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A Pro-Government, Socially Liberal Generation
DEMOCRATS' EDGE AMONG MILLENNIALS SLIPS

This report is part of a yearlong series of original reports that explore the behaviors, values and opinions of the Millennial generation, today's teens and twenty-somethings. For more in this series, go to www.pewresearch.org/millennials

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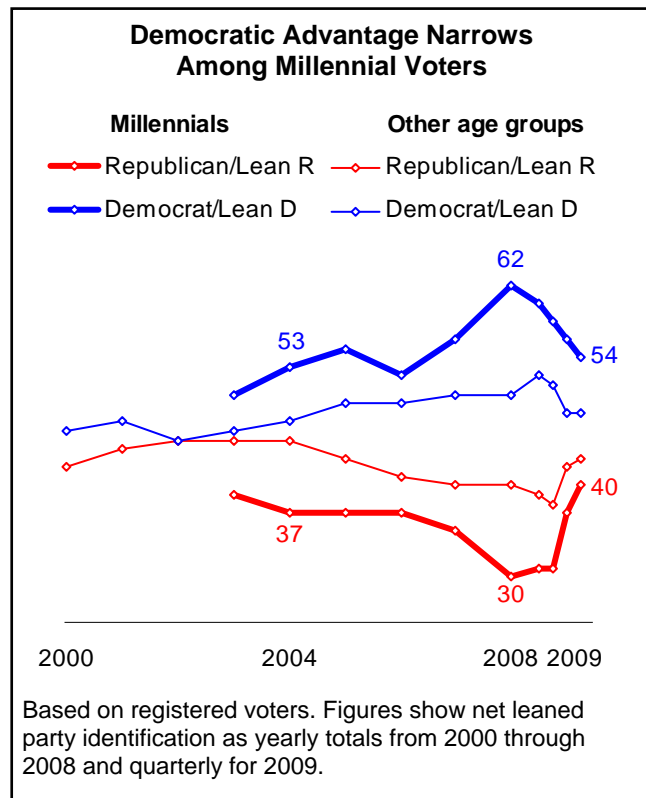
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A Pro-Government, Socially Liberal Generation **DEMOCRATS' EDGE AMONG MILLENNIALS SLIPS**

The “Millennial Generation” of young voters played a big role in the resurgence of the Democratic Party in the 2006 and 2008 elections, but their attachment to the Democratic Party weakened markedly over the course of 2009. The Democratic advantage over the Republicans in party affiliation among young voters, including those who “lean” to a party, reached a whopping 62% to 30% margin in 2008. But by the end of 2009 this 32-point margin had shrunk to just 14 points: 54% Democrat, 40% Republican.

While the Republican Party picked up support from Millennials during 2009, this age group continues to favor the Democratic Party more than do other generations. And the underlying political values of this new generation continue to be significantly more liberal than those of other generations on many measures.¹

Aside from partisanship, this distinctiveness is most evident in the Millennials’ social values, but can also be seen in greater support for government in general, and somewhat lower levels of support for an assertive national security policy compared with other generations. On other important dimensions, however, such as attitudes and values about business and about the social safety net, young people today are not particularly distinctive.



Young voters were Barack Obama’s strongest supporters in the 2008 election, but the Democratic Party’s advantage among Millennials predates Obama’s emergence on the political scene. Indeed, they had been the party’s best age group in both the 2004 and 2006 elections.

¹ The generational cohorts used throughout this report are: Millennial (born after 1980), Generation X (born 1965-1980), Baby Boomer (born 1946-1964), Silent Generation (1928-1945), and Greatest Generation (1910-1927).

However, over the course of 2009 the Democratic Party’s advantage among Millennials in party affiliation weakened considerably from its high point in 2008. The most recent party affiliation data (from the fourth quarter of 2009) shows that in terms of straight partisan identification, Democrats held a 36% to 24% lead over the GOP among Millennial voters, a significantly narrower edge than the nearly two-to-one margin (41% vs. 22%) in 2008. At the same time, the percentage of Millennials who said they lean Republican has nearly doubled, from 8% in 2008 to 15% at the end of 2009. There was little change in the percentage who leaned Democratic (20% in 2008 vs. 18% in late 2009). While the Democratic Party has a larger advantage among Millennials than it does among the two oldest cohorts, a greater proportion of the party’s support comes from people who do not explicitly identify as Democrats but only lean toward the party.

Despite the shift in partisan leaning among Millennials, the Republican Party has had limited success in increasing the number of Millennials who identify as – and not just lean – Republican. Just 22% of Millennial voters identified as Republican in 2008, and there was no significant rise in the latest polling (24% in the 4th quarter of 2009).

In another sign of sagging enthusiasm for the Democrats, Obama’s job approval rating slipped substantially over the past year among Millennials as well as among older age groups. Millennials were by far Obama’s strongest age group in the 2008 election – supporting him by about a two-to-one margin over John McCain, according to national exit polls. And in February 2009, 73% of Millennials approved of Obama’s job performance – the highest percentage in any age group. One year later, in February 2010, just 57% of Millennials give Obama a positive rating; still, Obama’s ratings among Millennials are eight points higher than among Generation Xers and Baby Boomers (49% each) and 19 points higher than among those in the Silent Generation (38%).

Even though their Democratic loyalties have diminished somewhat in the past year, Millennials retain a substantial pro-Democratic tilt. The political leanings of this youngest group

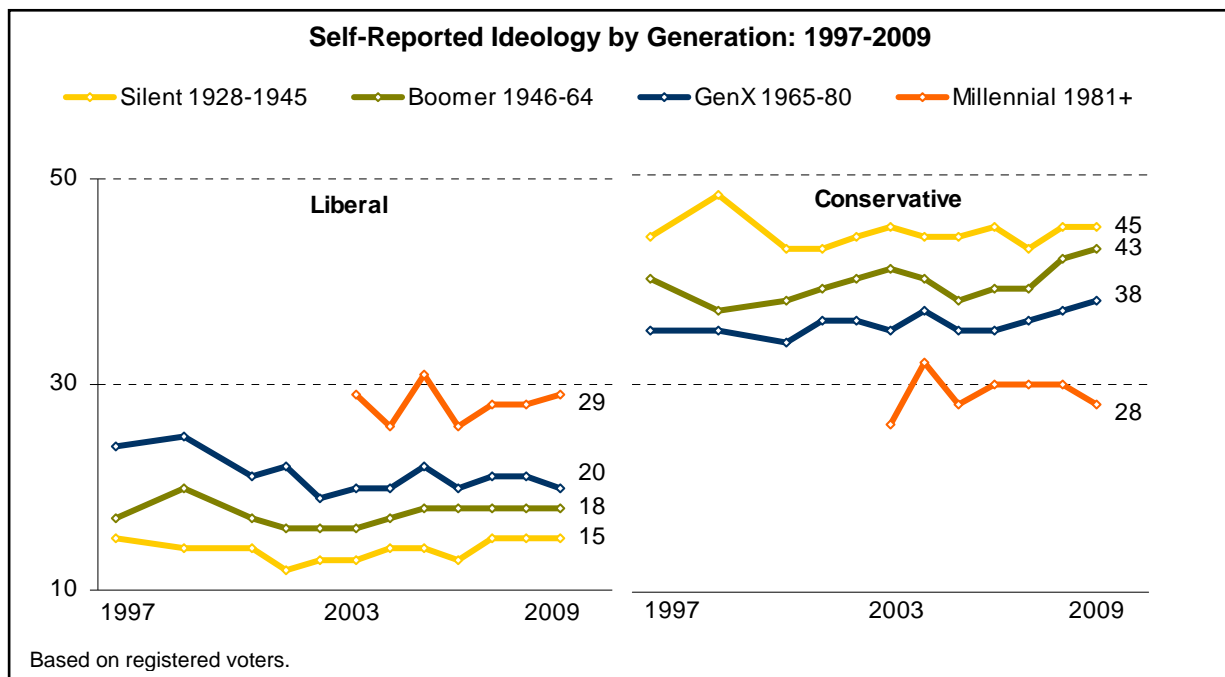
	All voters	Millennial	GenX	Boomer	Silent
4th Quarter 2009	%	%	%	%	%
Democrat	36	36	35	34	39
Lean Democratic	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>
NET Dem/Lean D	49	54	50	47	46
Republican	27	24	27	28	30
Lean Republican	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>
NET Rep/Lean R	42	40	42	44	44
2008					
Democrat	38	41	36	37	38
Lean Democratic	<u>14</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>
NET Dem/Lean D	51	62	51	50	48
Republican	28	22	29	29	31
Lean Republican	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>
NET Rep/Lean R	39	30	40	40	41

Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to NET party totals due to rounding.

of voters may be linked to their outlook on politics and society. Analysis of long-term political values finds that Millennials are far more liberal in a number of areas than are older Americans. This is reflected in Millennials' views on contemporary policy issues as well, from their widespread belief that gays should be allowed to openly serve in the military to their reservations over the use of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and their continued preference for a more expansive role for government.

