

Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) Brief Report – Round 8

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Conducted by the:

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Overview

The Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) is a project of Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), in conjunction with the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan. The goal is to understand how policymakers learn about state problems, develop political influence, and interact to produce policy solutions.

The targeted population for the panel included all persons regarded as "political insiders" in the State of Michigan. This included high-ranking members of state government agencies, current members of Michigan's Legislature and their staff assistants, association and corporate lobbyists, state relations officers, think tanks, public relations professionals, and state political media personnel.

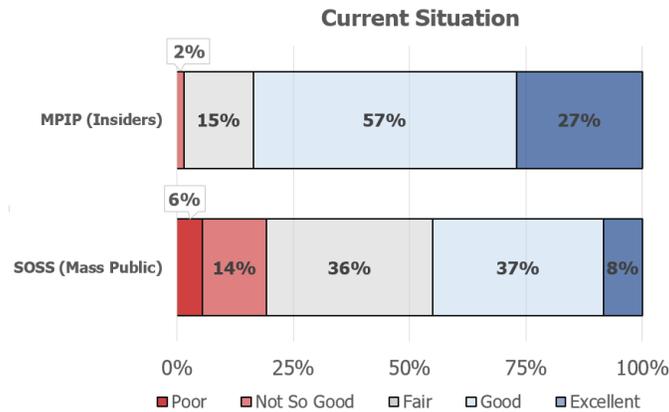
The Round 7 survey was fielded from October 20, 2020 to October 31, 2020. Email invitations were sent to 771 MPIP panel members on October 20, and reminder emails were sent on October 26 and October 29 to those who had not yet completed the questionnaire by the time of the reminder. During this time, 252 respondents accessed the survey (49.8 percent of the panelists) and 216 completed it. Of the 252 who accessed the survey, 85.7 percent completed it. The overall completion rate for the study is 28.0 percent¹.

¹ The formula for calculating the completion rate was Completed Interviews (CI) divided by the sum of Completed Interviews (CI), Respondent Refusals (R), and Non Interviews (NI) minus Ineligible Respondents (IE) (respondents who after selection into the sample are determined not to meet study criteria). No one was eliminated from the denominator due to being ineligible for the study. The completion rate for this study is calculated as $216 / 771 = .280$.

Section A. Economic Optimism

Panelists were asked to assess the state of economic conditions in Michigan, beginning with their own household's financial situation (including their family living with them). The questionnaire asked, "How would you rate your household's overall financial situation these days?" Their responses to this item are summarized in Figure 1. In addition, these questions were also asked on the October 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey², which is a representative sample of all adults living in the state of Michigan. The results of both surveys are presented in order to compare the responses of political insiders to those of the mass public.

Figure 1. Reported Assessment of Current Household Financial Situation



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Figure 1 shows that panelists expressed generally favorable views of their personal household financials, especially compared to the mass public. In particular:

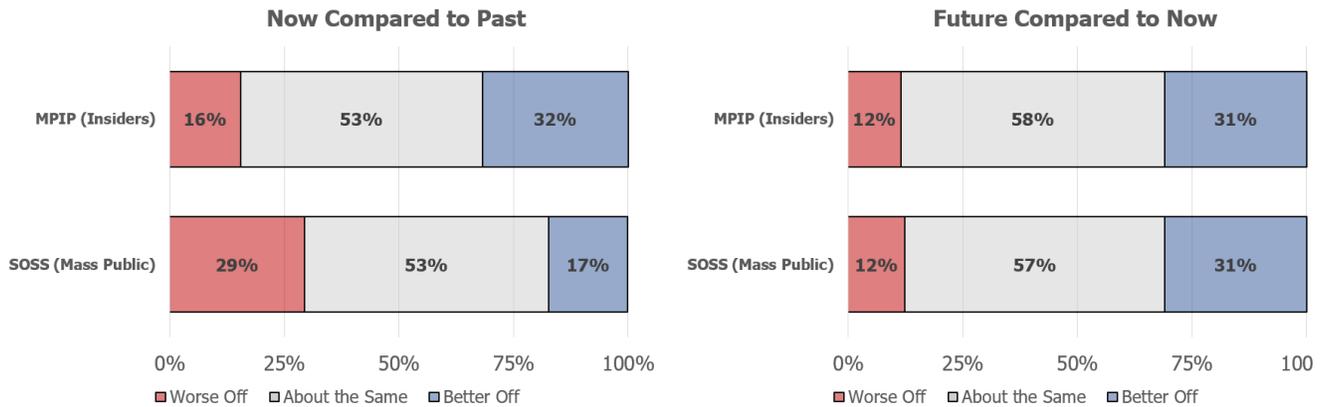
- 84 percent of insiders rated their current household financial situation Good or Excellent, compared to just 45 percent of the mass public.
- Only 2 percent of insiders rated their financial situation Not So Good and none rated it as Poor. By comparison, 14 percent of the mass public rated their financial situation Not So Good and 6 percent rated it poor.

Next, they were asked whether they are currently better off, worse off, or about the same as they were a year ago. In addition, they were asked whether they think that a year from now, they will be better off, worse off, or about the same as they are now. The results of these items, for both the insiders panel and the mass public, are presented in Figure 2, which shows that:

- Insiders (32 percent) were more likely than the mass public (17 percent) to report that their current financial situation is better than it was a year ago.
- Insiders (16 percent) were less likely than the mass public (29 percent) to report that their current situation is worse off than it was a year ago.
- Nevertheless, insiders and the mass public expressed similarly optimistic expectations of their financial situation over the next year, with 31 percent of both groups reporting that they think it will be better off and only 12 percent of both groups reporting that they think it will be worse off.

² SOSS is conducted by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) at Michigan State University. See <http://ippsr.msu.edu/survey-research/state-state-survey-soss> for more information.

Figure 2. Reported Assessment of Financial Situation, Compared to Past and Future

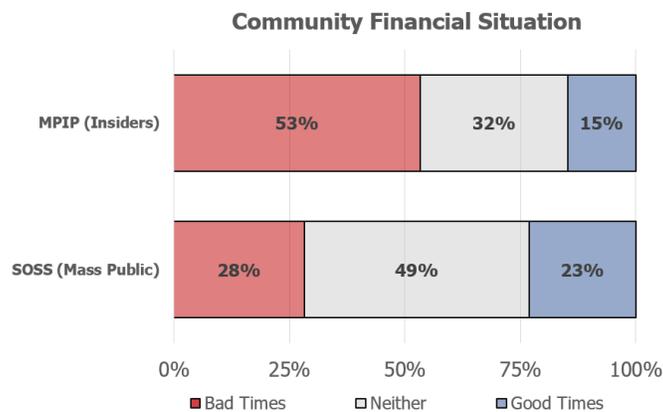


Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Next, panelists were asked, "Now turning to business conditions in your community, do you think that during the next twelve months your community will have good times financially, or bad times financially?" The responses to this item are summarized in Figure 3, including a comparison to the results from the SOSS survey of Michigan residents. The figure shows that insiders were more pessimistic in their expectations about their communities' financial situations. In particular:

- 15 percent of insiders reported expecting good times financially in their community over the next 12 months, compared to 23 percent of the mass public.
- 53 percent of insiders reported expecting bad times financially in their community over the next 12 months, compared to just 28 percent of the mass public.

Figure 3. Reported Expected Financial Situation in Community, Over Next 12 Months



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

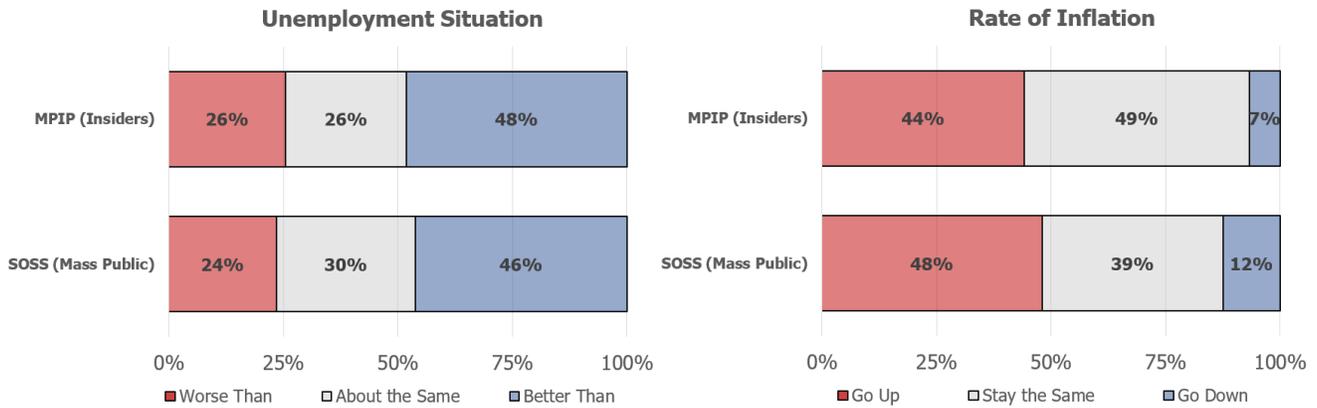
Panelists were then asked for their expectations about certain economic indicators for the country as a whole over the next 12 months. The questionnaire asked:

- "Twelve months from now, do you expect the unemployment situation in this country to be better than, worse than, or about the same as it was in the last 12 months?"
- "During the next twelve months, do you think the rate of inflation in this country will go up, will go down, or will stay about the same as it was in the past 12 months?"

