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Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #2: Crime and Politics

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

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Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #2

Crime and Politics

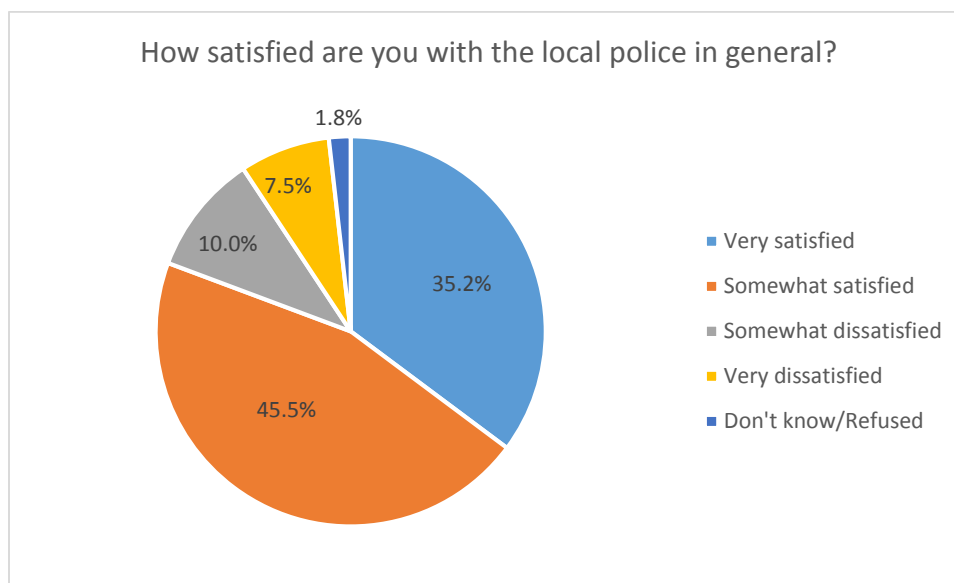
This report examines regional and sub-regional perceptions of crime and politics from the 2015 Life In Hampton Roads survey (LIHR 2015) conducted by the Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender, and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at www.odu.edu/ssrc.

Crime and Police

Control of crime and public safety are an important precondition for a high quality of life, and a significant concern among survey respondents. The 883 respondents were asked about various topics concerning local police and crime.

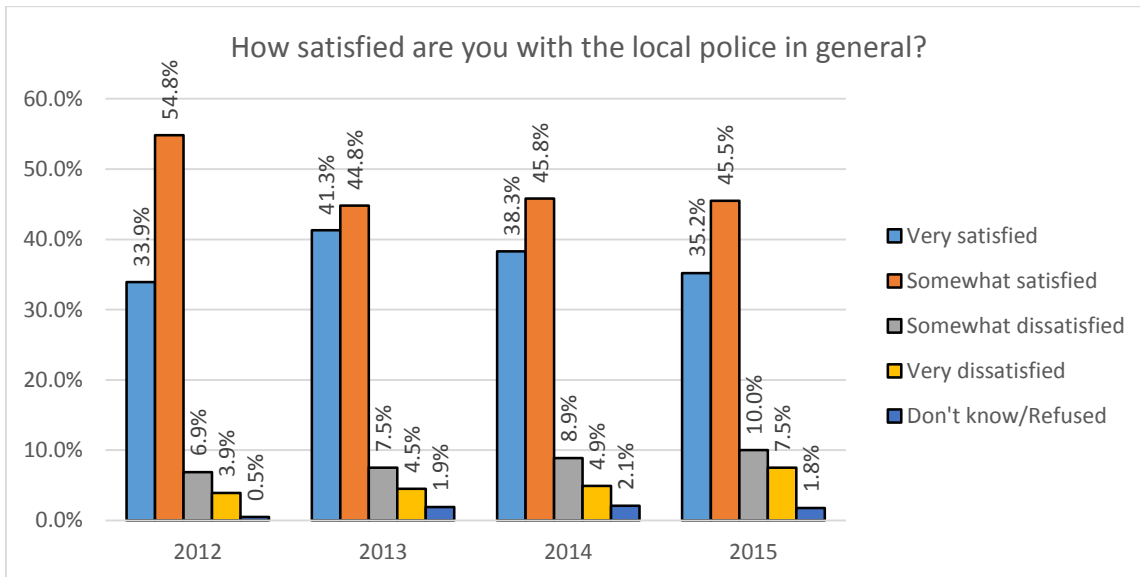
Satisfaction/Trust of Local Police and Perception of Crime

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the local police in general. The majority of respondents reported being somewhat satisfied (45.5%) and very satisfied (35.2%). Only 10 percent reported being somewhat dissatisfied and 7.5 percent reported being very dissatisfied with the local police. Additionally, 1.8 percent either did not know or refused to answer.