Moreover, Millennials are far more likely than older people to describe themselves as liberals. In the fourth quarter of 2009, as many Millennial voters identified themselves as liberals (29%) as conservatives (28%), while 40% said they are moderates. In every other age group, far more voters described their views as conservative than liberal. Among voters in Gen X, 38% described their political views as moderate and 38% said they were conservative; only 20% described themselves as liberal.

More Baby Boomers and members of the Silent Generation described their political views as conservative than moderate; 43% of Baby Boomer voters said they are conservative, 36% described themselves as moderate and only 18% said they are liberal. Similarly, 45% of voters in the Silent Generation described their views as conservative, 35% as moderate and 15% said they are liberal.



The data for this report is drawn from many sources, including regular political surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, as well as the Center's ongoing study of political values which began in 1987. The values study has tracked a broad range of beliefs and values that shape public opinion and ultimately influence voting behavior. The study has been conducted 14 times and asks respondents whether they agree or disagree with a series of approximately 80 statements covering core beliefs about government, business, religion and several other topics. The most recent [study](#) in the series was conducted March 31-April 21, 2009 with a nationwide sample of 3,013 adults (see appendix for more details).

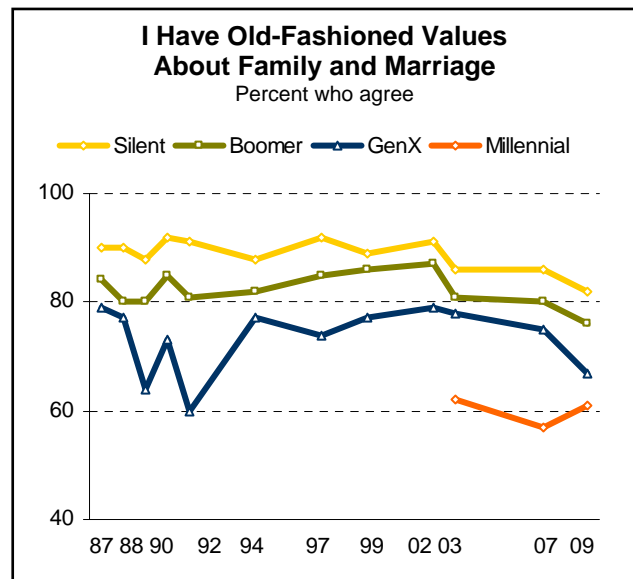
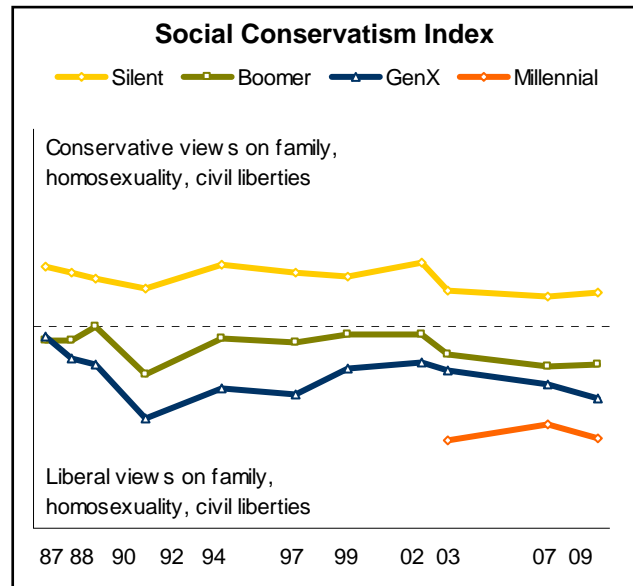
To get a clearer sense of the broad trends in each of several different kinds of attitudes and values, related questions in each substantive area were combined into a summary index. Respondents were sorted into generations (also referred to as cohorts) according to their age at the time of interview. Index scores for each generation of respondents are then presented graphically. Each line on the graph follows one cohort through the series of surveys. The Millennial cohort first appears in the 2003 survey, when enough interviews with adult members of that group were available for reliable reporting. Millennials in 2009, who ranged in age from 18 to 28, can usefully be compared with Gen X in 1994, when that cohort was roughly the same age. This allows a comparison of two cohorts at the same point in their own life cycles, though the circumstances of the political world were very different in 1994 and 2009.

SECTION 1: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VALUES

Millennials stand out as significantly more liberal than other generations on the index of social values, which is composed of questions about family, homosexuality and gender roles. Members of Generation X are somewhat more conservative than Millennials, but are more similar to them on social values than are the two older generations.

Baby Boomers are slightly more conservative than Gen X, and have become less conservative since first polled in 1987. The most conservative group is the Silent Generation. Even though they have become slightly more progressive in their views over time, they continue to hold much more traditional social values than other age groups.

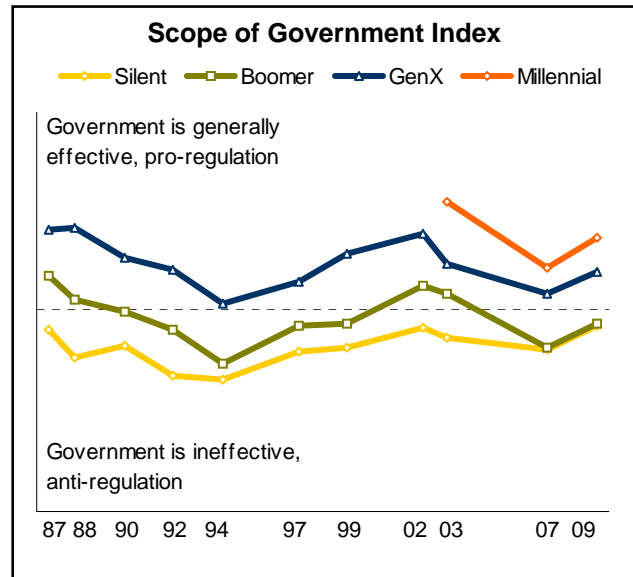
In the 2009 survey, 82% of the Silent Generation agreed that they have “old-fashioned values about family and marriage.” By contrast, 61% of Millennials agreed. Members of Generation X in 2009 were only slightly more likely than Millennials to agree with the statement (67% did so). But in 1994, when members of Gen X were about the same ages as the Millennials were in 2009, 77% of Gen X agreed.



One of the underlying factors in the strong generational pattern in social values is religion. Younger cohorts are less likely than older ones to express strong religious sentiment, and are more apt to be religiously unaffiliated (for an extensive analysis of generational differences in religion, see “[Religion in the Millennial Generation](#)” by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life). On an index of three questions measuring traditional religious values, Millennials register as less religious than other generations.