The responses to these items, including a comparison to the results from the SOSS survey of Michigan residents, are shown in Figure 4, which shows that:

- Insiders and the mass public expressed similarly optimistic expectations about the unemployment situation, with nearly half (46 to 48 percent) of both groups answering that it will be better 12 months from now, compared to just one-fourth (24 to 26 percent) of both groups who reported thinking it will be worse.
- However, insiders and the mass public expressed similarly pessimistic expectations about the rate of inflation. Almost half (44 to 48 percent) of both groups reported expecting that the rate of inflation will go up in the next 12 months compared to approximately one-tenth (7 to 12 percent) who reported expecting it will go down.

Figure 4. Reported Expected Change in Economic Indicators, Over Next 12 Months



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Section B. Assessment of Politicians and Parties

Panelists were also asked a battery of questions to measure their personal assessments of particular elected officials and political parties. First, the questionnaire asked panelists to rate the performance Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and United States President Donald Trump as excellent, good, fair, or poor. The same question had appeared on previous waves of the MPIP survey, including about then-Governor Rick Snyder and then-President Barack Obama. Figure 5 shows the mean approval rating of these executives at each time point.

Figure 5. Mean Approval Ratings of Executives, Tracked Over Time

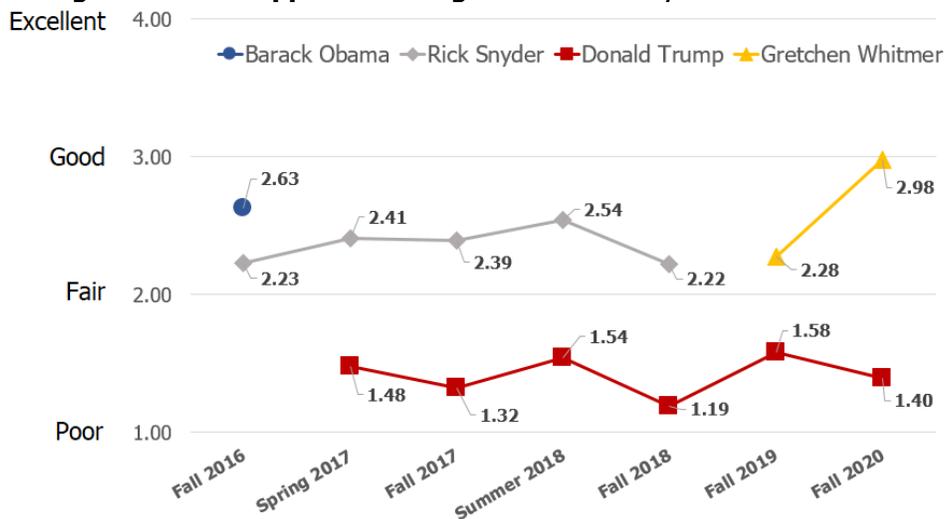


Figure 5 indicates that:

- Governor Whitmer received an average rating of 2.98 out of 4.00 from the panelists in Fall 2020 (which corresponds approximately to a “good” rating and represents an increase from 2.28 in Fall 2019). This was the highest mean rating given to any of the four executives in a given round so far.
- President Trump received an average rating of 1.40 out of 4.00 in Fall 2020 (which corresponds approximately to a “poor” or “fair” rating and represents a decrease from 1.58 in Fall 2019).

The performance evaluation questions for President Trump and Governor Whitmer were also asked to a sample of local government officials in Michigan as part of the Fall 2020 Michigan Public Policy Survey³, and to the general population of Michigan on the Fall 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey in Fall 2020. The opinions expressed about each executive’s performance by all three of these populations are summarized in Table 1. The results indicate that:

- Compared to local officials and the mass public in the state of Michigan, the insiders in our panel gave much more favorable assessments of Governor Whitmer. Whereas she enjoyed a +46 net approval rating (“excellent” or “good” minus “fair” or “poor”) among insiders, her net approval was -20 among local government officials and +4 among the mass public.
- Insiders also gave President Trump much less favorable assessments than did local government officials and the mass public. Trump’s net approval rating among insiders was -72, compared to +1 among local officials and -20 among the mass public.

Table 1. Reported Evaluations of Whitmer and Trump, with Comparisons to Other Populations

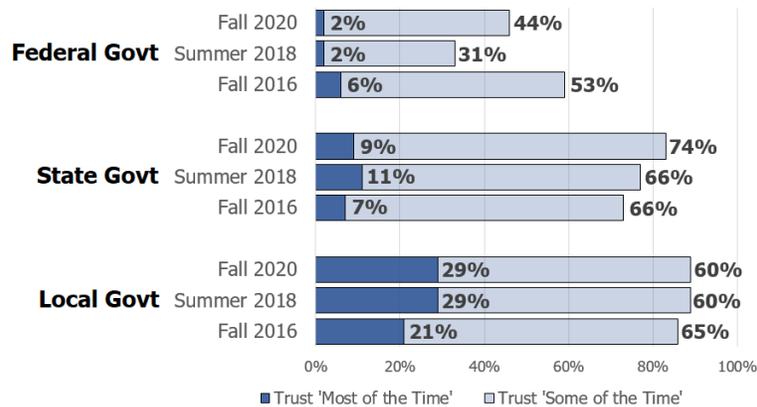
	MPIP (State Insiders)	MPPS (Local Govt Officials)	SOSS (MI Mass Public)
Gretchen Whitmer			
Net Approval ^a	+46.14	-19.59	+3.76
Mean Support ^b	2.98	2.21	2.48
Donald Trump			
Net Approval ^a	-71.8	+1.03	-20.18
Mean Support ^b	1.40	2.39	2.11
^a Net Approval is calculated as the percentage of respondents who evaluated the executives performance as “excellent” or “good,” minus the percentage of respondents who rated it “fair” or “poor.” Positive values indicate that respondents who rated the executive’s performance favorably outnumber the respondents who rated it unfavorably, while negative values indicate the opposite.			
^b Means are calculated using a four-point scale where 1 = “Poor” and 4 = “Excellent”			

Respondents were also asked how much of the time they think they can trust the federal government in Washington, the state government in Lansing, and their local government to do what is right – almost never, seldom, some of the time, or most of the time. This question also appeared in the Fall 2016 and Fall 2018 waves of the MPIP panel survey. Figure 5 shows the percentage of respondents who answered “some of the time” or “most of the time” for each level of government, at each of these two time points. The figure indicates that:

- As in previous waves, insiders reported *higher* levels of trust in lower levels of government than in higher levels of government. A vast majority (89 percent) indicated they trust their local government to do what is right some or most of the time, compared to 83 percent for the state government in Lansing and just 46 percent for the federal government.
- Trust in the federal government *increased* sharply from Summer 2018 (33 percent trusting some or most of the time) to Fall 2020 (46 percent), while trust in the state government *increased* slightly over the same time period (from 77 percent to 83 percent).

³ MPPS is conducted by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan. See <http://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/> for more information.

Figure 6. Reported Level of Trust in Various Levels of Government, Tracked Over Time



The trust in government questions for were also asked to a sample of the general population of Michigan on the Fall 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey in Fall 2020. Table 2 reports a comparison between insiders and the mass public in terms of trust in all three levels of government. The results indicate that:

- Compared to the mass public, insiders were less likely to report trusting the federal government to do what is right. While insiders gave the federal government a -9 net trust rating (percent trusting “most” or “some” of the time minus “seldom” or “almost never”), the mass public was evenly split between those who indicated they trust the federal government and those who indicated they do not.
- Insiders expressed higher levels of trust in the state government (+65 net trust) and local government (+78 net trust) than did members of the mass public (+14 net trust in state government, +46 net trust in local government).