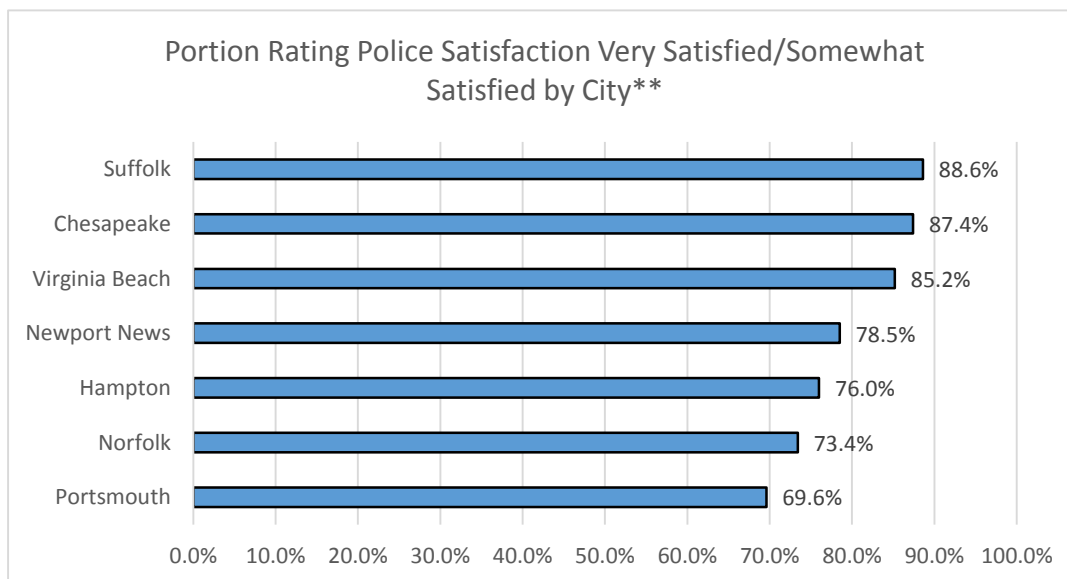


While overall satisfaction with the police remains high, it appears to be diminishing somewhat. In the four years the LIHR survey has asked about satisfaction with the local police, the portion reporting

that they are very or somewhat dissatisfied was at its highest in 2015. The portion of respondents somewhat or very satisfied with local police has declined from 88.7 percent in 2012 to 86.1 percent in 2013, 84.1 percent in 2014, and now 80.7 percent in 2015.

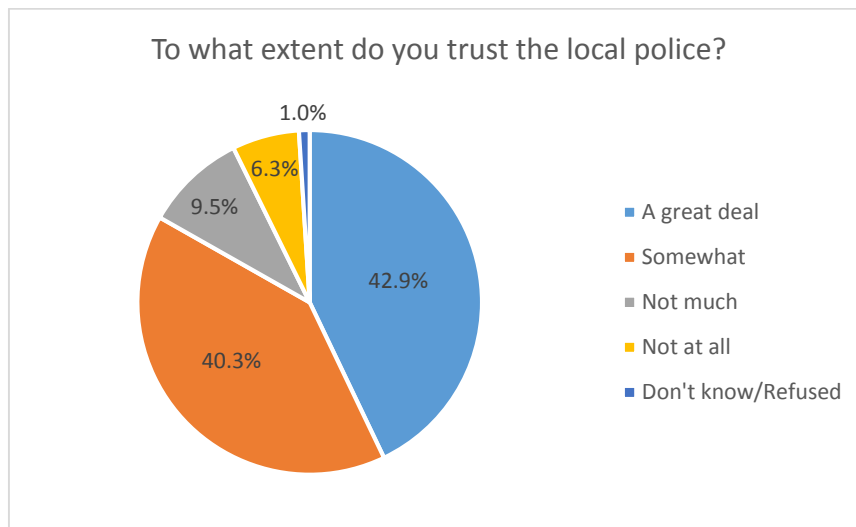


When examining respondent satisfaction with the local police by city, it is apparent that some cities are more satisfied than others. In fact, there is a significant difference in satisfaction with the local police across the seven cities of Hampton Roads ($p < .05$). For example, 88.6 percent of Suffolk residents and 87.4 percent of Chesapeake residents reported being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their local police compared to 73.4 percent of Norfolk residents and 69.6 percent of Portsmouth residents.