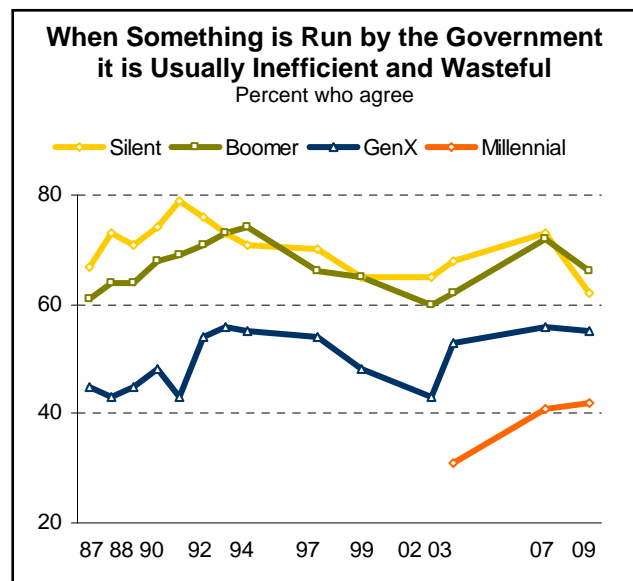
Views of Government

Millennials are significantly less critical of government on a number of dimensions than are other age cohorts. This tendency has been seen on a variety of individual survey questions as well as on a three-question index of items from the political values survey; this index covers opinions about government’s effectiveness, government regulation of business and whether the government has too much control over people’s lives.



The public’s attitudes about the role of government have fluctuated over the years in response to political events and in reaction to the leadership at the time. For example, support for an active government reached a low point in 1994, the year of sweeping Republican victories in the congressional elections that fall. And support fell again in 2007 as much of the public lost faith in the Bush Administration.

Baby Boomers were more supportive of active government than the Silent Generation through much of the period covered by the survey, but in 2007 and 2009 the views of these two cohorts converged. Generation X has been more supportive than the Boomers throughout the period, a result somewhat at odds with the fact that this generation has been somewhat more Republican than other cohorts throughout much of its existence. The Millennials are more supportive of government than is Gen X,



but they are currently no more supportive than Gen X was in 2002, a few months after the 9/11 attacks.

One key indicator in this series taps the public's views about government efficiency. Majorities of the public since 1987 have agreed with a statement that asserts that the government is often wasteful and inefficient, though the size of that majority has varied substantially over the period. Since their appearance in the Pew Research Center values surveys in 2003, Millennials have been less likely than other age cohorts to agree with this statement. In 2009, just 42% did so, compared with 55% for Generation X, 66% for Baby Boomers, and 62% for the Silent Generation.

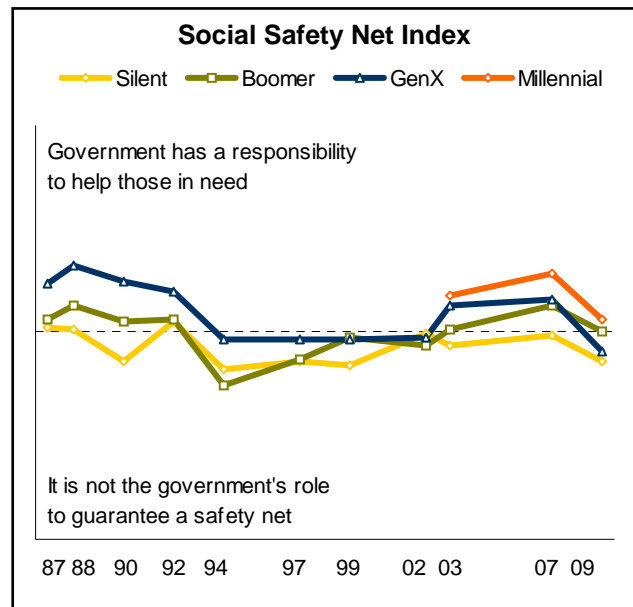
In 1994 when Generation X spanned roughly the same ages as the Millennials last year (18 to 28), 55% of that cohort agreed that government was wasteful and inefficient, considerably greater than the number of Millennials who said this last year (42%). It is unclear whether Millennials will continue to be less critical of government going forward, especially since overall anti-government sentiment is considerably lower now than in 1993. But, compared with older cohorts, Gen Xers have remained less opposed to active government for more than a decade, suggesting that these attitudes, once formed, tend to persist at least in comparison with other age cohorts.

Social Safety Net

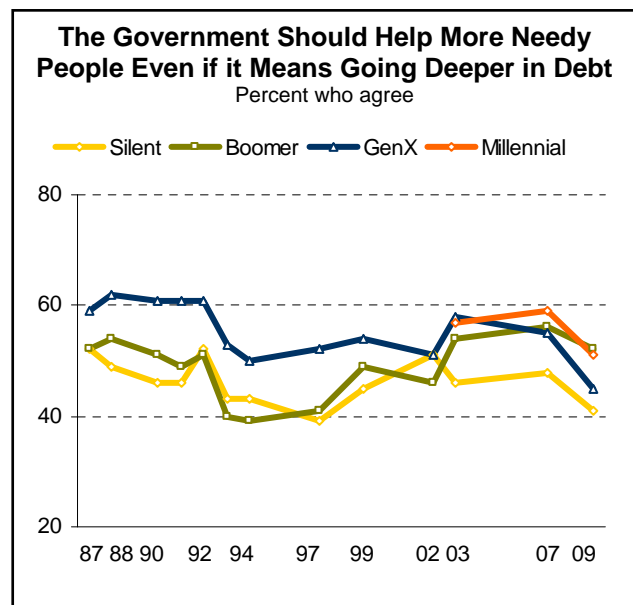
While Millennials are less skeptical than older age groups about the effectiveness of government, they are not particularly supportive of an expanded government social safety net. In the 2009 survey, those younger than 30 were no more likely than Baby Boomers – and only somewhat more likely than the Silent generation – to favor an activist role for government in helping the poor on a three-question social safety net index.

Since 2007, there has been a decline in the overall proportion favoring more generous assistance for the poor, a downturn that was true for the Millennials as well. In 2009, for instance, 51% of Millennials agreed that “the government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt”; two years earlier, 59% of Millennials agreed with that statement.

The decline was equally large among Gen Xers (from 55% in 2007 to 45% in 2009). On this measure, Millennials’ views came closest to those of Baby Boomers, with Gen Xers and members of the Silent Generation less supportive of the government providing more aid for the needy if it means incurring more debt.



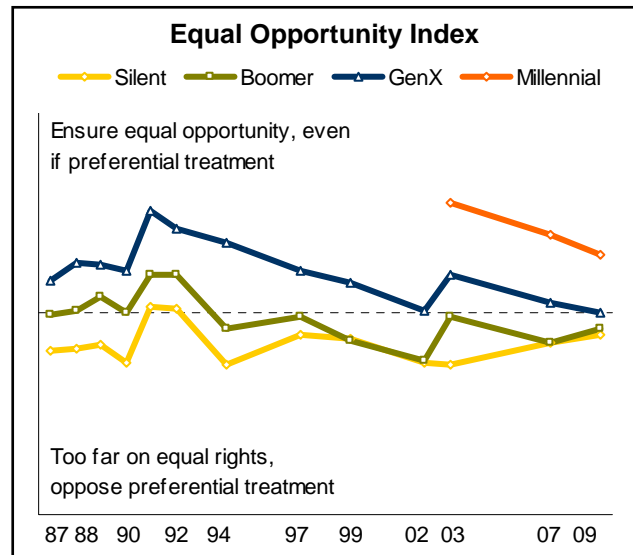
true for the Millennials as well. In 2009, for



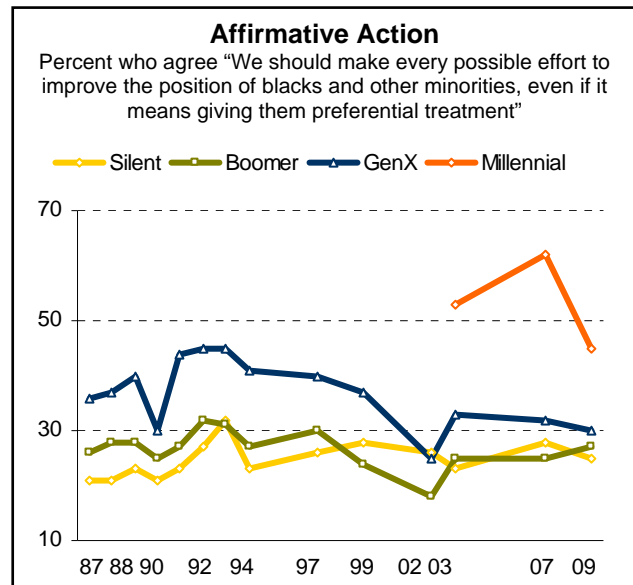
Equal Rights

The Millennial Generation is somewhat more supportive of efforts to ensure equal rights than are members of other age groups, though it not clear that this difference is truly a generational one. Differences among the three older cohorts on this measure have narrowed over time. On an index of three questions measuring support for ensuring equal rights and opportunities, Millennials have been more in favor than other age groups in each survey since 2003.