Table 2. Reported Net and Mean Trust in Various Levels of Government

	MPIP (State Insiders)	SOSS (MI Mass Public)
Federal Government		
Net Trust ^a	-8.62	-0.01
Mean Trust ^b	2.31	2.31
State Government		
Net Trust ^a	+64.65	+13.68
Mean Trust ^b	2.89	2.52
Local Government		
Net Trust ^a	+77.58	+46.2
Mean Trust ^b	3.15	2.80

^a Net Trust is calculated as the percentage of respondents who reported trusting the government 'Most' or 'Some' of the Time, minus the percentage of respondents reported trusting the government 'Seldom' or 'Almost Never.' Positive values indicate that respondents who trust the government more often outnumber the respondents who trust it less often, while negative values indicate the opposite.

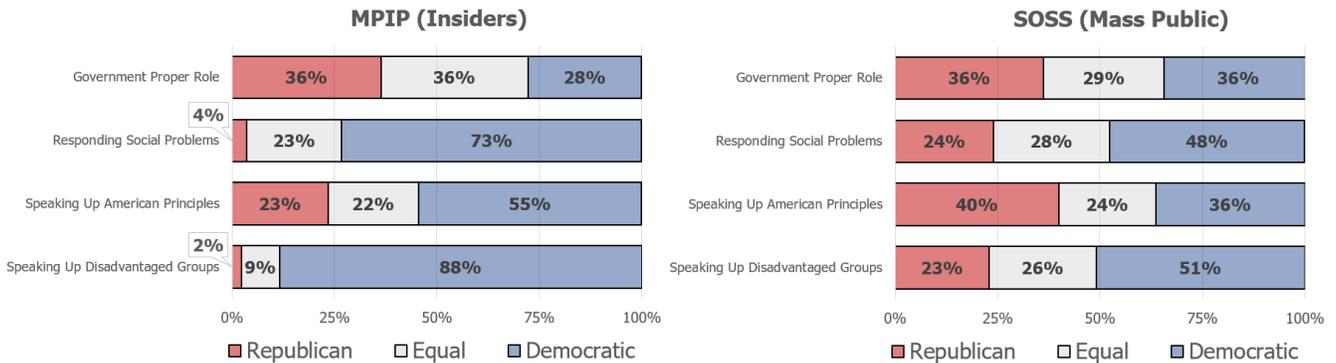
Next, panelists were asked which political party they think is better at each of the following, regardless of which party they normally support:

- Speaking up for disadvantaged groups in our society
- Speaking up for American principles and values
- Proposing specific policies that respond to new social problems
- Ensuring that government stays in its proper role in our society

The same question was asked of the mass public on the Fall 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey. Figure 7 shows the results from both populations. The results indicate that:

- By wide margins, insiders indicated the Democratic Party is better than the Republican Party in three out of four areas – speaking up for disadvantaged groups (88 percent to 2 percent), responding to social problems (73 percent to 4 percent), and speaking up for American principles (55 percent to 23 percent).
- Insiders indicated the Republican Party is better at ensuring government stays in its proper role, but by a more modest margin (36 percent to 28 percent).
- By comparison, the mass public was much more balanced in its assessment of party strengths. They favored each party in two out of four areas, and the widest margin in any area was 51 percent to 23 percent (in favor of the Democratic Party, in the area of speaking up for disadvantaged groups).

Figure 7. Party Named as Better in Particular Areas, Regardless of Personal Affiliation



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Section C. COVID-19 Pandemic

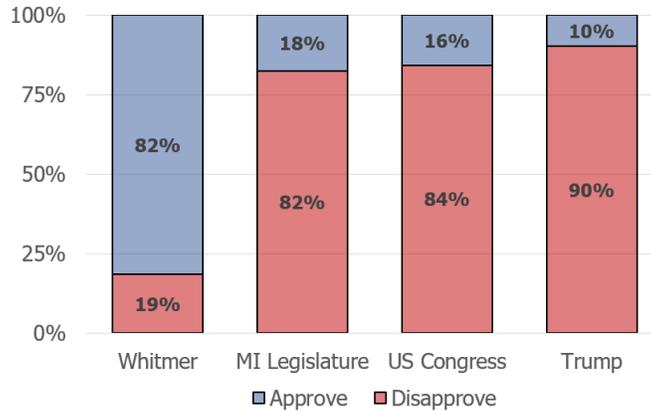
Next, panelists were asked a battery of items about the current COVID-19 pandemic and the response of various government officials. First, the questionnaire asked whether they approve or disapprove of the way four different individuals or bodies have responded to the coronavirus outbreak:

- Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer
- United States President Donald Trump
- The United States Congress
- The Michigan Legislature

The responses to each item are broken down in Figure 8, which indicates that insiders held very favorable opinions about Governor Whitmer’s response to the crisis but very negative opinions about the responses of the other elected officials. In particular:

- 82 percent of insiders reported approving of Whitmer’s coronavirus response, compared to 19 percent who disapproved.
- The state and federal legislatures were rated similarly, with 16 to 18 percent of panelists approving of the coronavirus response and 82 to 84 percent disapproving.
- Panelists gave the least favorable assessment to President Trump, with 10 percent approving and 90 percent disapproving of his response.

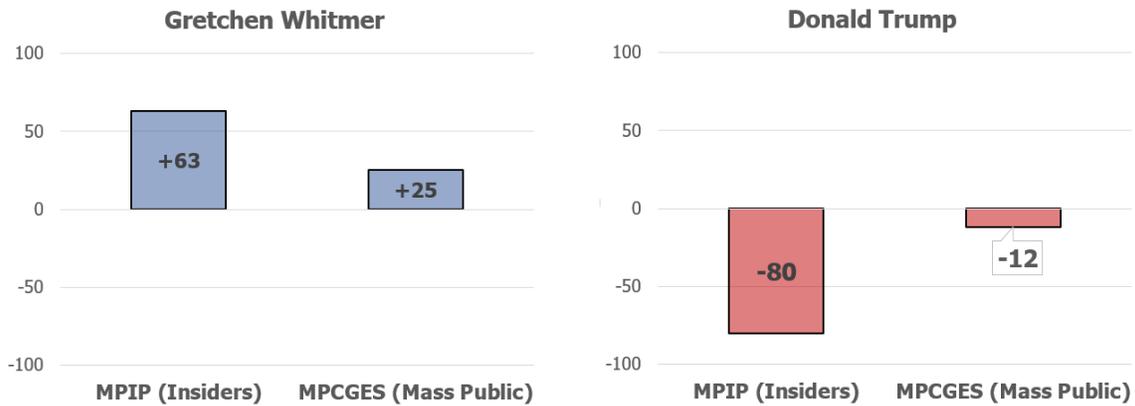
Figure 8. Reported Assessment of Response to Coronavirus Outbreak



Sample size: 216

These questions were also asked (about Governor Whitmer and President Trump only) to a sample of the Michigan mass public as part of the Michigan Post Convention General Election Survey⁴ in September 2020. Figure 9 shows the net approval (percent “approve” minus “disapprove”) of each executive’s response to the coronavirus outbreak, among each population.

Figure 9. Net Approval of Response to Coronavirus, with Comparison to MPCGES



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, MPCGES = 600

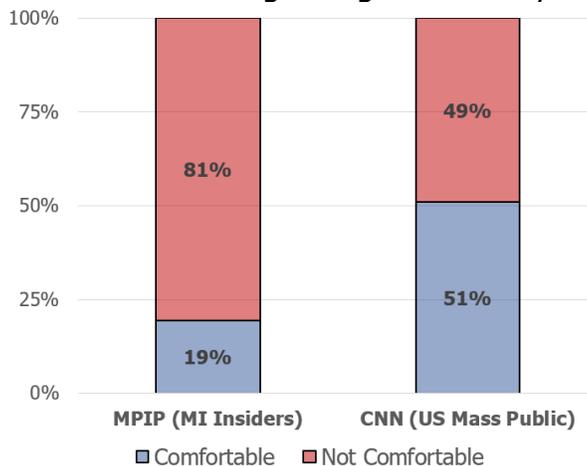
The figure indicates that both groups rated Governor Whitmer’s coronavirus response favorably and President Trump’s response unfavorably, on average. The difference, however, was much more pronounced among insiders (+63 for Governor Whitmer and -80 for President Trump) than among the mass public (+25 for Governor Whitmer and -12 for President Trump).

