

The Early Signs of Whom The Next U.S. President Will Likely Be

Presidential Polls Look Confusing Regarding Bernie, But Downright Bad Regarding Hillary & All Republicans

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The top thing that I look for in polling-results this early in a Presidential race, is the ratio of "Favorable" or "Positive," to "Unfavorable" or "Negative" ratings, regarding each candidate. These ratings tap into the public's sentiments concerning each individual candidate, instead of into mere name-recognition; and they're also not comparing the candidates with each other, which most voters at so early a stage in the Presidential contest can't yet do in any reliable way. When respondents are being permitted to indicate not just their pro-or-con direction but also the strength of their feelings regarding the given candidates, then the most meaningful ratio is produced.

One such poll was just issued: On May 11th, the GWU "[GWBattleground](#)" poll was published, and it offered its 1,000 respondents both the favorable-unfavorable, and also the degree-or-intensity, parameters; and, so, it can provide an unusually reliable indication, at such an early date, concerning whom the serious contenders will likely turn out to be when this contest matures.

Here, then, are the results, in this poll, for each of the following candidates:

Clinton: Strong Favorable = 27%, Strong Unfavorable = 39%

Biden: 14%, 32%

O'Malley: 1%, 6%

Warren: 14%, 13%

Bush: 8%, 30%

Cruz: 8%, 25%

Walker: 11%, 15%

Rubio: 11%, 19%

Paul: 10%, 18%

Huckabee: 12%, 20%

Fiorina: 3%, 10%

This sampling was done in the days right after Sanders had entered the Presidential contest on the Democratic side and before it was known that Warren wouldn't be running; and, apparently, the organizers of this poll didn't yet have enough time to scratch Warren and replace her with Sanders on their list to be sampled. Sanders will be the progressive candidate to run against Clinton; Warren won't.

On the Republican side, Carson — who is running to become the first Black to receive the Republican Presidential nomination, like Herman Cain was in 2012, and who, also similarly to Cain, has never held any elective federal office — was also not listed on this questionnaire. Perhaps the presumption there was that Carson is merely another Cain.

Now, let's examine more closely these findings:

The only candidate who had a positive ratio, a ratio of more than 1 instead of less than 1 — that is, had more "Strong Favorable" than "Strong Unfavorable" ratings — was Warren, who was also the only progressive on the list; and yet even *her* ratio was only just barely positive, 14%/13% or 1.08. The second-scoring candidate was Walker, whose 11%/15% ratio is .73. The only Democrats on this list other than Warren were Clinton, whose 27%/39% ratio is .69; and Biden, whose 14%/32% ratio is .44; and O'Malley, whose 1%/6% ratio is .17.

Why, then, did Warren outperform all others in this poll? It can't be on account of whom the competition is, because these ratios aren't actually about the competition for any given candidate; they're only about the respondents' positive versus negative feelings toward *each one of the individual candidates*.

So: here are the key data that might explain Warren's topping this poll:

On 28 December 2011, Pew's people-press.org headlined "[A Political Rhetoric Test,](#)" which repeated a 2010 Pew survey and found the same thing as their earlier one had found — that the most-popular ideological category in the United States is "Progressive." The positive/negative rating on that 2011 poll was 67%/22%, or 3.05.

Next was "Conservative," at 62%/30%, or 2.07.

Next was "Liberal," at 50%/39%, or 1.28.

Next was "Libertarian," at 38%/37%, or 1.03.

They also sampled "Socialism," which turned out to be the least-popular of the tested "Political Terms," at 31%/60%, or .52. (Perhaps lots of respondents thought it meant "communism," a hold-over from the cold war.)

They also sampled "Capitalism," to compare it against "Socialism," and they found it to score at 50%/40%, or 1.25, much more popular than "Socialism," but not nearly as popular as "Conservative" at 2.07, and vastly less popular than "Progressive" was, at 3.05.