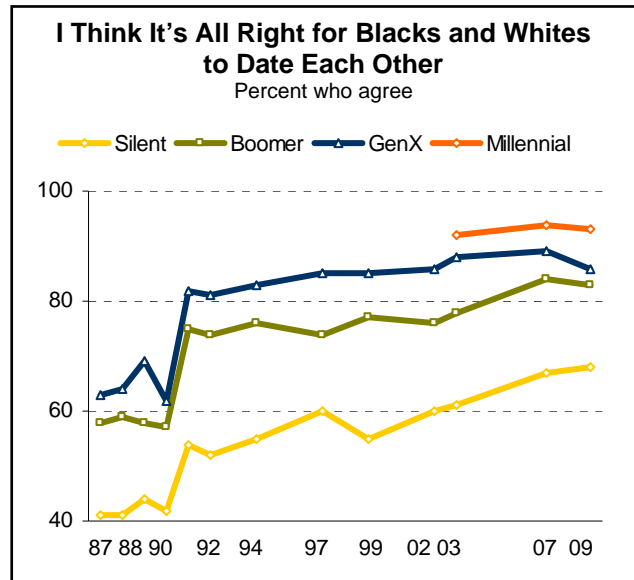
In the early 1990s, members of Generation X were at least as supportive as the Millennials are now. Gen X was distinct from older cohorts in those earlier years, but differences among the older three cohorts have vanished.



The largest percentage difference between Millennials and other cohorts in the area of equal rights is on a question about improving the position of blacks and other minorities “even if it means giving them preferential treatment.” Among Millennials in 2009, 45% agreed that we should do this, a much higher level of support than seen among Gen X (30%), Boomers (27%) or the Silent Generation (25%). But support for such efforts among Millennials has fluctuated over time as more members of the cohort have reached adulthood, with 53% supporting them in 2003 and fully 62% doing so in 2007. Among members of Generation X in 1993, 45% supported making efforts to improve the position of blacks and minorities, even with preferential treatment, the same as the Millennials today.



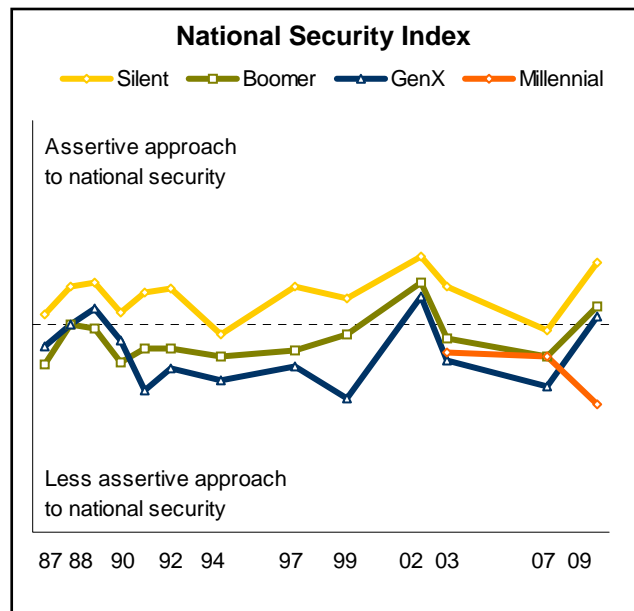
Another question that taps attitudes about race, but is not included in the equal opportunity index, asks about interracial dating. This question shows both a strong increase in approval over time within age cohorts, as well as large and persistent cohort differences. In the 2009 survey, 93% of Millennials agreed that it was okay for blacks and whites to date. Among Gen X and the Boomers, 86% and 83%, respectively, agreed. Among the members of the Silent Generation, just 68% were supportive of blacks and whites dating. But both the Silent Generation and the Boomers have changed markedly on this question since 1987.



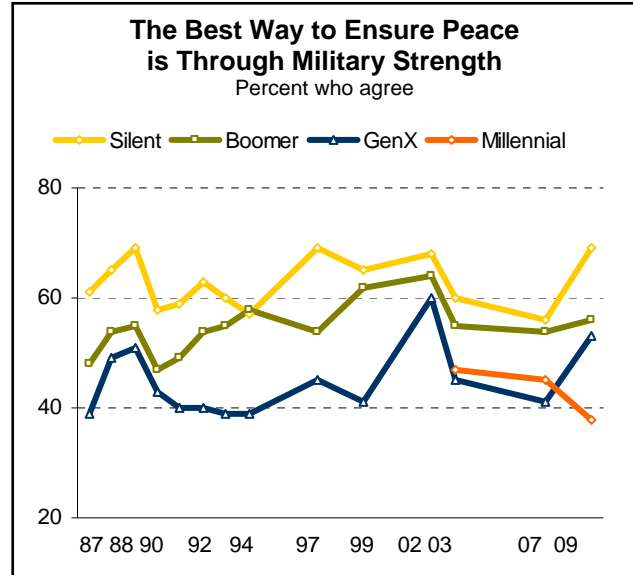
National Security

In 2009, young people expressed less support for an assertive national security policy than did older people. The young were less supportive of remaining in Iraq and Afghanistan, and less likely to say that the best way to achieve peace is through military strength. But the relationship between age, generation and attitudes about national security are complex and defy easy generalization.

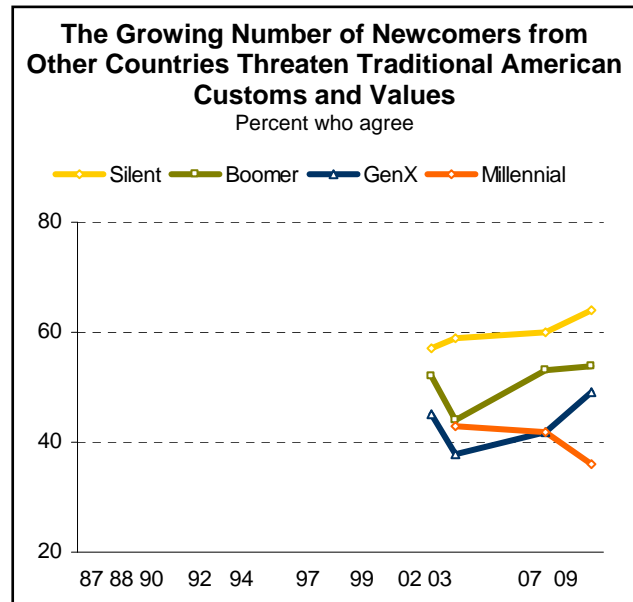
Generational differences are evident from an index of three values questions about national security policy. Members of the Silent Generation tend to be more supportive of an assertive approach to national security, compared with members of other cohorts. At times, Baby Boomers have been more hawkish than the two younger generations, though often the differences among the cohorts have been quite small. The Millennials appear distinctively less hawkish in 2009, but this was not the case in 2007 or 2003.



One of the key questions driving the pattern in the index asks people to agree or disagree with the statement that “the best way to achieve peace is through military strength.” With only a few exceptions, Generation X has been significantly less likely than the two older cohorts to agree with this statement. The Millennials first appeared in the 2003 survey, when 47% agreed. That was close to the 45% among Gen Xers who agreed, and lower than the 55% of Boomers and 60% of the Silent Generation who did so. In 2009, just 38% of Millennials agreed that peace is best achieved through military strength.



