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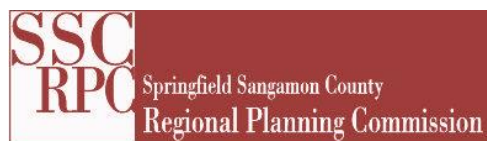
The Millennials: What Local Leaders Should Know about America's Newest Generation

A Review of Surveys and Assessments



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Executive Summary

In a few decades America may not resemble the country we live in today. Many forces are at work causing change, and one of them is the growth and potential impact of America's newest generational group; the *Millennials*.

In recent years demographers and authors have come to identify several generations of Americans. While different authors use different names for them, they are generally termed:

- The *Greatest* or *G* generation, made up of those born before 1928;
- The *Silent* generation, born between 1928 and 1945;
- The *Baby Boomers*, born between 1946 and 1964; and
- *Generation X*, born between 1965 and 1980.

The newest group of young Americans is the Millennials, also sometimes called *Generation Y*. This group is made up of those born after 1980, receiving its name because those in it began to come of age after the year 2000.

The Millennials are receiving a great deal of attention from both scholars and the popular press for two reasons. The first is because it is such a large population segment: 75.3 million in 2015. This year it became larger than the previously largest group, the Baby Boomers, which reached its peak of 78.8 million in 1999, but due to mortality will dwindle to 16.6 million by mid-century.

The second reason is that many believe the Millennials will be significantly different in their orientations and interests than the generations that preceded it, potentially changing our nation and its institutions to the same degree as the Baby Boomers.

To determine if this might be the case, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) reviewed various surveys and studies of the Millennials, specifically looking to provide local leaders with insights into:

- Differences in the group's demographics.
- Its unique generational personality.
- How it might fit into the workplace.
- Its consumer behaviors.

- Where the Millennials desire to live, and what they might expect in these areas.
- How they might affect government and governance.

These six areas were selected as they represent the bulk of the questions about the Millennials that have been put to the SSCRPC over the past few years.

Overall, the SSCRPC found that in many ways the differences between the Millennials and the four previous generations simply represent the continuation of trends already at work in the U.S. population. The Commission also found this population group to be affected by unique events and conditions different from those faced by the previous generations. Both of these findings are clearer when one compares them to the previous generations when they were the same ages, rather than at the ages of the various population groups now.

The SSCRPC's research also found that the Millennial generation should be considered in relationship to the Baby Boomers, not because of the similar sizes of these groups, but because the Boomers are expected to have a continuing and palpable effect on the Millennials as both groups age.

For example, Boomers remaining in the workforce beyond normal retirement age will limit employment opportunities for the Millennials, and the Boomers will also absorb wealth as they "age in place", while disrupting the larger economy in other ways as well. The Millennials will be called upon to assist the Boomers in their old age, absorbing additional resources and potentially leading to social and political conflicts. But this may not create a new "generation gap" similar to the one that existed between the Boomers and their parents, as the Millennials have maintained a much closer relationship with their parents than the Boomers maintained with theirs.

Demographics

In terms of demographics, the Millennials are not only the nation's largest generational group, they are also the most racially and ethnically diverse group in American history. This is due to a continuation of some long-term trends, but is also due to immigration: both new immigrants as well as the children of immigrants that began coming to this country in the 1960s.

The growth of various racial and ethnic groups is continuing what has been called the “browning” of America, but it is also being influenced by the fact that the Millennials are marrying and having children at older ages than the previous generations. More children are being born into non-traditional families, and the Millennials are more accepting of such families than their predecessors.

In part, this tendency to marry and start families later in life is a continuation of existing trends, but it is also due to the economic conditions that face the Millennials. They were economically stressed by the Great Recession, continue to be stressed by heavy student loan debt, with many of them continuing to live with their parents or be supported by them. They will continue to be limited by Baby Boomers, who are remaining in the workforce longer than previous generations, thus further limiting the Millennials’ career opportunities and economic gains.

Even so, the Millennials remain optimistic about their futures, and may have reason to be given that they are the best educated group in U.S. history. They are likely to remain so for some time.

The SSCRPC also found that local demographics appear to mirror the national trends for the Millennials, finding few differences, indicating that as the Millennials go, so goes our region and its communities.

Personality

As a great deal of public commentary has been written about the Millennials and what they are like, the SSCRPC attempted to reach a better understanding of their group “personality”.

In general we found that the Millennials believe that they are a unique generation largely because of their use of technology, and data supports their view of themselves in this regard. They are indeed an “iGeneration”.

They also see themselves as being more liberal and tolerant than previous generations, and their positions on various social and political issues supports this view as well. Even so, it is unclear as to whether or not this liberality and tolerance will fade over time, as it has done with previous generational groups.

But although they are tolerant, they are not trusting, and are particularly less trusting of large, traditional institutions, such as political parties, fraternal and

social organizations, and churches. To some extent they appear to off-set this by being a very social generation in a new way: building social networks – linked through the new communication and information technologies – around self-organized and self-identified friend and peer groups.

These groups are very self-contained, and may potentially be limiting. While the Millennials may not be “bowling alone”, they are also not as connected to larger, diverse civic life in the ways that earlier generations were due to the Millennials’ disassociation from institutions. Moreover, and also indicative of their use of technology *and* rejection of traditional institutions, they receive much of their information from non-traditional news sources – such as social media, blogs and cable television – which may limit their worldview, creating a different sort of generation gap than the one attributed to the Boomers.

But all-in-all, what the Millennials want out of life is not fundamentally different from what previous generations desired.

At Work

As the Millennials will be moving into leadership positions in the years to come, attention must be paid to how they may affect the workplace.

As they entered the workforce the Millennials were significantly affected by the Great Recession, however normal life-cycle events may have had a greater influence on their employment status. Even though as a group they are struggling economically (particularly in comparison to those in some of their predecessor generations), they have a positive view of business and the opportunities there. This is somewhat surprising given their positions on various political and ideological issues, as well as their distrust of large institutions.

In the workplace they desire many of the same things that their elders desire: a reasonable balance between life and work; good pay and benefits; opportunities for advancement; and meaningful work experiences, particularly work that they can see as making a difference.

They also seek a nurturing work environment; primarily one that allows interaction with their colleagues and employer. This is quite consistent with the nature of their social group interactions.

Where they may be faulted is their work ethic, which they themselves question. But they want to work, are happy when they do, and seek to put their creativity and knowledge of technology to use in ways that will advance business goals; particularly if those goals are seen as achieving positive societal outcomes.

Consumers

Given the size of this group, they are likely to drive consumer spending for many years to come, therefore knowing how they will act as consumers is particularly important to business and industry. While there has been a great deal of prognostication in this area, the SSCRPC believes that the data to support it remains weak. However, some notions as to the Millennials' consumer behaviors were identified, and there is even some limited evidence that their consumer behaviors will not change as they age and achieve higher incomes.

First, and because of their economic limitations, the Millennials search for *deals*. To them a deal is not just a dollar-and-cent based transaction, as they also search for the “authentic”: a quality product that they can feel good about buying, and that is purchased from a company that shares their values. As part of this search for the authentic, the Millennials also value things that are local, or at least products that demonstrate local character and pride, wherever they originate.

The input that they seek in determining products to buy can come from non-traditional sources, such as blogs. As they are a technologically-oriented and savvy group, the Millennials depend upon these technologies when shopping and making buying decisions. Given their experiences with technology, they expect it to work and work well, meaning that businesses seeking to market to them in this way must make sure that the systems they use *do* work well.

When they shop, they seek more than a purchase; they want an *experience*, even an adventure. Developers and retailers will need to find ways – such as lifestyle centers – to create such an experience for them. And businesses can expect that they will not be solo shoppers. Their unique social nature causes them to shop in groups. They often make their buying decisions based upon the collective opinion of their peer group or others in their age group who share their experiences and interests.

Because of their desire for experiences and adventures, Millennials may be prime consumers of leisure travel, and do so in groups, if their vacation stops provide the experiences they seek or advance their personal interests and goals.

Where They Will Live

In the Springfield area there has been a good amount of discussion concerning the anticipated residential lifestyle desired by the Millennials and how this might help the city center become repopulated and grow. The anticipation is that the Millennials desire more of an urban lifestyle than their parents, making downtown living attractive to this new generation of residential consumers.

The Millennials *are* moving to more urban areas from less urban ones, but this is not unique to the Millennials and is a continuation of long-standing U.S. population trends. They do desire an urban experience, as it provides a mix of uses that allows them to walk or bike from where they live to where they work, shop and play. And this urban experience is not limited to just the largest metro areas, as it includes mid-sized cities as well. Unfortunately Springfield and other central Illinois communities are still smaller than the mid-sized communities the Millennials tend to seek.

The shift in population to urban areas may not be as large as many believe, as a goodly number of Millennials continue to live in the suburbs. This may mean that there will not be the decline in the suburbs some suspect, but simply a reorientation and redesigning of these areas to include the more pedestrian friendly mixed-use locations that approaches such as the New Urbanism movement provide.

Government

Large population groups such as the Millennials are not only workers, consumers and residents, they are also voters. They may have a far different effect on government and politics than did the Boomers, becoming a more positive force for government and governance over the next few decades than local leaders are likely to see from the Boomers.

This is because the Millennials are much more optimistic than their elders about government and the role that it can play in solving problems, and they are particularly satisfied about what they are seeing in their communities.

While they are seen – and see themselves – as more liberal than their elders, and indeed they are on many social issues, there are many surprising areas where they are not. This may represent the fact that while they may be accepting of various social changes, this does not mean that these changes have their wholehearted support.