Whereas Bernie Sanders, who entered the Presidential race on April 30th, wasn't listed, he is one of the three progressives in the U.S. Senate, along with Elizabeth Warren and Sherrod Brown. The expectation has long been that one of those three would probably enter the contest to provide an alternative to the conservative and mainstream Democrats, Hillary Clinton and the other or others; and Sanders has turned out to be that progressive. Does

this mean he would have scored positively, as Warren did, if his name were polled? Not necessarily, and here is why:

Sanders has, throughout his career, self-identified both as “progressive” and as “socialist,” which means as both the most-favored and the most-disfavored of all the ideological categories tested. He has always made clear that he favors “democratic socialism, such as in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark,” and *not* “dictatorial socialism, or communism, such as in the Soviet Union or Cuba,” but, during the next year, as he is contesting in Democratic primaries, will Democrats see him as representing the type of government that northern Europe has; or, instead, the type of government that the Soviet Union had?

If they see him as being the former, then he’ll probably win the Democratic nomination; if the latter, then one of the regular Democrats will. His entire voting-record in the Senate, and in the House before that, has, in fact, been “socialist” in the sense of progressives such as Elizabeth Warren and Sherrod Brown, and of Social Democrats in the European tradition, which is dominant in northern Europe. But Sanders has chosen to identify himself as a “socialist,” not only as a “progressive”; and each voter will need to determine for him or her self what that means, regarding him. Sanders has laid that term, “socialism,” before the public, whether he should or not, and now he’ll have to deal with that — a matter of educating the public about basic ideology, if he can do that.

None of what has been said here encompasses possible outright blunders that any one of the candidates might make, or has made, such as when Jeb Bush on Fox News this week on Monday May 11th, was asked whether, if he were President, knowing everything that is known today, would he have invaded Iraq as his brother did in 2003, and he said [yes](#). So, already, Bush — who had scored only 8%/30%, or .27, even before that disqualifying remark — is virtually dead in the water.

Clinton won’t make that blunder, because, whereas the pressure on Republican candidates is for them to endorse George W. Bush, the pressure on Democratic ones is for them not to, but instead to endorse Barack Obama, who always opposed that invasion. But she voted for the invasion of Iraq while she was in the Senate, and Sanders [voted against it then when he was in the House](#). Those votes could determine who wins the Democratic nomination, and even the Presidency. (Of course, if Clinton becomes the candidate, then she won’t be using that argument against the Republican, because she won’t want to remind voters that she had voted with virtually all Republicans on that. Sanders won’t have that weakness if he gets to the general election; he’ll instead be able to rip the Republican nominee to shreds on the matter of the Iraq-invasion.)

As the *Wall Street Journal* [put it, on 15 October 2014, reporting what is still the most recent poll on the subject](#), “Americans in record numbers say the Iraq war was not worth it. A full two-thirds (66%) of those surveyed said that conflict wasn’t worth fighting. Even Republicans who say they are voting for a more robust response to the Middle East militants say the war wasn’t worth it, 49% to 41% who say it was worth it.” So: Jeb Bush simply stuck his foot down the throats of even Republicans there; and, among the general electorate (which is what he’d need to convince if Jeb were to win the Republican nomination), that ratio is actually [26% saying “Worth it,” and 66% saying “Not worth it.”](#)

That’s not really “two-thirds” like the WSJ said; it’s instead 66%/92%, or 72%, of those who had an opinion on the matter. Only 28% of those who have an opinion are with Jeb on it. So, if Republicans were so stupid as to give Bush their nomination, they’d probably be thereby

handing the White House to whomever the Democrats would nominate, even if it were to turn out to be someone who had voted for that war, like Hillary Clinton, because no Democrat is under any pressure to support today that invasion in 2003. Whereas Jeb says that the invasion was the right thing to have done, no Democrat, in retrospect, is saying any such thing. However, Hillary, unlike Bernie, won't be in the position of being able to raise the issue in attacking the Republican nominee.

This is another reason why Sanders would probably be able to crush any Republican except perhaps Rand Paul, if he were to win the Democratic primaries.

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