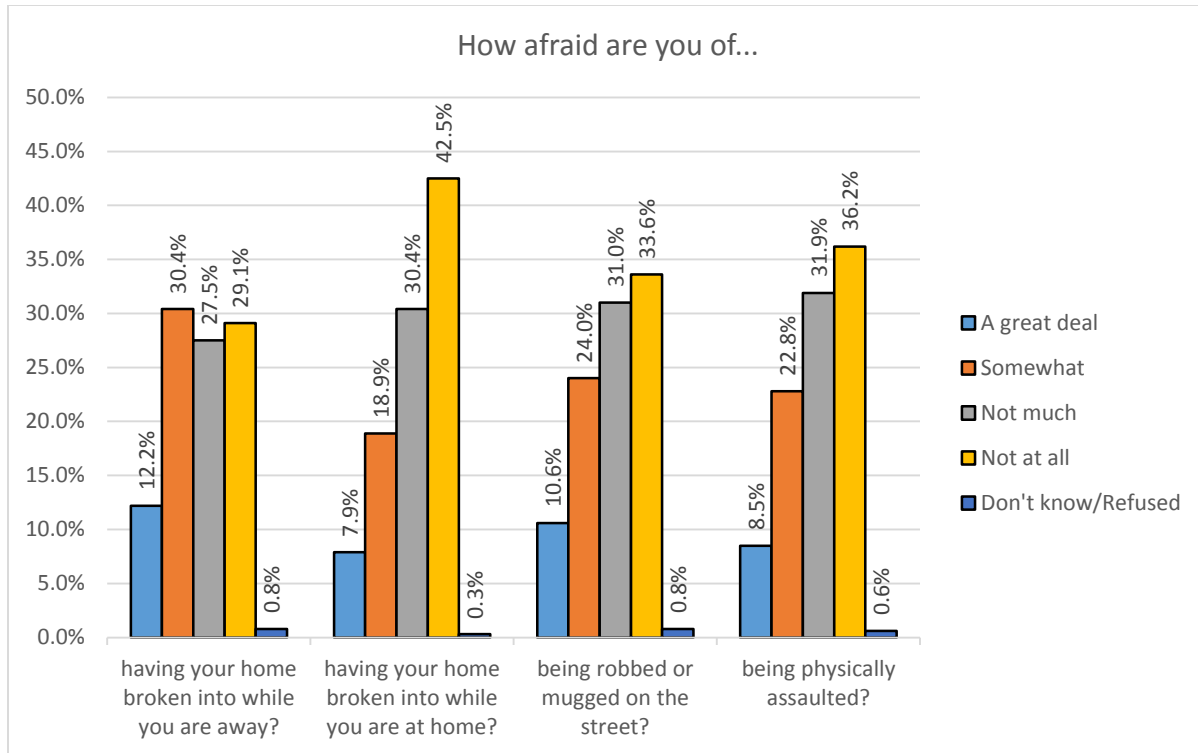


** $p < .05$ statistically significant, 2-tailed test

Respondents were also asked how much they trust the local police. The majority of respondents (83.2%) indicated they either trust the police a great deal (42.9%) or trust the police somewhat (40.3%). Only 6.3 percent reported not trusting the police at all and another 9.5 percent reported not trusting the police much.



In 2015, respondents were asked to answer how afraid they are of crime related situations happening to them in Hampton Roads. Respondents reported being either somewhat afraid (30.4%) or afraid a great deal (12.2%) of having their home broken into while they are away (42.6%). Respondents were less afraid of having their home broken into while they are home (26.8%). The majority of respondents (64.6%) reported either being not afraid at all (33.6%) or not much afraid (31%) of being robbed or mugged on the street. Only 10.6 percent reported being afraid a great deal of being robbed or mugged on the street and 24.0 percent reported being somewhat afraid of being robbed or mugged on the street. Additionally, 68.1 percent of respondents reported being either not at all afraid (36.2%) or not much afraid (31.9%) of being physically assaulted.



Hampton Roads residents were also asked whether or not they have experienced identity theft, where someone stole their personal or financial information. Almost one-third of respondents said they had experienced identity theft (31.3%).