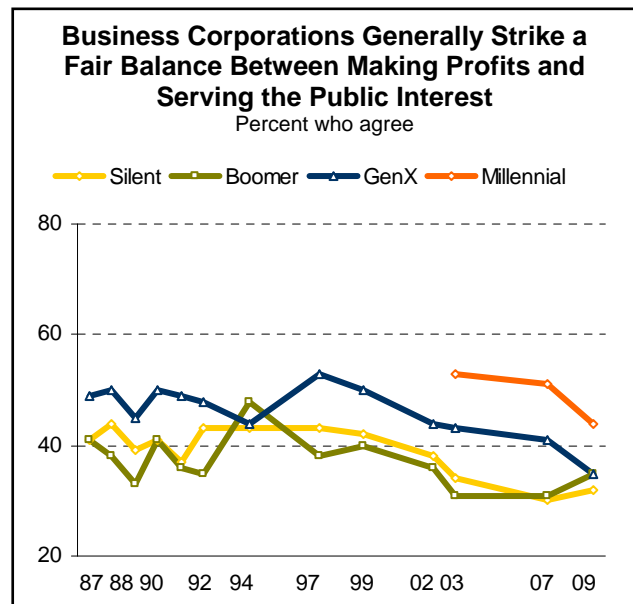
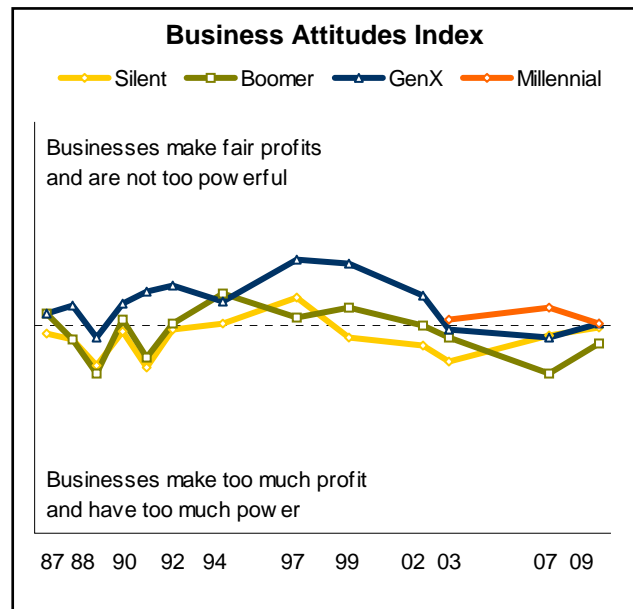
Another dimension of attitudes about foreign affairs relates to immigration. Pew Research Center surveys in the past few years have found younger people more tolerant of immigrants than are older people. Especially in 2007 and 2009, older cohorts were more apt to say immigrants have a negative impact on American customs and values. Millennials were not particularly different from members of Gen X in either 2003 or 2007, but stood out as much more accepting of immigrants in 2009. Another question with a large age difference in 2009 found Millennials much less supportive of further restrictions on immigration than were other cohorts. Still, a 59% majority of Millennials said we should restrict and control immigrants more than we do now; at least 76% of each of the older cohorts agreed.



Views of Business

Millennials' views of business are not substantially different from those of older generations. On a three-question index of attitudes about business power and profits, Millennials' opinions mirror those of Gen Xers and members of the Silent Generation; and are slightly less critical of business than are the Baby Boomers. Millennials are no more likely than other cohorts to say that big companies have too much power, and Millennials are nearly as likely as other cohorts to agree that the country's strength is mostly built on the success of American business.

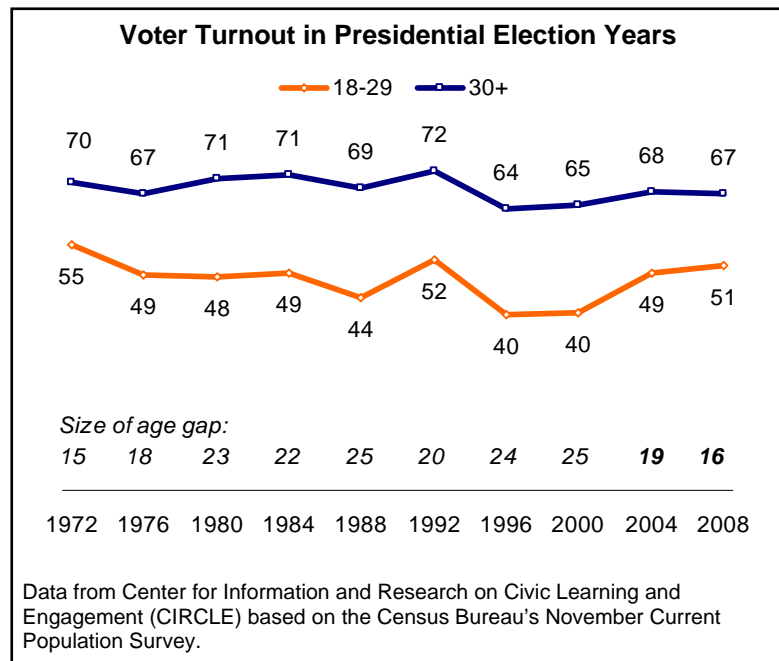
On one question, Millennials appear more supportive of business than do other cohorts. A higher percentage of Millennials than other cohorts agrees that "business corporations generally strike a fair balance between making profits and serving the public interest." Among Millennials, 44% agree, compared with 35% each for Gen X and Boomers, and 32% for the Silent Generation. Throughout much of their early adulthood, Generation X had also been more pro-business on this measure; in 2009 their views converged with those of the two older cohorts.



Political Engagement

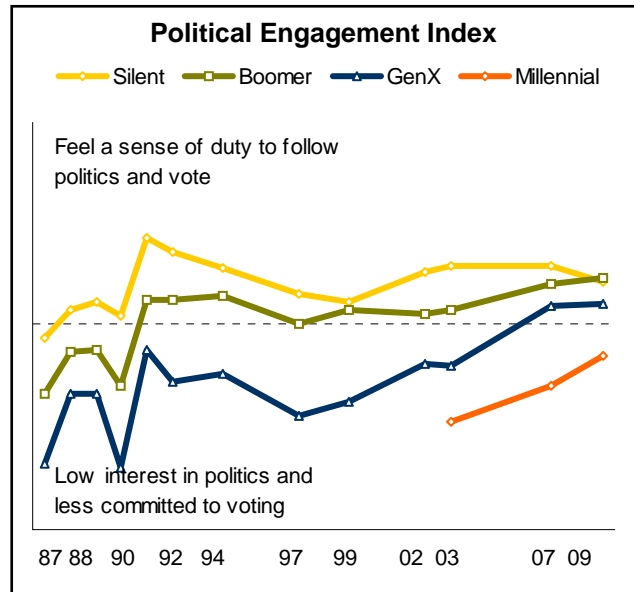
Younger Americans traditionally lag older Americans in their attention to politics, voting participation and in other forms of political activity. The Millennials today are no exception to this pattern. However, the presidential elections of 2004 and 2008 produced a significant uptick in voter turnout among young people, reducing the gap in turnout between younger and older Americans. Yet it is unclear whether this pattern reflects a generational change, or is mostly a result of circumstances unique to the highly polarized elections of the period.

The percentage of young adults who turned out to vote jumped from 40% in the 2000 election to 49% in 2004, while turnout among older adults rose only 3 percentage points, to 68%. Turnout among the young rose again in 2008, to 51%, while among those 30 and older, turnout was virtually unchanged, at 67%. Looking across the 36 years for which reliable estimates of turnout by age are available, the gap in turnout percentage between older and younger people has not been as small since 1972, the first year that 18 year olds were guaranteed the right to vote.



The higher youth turnout in 2004 and 2008 may have been the product of many things, including highly charged campaigns, polarization over the president and two wars, and significant efforts on the part of the parties, campaigns and non-profit organizations to mobilize young voters. The higher turnout also might signal an increased engagement that is generational in nature, but this is difficult to prove at this point. The elections held since 2008 question the notion of a permanently engaged young cohort. The off-year gubernatorial elections in New Jersey and Virginia were marked by low turnout among young voters, and estimates of the number of young people who voted in the Massachusetts special election for the U.S. Senate in January of this year were quite low.

