

Generation Jones re-elected Bush – will they re-elect Blair?

New data published in today's Independent on Sunday shows the UK may follow the 2004 US voting pattern

Since its introduction to the UK last autumn, Generation Jones (those born between 1954 and 1965) has taken the marketing & advertising community by storm. But until now, Jonesers have never been properly considered in a UK political context - despite their much-discussed role in re-electing George W Bush as President. Importantly, one key factor connects the importance of Jonesers in both business and politics: the surprisingly high level of persuadability among these now 39-50 year olds.

Several top U.S. political pollsters, including Gallup, Rasmussen, and Mason-Dixon, showed that Jonesers, especially women, were clearly the most volatile of all age groups throughout the Presidential campaign. Furthermore, Jonesers' swing to Bush on election day was widely regarded as handing the victory to the President. Mason-Dixon for instance wrote that 'history will show that Jonesers were the decisive vote that re-elected George W Bush'.

WHO ELECTED BUSH? **'GENERATION JONES'**

The folks born between 1954 and 1965, say **Jonathan Pontell** and **J. Brad Coker**, have proved to be perhaps the most important voting group in the nation



| Generation | Age |
|------------|-------|
| 18-29 | 18-29 |
| 30-39 | 30-39 |
| 40-49 | 40-49 |
| 50-59 | 50-59 |
| 60-69 | 60-69 |
| 70-79 | 70-79 |
| 80-89 | 80-89 |
| 90-99 | 90-99 |

Rasmussen Reports Home
Rank on Kerry Today
Rank on Approval
Congress - GOP vs Dem

Generation Jones Women are Swing Voters

October 27, 2004 - Since July, 40-49 yr old (Generation Jones) women have vacillated more than other generations of women between John Kerry and George W. Bush. In October they are also the most evenly divided, favoring Bush by a slight margin of 47% to 49%. This segment also has the highest percentage of undecideds in October, with 4.4% not sure who they'll vote for on Nov. 2.

Three of the five generations of women have favored Kerry each month, with only 30-39 yr olds (Generation X) and 40-49 yr olds swinging toward Bush in August and September. However, the much-discussed swing among women back toward Kerry in October was done by the Generation Jones segment, while Generation X women actually increased their support for Bush, favoring him by 52% to 43%.

Rasmussen Report's age-breakdown also highlights the difference between Generation Jones and Baby Boomer women (the two groups are sometimes lumped together). Boomer women have favored Kerry each month, in October by 50% to 41%.

In the UK, Generation Jones has provided an increasingly important (and lucrative) way of analysing consumer behaviour. Generation Jones was first introduced in the UK by Carat, the country's leading independent media agency, as the first element in its long term research study 'Project Britain' which seeks to explore the complexity and diversity of modern Britons and provide the fresh thinking that drives smarter marketing decisions.

Generation Jones has since caught the imagination of an industry of persuaders who have recognised not only the analytical veracity of treating this unique generation differently from surrounding age groups, but it has also proved intuitively persuasive to treat as one group individuals who have had collective formative experiences – educationally, culturally, and – importantly – politically.

Until this election, there has been a paucity of data available to provide sufficient analytical capacity to determine the impact of generational differences on electoral behaviour. In fact, the standard age breaks (random ten year categories like 25-34, 35-44, etc.) used by UK pollsters have served to obscure generational differences that can be key to the outcome of elections.



However, today's Independent on Sunday features a new poll commissioned by Carat, which represents the very first serious 'Gen Jones' study conducted in a British electoral context. The findings make for a strikingly close comparison with UK Jonesers' Stateside counterparts.

For more information about the IoS coverage, and to read today's article "Introducing Generation Jones: voters who hold the key to No. 10" visit <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/story.jsp?story=627941>

What is it that makes Jonesers so important to this election?

First, their size – about 24% of the electorate.

Second, this generation is the 2nd most likely to vote. This should be unsurprising in view of their economic stake in the election outcome relative to other generations – Jonesers are at or near the peak of their career, often with mortgages and children to be educated.

Third, Jonesers sit as the fulcrum between the generations either side in terms of voting intention. On one side are the Baby Boomers & War Generation – the two generations most likely to vote but predictably so, predominantly in favour of the Conservatives. On the other side are the less dependable Generations X and Y, most likely to support Labour but very uncertain to vote. In the middle are the Jonesers – fairly likely to vote but more evenly balanced between the two main parties than any generation.

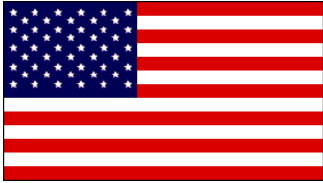

Fourth, Generation Jones is persuaded by a unique combination of voting drivers. The only issue to exert equal pull across all generation is the NHS. But Joneses are more sensitive to messages about tax than any other generation, while on other issues they differ quite markedly from older generations (whose votes are less fluid) – for example Jonesers are more concerned than older voters with education but less concerned about asylum & immigration.

UK Jonesers present an explosive mix of political characteristics. They're volatile, likely to vote, and driven by issues of direct relevance to them – especially tax & education. Yet fully one-quarter of Jonesers who indicated an intention to vote for a specific party said that they 'may well change their mind', and of those who were unsure or reluctant to disclose voting intention, more than half of Jonesers said they were floating voters.

So, the Jones vote is up for grabs and party managers need only look across the Atlantic to see how powerful an electoral force this group are likely to be on 5th May.



Comparing US Jonesers with the UK – consumer and political attitudes

|  | |  | |
|--|--|---|---|
| US Consumers | US Voters | UK Consumers | UK Voters |
| Highly persuadable. Very open to trying new products and services, Current period of experimentation undermines past brand loyalties | Major swing voters Joneser women vacillated between Bush and Kerry more than any other age/gender category | Highly persuadable. A large number will happily switch brands within a category if the offer better meets their needs. More is spent on finding new consumers than retaining loyal ones. | Think of themselves as floating voters. Even among those indicating a party, 27% may well change their mind |
| Work longest hours, Make most money, Have biggest expenses | “Kitchen Table Issues” key: child care, taxes, health care, jobs | Pay more for public services than previous generations & don’t feel the benefit. | More concerned than older voters about taxes & education. |
| Very savvy with advertising, fine-tuned b.s. detectors, see through and turned off by ad hype | Respond well to straightforward political advertising messages, resistant to gratuitous emotional appeals | They respond best to communications of simplicity, honesty & delivery. | Receptive to new political messages but will judge parties on whether they think they can actually deliver on their promises. |

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