Engaging the Millennials in local government and its activities will require local leaders to rethink the approaches they have used in the past to encourage public involvement. This is not unimportant, as this generational group is not as attached to traditional institutions as previous generations, continuing a trend started by the Boomers to be less engaged in civic life.

And engaging them will be necessary as a new generation gap may emerge as the needs and wants of the Millennials diverges from those of its elders, putting additional stress on local leaders to seek a clear political and policy path between both. It may also be of great value, as the Millennials can be creative and technologically savvy problem solvers, who are willing to work with their local governments to address pending community problems.



About this Report

It is an old assertion among those who study changes in population that “demographics are destiny.” It is old because even the ancient Greeks noticed that the characteristics of a people shape their attitudes, and in so doing can shape their destiny: their economic success, social mores, cultural advancements, and even political opinions. That makes reaching a better understanding of new generational groups fundamentally important to those who study populations, as well as to those who must serve them, hire them, govern them, and devise the plans intended to take their needs and wants into account.

Because of this, demographers, political pundits, business analysts, and planners have all paid particular attention in recent years to the effects that the newest generational group, the *Millennials* (sometimes known as *Generation Y*), may have on American life.

The importance of the Millennials to our region, state and nation cannot be underestimated, if for no other reason than its size. Because of this – and the popular opinion that the Millennials will be significantly different than the generations that came before it – the Millennials are anticipated to have a significant effect on our communities, potentially changing them in fundamental ways.

Part of the reason why this expectation occurs is that the previously largest generational group – the *Baby Boomers* – had just such an effect; changing the nation and being changed by it in ways that were unanticipated. As we will see from some of the material presented in sections of this report, the Boomers continue to affect and influence the nation – and those who will come after it – even today.

Due to the influence that the Millennials are expected to have, the nature of the group has become grist for the popular press’ mill as well that of demographers and planners. All three are making valiant efforts to scrutinize, characterize, psychoanalyze, and, in a few cases, even demonize this group of young people to determine how it will shape the future.

At the local level we see this demonstrated in many ways. Governmental bodies are trying to determine

how the needs of this group might change the services they are called upon to provide, employers are questioning how the Millennials might change the dynamics of the workplace, businesses are analyzing their potential buying patterns, realtors and home builders are trying to assess where and how this group might want to live, and municipal planners are trying to shift their thinking from the suburban forms that were the hallmark of the post-World War Two generations to what are seen as the more urban interests of the Millennials. In a real way this last group is now being asked to stop planning cities and towns for the Baby Boomers, and turn its focus to a new generation whose needs and desires are still forming.

Because of this interest, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) thought it important to turn its attention to the Millennials by conducting an initial review of what is known about them in order to better determine how they might affect this region and its localities in the years ahead. In this report the SSCRPC attempts to address at least some of the questions about the Millennials being asked by local leaders, providing a preliminary snapshot of America’s newest generation.

It does this by:

- Reviewing differences in this group’s demographics.
- Offering some feel for its unique generational personality.
- Considering how it might fit into the workplace.
- Assessing some of its consumer behaviors.
- Looking at where the Millennials desire to live, and what they expect from those places.
- Giving some thought as to how this generational group might affect government and governance.

As the reader will find, this work attempts to compare the Millennials – how they think, what they want to do with their lives, how they look at work and play, the nature of the families they will build, and what they hold precious – to previous generations. The three generations that form the basis for this comparison are shown on the chart on the next page.

However, considering all of the aspects of a new generation of Americans is a complicated task. For example, it involves considering many broad characteristics which cannot reasonably suggest how a generation's opinions and tendencies may change as it ages, but most critically, requires that comparisons be made with previous generations *at similar ages*. This the SSCRPC found critical to its work, as our own personal experiences tell us that the opinions, likes and dislikes we held when we were younger may not be the same as when we are older; *and the generation being discussed in this report is young indeed*.

Because of the importance of comparing generations at the same periods of their lives, a large part of the data and analysis provided here is drawn from the work of the Pew Research Center, particularly its 2010 report, *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next*. Even though this study is now five years old, it is one of the first attempts to study the Millennials in a rigorous way by comparing them to previous generations *at the same ages*. For this reason material from the 2010 Pew Center study is widely quoted in this document and used as the primary basis for much of how this report is organized. As such, wherever Pew is mentioned below or graphs and charts provided, the reader may assume that the material comes from this Pew study unless otherwise noted.

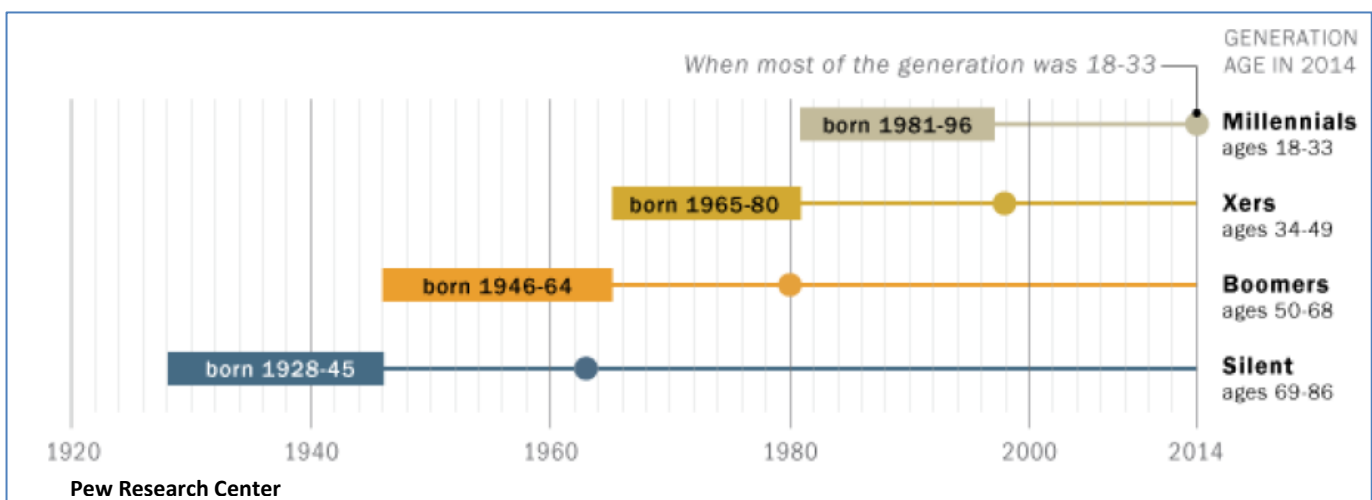
The SSCRPC found that assessing the Millennials was not a simple effort for other reasons as well.

Since the Commission did not have the resources to

conduct its own data collection and field work, it was left to depend upon the accessible work of others, such as the Pew study. Unfortunately much of the material written about the Millennials – particularly that found in the popular press – often appears to be based upon opinion rather than data. Indeed it was interesting to find that many of the more authoritative studies of the Millennials we reviewed try to dismiss misconceptions and even “myths” about this group. Expecting that it would be significantly different from its predecessors often left the authors to focus more on suspected differences rather than any commonalities between the Millennials and previous generations, and as we mention in the concluding section of this report, we found many commonalities.

Yet searching for commonalities as well as differences across generations at similar periods of time may leave out some of the historical drivers that have affected them, losing sight of important nuances. We suspect that others who have tried to compare the Millennials with previous generations from existing studies, as we have tried to do, can confirm this. For that reason we have tried to include both data and commentary so that others have the opportunity to reach their own conclusions. This is particularly important because many of the aspects of the Millennials discussed here are intertwined and inter-related. For this reason the reader will often find our comments in one section of the report referring to related comments in other sections.

And finally, and for full transparency, let it be known that the author of this report is a Baby Boomer, not a Millennial. This means that he may well look at



America's newest generation through that lens, carrying his own generational "baggage" into the work. But even so, and if the result is that this report only views the Millennials through the eyes of a Boomer, those eyes see more similarities than differences, and where differences exist, ones that may serve the Millennials well in the world the previous generations are leaving them.

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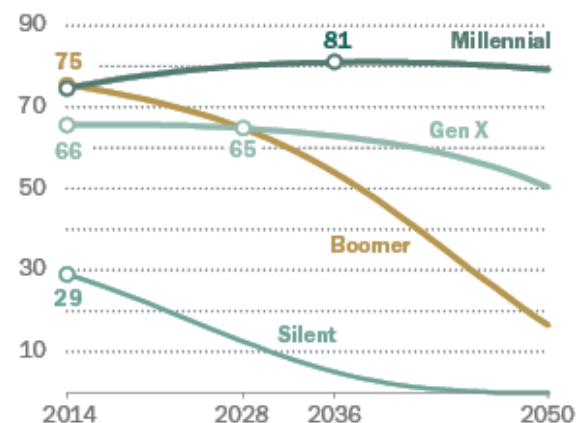
I: Who are the Millennials?

In recent years it has been common for demographers, the media, and even marketing executives to assign titles to generations. In this regard the population group that is receiving the most current attention is that known sometimes as *Generation Y*, but more popularly as the *Millennials*. This is the generation that was born after 1980 – coming of age after the year 2000 – and which will lead our nation and its communities in the coming years.

Interest in the Millennials largely increased for two reasons. The first is the belief that this group is tending toward interests and behaviors far different from previous generations, particularly the Baby Boomers. But the second is similar to the one that made the Boomers such an important demographic age group; there are a *lot* of Millennials.