In the 2009 values survey, Millennials scored lower than others on an index of political engagement, just as Gen Xers did when they were about the same ages as the Millennials now. On some of the questions that make up this index, the percentage of Millennials who expressed interest or engagement was somewhat higher than among Gen Xers in 1994. For example, 59% of Millennials in 2009 agreed that “I feel it’s my duty as a citizen to always vote.” In 1994, 52% of Gen Xers agreed. And more Millennials in 2009 expressed an interest in keeping up with national affairs and with local politics than was true for Gen Xers in 1994. But there was no difference between Millennials in 2009 and Gen Xers in 1994 in the percentage saying they felt guilty when they didn’t vote.



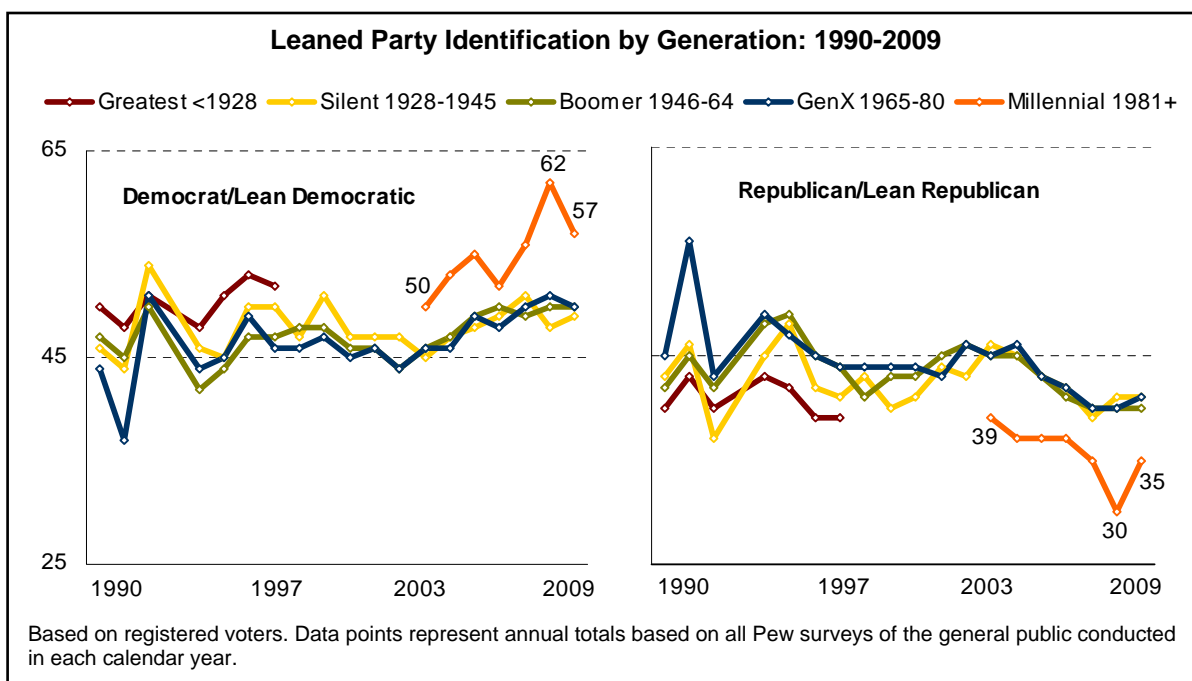
SECTION 2: PARTY AFFILIATION

As they have arrived on the political scene, Millennials have consistently identified more with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. Interviews with more than 18,000 registered voters nationwide in 2009 found an average of 37% of Millennial voters identifying as Democrats and 22% as Republicans. A substantial share of Millennials called themselves independent (38%) and another 4% mentioned another party or did not state a preference.

The 2009 Democratic advantage was even larger when the partisan leaning of independents is taken into account. An additional 20% of Millennial voters said they leaned toward the Democratic Party, 13% toward the Republican Party, and 8% did not lean either way. When these leaners are combined with partisans, 57% of Millennial voters identified with or leaned toward the Democratic Party; only 35% identified with or leaned toward the Republican Party.

The Democratic advantage among Millennials peaked in 2008 when 62% favored the Democrats and only 30% the Republicans. From 2003 to 2007 the Democrats held an advantage of between 11 and 21-points in leaned party identification among Millennials.

The partisan leanings of the Millennial generation have consistently stood apart from older generations. On average in 2009, the Democrats held a 22-point edge in leaned party identification among Millennial voters. This compares with more modest advantages among voters in Gen X (50% vs. 41%), Boomer voters (50% to 40%) and voters in the Silent Generation (49% to 41%). In 2003, the balance of Republican and Democratic identification was



virtually even among all three older generations, while Millennials favored the Democrats by a 50% to 39% margin.

Republican Gains in 2009

Between the 2004 and 2008 presidential election years, the Democratic Party opened a substantial advantage nationwide in party identification. In 2004, Democrats held a slim 47% to 44% advantage in leaned party identification among registered voters. By 2008, this lead had opened to a 51% to 39% advantage.

But the Democrats' advantage peaked in 2008 and early 2009, and has decreased over the course of the past year. In the first quarter of 2009, 53% of voters identified or leaned to the Democratic Party compared with 38% who identified or leaned to the Republican Party. But in the final quarter, Democrats had only a 49% to 42% advantage over Republicans among voters.

This overall shift has taken place within most cohorts. The share of Millennial voters who identified or leaned Democratic fell from 60% at the beginning of 2009 to 54% at the end of the year, while the share who identified or leaned Republican rose from 31% to 40%. While the Democratic Party still maintained an advantage among Millennials at the end of 2009, the had margin shrunk substantially.

	Dem In Dem	Rep/ In Rep	Dem adv	N
<i>All registered voters</i>	%	%		
Jan-Mar	53	38	+15	3473
April-June	52	37	+15	5423
July-Sept	49	41	+8	5426
Oct-Dec	49	42	+7	4147
<i>Millennial (1981+)</i>				
Jan-Mar	60	31	+29	330
April-June	58	31	+27	491
July-Sept	56	37	+19	485
Oct-Dec	54	40	+14	352
<i>GenX (1965-80)</i>				
Jan-Mar	51	41	+10	743
April-June	53	37	+16	1100
July-Sept	46	44	+2	1063
Oct-Dec	50	41	+9	824
<i>Boomer (1946-64)</i>				
Jan-Mar	52	39	+13	1397
April-June	51	38	+13	2234
July-Sept	49	39	+10	2208
Oct-Dec	47	44	+3	1698
<i>Silent (1928-1945)</i>				
Jan-Mar	54	38	+16	783
April-June	48	40	+8	1256
July-Sept	48	42	+6	1367
Oct-Dec	46	44	+2	1014

Based on registered voters. Figures read across.
Percent who do not lean to either party not shown.

Democrats also enjoyed a double-digit advantage among voters in the other generations at the start of the 2009. But as the year came to a close, the Democratic Party's edge among Boomers and those in the Silent Generation had all but disappeared. Leaned party affiliation among Generation X ended the year much as it started, with a modest Democratic advantage.

Younger Voters Over Time

The Millennial generation is more Democratic in their party affiliation than Gen Xers when they were young but are not substantially more Democratic than young Boomers or members of the Silent Generation at comparable points in time. To understand how each of the generations identified politically when they were young, selected years were chosen where the members of each generation were about the same age as Millennials are today. These years also represented key presidential or midterm election years that may have helped to shape each of the respective generations.

In 2008 at the height of the Democratic Party's advantage, 41% of Millennial voters identified with the Democratic Party, while only 22% identified with the GOP. By comparison, Republicans had a slight advantage over Democrats among Gen Xers when they were roughly the same age as Millennials are today. In 1994, a strongly Republican year, 34% of voters in Gen X said they were Republicans and 30% said they were Democrats. In recent years, Gen Xers have become more Democratic, along with the public as a whole.