Next, panelists were asked, “Based on what you know right now about the coronavirus outbreak in the area where you live, would you feel comfortable or not comfortable returning to your regular routine today?” This question was also asked to a sample of the United States mass public in an October 2020 CNN Poll⁵. Figure 10 compares the results from both surveys, with those answering “No opinion” to the CNN poll excluded. The figure indicates that less than one-fifth (19 percent) of the insiders panel reported feeling comfortable about returning to their routine, compared to over half (51 percent) of the US mass public.

⁴ The MPCGES was conducted by Glengariff Group, Inc. on behalf of Detroit News/WDIV-TV. See <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2020/09/09/michigan-voters-approve-gretchen-whitmer-handling-pandemic-poll-finds/5750849002/> for more information.

⁵ The poll was conducted by SSRS on behalf of CNN. See <https://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2020/images/10/28/rel15.pdf> for more information.

Figure 10. Reported Comfort Level Returning to Regular Routine, Compared to US Mass Public



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, CNN poll = 1005

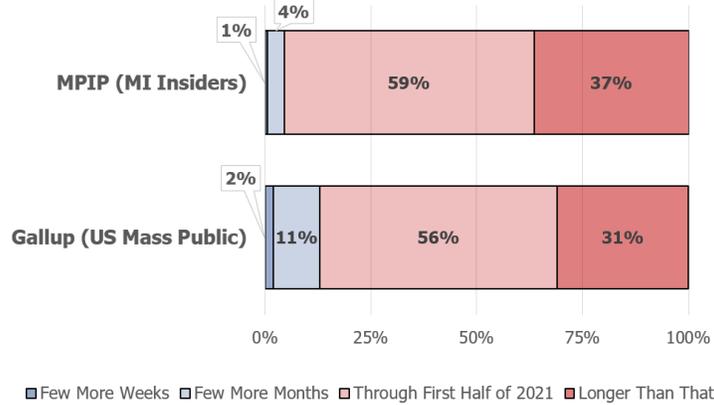
Panelists were also asked, “How long do you think the level of disruption occurring to travel, school, work and public events in the U.S. due to the coronavirus outbreak will continue?” Answer options included “a few more weeks,” “a few more months,” “through the first half of 2021,” and “longer than that.” This item also was also asked on an October 2020 Gallup Panel survey⁶ that is representative of the United States adult population. Figure 11 compares the results of both surveys.

The figure indicates that:

- The MPIP insiders panel reported expecting the disruption from the coronavirus outbreak to last well into 2021, with 59 percent answering “through the first half of 2021” and another 37 percent answering “longer than that.” Just 5 percent of Michigan insiders expected the disruption to end within a few months or less.
- The mass public of the United States expressed slightly more optimistic expectations about the duration of the disruption, but overall agreed with our insiders panel that it would likely last well into 2021. Over half (56 percent) of the Gallup Panel answered “through the first half of 2021” and 31 percent answered “even longer than that.” Only 13 percent expected the disruption to end within a few months or less, although that opinion was expressed more than twice as often within the Gallup Panel than among Michigan political insiders.

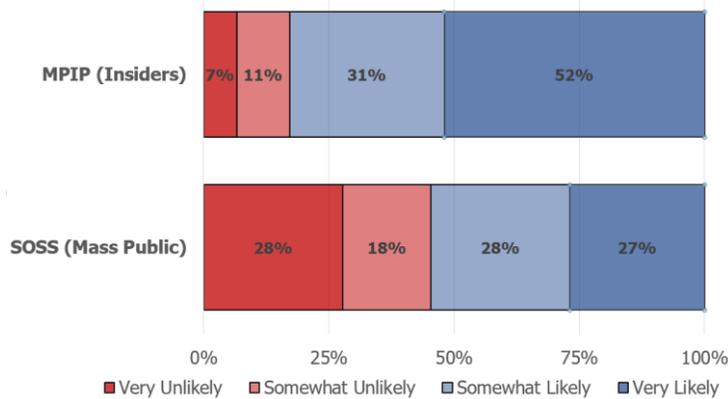
⁶ Gallup Panel surveys are conducted by Gallup, Inc. See <https://news.gallup.com/poll/308222/coronavirus-pandemic.aspx> for more information.

Figure 11. Reported Expected Duration of Disruption Due to Pandemic



Next, panelists were asked, "If a vaccine becomes available for the coronavirus, how likely are you to get the vaccine?" Responses could be indicated on a four-point scale ranging from "very unlikely" to "very likely." This item was also asked of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 State of the State Survey. Figure 12 shows the results from both surveys in order to compare the opinions of the two different populations.

Figure 12. Reported Likelihood of Receiving Coronavirus Vaccine



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

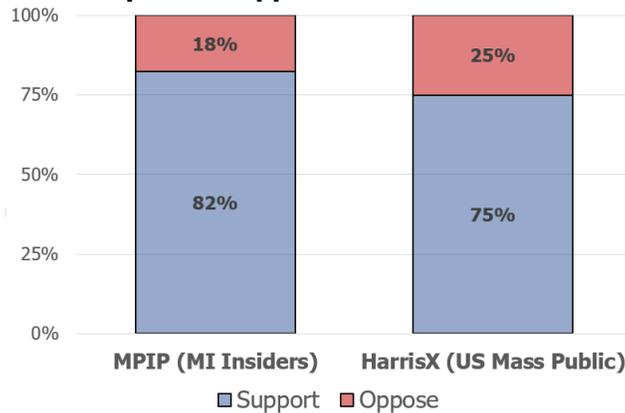
The results indicate that:

- Over four-fifths (83 percent) of the insiders panel indicated they were likely to receive the vaccine, with 52 answering "very likely" and another 31 percent answering "somewhat likely."
- By comparison, the mass public of Michigan was much more divided over the vaccine, with just 27 percent answering "very likely" and 28 percent answering "somewhat likely."

Panelists were also asked for their views on a national mask mandate. In particular, the questionnaire asked, "Would you support or oppose a national mandate to wear a mask?" This item also appeared on a nationally representative HarrisX poll⁷ in early November 2020. The results from both surveys are compared in Figure 13, which indicates that over three-fourths of both groups would support a mask mandate, with four-fifths (82 percent) of Michigan insiders and three-fourths (75 percent) of the US general population answering "support."

⁷ The poll was conducted by HarrisX on behalf of The Hill. See <https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/526175-poll-75-percent-of-voters-support-a-national-mask-mandate> for more information.

Figure 13. Reported Support for National Mask Mandate

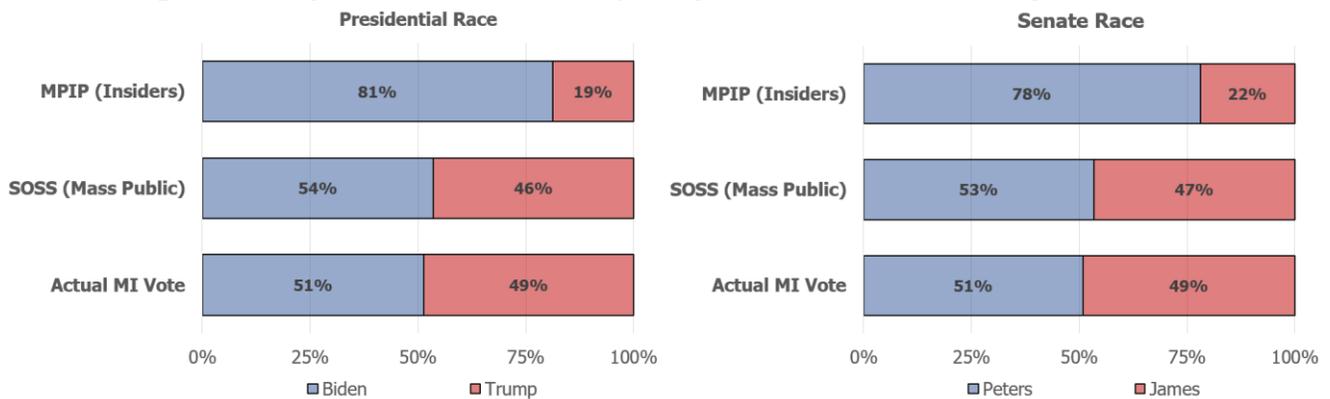


Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, HarrisX = 2762

Section D. 2020 Elections

Panelists were also asked a series of items about the 2020 elections, in the days leading up to the election. They were first asked which candidate they would most likely vote for in the presidential and US Senate elections, if it were held today. These items were also asked to a representative sample of Michigan voters in the October 2020 State of the State Survey. The results from both surveys are shown in Figure 14, along with a comparison to the actual two-party popular vote share in those contests (third party voters are excluded).