Projected Population by Generation

In millions



Note: Millennials refers to the population ages 18 to 34 as of 2015.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau population projections released December 2014

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The Pew Research Center reports¹ (see graph lower left) that this year the Millennials will overtake the Baby Boomers as the nation's largest living population group, and will continue to grow as young immigrants swell its ranks.² That is not because more Millennials were born than Boomers, but because as the Boomers age and reach mortality, which they are now doing, they are being lost as part of the population. Even so, a shift of this degree is significant and worth consideration by governments (particularly local ones) as well as the private sector. For that reason the SSCRPC thought it worthwhile to know more about who the Millennials are, what their interests appear to be, and how they might change our communities and region.

What's in the Name?

As noted above, the naming of various generations is a popular, yet not very scientific – and even arbitrary – approach to distinguishing age groups. The names given to the generations are sometimes drawn from historic events, social or cultural changes, or even, as in the case of the Millennials, turns of the calendar.³ In recent years we have come to identify several generations of Americans, with different authors using different names for them, and sometimes even dividing the age groups differently. Most commonly this begins with what many call the *Greatest* (or “GI”) generation, those born before 1928, and the generation that fought and won World War II.

The next is often called the *Silent* generation (the “Silents”), made up of those born between 1928 and 1945. These are children of the Great Depression and WWII, who earned their name by being seen as having conformist, civic-minded instincts.

The *Baby Boomers* (the “Boomers”) include those born between 1946 and 1964, receiving their title due to the spike in fertility that began immediately following the Second World War. As is expected with the Millennials, the Boomers had a significant impact on our nation due to the size of this population group and the effect it had shaping the post-war economy

¹ Fry, R. Jan. 16, 2015. *This Year, Millennials Will Overtake Baby Boomers*. Pew Research Center: Wash., DC.

² Fry (2015).

³ Pew Research Center. Feb. 24, 2010. *Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change*. Wash., DC.

as well as popular culture and social mores for many, many years. As will be discussed additionally below, because of the size of this group they are still having a significant effect as they age, including palpable effects on the Millennials.

The Boomers were followed by what is often called *Generation X* (“Gen X” or the “Gen Xers”), which includes those born between 1965 and 1980. It is also sometimes referred to as the “Baby Bust” or the “Boomlet” because it did not have the same robust growth as the preceding generation. Some contend this to be due to the birth control pill becoming available in 1964.

The fundamental question addressed about the Millennials in this report is, of course, whether this large young population group will significantly change the nation, its states and their localities in ways similar to that of the nation’s previous largest population group, the Boomers. Of course this question can only be definitively answered by the Millennials themselves as they age, but there is current reason to believe that they will have such an impact.

The Boomers and the Millennials

Although we will be comparing the Millennials to various previous generations throughout this report, to get an initial understanding of the Millennials and the influence they might have on our region, it is useful to first consider the Boomers and the influence they have had and will likely have on the Millennials, as the Boomers are now reaching retirement age, and had “vastly different wants, needs, likes and dislikes than the generations before them.”⁴

The Boomers

In the 1950s one of the major topics of conversation was the post-war “baby boom”. The increase in births following the Second World War that created the Boomers is attributed to many factors, but among them are the large increase in American economic productivity that occurred after WWII that encouraged the growth of households (and the children that came with them), along with changes in living patterns due

to the growth of suburbs and access to automobiles along with improved highway systems, and the simple fact that the war tended to separate large numbers of men and women during their most fertile years. Whatever the causes, they kept families growing for another 15 years. After that point birth-rates started to fall as the 1960s led to changes in demographic patterns that reduced early marriage as well as family size.



The Boomers were clearly the beneficiaries of post-war U.S. economic expansion and the values that came with it, and one of the results was that they enrolled in higher education at greater rates than any previous generation. This change, as well as the size of the group in general and the desires of their parents – formed by both war and depression – helped ignite seismic shifts in American society, including what one demographer calls the Boomers’ “individualism, their attraction to personal risk, their distrust in big institutions, their carelessness about material wealth, their cultivation of self, their die-hard moralism.”⁵

There is no question that the Boomers had an effect on the nation that their parents and grandparents turned over to them. Many can still remember these effects as leading to expansions in school facilities, with temporary and “portable” buildings located on many elementary and secondary school properties, the growth of the suburbs, and even changes in advertising and marketing so as to address the first group of young people to have their own disposable income. But others will also remember the Boomers because of the social and cultural changes they brought, which were seen as a rejection of the

⁴ Howe, N. Sept. 2012. *What Makes the Boomers the Boomers*, Governing.com: Washington, DC. p.1. Governing.com.

⁵ Howe (2012), p. 2.

attitudes and opinions of their elders. Indeed, the Boomers invented the “generation gap”. But the impact of the Boomers is not over, as they will also have an effect on the Millennials. Aspects of this impact will be suggested throughout this report.

Lasting Effects on Millennials

For example, the Boomers are expected to redefine the idea of retirement. They have been referred to as the “Peter Pan” generation: one that prefers to stay young. In doing this they have closed the generation gap they created simply by refusing to age. They are “reported to regard 80 as the onset of old age, and dislike the notion of retirement...Many, at 50, still have unfulfilled dreams.”⁶



Unlike their predecessors, more of them will continue working, in large part because even before the Great Recession they did not have a lot of wealth to support them in their senior years, particularly when compared to the Silent generation.⁷ This factor, along with improvements in medical care, technological advances that allow one to work from home, more free-agent and part-time working arrangements, and the simple desire to continue to work to meet psychological and social fulfillment needs, are leading the Boomers to remain in the workforce longer than previous generations, providing less “headroom” for Gen-Xers and Millennials to advance.

Above we noted that the Boomers invented the generation gap, and there were stark contrasts between the desires and intentions of the Boomers and their Greatest and Silent generation parents.



But there appears to be less of a gap between the Boomers and their children, at least in terms of popular culture. They often read the same books, go to the same movies and watch the same television shows. Their iPod playlists may even overlap.⁸ Even though, as we will find in another section of this report, the Millennials see themselves and are seen as a technology-based generation, there are still linkages to their parents, or as one author put it, “We’re all Millennials now”:

Not only have older generations been adopting tech and electronics pioneered by millennials at a higher rate than ever before, but the world has shrunk from the perspective of any single generation needing a lift from it: people of all ages are in a period of struggle. This struggle creates an atmosphere where we are all defining and redefining out of necessity. Across all generations, your tech is my tech...⁹



⁶ Pirie, M., and Worcester, R.M. 1998. *The Millennial Generation*. Adam Smith Institute: London, UK.

⁷ Howe (2012), pp. 2-3.

⁸ Howe (2012), p. 4.

⁹ George, T. S. Jan. 7, 2014. *CES 2014: Millennials in “Play”: 5 Key Millennial Behaviors with Consumer Electronics*. IPG Media Lab: NY, NY.

And the linkage between the Boomers and the Millennials shows up in family dynamics as well.



Millennials, for example, are more comfortable living with their parents than were the Boomers at the same age. In 1980 only 11% of those 24 to 34 years-old lived with their parents, but this had doubled by 2010.¹⁰ By 2012, fully 36% of those aged 18-31 were living with their parents; a record total of 21.6 million Millennials.¹¹

In 2013, with the nation officially four years into economic recovery following the “Great Recession”, only about a third of Millennials (those aged 18-34) headed their own households; even lower than the rate observed for this group during the recession when they were younger. The sluggish household formation among Millennials is one of the reasons given for lackluster apartment, housing and household furnishing demand.¹²

Part of this was due to the job market, but it is also seen as indicative of a closing of the generation gap, as the Boomers have, for example, maintained a much closer financial relationship with their children than did the Boomer’s parents, helping their Millennial off-spring to find jobs, get mortgages and car loans, pay for family vacations, and care for grandchildren. And, more than seen previously, the Millennials are helping their Boomer parents with various chores and family needs. This last is not inconsequential.

As noted above, affluence among the Boomers is expected to fade as they turn 65. This is expected to

lead to a noticeable shift in the Boomer’s overall socioeconomic situation, including such demographic and economic shifts for the nation as a:

...decline in educational attainment and the share with college degrees, a decline in the professional share, a decline in household net worth and pension assets, and a relative decline in pre-retirement income. As a result, these new elders will be in gradually greater risk of ending up in poverty or on the brink of it.¹³

This decline in wealth – along with the Boomer’s desire to retain the quality of life they had prior to retirement – will likely lead them to remain in the workforce and “age in place”, living in the house where they already live rather than selling their homes and moving to retirement communities. Keep in mind, the Boomers became used to having their own way during formative portions of their lives, driving the likes and dislikes of the economy and popular culture for many years, so they are not likely to give that up now.



Some indication of this comes from an AARP study that found that four out of five Boomers say that they want to remain in their own homes even when they need assistance.¹⁴ Not only will this put additional stress on governmental programs for the elderly, it will also likely require the Boomers’ children to provide assistance in the upkeep and maintenance of their parents’ households and life-styles as well as their own.

¹⁰ Howe (2012), p. 4.

¹¹ Fry, R. Aug. 1, 2013. *A Rising Share of Young Adults Live in their Parents’ Home*. Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. p. 1.

¹² Fry, R. Oct. 18, 2013. *Millennials Still Lag in Forming Their Own Households*. Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. p. 1.

¹³ Howe (2012), p.3.

¹⁴ Howe (2012), p.5.

This is especially likely as, to the extent that Boomers do move, they are not interested in elder communities, but in mixed-use urban areas where they can be around young people, like the Millennials, who are doing interesting things. The Millennials may have invented the “flash mob”, but the Boomers invented the “Happening”, and are still interested in being vital *and* entertained.