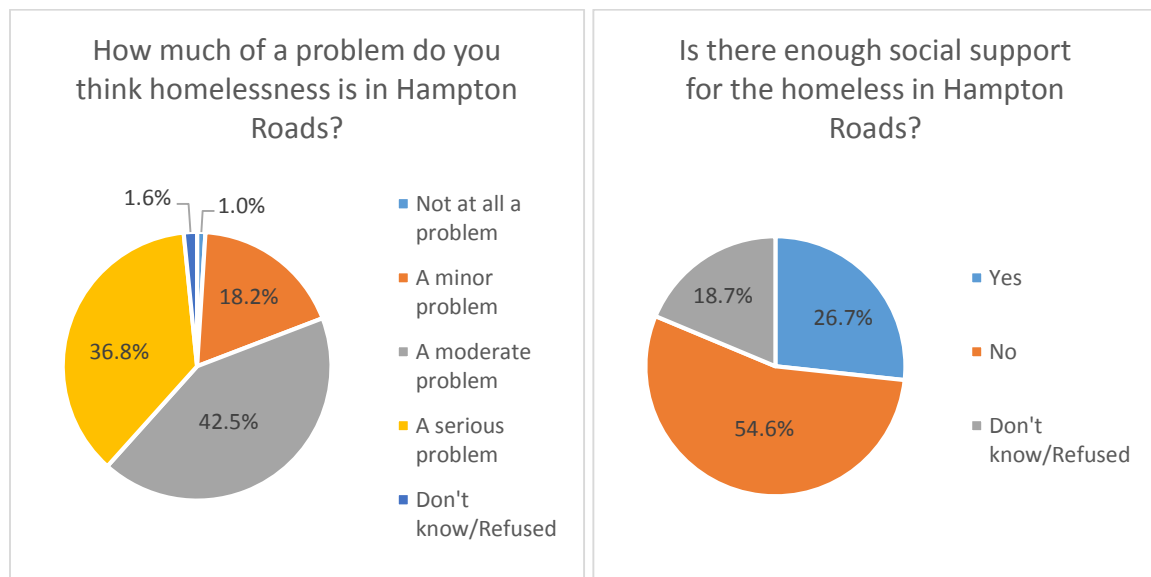


Overall, satisfaction with the local police is high among Hampton Roads residents, but somewhat diminished. The overall percentage for satisfaction with the local police has decreased every year since 2012. Trust of local police was also high among Hampton Roads residents. While most Hampton Roads

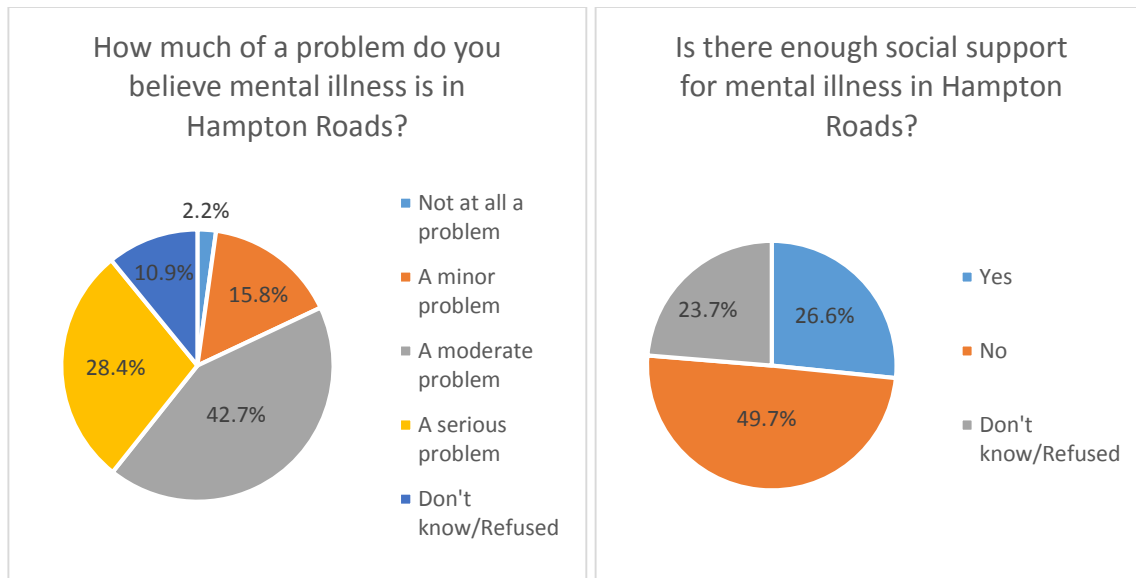
residents were not afraid of having their home broken into, there was slightly more fear of having their home broken into while they are away.