Figure 14. Reported Vote Preference, Compared to Actual Two-Party Vote Share



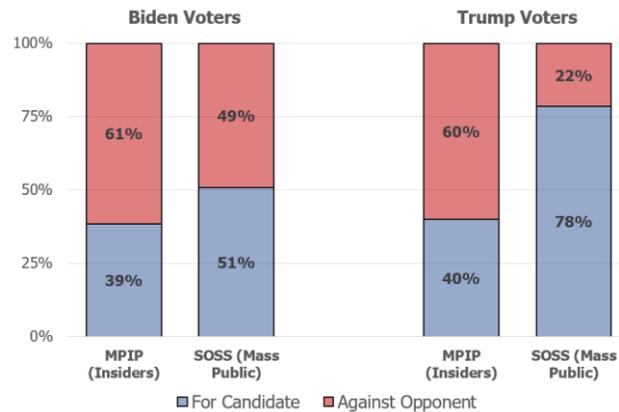
Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

The results indicate that insiders were much more likely to favor Joe Biden (81 percent) and Gary Peters (78 percent) than the mass public, whether measured by SOSS (54 percent for Biden and 53 percent for Peters) or the actual results (51 percent for Biden and 51 percent for Peters).

As a follow-up, the MPIP and SOSS questionnaires both asked respondents whether they would say their votes for Biden or Trump were more a vote *for* their preferred candidate or a vote *against* his opponent. The results are shown in Figure 15, which indicates that:

- Regardless of which candidate they actually voted for, approximately three-fifths (60 to 61 percent) of insiders answered that their vote was more a vote *against* the opponent.
- By comparison, over three-fourths (78 percent) of Trump voters and half (51 percent) of Biden voters in the mass public reported that theirs was more a vote *for* their preferred candidate rather than a vote *against* the opponent.

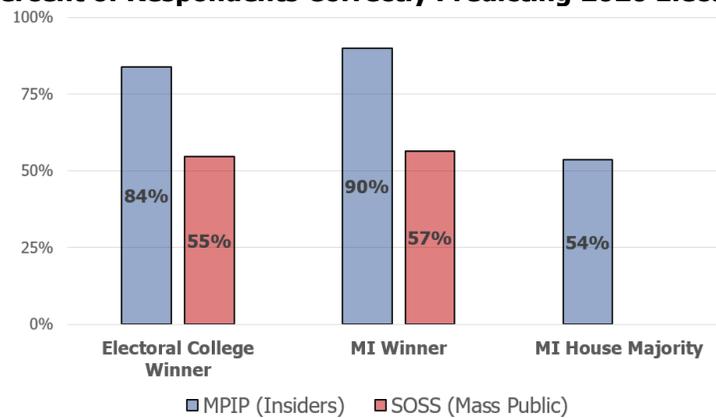
Figure 15. Explanation of Vote Preference as For Candidate or Against Opponent



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Regardless of which candidates they actually supported, panelists were also asked to predict who would actually win the Electoral College, the state of Michigan’s electoral votes, and the majority of seats in the Michigan House of Representatives. With the exception of the question about the legislature, these items were also asked to a sample of the mass public in the State of the State Survey. The actual outcomes of these elections was Joe Biden winning the Electoral College and the state of Michigan, and the Republican Party holding the majority in the Michigan House. Figure 16 shows the percentage of respondents in each survey who correctly predicted these outcomes.

Figure 16. Percent of Respondents Correctly Predicting 2020 Election Outcomes



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

The results indicate that:

- Wide majorities of the insiders panel correctly predicted the presidential race, with 90 percent predicting Michigan’s outcome and 84 percent predicting the Electoral College outcome.
- While insiders were closely divided in their predictions about the state House of Representatives, a narrow majority (54 percent) did predict that Republicans would keep control of the chamber.
- The mass public was much more divided than the insiders in their predictions about the presidential race, but a narrow majority did still predict that Biden would win Michigan and the Electoral College as a whole (57 and 55 percent, respectively).

Section E. Group Identities

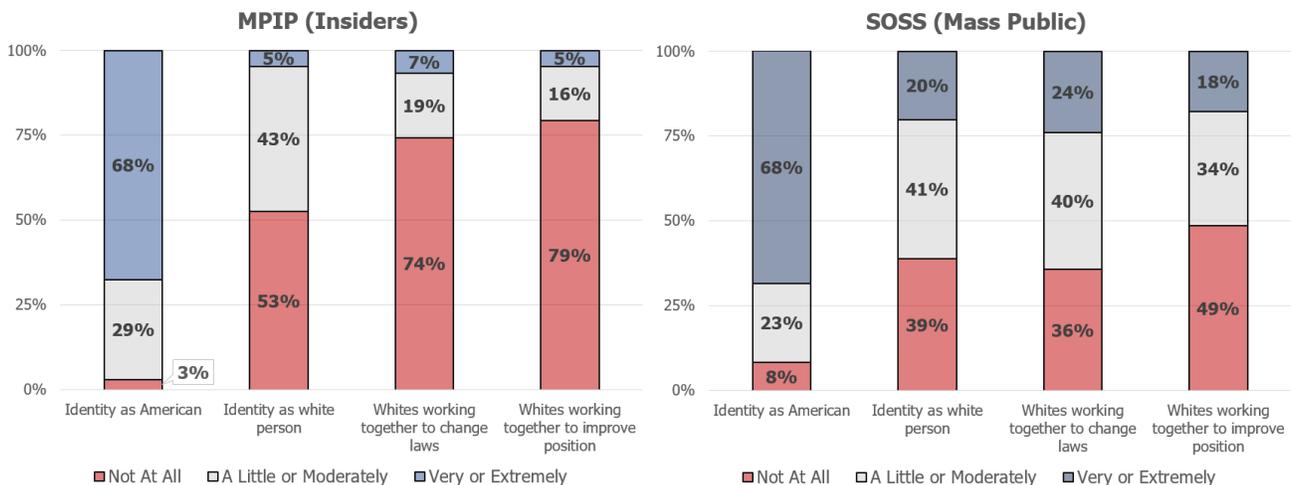
Panelists were also asked a battery of items about their group identities and beliefs about group-based and discrimination. First, respondents who identified their race as White were asked, "As you know, people have different identities. They think of themselves as Black, White, etc. We would like to ask you how you think about yourself. How important:

- *Is your identity as an American?*
- *Is your identity as a white person?*
- *Is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?*
- *Is it that whites work together to improve the position of their group?"*

These items were also asked to the mass public of Michigan in the October 2020 State of the State Survey. The results from both surveys are compared in Figure 17, which indicates that:

- Insiders and the mass public ascribed similar levels of importance to their identities as Americans, with 68 percent of both groups answering "very important" or "extremely important."
- Members of the mass public were three to four times more likely than insiders to answer either "very important" or "extremely important" to the other three items.

Figure 17. Reported Level of Importance of White and American Identities



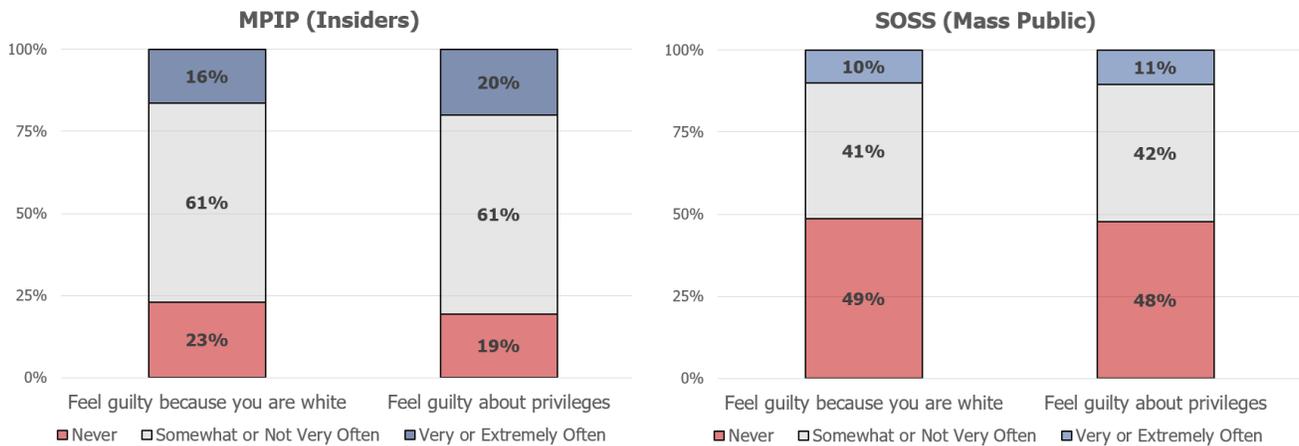
Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

White-identifying respondents to the MPIP and SOSS surveys were also asked a pair of items designed to measure their level of "white guilt," a sense of regret or remorse that some white people feel about benefits or privileges they believe they receive, or harms or disadvantages they believe others receive, as a result of racial injustice. In particular, the questionnaires asked:

- *"When you think about the history of this country and the treatment of different non-white groups, how often do you feel guilty because you are white?"*
- *"How often do you feel guilty about the benefits and privileges that you receive as a white American?"*

The results of these items from both surveys are compared in Figure 18, which indicates that insiders were almost twice as likely (16 to 20 percent) as members of the mass public (10 to 11 percent) to report feeling guilty "very often" or "extremely often."