If it provides any comfort to the Boomers, 63% of Millennials aged 18-25 believe that it is a responsibility for adult children to allow an elderly parent to live in their home, a larger percentage than of the Boomers, where only 55% of them aged 42-60 feel the same way about their parents.¹⁵

Yet while there are noticeable social and cultural similarities between the Boomers and the Millennials, there are significant differences as well. The following sections begin to identify some of both.

Some Takeaways:

The Millennial Generation must be considered in relationship to the Baby Boomers, the previously largest portion of the U.S. population, as the Boomers will have a continuing effect on the Millennials as both groups age.

Boomers remaining in the workforce beyond normal retirement age will limit employment opportunities for the Millennials, and will also absorb economic wealth as the Boomers “age in place”.

The Millennials will be called upon to assist the Boomers in their old age, but are willing to do so. In part this may be due to the closer relationship – cultural, social and economic – that the Millennials have with their parents than the Boomers had with theirs.

¹⁵ Taylor, P., and Ketter, S. (eds). Feb. 2010. *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next*. Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. p. 16.

II: A Demographic Snapshot of the Millennials

As noted previously in the introduction to this report, the Pew Research Center conducted one of the most complete assessments of the Millennial generation to date¹⁶, looking not only at the characteristics of the oldest Millennials (those in the population aged 18-28 in 2010)ⁱ, but also attempting to compare these characteristics to previous generations when they were the same age.

That is not an unimportant consideration and is why the SSRPC chose the Pew study as the starting point for this report. Comparing current Millennials (at their young ages) to previous generations (at their older ages), as some studies do, may result in “apples to oranges” comparisons; more telling about how age and income affects desires, interests and orientations, than about fundamental differences in the generations themselves. By comparing the last few generations at similar ages, Pew paints a picture as to how the Millennials may differ from the previous ones and how these differences may affect our communities in the future. The SSRPC believes that understanding both similarities and differences at like ages is of critical importance in understanding the Millennials and the changes they may bring.

In terms of demographics, and along with the growing size of the group, Pew generally found *the Millennials to be more ethnically and racially diverse, better educated, less likely to be working, and slower to settle down than previous generations were at the same age*. We address these findings briefly below.

The Millennial Generation's Size

To begin to get a picture of the Millennials it is worth considering the size of this group in comparison to the Boomers, for as we previously noted, the very size of that generation became and remains a significant aspect of its influence. One expects that the same will be true of the Millennials.

The Boomers are an outsized population compared to previous generations, peaking at 78.8 million in 1999; or about 28% of the total population at that time. In 2014 the Boomers accounted for 75.8 million (about 24% of the total U.S. population) in that year, but are expected to dwindle to 16.6 million by mid-century.¹⁷

Conversely, there were 74.8 million Millennials in 2014, a number projected to grow to 75.3 million in 2015; as with the Boomers, making up about 24% of total population. That will make them the largest current generational group.

A Quick Comparison

Baby Boomers:

Estimated size at its peak (1999): 78.8 million

Estimated size in 2050: 16.6 million

Millennials:

Estimated size at its peak (2036): 81.1 million

Estimated size in 2050: 79.2 million.

When immigration is added, the Millennials are projected to jump to a peak of 81.1 million in 2036. By that time the oldest Millennials will be at least 56 years-of-age, and with mortality will begin to decline in population, falling to 79.2 million by 2050. Noting the impact of immigration on this group is important, as it helps explain its demographic diversity.

The Millennials are “Browner”

U.S. Census results over the past two decades have indicated a trend toward what is sometimes called the “browning” of America as its population becomes more-and-more racially and ethnically diverse. This trend is particularly noticeable when considering the Millennials, as they are the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in American history.

This is largely due to the large numbers of Hispanic and Asian immigrants who came to this country over the past 50 years, and whose children are now becoming adults having children of their own. Some 43% of Millennials are non-white, the highest share of any generation, and about half of newborns are non-white. Because of this, the majority of the U.S.

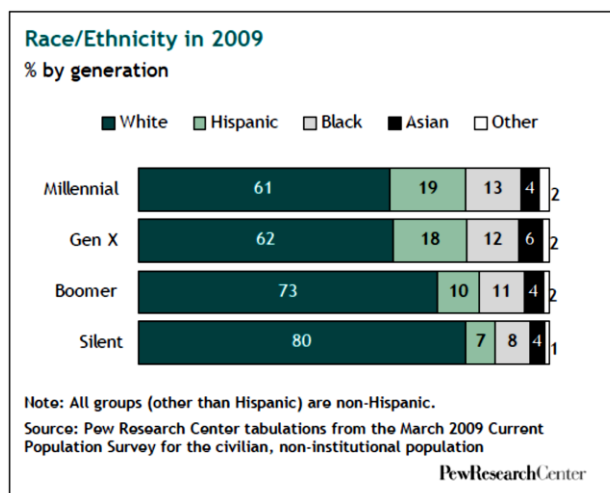
¹⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010).

¹⁷ Fry (2015), p. 1.

population is projected to be non-white by about 2043.¹⁸

Only about 61% of Millennials are non-Hispanic whites, similar to Gen X (62%), but much less than the Boomers (73%) or the Silent generation (80%). Conversely, racial and ethnic minorities make up 39% of Millennials and 38% of Gen-Xers, but only 27% of Boomers and 20% of Silents.

This is largely due to the growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S., particularly in comparison to African-Americans. Among the Boomers, 11% are African-American and 10% Hispanic, but the Millennial population includes 19% Hispanic compared to 13% African-American. While blacks have grown as a share of the total population, Hispanics are out-pacing this group in native births, but also, as one might guess, due to immigration.



Even so, Millennials are no more likely to be foreign-born than were other recent generations, and are even less likely than the generation that immediately preceded them; the Gen Xers. Only 14% of Millennials are foreign compared to 21% of Gen X. This is important, and conflicts with some current popular beliefs, as Pew notes that it indicates that many of the new immigrants are in their 30s when they arrive.

The major difference is that 11% of the Millennial population are the U.S. born children of at least one immigrant parent. That makes this group noticeably

more diverse than their immediate predecessors, as this share is higher than both the Gen Xers (7%) and Boomers (5%). The low percentage of Boomers is particularly interesting given that they represent children born after 1945 and would include the offspring of servicemen who married spouses they met while overseas.

Millennials are Well-Educated, and are Likely to Become More So

The degree to which a population is well-educated is especially relevant to that population's mindset as well as its economic potential. Specifically the degree to which the Millennials seek educational advancement is of critical importance and worthy of consideration because they are inheriting an increasingly knowledge-based economy where adults who do not advance beyond high school pay a stiffer penalty in terms of low wages and high unemployment than was the case one or two generations ago.¹⁹

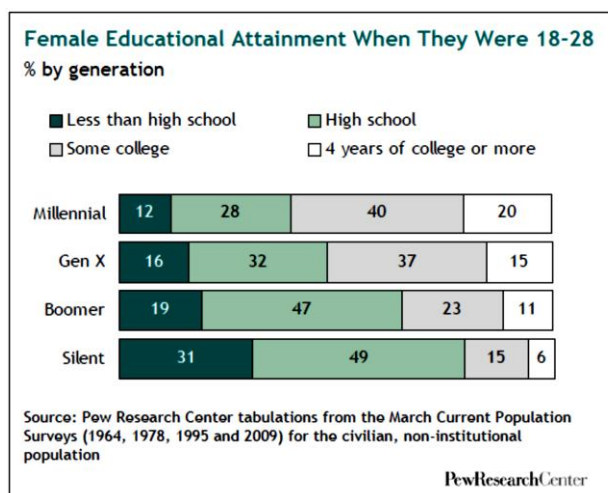
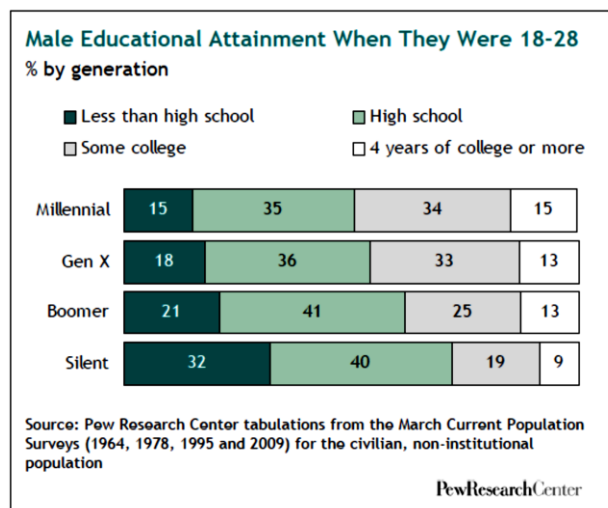
As noted previously, the Boomers are a well-educated group. They were assisted in attaining their educational goals because of their Greatest and Silent generation parents' desire and insistence that their children have better lives than they did, but also because of the numerous state and federal financial assistance programs that were established to provide financial support for furthering their educations. Some of this support was driven by large national programs intended to address problems the Boomers were in part causing. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, for example, was intended to improve public schools following the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957, but it also provided forgivable loans to college students interested in teaching, which helped address the number of new teachers needed to educate the flood of Boomers entering school systems. But whatever the causes, the increased educational attainment of the Boomers benefitted the nation in many ways.

However, the Boomers educational attainment will not equal that of the Millennials in terms of both what they have accomplished to date as well as what they

¹⁸ Pew Research Center, March 7, 2014. *Millennials in Adulthood*. Washington, DC. p. 4.