Homelessness and Mental Illness

Respondents were asked how much of a problem they think homelessness and mental health are in Hampton Roads as well as whether or not there is enough social support for the homeless or those with mental illness. The majority of respondents (79.3%) said they thought that homelessness in Hampton Roads was either a moderate problem (42.5%) or a serious problem (36.8%). Another 18.2 percent thought that homelessness in Hampton Roads is a minor problem. Additionally, over half of respondents said that there was not enough social support for the homeless in Hampton Roads (54.6%). Only 26.7 percent said there was enough social support for the homeless in Hampton Roads.



The majority of respondents (71.1%) also think that mental illness in Hampton Roads is either a moderate problem (42.7%) or a serious problem (28.4%). Another 15.8 percent reported that mental illness is a minor problem in Hampton Roads and only 2.2 percent reported that mental illness is not at all a problem in Hampton Roads. Just under half of respondents said they do not think there is enough social support for mental illness in Hampton Roads (49.7%). Only 26.6 percent said there was enough social support for mental illness in Hampton Roads and 23.7 percent either said they did not know or refused to answer.



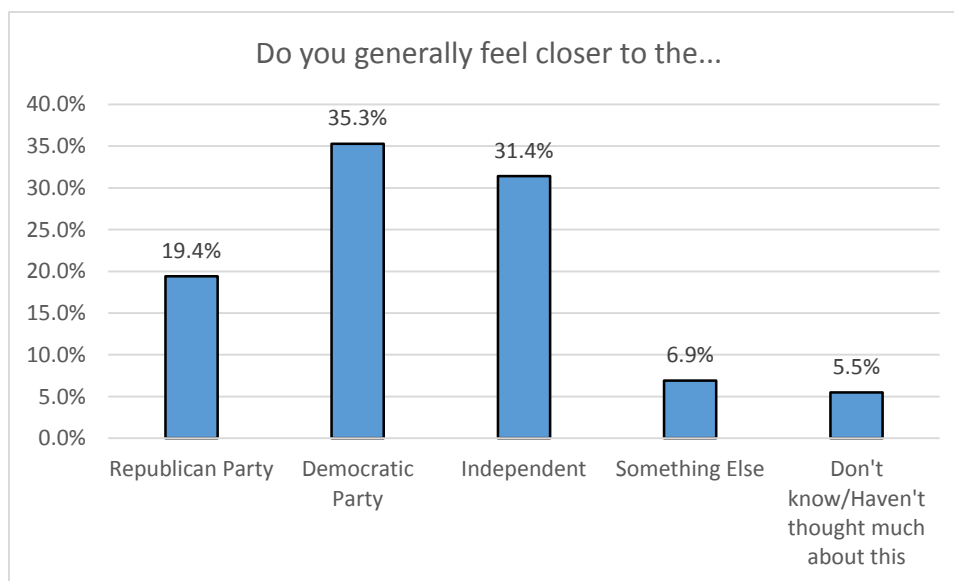
The majority of respondents perceive that homelessness and mental illness are a problem to some degree in Hampton Roads. Roughly half of respondents feel that there is not enough social support for the homeless or the mentally ill in Hampton Roads. Taking the analysis a step further, excluding invalid cases (i.e., don't know/refused) and combining those that believe mental illness or homelessness was a moderate or serious problem, the data show that 70.4 percent of Hampton Roads residents believe these issues to be problematic. Additionally, we find that 65.1 percent believe there is not enough support for the mentally ill or the homeless. As might be expected, there is a strong correlation between believing there is a problem and believing there is not enough support for these individuals ($p < .01$). Just over half (52.9%) of those who did not believe homelessness and mental illness were a moderate or serious problem did believe that there was not enough support for these individuals. However, the vast majority (81.4%) of those who believed these problems to be serious or moderate also believed that there was not enough support.

Politics

Local politics are of central importance for the prosperity and success of the region. Respondents were asked a variety of questions about several topics ranging from political questions including party affiliation, political attitudes and voter registration. The 883 participants gave a wide variety of answers to these questions and while much of the data reflects response patterns seen in years past, there are some results that have changed pointedly when compared to past years.