Party Identification Over Time by Cohort

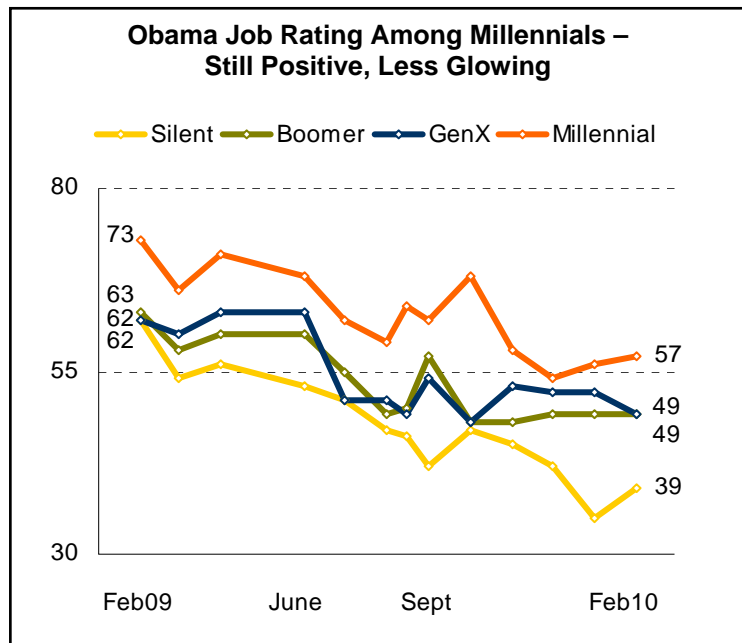
	1956*	1974*	1994	2008
	%	%	%	%
Republican	35	22	33	28
Millennial (1981+)	--	--	--	22
GenX (1965-80)	--	--	34	29
Boomer (1946-64)	--	17	34	29
Silent (1928-1945)	28	23	31	31
Greatest (1910-1927)	30	26	33	--
Democrat	44	44	33	38
Millennial (1981+)	--	--	--	41
GenX (1965-80)	--	--	30	36
Boomer (1946-64)	--	47	30	37
Silent (1928-1945)	45	46	36	38
Greatest (1910-1927)	47	51	39	--
Independent	21	31	30	29
Millennial (1981+)	--	--	--	32
GenX (1965-80)	--	--	34	31
Boomer (1946-64)	--	35	34	29
Silent (1928-1945)	26	29	28	25
Greatest (1910-1927)	22	22	22	--

Based on registered voters.
 Percent saying "other party" or "don't know" not shown.
 * 1956 and 1974 data based on surveys conducted by the Gallup organization and provided by the Roper Center.
 Voters older than those in the Silent Generation not shown.

When Boomers and members of the Silent Generation were the same ages as Millennials are today, they also identified more with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. In 1974 – a year that saw a Republican president resign from office – nearly half of Boomer voters (47%) identified with the Democratic Party and just 17% identified with the Republican Party. At that time, older generations also were more Democratic in their party affiliation. In 1956, a better time for the Republican Party, 45% of voters of the Silent Generation identified as Democratic, compared with 28% who identified with the Republican Party. The Greatest Generation, whose formative experiences included the Great Depression, the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Second World War, remained more Democratic in affiliation than other cohorts throughout much of the second half of the 20th Century, even though they – along with the rest of the populace – had become more Republican by 1994.

SECTION 3: VIEWS OF OBAMA AND THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS

President Obama's job approval rating has fallen substantially in the past year across all age groups, Millennials included. In Pew Research's February 2010 survey, 57% of Millennials approved of the way Obama was handling his job as president, down from 73% in February 2009. Moreover, Millennials have become much more critical of Obama's handling of several major issues, especially the war in Afghanistan. In January, Millennials were the only age group in which more disapproved than approved of Obama's handling of the situation in Afghanistan.



Yet Millennials stand out for their continued highly favorable personal views of Obama. Last November, three-quarters of Millennials had a favorable impression of Obama, virtually unchanged from January; over the same period, favorable views of Obama fell by double digits in older age groups.

Declining Ratings on Key Issues

There is a similar pattern in Millennials' opinions of Obama's handling of most issues. Last April, at about the 100-day mark of Obama's first year as president, majorities of Millennials approved of Obama's handling of all six issues tested. In January of this year, a majority of Millennials approved of Obama's performance on only one of eight issues (terrorist threats), while half approved on another issue (energy policy).

On the economy, Obama's approval rating among those younger than 30 has fallen from 66% in April 2009 to 44% in January of this year. And while 63% of Millennials rated Obama's job on health care positively last April, just 46% approved of his handling of the issue last month.

<i>Obama approval rating on...</i>	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Millennial</u> %	<u>Gen X</u> %	<u>Boomer</u> %	<u>Silent</u> %
Economy					
April 2009	60	66	64	56	57
July 2009	38	38	38	40	38
Jan 2010	42	44	50	40	28
<i>April-Jan change</i>	-18	-22	-14	-16	-29
Health care					
April 2009	51	63	56	46	39
July 2009	42	48	45	42	33
Jan 2010	38	46	41	36	30
<i>April-Jan change</i>	-13	-17	-15	-10	-9
Terrorist threats					
April 2009	57	56	62	57	50
Nov 2009	52	55	57	49	44
Jan 2010	51	53	54	54	38
<i>April-Jan change</i>	-6	-3	-8	-3	-12

By contrast, Obama's ratings on handling the threat of terrorism have remained more consistent and more positive, among Millennials as well as Gen Xers and Baby Boomers. Yet even here, those in Silent Generation have become more critical; just 38% approved of Obama's handling of terrorist threats in January, down from 50% in April 2009.

Rising Criticism on Afghanistan

Last month, Millennials gave Obama the lowest ratings among all age groups for his handling of the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Only about a third of Millennials (34%) approved of his handling of the situation in Afghanistan while 50% disapproved. Millennials were the only age group in which more disapproved than approved of Obama's handling of Afghanistan. That represented a sharp reversal from July, when a majority of those younger than 30 (51%) approved of Obama's performance on Afghanistan.

This change may well have been a response to Obama's decision in December 2009 to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Millennials were the only age group in which a majority (51%) opposed Obama's troop increase. Majorities in older age groups favored sending 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan.

	July 2009		Nov 2009		Jan 2010		July-Jan change
	App %	Dis %	App %	Dis %	App %	Dis %	
Afghanistan							
Total	47	33	36	49	45	43	-2
Millennial	51	30	42	53	34	50	-17
Gen X	45	38	39	47	53	39	+8
Boomer	51	33	35	51	46	44	-5
Silent	41	33	30	51	45	40	+4
Iraq							
Total	47	38	41	48	45	44	-2
Millennial	41	40	41	51	38	49	-3
Gen X	42	43	41	47	48	42	+6
Boomer	58	31	44	46	49	43	-9
Silent	41	39	34	50	45	43	+4

Obama also receives relatively low ratings from Millennials for his handling of the situation in Iraq. In January, just 38% approved and 49% opposed of his handling of the situation in Iraq.

	Total %	Millennial %	Gen X %	Boomer %	Silent %
Dec 2009					
<i>Obama decision to send 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan</i>					
Approve	51	40	50	56	59
Disapprove	39	51	41	36	29
N	1,504	199	346	571	322
Nov 2009					
<i>Obama removing troops from Iraq...</i>					
Not quickly enough	29	37	27	25	26
Too quickly	15	12	13	18	19
Handling about right	49	46	52	49	45
N	999	121	199	380	213

Note: "Don't know" responses not shown.

Millennials have been more likely

than older Americans to fault Obama for moving too slowly in drawing down U.S. forces from Iraq. In a November survey, 37% of those younger than 30 said that Obama was not moving quickly enough in removing U.S. forces from Iraq; that compared with only about a quarter of those in older age categories.

Obama's Personal Image Still Strong

Even as Millennials have grown more critical of some of Obama's major policies – and his job approval among them has fallen – he remains personally very popular with young people.