¹⁹ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 7.

additionally desire to attain. As the bar charts below show, both male and female Millennials are more highly educated than those in the other generations at the same age, including their well-educated Boomer predecessors. Only their older Gen X brothers and sisters come close to matching them.²⁰



We find this particularly noteworthy given the emphasis placed on higher education for the Boomers, and may even be indicative of the influence that Boomer parents – and changing economic conditions – had on their off-spring.

However, the Millennials may exceed even the Gen Xers in educational attainment if given just a bit more time. About 39% of the Millennials were still in college, high school or a trade school at the time the

Pew study was conducted. As of 2010, only 19% of Millennials were college graduates, with 26% in college and planning to graduate, and an additional 30% not in school but expecting someday to become college graduates. The number of Millennial college graduates had grown to 22% in 2014, compared to only 16% for the same age group in 1980.²¹ This all suggests that when they have completed their education the majority will be college graduates, putting them on track to clearly be the most highly educated American generation.²²

And in terms of their desire and willingness to advance their education, the Millennials are ambitious. About half want to earn a graduate or professional degree, with only 34% planning to end their formal schooling after receiving an undergraduate degree. That only leaves a small remainder whose plans include only a high school diploma, a community college degree, or a certificate from a trade or vocational school.²³

Related to their interest in graduate studies, Millennials are more likely to seek graduate degrees than were members of the previous generations. To give this some context, among 18 to 34 year-olds, college enrollment was 19% in 2010, up from 15% five years before. *But graduate school enrollment had increased at an even faster rate, going to 3.8% in 2010 from 2.8% in 1995; a 35% jump.*²⁴ Granted that this increase may be due to a lack of job opportunities for Millennials at that time, or even the perception that the career track they wished to follow required an advanced degree. In either case, this leads one to wonder if the Sangamon regional economy will be able to meet the expectations of those who choose additional schooling.

This may in part be answered by their chosen areas of study. Millennials are more likely to study the social sciences or applied fields (e.g., communications, criminal justice, library science) than to follow a traditional liberal arts track. Although this result does not show a tendency toward the hard sciences or

²⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 41.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Dec. 4, 2014. *New Census Bureau Statistics Show How Young Adults Today Compare With Previous Generations in Neighborhood Nationwide*. Wash.: DC.

²² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 41.

²³ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 41.

²⁴ Council of Economic Advisors. Oct. 2014. *15 Economic Facts About Millennials*. Washington, DC. p. 12.

engineering, areas in which the United States is seen to be losing ground to other nations and a necessary component of a high-tech economy, it does show a tendency toward coursework more directly related to a specific career path.

Notably, coursework toward education degrees decreased among this group, not so much due to a lack of interest in teaching as a career, but largely due to an increase in women seeking business degrees. While this trend might not be seen as a positive trend for school districts and K-12 education in need of teachers as Boomer teachers retire, it does represent Millennial women seeking a more expansive role for themselves in non-traditional occupational fields.

Surprisingly though, given the Millennials interest in technology, the share of this group majoring in computer or information science has declined, particularly among women.²⁵ This may provide additional support for recent efforts to encourage young women to consider coursework in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in order to broaden their career opportunities.



The above also indicates a significant change in past trends pertaining to education among the Millennials by gender, with women surpassing men in their share of those graduating from or attending college (21% of Millennial women are college graduates compared to 16% of men)²⁶. This trend is emphasized not just because it indicates social changes in the U.S. population, but because it may be seen as a leading indicator as more-and-more women enter business and political life, *and* expect to have a larger role to play there.

We took note of the fact that many Millennials are planning for further schooling, so what then is holding them back? Pew found two reasons: *too little money* and *too little time*.

Both men and women are equally likely to give this response.ⁱⁱ More than 36% of Millennials report that they cannot afford school, which Pew believes is more related to the increasing cost of higher education rather than the Great Recession. An additional 35% say that they simply do not have the time to commit to additional schooling. This leaves only 14% of Millennials who say that they do not see a need for additional schooling.²⁷

However, if there is any firm indication of the Millennials commitment to education, it may be drawn from the number who both work and go to school. Almost a quarter of Millennials (24%) do both, with about 10% working full-time and 14% working part-time while in school. In 2010, about 40% of Millennials were employed full- or part-time and not in school, but of this group, 30% were the younger Millennials and almost 60% were those aged 25-29 who had already finished their formal schooling.²⁸

There are mixed results from other studies, however, with the President's Council of Economic Advisors reporting Millennials to be more likely to focus exclusively on their studies instead of combining school and work. They found this to be somewhat related to the Millennials career aspirations, as focusing exclusively on study enables students to invest more time building skills for the workplace.²⁹ We speculate, however, that this could also be related to one of the factors Pew indicated as a reason as to why Millennials were working while attending classes: the rising costs of higher education. Given these costs, and the many Millennials that are carrying a large student loan debt burden, some may simply be finding it prudent to complete their degree work more quickly than they could if they were to both study and work. Colleges and universities in the region may want to consider this and review their curricula in light of potential additional demand for expedited or weekend executive degree programs.

²⁵ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), pp. 14-15.

²⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.42.

²⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 43.

²⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), pp. 43-44.

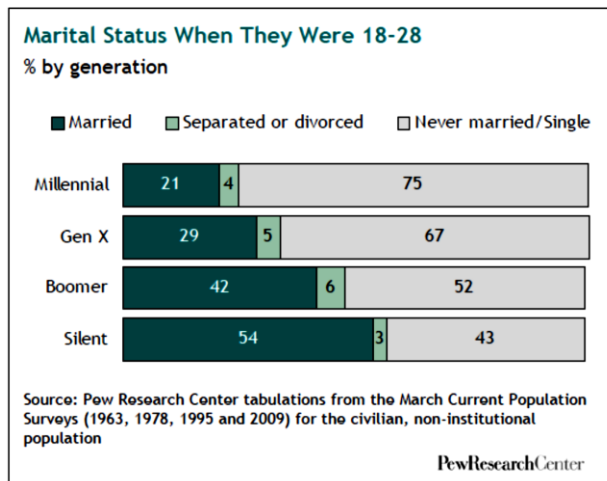
²⁹ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 18-19.

Millennials and the Family

While past generations may have seen marriage and children as significantly important aspects of life, the Millennials appear less likely to rush into doing either, as they are less likely to be married or have children at the same ages as earlier generations. They are also more tolerant than other generations when it comes to nontraditional behaviors related to marriage and parenting.

Marriage and Children

Related to marriage, and as the Pew bar chart below indicates, 75% of Millennials have never married, compared to 43% of Silents, 52% of Boomers, and 67% of Gen Xers *at the same age*.



In 2010 just 21% of Millennials were married, and only 12% were married and had children in the home. This is about half of the proportion of Boomers at the same age. This trend is not changing as the Millennials get older, even though 69% of unmarried Millennials say that they would like to be.³⁰

One might conclude that this delay in marriage and raising a family is due to the weaker economic times that the Millennials inherited compared to their predecessors, but that does not appear so. Delaying marriage is not a new phenomenon, and the Millennials doing so simply represents an additional data-point for a trend shown by previous generations. With each generation Americans in the 18-28 age group have increased their delay in marrying; or even

not marrying. By 2014 the median age for first marriage was at its highest point in modern history: 29 for men and 27 for women. What is different is that in contrast with the past, marriage is now more common among those with higher incomes and more education, leading to all socioeconomic groups not marrying at the same rate.³¹

Pew reports that Millennials are twice as likely as Boomers (8% vs. 4%, respectively) to be single parents living with their children, and whether married or single, less likely than similarly-aged Boomers to be *both* parents *and* live in the same household as their child or children (20% vs. 30%). This is particularly noteworthy given the smaller percentage of Millennials between ages 18-24 that are divorced or separated compared to the Boomers. So what is the difference?

The Pew Research Center writes:

What has replaced the married-with-children household among Millennials? It is not the single-person household, which is no more prevalent among Millennials than it was among Gen Xers or Boomers at the same age...

Millennials are more likely to be living with other family members (47%), such as their parents, than were the immediate two previous generations at the same age... They also are more likely than others had been at the same stage of life to be cohabiting with a partner or living with a roommate.³²

The Millennials slow approach to marriage also shows up in other ways. Some of the results indicate that they are not simply waiting to marry as much as marriage being somewhat less important to them than it was for previous generations.

For example, about 9.2% of Millennials cohabit, compared with 5.8% of Gen Xers, and 24% of now-married Millennials report that they had become homeowners prior to marriage.³³ A Clark University poll of "established adults" found that people between

³⁰ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 2.

³¹ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 7.

³² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 12.

³³ Raphelson, S. Nov. 18, 2014. *Amid Stereotypes, Some Facts about Millennials*. National Public Radio: Washington, DC. p. 4.