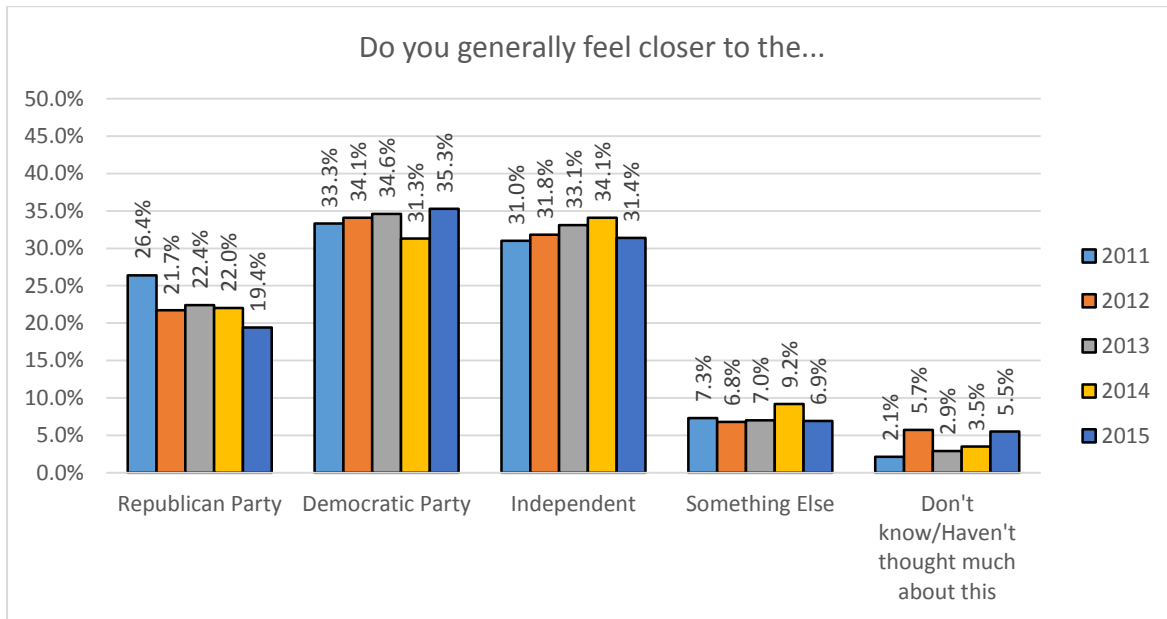
Political Affiliation and Attitudes

Respondents were asked what political party they generally feel closer to. A larger proportion of respondents reported feeling closer to the Democratic Party (35.3%) or being Independent (31.4%). Only 19.4 percent reported feeling closer to the Republican Party and another 6.9 percent reported feeling closer to something else.