In November, 75% of Millennials said they had a favorable impression of Obama, which was virtually unchanged from January 2009. Obama's personal favorable ratings fell by double digits among older age groups, including by 25

Opinion of Barack Obama	Jan 2009		April 2009		Nov 2009		Jan-Nov change in fav
	Fav %	Un-fav %	Fav %	Un-fav %	Fav %	Un-fav %	
Total	79	15	73	24	65	30	-14
Millennial	73	23	82	16	75	19	+2
Gen X	79	14	75	23	69	27	-10
Boomer	82	13	69	28	63	32	-19
Silent	81	8	66	29	56	38	-25

points among members of the Silent Generation. Over this period, the share of Millennials expressing unfavorable opinions of Obama remained relatively stable (19% in November). Negative opinions of Obama in older age groups have increased markedly: Among Baby Boomers 32% expressed an unfavorable opinion of Obama in November, up from 13% in January. Among the Silent Generation, 38% viewed Obama unfavorably in November, compared with just 8% less than a year earlier.

Generations and Midterm Voting

Millennials stand out for their support of Democrats in early surveys of voting intentions for the 2010 midterm elections. In combined data from January and February 2010, 51% of those younger than 30 said they support the Democratic candidate in their district while 37% favored the

	1994		2002		2006		2010	
	Vote Rep %	Vote Dem %	Vote Rep %	Vote Dem %	Vote Rep %	Vote Dem %	Vote Rep %	Vote Dem %
All voters	45	43	42	46	39	49	43	45
Silent	43	45	40	48	41	49	48	39
Boomer	48	40	44	45	40	49	42	46
Gen X	48	46	43	44	40	46	44	45
Millennial	--	--	--	--	33	53	37	51

All surveys of registered voters. Preferences include those who lean toward party's candidate. 1994, 2002 election weekend surveys; 2006 surveys from October and election weekend; 2010 surveys conducted Jan.6-10 and Feb 3-9.

Republican. In no other age group do the Democrats have a significant lead. In the fall of 2006, Millennials favored the Democratic candidate by 20 points (53% to 33%).

A generational analysis of recent midterms finds that, as might be expected, the Silent Generation has become much more Republican in its voting intentions. In the 2010 surveys, 48% of those in the Silent Generation supported the Republican candidate compared with 39% who backed the Democrat. In 2006 and 2002, the Silent Generation supported the Democrat, while in the fall of 1994 members of this age cohort were evenly divided (45% Democrat, 43% Republican).

APPENDIX: ABOUT THE ANALYSIS

The Values Analysis

Most of the analysis in Section 1 of this report uses data collected over the past 22 years as part of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press' ongoing values study. Over this period, 14 surveys have been conducted from 1987 to 2009 with a total of 32,570 interviews. Surveys from 1987 to 1990 were conducted face-to-face; surveys since 1991 have been conducted by telephone. Surveys since 2003 include interviews conducted in English and Spanish.

To provide a summary measure of some of the areas covered by the values study, questions about a related topic are combined into indices using a technique called factor analysis. This statistical procedure combines questions that are related to a common concept (e.g., religiosity) into a single scale, giving each question a weight in the index that reflects how similar it is to the concept being measured. Each person in the survey is assigned a score on the scale that summarizes his or her answers to these related questions. These scores can then be aggregated for comparisons over time or across groups (e.g., between Democrats and Republicans).

The following pages show the individual survey questions that are included in each index. (The response to each question – agree or disagree – that is coded positively in the index construction is noted in italics.). Results from the 2009 values study are provided, including breakdowns by generation. The percent who agreed or disagreed with each question in 2009 is shown for reference purposes. The factor indices take into account the full variability on each question, including strength of agreement.

For more information on these and other indices, and the full scope of the Pew Research Center's values study, see our full report from May 21, 2009:

Independents Take Center Stage in Obama Era: Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1979-2009:

<http://people-press.org/report/517/political-values-and-core-attitudes>

SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	54	50	50	59	58
	Disagree	39	45	41	36	35
	DK	6	5	8	5	7
When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	57	42	55	66	62
	Disagree	39	54	42	32	34
	DK	4	4	3	3	4
The federal government controls too much of our daily lives (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	55	48	51	57	62
	Disagree	42	49	46	41	35
	DK	3	3	3	2	3
SOCIAL SAFETY NET		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
It is the responsibility of the government to take care of people who can't take care of themselves (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	63	65	59	63	65
	Disagree	33	33	36	32	30
	DK	5	3	5	4	6
The government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	48	51	45	52	41
	Disagree	46	46	51	43	48
	DK	5	3	4	6	11
The government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	62	71	62	62	56
	Disagree	35	28	34	35	40
	DK	3	1	3	3	4
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
Our society should do what is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	87	90	88	86	86
	Disagree	11	8	11	12	11
	DK	2	1	1	2	4
We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	41	40	39	42	45
	Disagree	56	58	58	54	50
	DK	4	2	2	5	4
We should make every possible effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities, even if it means giving them preferential treatment (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	31	45	30	27	25
	Disagree	65	49	67	70	70
	DK	4	6	4	3	6
BUSINESS ATTITUDES		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
There is too much power concentrated in the hands of a few big companies (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	77	78	76	78	76
	Disagree	21	20	22	21	19
	DK	2	2	2	1	6
Business corporations make too much profit (<i>disagree=high</i>)	Agree	62	65	61	64	59
	Disagree	33	33	35	32	32
	DK	5	2	4	4	9
Business corporations generally strike a fair balance between making profits and serving the public interest (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	37	44	35	35	32
	Disagree	58	51	62	62	57
	DK	5	5	3	3	11

NATIONAL SECURITY		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
It is my belief that we should get even with any country that tries to take advantage of the United States (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	49	42	53	48	55
	Disagree	43	55	43	44	31
	DK	8	3	4	8	15
The best way to ensure peace is through military strength (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	53	38	53	56	69
	Disagree	42	58	44	39	26
	DK	4	4	3	5	5
We all should be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	53	42	57	57	53
	Disagree	41	55	38	39	39
	DK	5	3	5	4	8
SOCIAL CONSERVATISM		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
School boards ought to have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	28	20	23	29	44
	Disagree	67	78	74	67	45
	DK	5	2	3	4	11
Books that contain dangerous ideas should be banned from public school libraries (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	46	40	48	43	55
	Disagree	49	58	49	50	35
	DK	5	2	3	7	10
Women should return to their traditional roles in society (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	19	16	20	18	24
	Disagree	75	84	76	75	64
	DK	6	0	4	7	12
I have old-fashioned values about family and marriage (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	71	61	67	76	82
	Disagree	25	35	29	21	13
	DK	4	4	3	3	5
There are clear guidelines about what's good or evil that apply to everyone regardless of their situation (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	75	70	74	80	74
	Disagree	21	26	23	17	18
	DK	4	4	2	4	8
POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT		<u>Total</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Xers</u>	<u>Boomers</u>	<u>Silent</u>
I feel it's my duty as a citizen to always vote (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	90	83	92	92	92
	Disagree	8	15	6	7	4
	DK	2	3	2	1	3
I'm interested in keeping up with national affairs (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	88	83	85	90	89
	Disagree	10	16	12	8	7
	DK	2	1	3	2	4
I'm pretty interested in following local politics (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	78	72	78	81	81
	Disagree	20	28	20	18	15
	DK	2	1	2	2	4
I feel guilty when I don't get a chance to vote (<i>agree=high</i>)	Agree	65	63	67	69	61
	Disagree	27	33	29	24	25
	DK	8	4	4	7	14

The Party Identification Analysis

Most of the analysis in Section 2 of this report is based on surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center from May 1990 to December 2009. These surveys are combined into one large data file that can provide aggregate totals for defined time periods and sorted according to a range of demographic characteristics. Yearly totals for each generation are calculated by combining all surveys for the calendar year, with appropriate weights applied. For 2009, quarterly totals also are reported, combining all surveys within each three-month period. In this report, all party identification analysis is based on registered voters.

Trends in party identification from 1956 and 1974 were compiled from surveys conducted by the Gallup Organization, and obtained from searches of the iPoll databank and other resources provided by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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