25 and 39 years of age did not consider marriage to be one of the major markers of adulthood, with a Pew analysis of census data projecting that 25% of Millennials will never marry.³⁴

Associated with this, the Millennials lead other generations in their share of out-of-wedlock births. In 2012, almost half (47%) of births to Millennial women were outside of marriage, compared to only 20% among older women. Some attribute this to a change in social conventions or life-cycle effects, but whatever the reason, this is demonstrative of a continuing shift. In 1996, for example, when Gen Xers were about the same age as Millennials were in 2012, just 35% of births were out of wedlock, compared to 15% among women older than the Gen Xers.³⁵

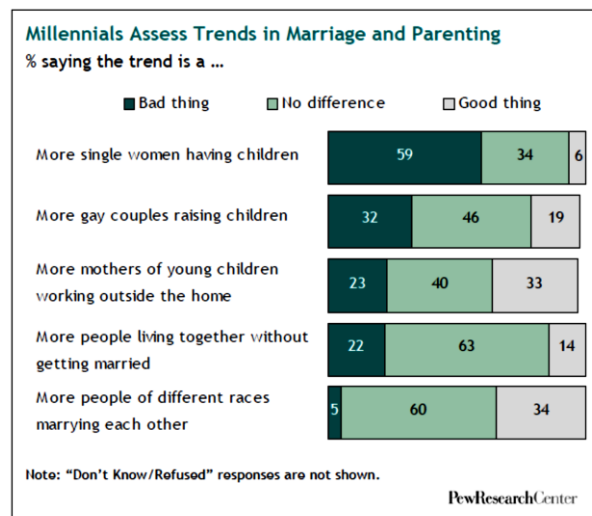
This might lead one to believe that the Millennials discount both marriage and parenthood, but this is not the case. As will be mentioned in the next section of this report, three-in-ten Millennials list being a good parent and having a successful marriage as their two top life goals (52% and 30%, respectively), even though they are delaying doing both. At first blush these may seem to be low percentages, but they differ only marginally from that of those over 30 years-of-age, as 50% of that group consider being a good parent to be a primary life goal and 35% think that having a good marriage is.

They are also committing time to parenting. A 2014 study found that hours spent parenting had increased for both fathers and mothers, tripling for fathers since 1985 and increasing by 60% for mothers. This trend is particularly pronounced for college-educated Millennials.³⁶

Non-Traditional Families

Although almost 60% of Millennials believe that more single women having children is a bad trend, they are the only generation to favor the legalization of gay marriage, with 50% believing it should be. Moreover, only 32% believe that gay couples raising children is a bad thing.³⁷ They are additionally receptive to mixed race households, with only 5% reporting it as a “bad”

thing, while 34% say it is a “good thing”, and 60% believing there is no difference.³⁸



But Pew points out that the Millennials' acceptance of these nontraditional approaches to marriage and family life does not necessarily translate into outright approval³⁹ and may not represent a complete break with the past. For example, the Millennials acceptance for gay marriage represents a straight-line progression consistent with previous generations, with each one more supportive than the previous.

Moreover, and considering the trends indicated in the chart, only 34% of Millennials describe any of these trends as “good thing” for society, with a tilt toward disapproval of single women having children as well as gay couples raising children.

Employment and Finances

In 2010 Pew found, as the chart on the next page shows, that Millennials were much less likely to be working, particularly full-time, than those in the two preceding generations. While only 41% of Millennials were working full-time in 2010, 65% of Gen Xers and 54% of Boomers were.

Moreover, their situation had deteriorated over the previous four years. In 2006, 50% of Millennials held a full-time job, but this had declined to 41% in 2010. This is a different situation than that of the Gen Xers and Boomers, whose employment situations had

³⁴ Raphleson (Nov. 18, 2014), p. 4.

³⁵ Pew (March 7, 2014), p.7.

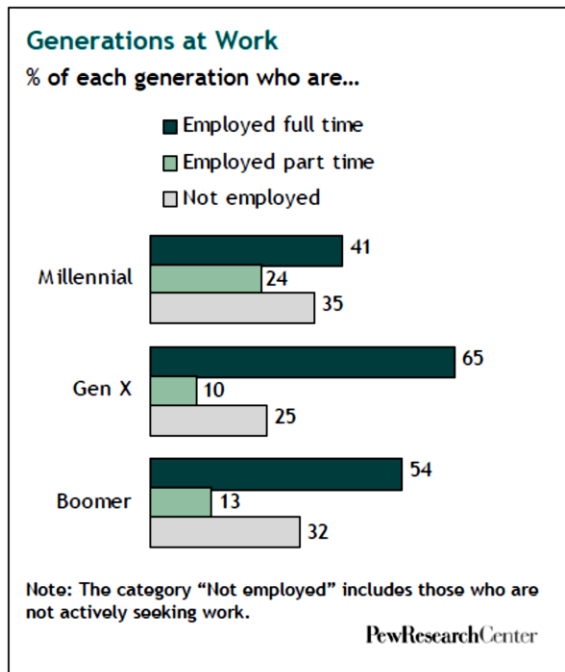
³⁶ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 9.

³⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 51.

³⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 51.

³⁹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.51.

improved during the same period, with Gen Xers moving from 63% employed to 65%, and Boomers holding rather steady at 53% and 54%.⁴⁰



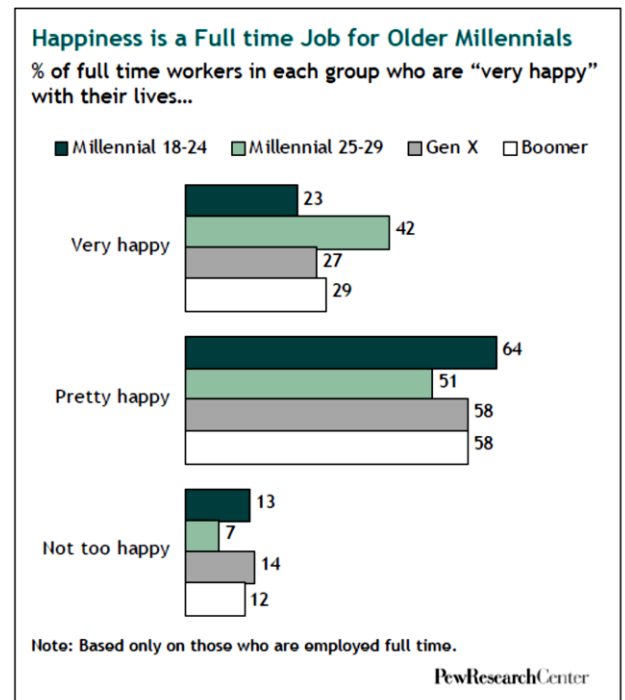
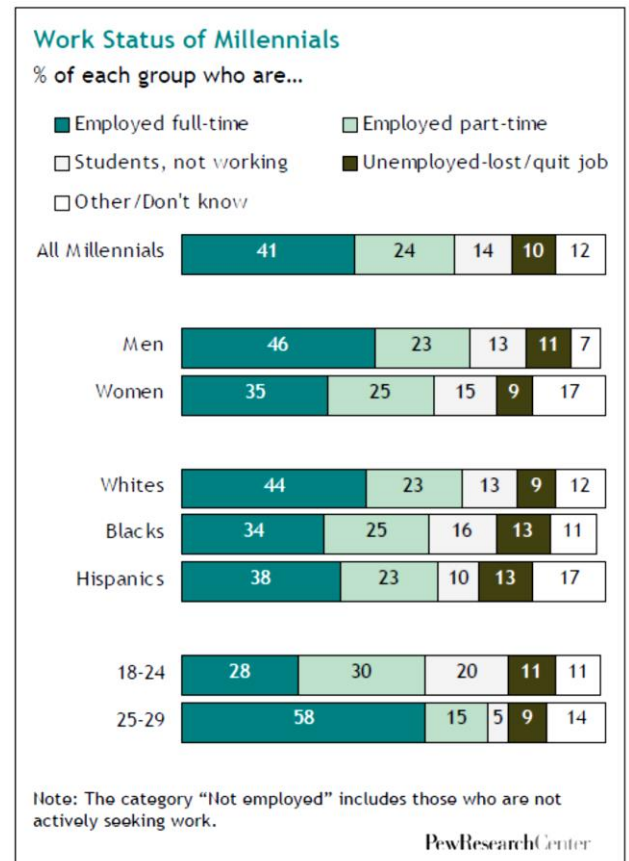
This differential is somewhat explained by the first chart to the right that considers Millennial employment in terms of the group's demographics.

The reader will note that part of the differential is explained by age, with the older Millennials (those between 25 and 29 years-of-age) being more fully employed than their younger generational mates: 58% vs. 28%. This can be explained by a number of factors, including the number of Millennials in the younger group still working to complete their educations, and so working only part time.

As the chart also shows, and not inconsistent with general population findings, men tend to be more likely than women to be holding full-time jobs, and whites more likely than blacks or Hispanics. Again, a trend we see in other age groups.

But happiness *is* a full-time job for these older Millennials, regardless of sex, race or ethnicity. As the second chart to the right shows, there are some distinct differences among the Millennials regarding

their happiness compared to both Gen Xers and the Boomers when age is taken into consideration.



⁴⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 46.

The simple interpretation is that the Millennials *do* want to work, and when they are, they express their happiness in similar proportions to the Boomers and Gen X. This will be particularly relevant when we address Millennials in the workplace later in this report.

Personal Finances

Employment certainly has an effect on personal finances, but shifts in the economy can as well.

Due to the effects of the Great Recession, at the time that Pew was conducting its 2010 study Americans were keeping a sharp eye on their pocketbooks. Since Millennials were significantly affected by the downturn as they entered the workforce, one would expect that they in particular would be wary. *They were and continue to be.*

Pew found that 55% of 18- to 29-year-olds were watching their spending “very closely”, up from 43% who reported doing so in 2006. That matched similar numbers for the adult population as a whole, with 77% of those under 30 in 2010 reporting that they worried that they were not saving enough. Pew contends that among the causes for this worry was the lack of health insurance coverage,⁴¹ which is in conflict with some who argued that the Federal Affordable Care Act was not needed by young people as they seldom had a need for medical care. That may be true, but it apparently did not fully end their worries, particularly given that only 61% of Millennials reported that they were covered in 2010, compared to 73% of Gen Xers, 83% of Boomers, and 95% of Silents.⁴²

But unlike these other generations, the Millennials had a resource to call upon when in need: their families. Earlier we noted that the Millennials were much more connected to their parents financially than previous generations. The Pew data bears this out.