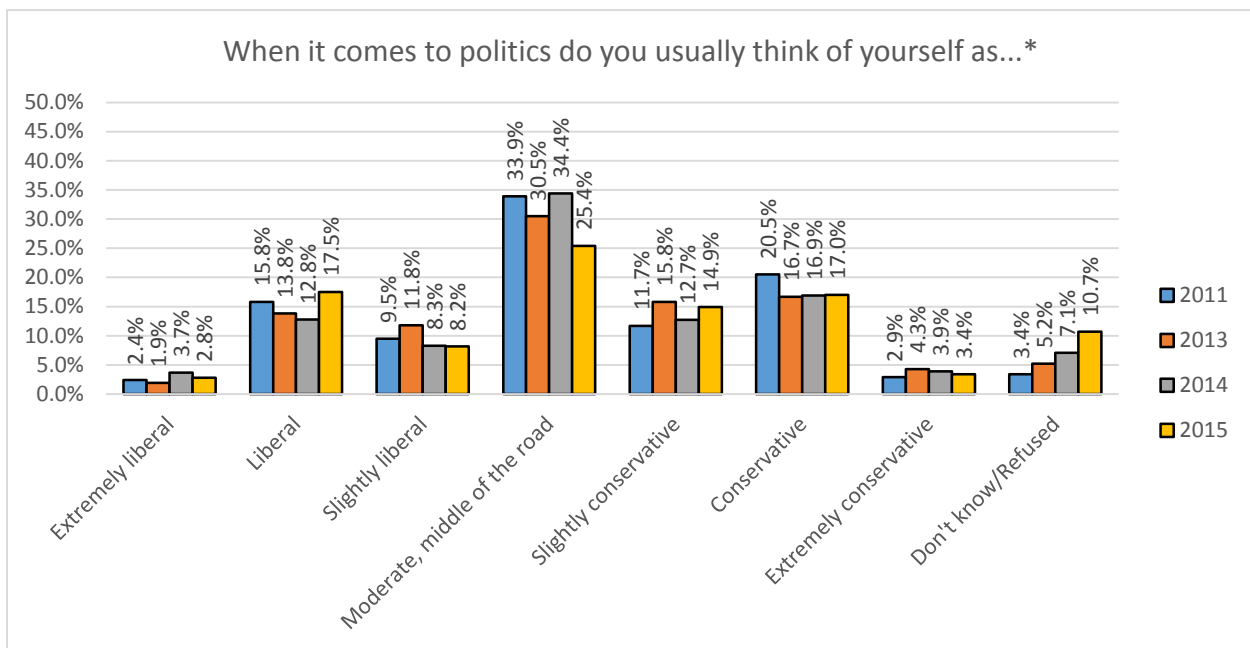
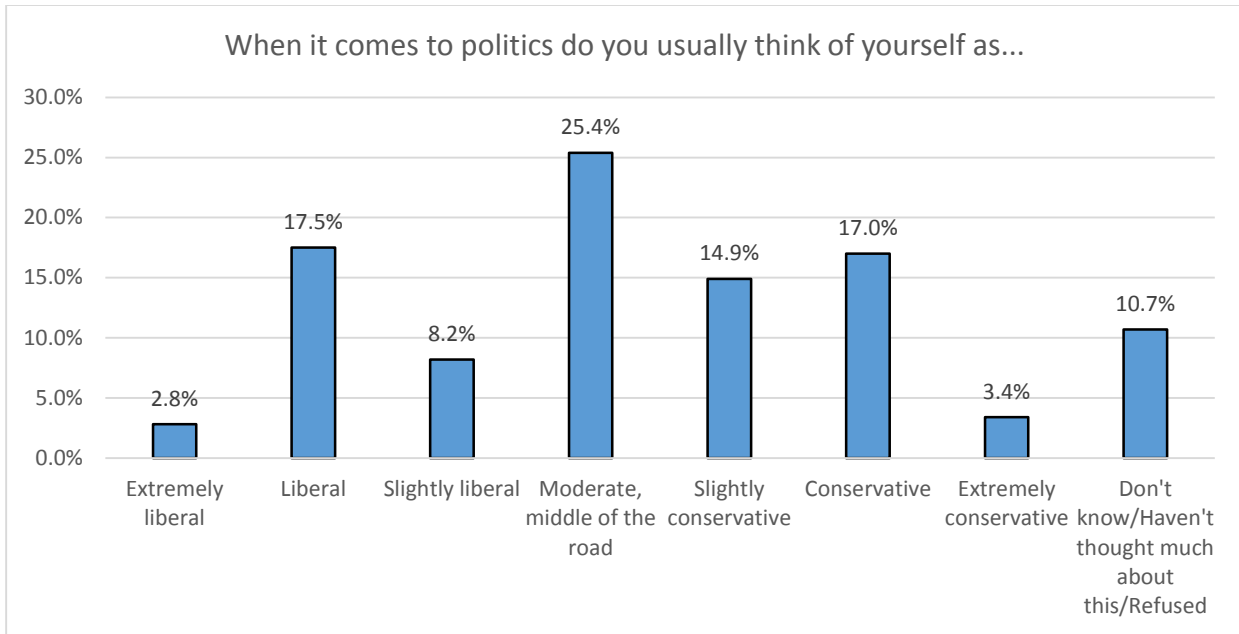


This year marked an important drop in the percentage of Hampton Roads residents identifying as Independent since 2011 following slight increases in 2011 and 2014. In 2011, 31 percent reported feeling closer to the Independents, 31.8 percent in 2012, 33.1 percent in 2013, 34.1 percent in 2014, and 31.4 percent in 2015. The Democratic Party saw a small increase in percentage in 2015; up to 35.3 percent from 31.3 percent in 2014. The Republican Party saw an almost 5 percent decline between 2011 and

2012 (26.4% and 21.7%, respectively), then stayed consistent with 22.4 percent in 2013 and 22 percent in 2014. This year the Republican Party reported its lowest percentage reported in any of the previous years of the Life in Hampton Roads Survey (19.4%).