Figure 18. Reported Frequency of White Guilt Feelings, Among White Respondents



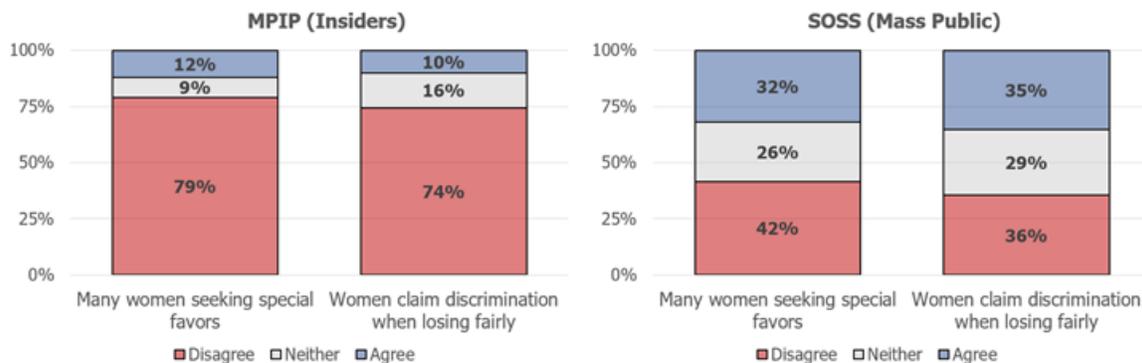
Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Next, panelists were asked a pair of items designed to measure their beliefs about women and sexism. In particular, the questionnaire asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- "Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring practices that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for 'equality'"
- "When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against"

These items were also asked to a sample of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 State of the State Survey. The results from both surveys are compared in Figure 19, which indicates that members of the mass public were approximately three times more likely than insiders to agree or strongly agree with each of these two items (32 to 35 percent of the mass public, compared to 10 to 12 percent of insiders).

Figure 19. Reported Beliefs about Women and Sexism



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Next, panelists were asked a battery of items about their racial attitudes⁸. The questionnaire presented a series of statements, and panelists were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item, on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." These items were also asked to a

⁸ This scale was developed for the American National Election Studies by Donald Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders. See Carmines et al (2011), "On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634 for more information.

sample of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey. The wordings of the items are listed in Table 3, along with a summary of responses from each survey.

The results indicate that insiders in Michigan expressed more favorable attitudes toward African-Americans than did the mass public. In particular:

- Approximately one-seventh (14 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that African-Americans should work their way up without any special favors, compared to almost one half (46 percent) of the mass public.
- Three-fourths (76 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that slavery and discrimination have made it difficult for African Americans to work their way up financially, compared to less than half (44 percent) of the mass public.
- Two-thirds (64 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that African-Americans have gotten less than they deserve, compared to two-fifths (39 percent) of the mass public.
- Only 5 percent of insiders agreed to strongly agreed that African-Americans only need to try harder to be just as well off as whites, compared to one-third (34 percent) of the mass public.

Table 3. Summary of Responses to Racial Attitudes Items

Items	MPIP (Insiders)			SOSS (MI Mass Public)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	Mean ^a	% Agree	% Disagree	Mean
Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. African Americans should do the same without any special favors.	14%	69%	2.02	46%	31%	3.25
Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for African Americans to work their way up financially.	76%	18%	2.01	44%	40%	2.95
Over the past few years, African-Americans have gotten less than they deserve	64%	14%	2.25	39%	39%	3.01
It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if African-Americans would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.	5%	84%	1.61	34%	31%	2.68
	Average 40%	46%	1.97	41%	35%	2.97

^a Means are calculated on a five-point scale where higher values indicate greater levels of racial resentment – that is, less favorable attitudes toward minorities

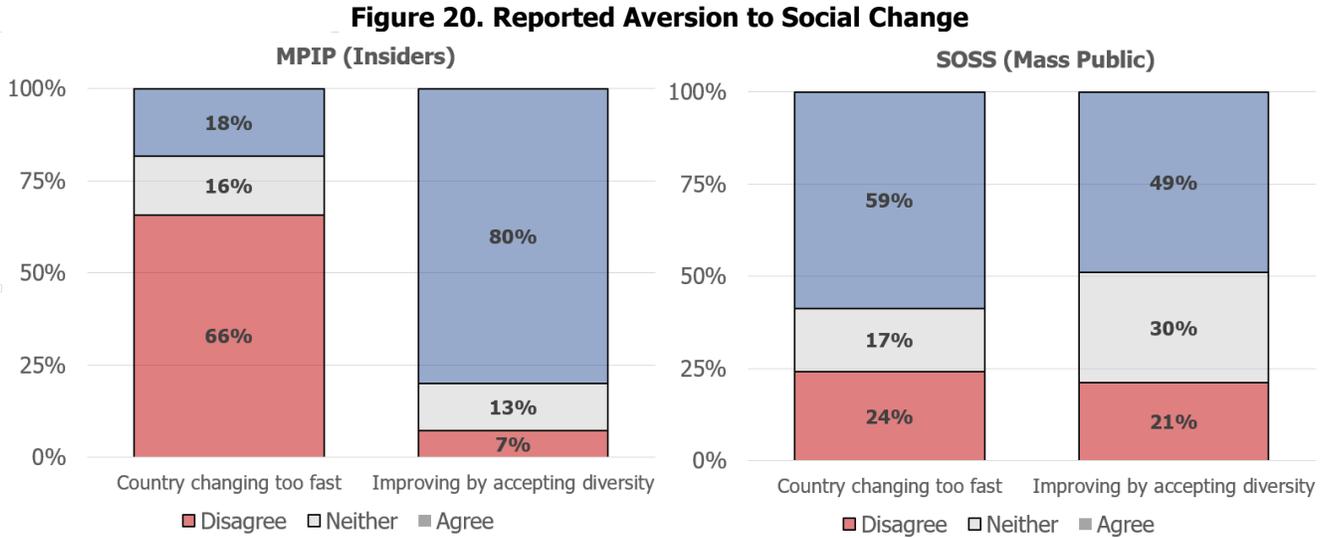
Section F. Political Values

Finally, respondents were asked a series of items about their political values and orientations toward society more broadly. First, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a pair of statements about social change⁹:

- "Our country is changing too fast, undermining traditional American values."
- "By accepting diverse cultures and lifestyles, our country is steadily improving."

⁹ For more information, see Grossmann and Thaler (2018), "Mass-Elite Divides in Aversion to Social Change and Support for Donald Trump" *American Politics Research* 46:5.

These items were also asked to a sample of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 wave of the State of the State Survey. Figure 20 compares the results from both surveys. It indicates that insiders were *less likely* (18 percent) than the mass public (59 percent) to agree or strongly agree that the country is changing too fast, and *more likely* (80 percent) than the mass public (49 percent) to agree or strongly agree that our country is improving by accepting diverse cultures and lifestyles.



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

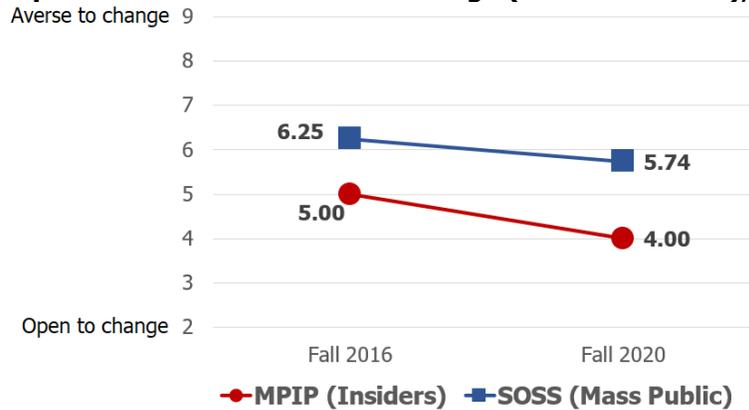
These items, coded in opposite directions, were also combined to create an Aversion to Change scale, which Grossmann and Thaler (2018) have used as “a measure of aversion to (or acceptance of) social diversification and value change.” Figure 21 plots the mean value of this scale among insiders and the mass public, including a comparison to Fall 2016 when these items last appeared on the MPIP and SOSS surveys¹⁰.