More than a third of Millennials (36%) were depending upon their parents or other family members for financial assistance in 2010. This should not be considered a detriment to that generation, for one must remember that given the age of the group at that

time, a large share of them were full-time students. This is confirmed by the fact that younger Millennials were more likely to receive financial help from their families than older ones: 50% of younger compared to only 16% of older. This is also confirmed by the fact that 77% of Millennials attending school and not employed were receiving financial assistance from their families.

Even with family support, one in five young adults (13.5 million) were estimated to be living in poverty, a noticeable increase from the one in seven (8.4 million) in 1980.⁴³

They Struggle Optimistically

Economically, the Millennials find themselves struggling, but remain optimistic. As noted above in discussing their employment, about one-third of Millennials were unemployed in 2010, a situation that had worsened since 2006. Of the Millennials who were in the workforce in 2010, only 31% of them thought that they were earning enough to lead the kind of life that they wanted to lead. Since only 46% of Gen Xers and 52%⁴⁴ of Boomers say the same thing, dissatisfaction with pay is not limited to only one generation, and may be higher for the Millennials than the previous two generations because they are newer to the workforce and were significantly affected by the recession as they entered it.

Millennials also face some struggles that previous generations did not. For example, and as was alluded to earlier, they have higher levels of student loan debt, poverty and unemployment, along with lower levels of personal wealth and income, than either the Gen Xers or Boomers had at the same stage in life.⁴⁵ To place this in some context, Pew reported in 2014 that two-thirds of recent bachelor's degree recipients have outstanding loans, with an average debt of about \$27,000. Only one-half had such a debt 20 years ago, and that debt was about one-half of the one recent graduates carry.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.48.

⁴² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 48.

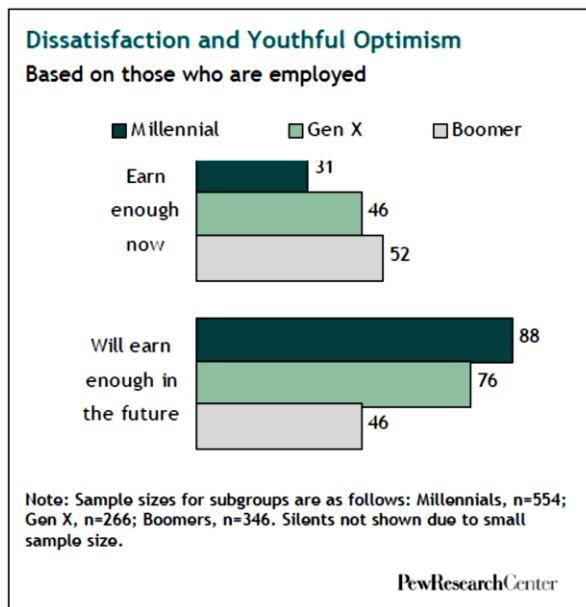
⁴³ U.S. Census Bureau. (Dec. 4, 2014).

⁴⁴ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 20.

⁴⁵ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 6.

⁴⁶ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 7.

Even so, they remain noticeably more optimistic about their working futures than the other two generations, as the chart below indicates.



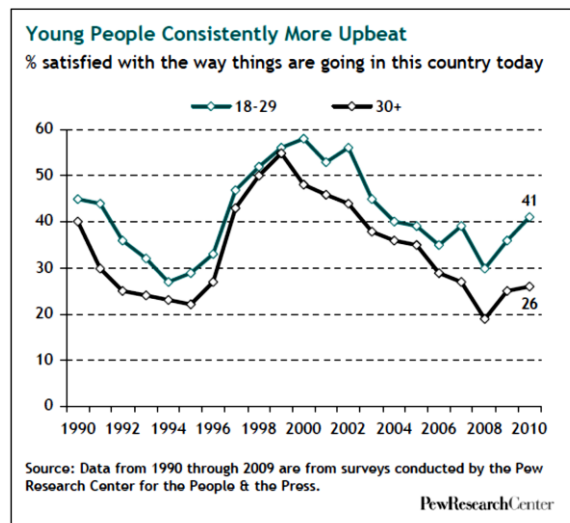
While 31% of Millennials say that they do not currently earn enough, they remain optimistic with almost 90% of them believing that they will earn enough in the future. This is noticeably more than the results for Gen X and the Boomers, a result that need not represent the Millennials' young naiveté so much as indicate that the Boomers have already achieved any mid-career earnings high point and the Gen Xers feel they are near to reaching it.

However, the Millennials are more optimistic than the previous generations at the same age; for example the Gen Xers. Among employed young people who said that they did not earn enough to live the kind of life they wanted, 77% thought they would in the future.⁴⁷

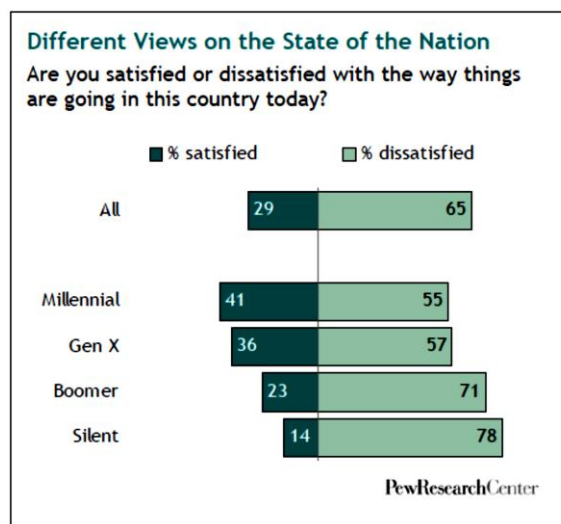
In part the Millennials may be more optimistic about their earnings potential because they are more upbeat in general.

As the graph in the next column shows, young people are traditionally more optimistic about the future than their elders, and the overall "satisfaction gap" is wider than it has ever been at any time since 1990. Part of this is due to widespread dissatisfaction about the

state of the nation among those 65 and older, and we alluded to this earlier in this report when we discussed the Boomers, and will address it again later in this report when we discuss government and governance. This is somewhat supported by the fact that the Millennials are more united in their satisfaction with the way the nation is tending than are their elders.⁴⁸



In 2010, over two-thirds of Americans were dissatisfied with where the country was tending, but one can see the marked differences between the generations in the Pew chart below. Clearly age has a great influence on the extent to which the population is satisfied or dissatisfied, and we will return to this point later in the report when we address the Millennials views on government and politics.

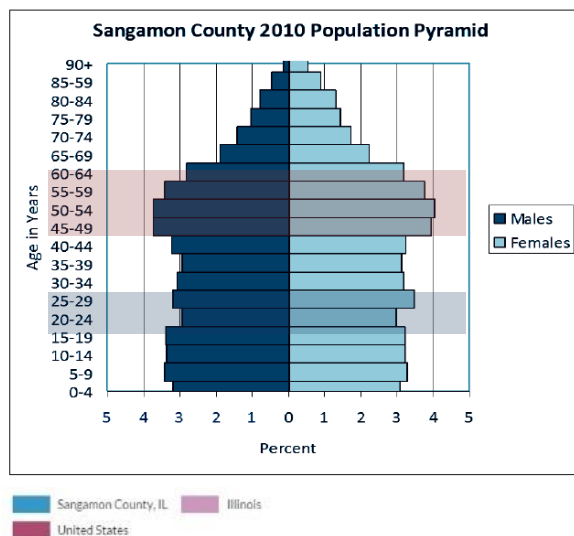


⁴⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 20.

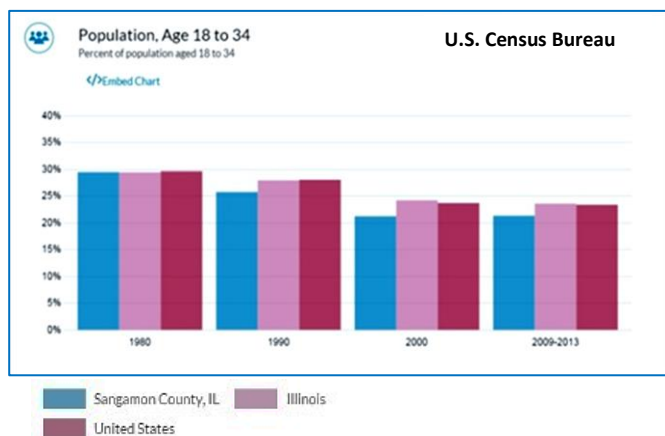
⁴⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 22.

The Local Demographic Picture

Many of the trends noted above are also noticeable at the local level. The graph below provides a snapshot of the Sangamon County regional population based upon the results of the 2010 Census.⁴⁹

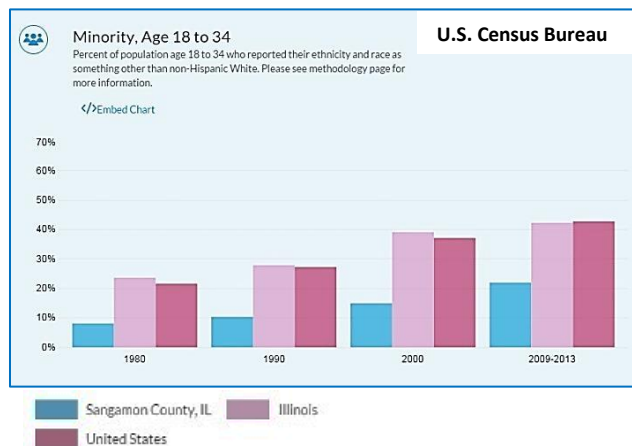


In 2010 the Boomers were 45 to 64 years of age while the oldest Millennials were 18 to 28. We have highlighted bands to generally show the two groups as they move through this region's "population pyramid", particularly to show the bulge the Boomers caused.