Next, respondents were asked to identify whether they usually think of themselves as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative. Not surprisingly, moderate was the most commonly given response (25.4%), although this percentage is almost 10% lower than it was in 2014 (34.4%). Those respondents who reported being conservative were broken down as "conservative" (17%), "slightly conservative" (14.9%), and "extremely conservative" (3.4%). Those who reported being liberal were broken down as "liberal" (17.5%), "slightly liberal" (8.2%), and "extremely liberal" (2.8%). However, despite the fact that more respondents identified with the Democratic Party (35.3%) than the Republican Party (19.4%), there were more respondents who reported being conservative (35.3%) than liberal (28.5%). In part this reflects the presence of non-white conservatives who often do not affiliate with the Republican Party. For instance, 24.9 percent of African American or Black respondents identify as conservative, but only 2.6 percent African American respondents self-identify as Republicans.

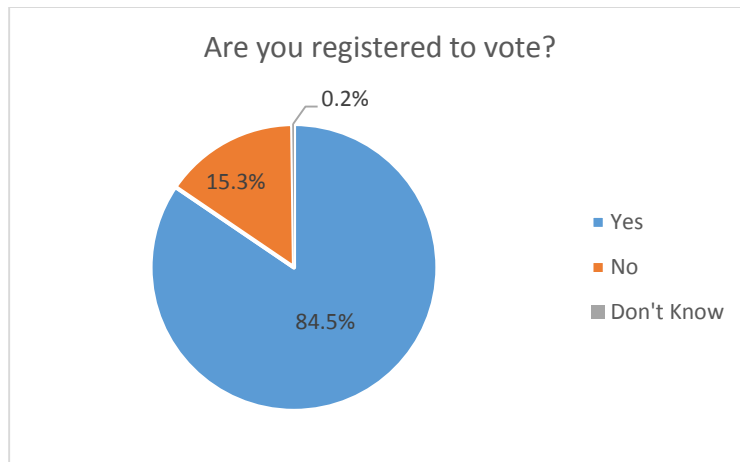


*This question was not asked to respondents during the 2012 LIHR Survey.

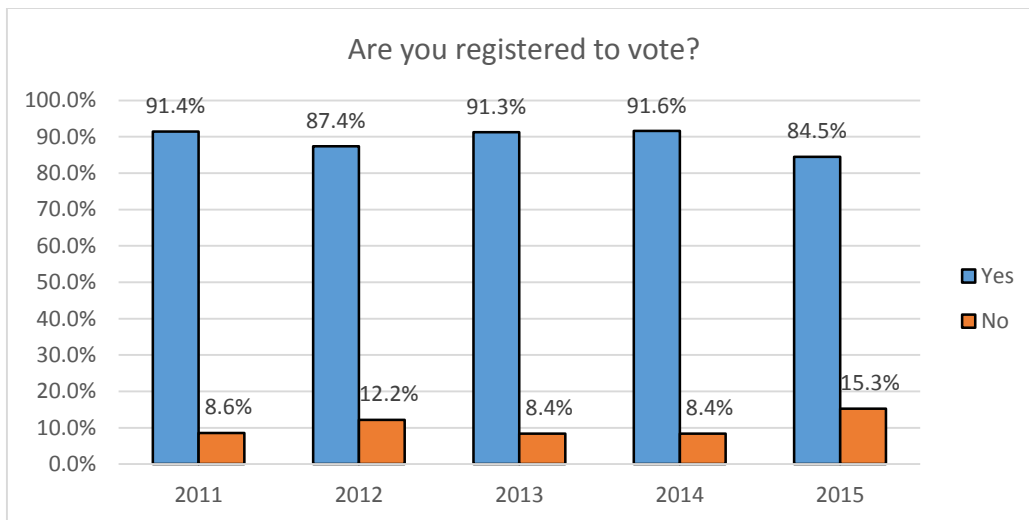
Voter Registration

Finally, respondents were asked whether or not they were registered to vote. The vast majority of respondents said that they were registered to vote (84.5%). Conversely, only 15.3 percent of respondents were not registered to vote at the time of the survey. Even though the majority of respondents said they

were registered to vote, this percentage is the lowest reported in the past five years, including 2014, which showed 91.6 percent of respondents saying they were registered to vote.



Since 2011, at least 90 percent of respondents have reported being registered to vote, except in 2012 when only 87.4 percent reported being registered to vote and this year when only 84.5 percent reported being registered to vote.



All Life in Hampton Roads Data Analyses will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released (<http://www.odu.edu/al/centers/ssrc>). Follow-up questions about the 2015 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

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