The figure indicates that:

- Aversion to Change has *decreased* on average among both groups from 2016 to 2020, which indicates a greater openness to diversification and social changes compared to the time of the 2016 general election.
- Insiders decreased even more in Aversion to Change (from 5.00 to 4.00, on average) than did the mass public (from 6.25 to 5.74). This may reflect a widening gap between mass and elites on attitudes toward change, even as both groups seem to have shifted toward greater openness.

¹⁰ SOSS was conducted using different modes at these time points. The Fall 2016 wave was conducted by telephone using a stratified random sample of landline and cell phone numbers in Michigan. The Fall 2020 wave was conducted online by YouGov and matched on gender, race, age, and education to produce a sample that is representative of the state’s adult population.

Figure 21. Mean Reported Level of Aversion to Change (Two-Item Scale), Tracked Over Time



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Panelists were also asked to indicate their feelings toward different social and economic systems, using a “thermometer” scale of 0 to 10 where higher values correspond to warmer, more favorable feelings. These items were also asked to a sample of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 State of the State Survey. The list of items, along with the mean ratings given by each group, are shown in Table 3. It indicates that insiders assessed democracy (8.98 out of 10.00) and capitalism (6.55) more favorably than did the mass public (7.71 and 5.74, respectively), whereas the mass public expressed slightly more favorable views of socialism (3.90, compared to 3.77 among insiders).

Table 3. Mean Reported Favorability toward Various Social Systems

	MPIP (State Insiders)	SOSS (MI Mass Public)
Democracy	8.98	7.71
Capitalism	6.55	5.74
Socialism	3.77	3.90
<i>n</i>	216	1000

Means are calculated on an 11-point scale ranging from 0.00 to 10.00. Higher values correspond to more favorable views toward the system, whereas lower values correspond to less favorable views.

Next, panelists were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements designed to measure their attitudes toward social dominance:

- “We should try to get ahead by any means necessary.”
- “Winning is more important than how the game is played.”
- “Inferior groups should stay in their place.”

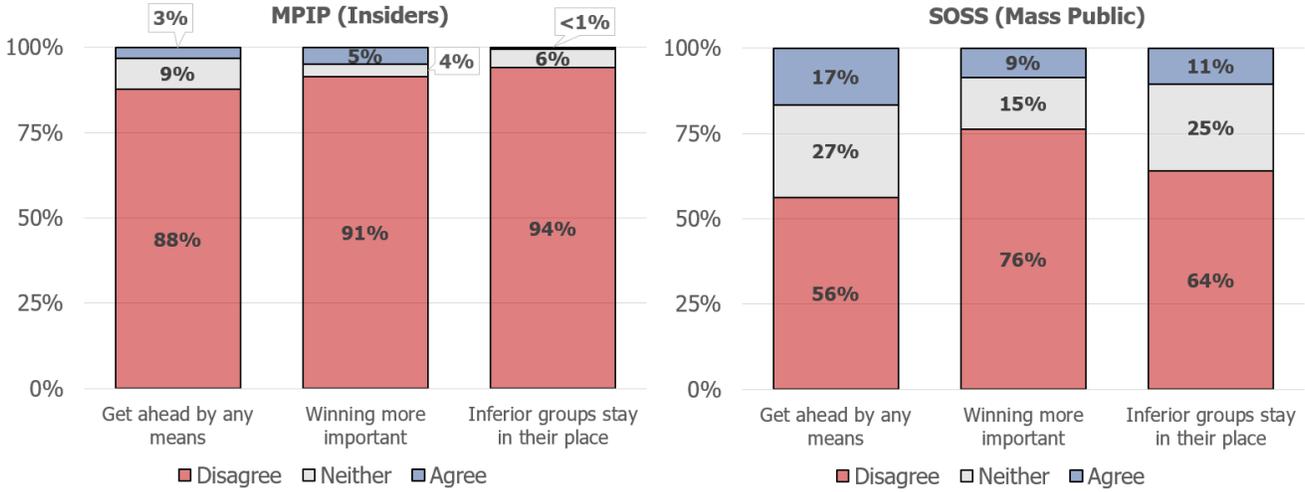
These items were also asked to a sample of the Michigan mass public on the October 2020 State of the State Survey. The results of both surveys are compared in Figure 22, which indicates that feelings of social dominance – expressed rarely by both groups – were many times more common within the mass public than among insiders.

In particular:

- Only 3 percent of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that we should get ahead by any means necessary, compared to 17 percent of the mass public.
- One-twentieth (5 percent) of insiders agreed to strongly agreed that winning is more important than how the game is played, compared to 9 percent of the mass public.

- Less than 1 percent of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that inferior groups should stay in their place, compared to 11 percent of the mass public.

Figure 22. Reported Orientation toward Social Dominance



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Panelists and SOSS respondents were also asked a pair of items designed to measure their preferences about the size of the government’s role in society. In particular, they were presented with two pairs of statements and asked to indicate which statement within each pair comes closer to their views.

The first item asked *"Which comes closer to your views:*

- *"The main reason government has become bigger over the years is because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves," OR*
- *"Government has become bigger because the problems we face have become bigger."*

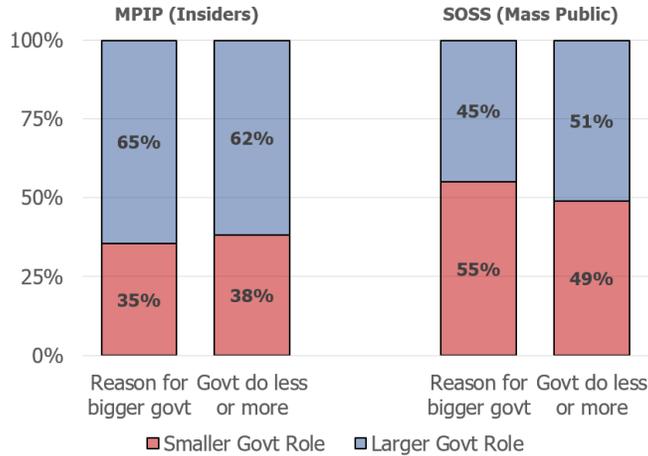
The second item asked *"Which comes closer to your views:*

- *"The less government, the better," OR*
- *"There are more things that government should be doing."*

The first statement¹¹ in each pair would reflect a preference for a smaller role for government, while the second statement in each pair would reflect a preference for a larger government role. The results for insiders and the mass public are compared in Figure 23, which indicates that insiders were more likely to express a preference for a larger role for government (62 to 65 percent, respectively, on the two items) than were members of the mass public (45 to 51 percent, respectively).

¹¹ As listed here in this report. In the actual instruments, the order of the statements was randomized for each respondent.

Figure 23. Reported Preferences about Size of Government



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

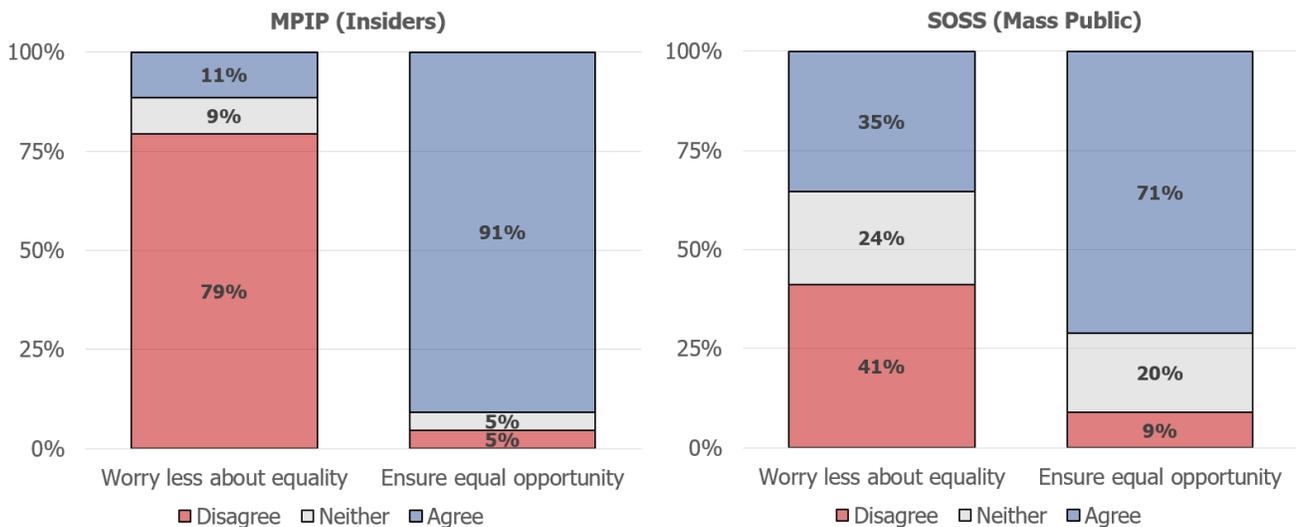
Panelists and SOSS respondents were then asked a pair of items designed to measure their preferences about egalitarianism and equal opportunity. In particular, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two statements:

- "This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are."
- "Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed."

