if Trump were to win in November, and 25 percent would be angry if Clinton were elected. Because of the partisan nature of these opinions, few Americans (5 percent) express anger about the prospect of both candidate’s election.

- Most Republicans (52 percent) say they would be angry if Clinton were elected president, and even more Democrats (71 percent) would be angry if Trump were to prevail in November.

- But neither candidate stimulates much excitement in members of their own party. Twenty-three percent of Republicans express enthusiasm about a Trump victory in November, while 27 percent of Democrats are enthusiastic about a possible Clinton win.

**AMERICANS ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE STATE OF POLITICS AND THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THIS COUNTRY, THOUGH MANY ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.**

Three-quarters of Americans express negativity about the way things are going in the United States. About half say they are dissatisfied and another quarter are angry. The public is particularly upset about the gap between the rich and poor, the state of the news media, and race relations—about each of which more than 7 in 10 say they are dissatisfied or angry. Although just a quarter of Americans are pleased with the condition of the United States overall, they have mixed feelings about their own state and tend to express positive views about their local community.

Americans are most heated about the state of politics in the United States. Overall, 41 percent of the public is angry over politics these days, and 45 percent say they are dissatisfied. Whites (44 percent) and Hispanics (42 percent) are more likely than blacks (24 percent) to be angry about the state of politics.
Americans are negative about many conditions in the country, particularly the state of politics.

Although other factors queried about in the poll don’t engender quite as much ill feeling as politics, some members of the public have more enmity toward particular aspects of life in the United States than others:

- Three in 10 Americans are angry about the news media, including a third of Republicans. Less than a quarter of Democrats (23 percent) say they are angry with the news media.
- About 30 percent of the public is angry about the state of the country’s morals and ethics. Americans without a college degree are more likely to say they are angry than those with a college degree (33 percent vs. 22 percent). Republicans (40 percent) and independents (37 percent) are more likely than Democrats (19 percent) to express anger about this.
- And nearly 3 in 10 are angry about the gap between the rich and poor, with younger Americans particularly outraged. Thirty-five percent of those age 18-29 are angry about the gap between the rich and poor compared to 26 percent of those age 30 and older.
- Similarly, while only about 20 percent of the public is angry about race relations, nearly a third of Americans age 18-29 (31 percent) express anger over the state of race relations compared to just 18 percent of older Americans.
- Overall, about 15 percent are angry about the state of individual rights and freedoms. Hispanics are more likely than whites to express anger (23 percent vs. 14 percent). More independents than
Democrats are angry (24 percent vs. 13 percent). And those who live in rural areas (22 percent) or urban areas (20 percent) are more likely to express anger about the state of individual rights and freedoms than those who live in suburban areas (11 percent).

The media sources people use to follow current events and politics are also associated with anger. For example, those who get their news from national news sources such as network news, NPR, or The New York Times are less likely than those who do not to be angry about the state of morals and ethics (15 percent vs. 33 percent) but are more likely to be angry about the gap between the rich and poor (39 percent vs. 24 percent).

**AMERICANS ARE NEGATIVE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF EITHER A CLINTON OR A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, THOUGH FEWER WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH A TRUMP PRESIDENCY.**

Overall, the public is less likely to feel favorable than unfavorable toward both presidential nominees. Thirty-nine percent of Americans have a favorable impression of Clinton compared to 55 percent who have an unfavorable view. Just 27 percent have a favorable view of Trump compared to 69 percent who feel unfavorable toward him.

In addition, few Americans are enthusiastic about the prospect of either a Clinton or a Trump administration, regardless of their political identification. Just 15 percent describe themselves as enthusiastic about Hillary Clinton being elected and 10 percent say the same about Donald Trump. Americans express less negativity about the prospect of a Clinton administration, however; 53 percent say they would be dissatisfied or angry if she were elected versus 70 percent who say the same about Trump.

**Most independents would be unhappy if either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump were elected president.**

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**Question:** Which comes closest to your feelings if each of the following individuals were elected president?

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An angry reaction to one or the other candidate’s possible election has a distinctly partisan tone. Seven in 10 Democrats say they would be angry if Donald Trump were elected president, half of Republicans say anger would be their response if Hillary Clinton were elected. Thirteen percent of Republicans say they would be angry if their party’s nominee were elected compared to just 4 percent of Democrats.

Democrats are slightly more positive about a Clinton administration than Republicans are about seeing Trump in the White House. Nearly 3 in 10 Democrats say they are enthusiastic about Clinton, and more than 4 in 10 would be satisfied if she were to become president. Among Republicans, just over 2 in 10 are enthusiastic about Trump, and about 4 in 10 say they would be satisfied if he won in November.

Independents are less positive about either party’s nominees. About 4 in 10 are either enthusiastic or satisfied with Clinton, and just under 3 in 10 say the same about Trump. However, nearly 4 in 10 independents say they would be angry if Trump moved into the White House, and 3 in 10 say the same about Clinton.

Blacks are much more likely to be enthusiastic about a Clinton presidency (44 percent) than either Hispanics (17 percent) or whites (9 percent). Americans age 18-44 are much more likely to be angry about a Trump presidency than those age 45 and older (55 percent vs. 38 percent). Men are more likely than women to be enthusiastic about seeing Trump in the White House (15 percent vs. 6 percent).

ABOUT THE STUDY

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected using AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC’s probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face).

Interviews for this survey were conducted between June 23 and 27, 2016 with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,008 completed the survey—773 via the web and 235 via telephone. The final stage completion rate is 29.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 18.2 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 91.1 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 4.9 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and household phone
status. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over, were used for all analyses.

All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or lower) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

A comprehensive listing of the questions, complete with tabulations of top level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center website: www.apnorc.org

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**ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS–NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH**

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