The results for both groups are compared in Figure 24, which indicates that insiders were much more likely than the mass public to express egalitarian views. In particular:

- Only one-tenth (11 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that we should worry less about how equal people are, compared to one-third (35 percent) of the mass public.
- Nine-tenths (91 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that we should make sure everyone has an equal opportunity, compared to 71 percent of the mass public.

Figure 24. Reported Opinions about Egalitarianism



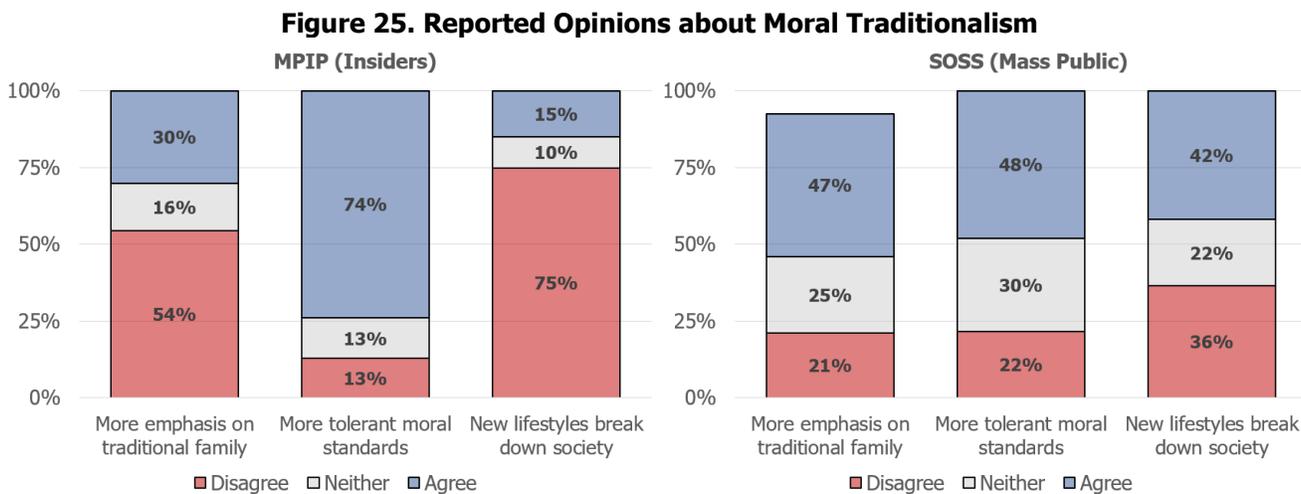
Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Finally, MPIP panelists and SOSS respondents were asked a set of items designed to measure their preferences about moral traditionalism. Specifically, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements:

- "This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties"
- "We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to different moral standards"
- "Newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society"

The responses of both groups are compared in Figure 25, which indicates that insiders reported agreeing less with moral traditionalist views than did members of the mass public. In particular:

- Less than one-third of insiders (30 percent) agreed or disagreed that there should be more emphasis on traditional family ties, compared to nearly half (47 percent) of the mass public.
- Almost three-fourths (74 percent) of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that we should be more tolerant of different moral standards, compared to less than half (48 percent) of the mass public.
- Only 15 percent of insiders agreed or strongly agreed that new lifestyles contribute to the breakdown of society, compared to two-fifths (42 percent) of the mass public.



Sample sizes: MPIP = 216, SOSS = 1000

Section G. Summary of Conclusions

As a whole, the results of the Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP) survey suggest that the people working in and around the state government of Michigan differ heavily in a variety of ways from the general population of the state and country. Of particular note:

- Participants from our panel of insiders reflected *more favorably* than the general population of Michigan about their own household's financial situation, yet were *more pessimistic* about business conditions within their communities.
- The insiders panel assessed Governor Whitmer *more favorably*, and President Trump *less favorably* (both overall and with respect to the handling of the coronavirus outbreak specifically) than did the general population of Michigan and local government officials in the state.
- Compared to the general population of Michigan, insiders were *more trusting* of state and local government and *less trusting* of the federal government in Washington.
- Regardless of their personal party affiliation, insiders reported thinking that the Democratic Party does a better job than the Republican Party at responding to social problems, defending American principles, and standing up for disadvantaged groups, whereas the general population of Michigan was more divided in its partisan assessments.

- Compared to the adult population of the United States as a whole, the insiders panel reported expecting the COVID-19 disruption to last longer, expressed a greater willingness to receive the vaccine, and expressed greater support for a national mask mandate.
- Regarding the 2020 general elections, the insiders panel more strongly preferred Joe Biden for president and Gary Peters for Senate than did the general population, and was also more likely to correctly predict that they would both win.
- The insiders panel expressed more pro-minority views on social discrimination issues than did the mass public of Michigan, including a greater level of white guilt and less white racial identity among white respondents, stronger anti-sexist sentiments, and lower levels of racial resentment.
- The insiders panel reported holding more tolerant political values than did the mass public of Michigan, including greater openness to social change, lower levels of social dominance, greater support for egalitarianism, and lower levels of moral traditionalism.
- In terms of specific political preferences, the insiders panel also expressed a greater level of favorability toward democracy, capitalism, and a larger role for government compared to the mass public of Michigan.

Appendix A - Demographic Summary

Table A-1 provides a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of the political insiders who responded to each of the first eight rounds of the Michigan Political Insiders Panel survey. In addition, it includes a comparison to results from the State of the State Survey, which is designed to be representative of the general adult population of Michigan.

The demographic breakdown of MPIP respondents was very similar across all three rounds of data collection, with only very slight (zero to four percentage points) variation across most time points. Notably, however, the distribution of panelists participating has included a smaller proportion of Republicans (24 percent in Wave 8) than it did originally (33 percent in Wave 1). On average, compared to the state's general population, the panel of insiders is *more* Democratic-leaning in partisan identification, *more* ideologically centrist, *less* diverse in terms of race and gender, and *more* formally educated.

Table A-1. Demographic Breakdown of MPIP Panel, by Round

Demographic Characteristics		MPIP ^a	SOSS ^a							
		Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	(General MI Population)
Party^b	Republican	33%	34%	31%	29%	32%	29%	27%	24%	28%
	Independent	30%	29%	31%	33%	31%	32%	33%	33%	36%
	Democrat	37%	36%	38%	38%	37%	39%	40%	42%	36%
Ideology	Conservative	16%	16%	14%	15%	14%	14%	13%	11%	37%
	In the Middle	61%	61%	61%	61%	66%	63%	63%	60%	35%
	Liberal	23%	22%	24%	24%	20%	23%	25%	29%	28%
Race/Ethnicity^c	White	90%	92%	93%	90%	92%	89%	88%	89%	82%
	Black	8%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%	8%	7%	14%
	Hispanic	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	6%
Gender	Male	62%	64%	64%	62%	68%	65%	64%	62%	49%
	Female	38%	36%	36%	38%	32%	35%	36%	38%	51%
Education	No 4-Year Degree	4%	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%	72%
	4-Year Degree	44%	47%	44%	42%	40%	45%	47%	45%	18%
	Graduate Degree	53%	50%	53%	56%	55%	52%	49%	50%	10%
<i>n</i>		526	402	359	353	290	286	329	270	1000

^a MPIP percentages are unweighted from a non-probability sample; SOSS percentages use survey weights.

^b Third party identifiers were excluded from Party ID percentages only.

^c Racial/ethnic categories were not mutually exclusive; respondents could select as many as applied to them.