Particular attention was given previously to the size of the Millennial group. The Census Bureau bar chart above displays the percentage of the population ages

18-34 over time, as that is the age of the oldest group of Millennials in 2013. It compares Sangamon County (the blue bar) to Illinois (the pink bar) and the U.S. (the red bar). In 1980 the number of that age locally was quite comparable to that of the state and nation, at 29.4% (IL, 29.4%; US, 29.6%). However, by 2000 it had fallen slightly below both the state and national averages, to 21.2% (IL, 24.2%; US, 23.7%), averaging an estimated 21.3% of the population over the 2005 to 2013 period (IL, 23.6%; US, 23.4%).

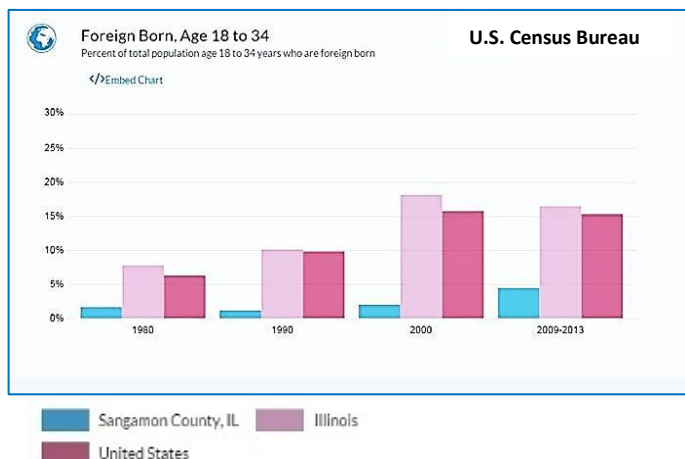


We also reported that the Millennials were continuing the "browning" of the nation. The chart above shows this trend for the region, displaying the percentage of the population aged 18-34 who reported ethnicity and race as different from non-Hispanic White. In 1980 only 8.2% of the Sangamon group reported in this way, but this number almost doubled by 2000, at 15%. The average for the 2009-2013 period was even greater, at 22%. Respective IL and US rates were: 23.7% and 21.6% in 1980; 39.2% and 37.2% in 2000; 42.3% and 42.8% in 2009-2013.

The impact of immigration can also be found in the more recent Census Bureau data.

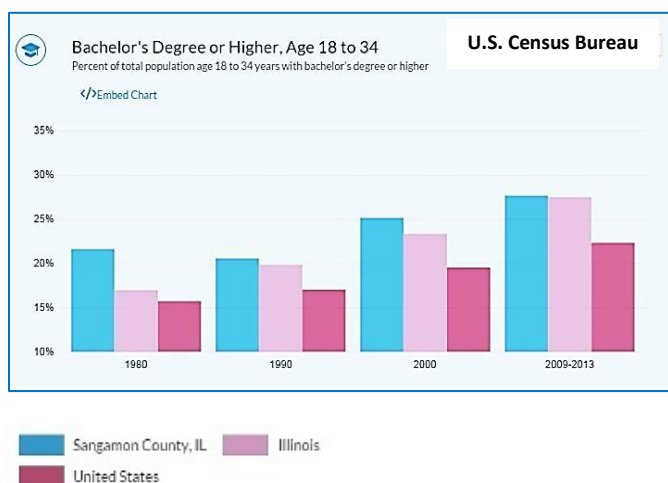
As the Census Bureau chart on the next page shows, in 1980 only 1.7% of Sangamon County residents 18-34 were foreign born, compared to 7.8% for the state and 6.3% for the nation. This had changed considerably for the state and nation by 2000, with 18.2% of Illinois' population being foreign born, compared to 15.8% of the nation, but only 2.0% for Sangamon County.

⁴⁹ Uden, A. 2014. *2010 Census Analysis of Springfield and Sangamon County*. SSRPC: Springfield, IL. p. 12.

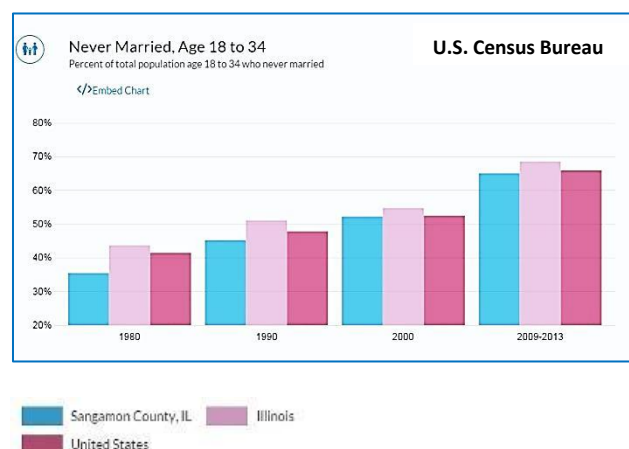


By the 2009-2013 period, the Illinois and national share had decreased to 16.5% and 15.4%, respectively, while the Sangamon County group had more than doubled, to 4.5%; so the region is getting noticeably more diverse.

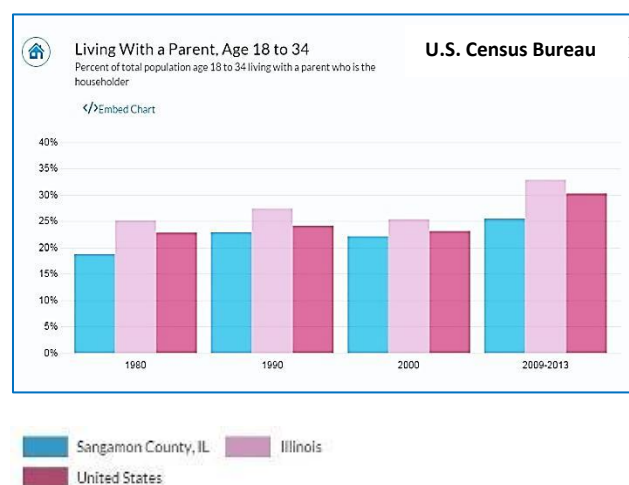
The Millennial trend toward increased education is also represented within Sangamon County, as the chart below demonstrates. In 1980, 21.6% of this age group in the county had a BA degree or higher, compared to 17.0% in Illinois and 15.7 nationwide. By 2000 this had increased to 25.1% (IL, 23.3%; US, 19.5%), and had grown to 27.6% during the 2009-2013 period (IL, 27.5%; US, 22.3%). This also demonstrates both the state and nation catching up with Sangamon County residents in educational attainment over the period.



Regional data, as shown in the chart below, also demonstrates the trend toward delay in marriage, and Millennials living with their parents.



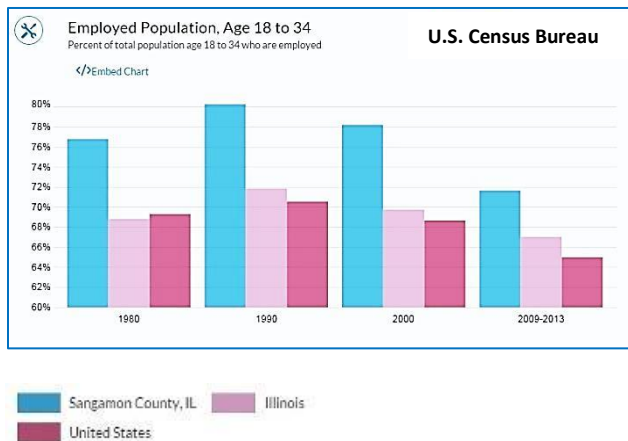
In 1980, only 35.5% of Sangamon County residents 18-34 had never married, a lower rate than either the state or nation (IL, 43.7%; US, 41.5%). By 2000 this rate had grown to 52.2%, better matching the state and national rates (IL, 54.8%; US, 52.5%). But during the 2009-2013 period the number increased considerably. During that period 65.1% of those in this age cohort living in Sangamon County had not married, and the Illinois rate had risen to 68.6%. The Sangamon rate was more similar to the national 65.9%.



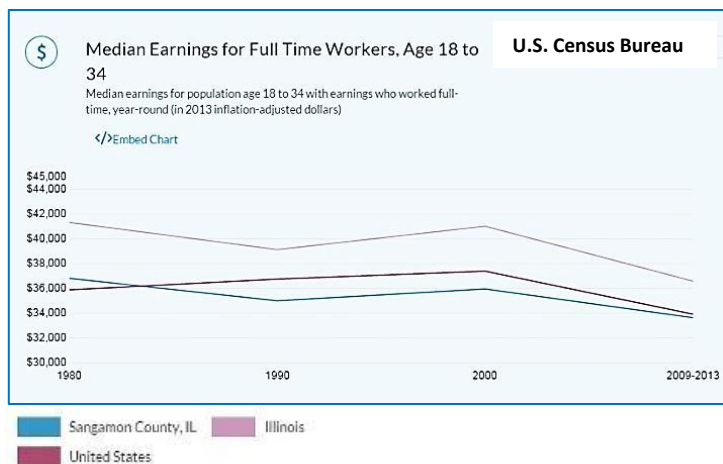
As to living with parents, Sangamon County residents showed this tendency, but not to the same degree as the state or nation did by 2013 (see chart above). In 1980, 18.8% of those in the county aged 18-34 lived with a parent. This was much lower than the state

rate, 25.2%, or national one, 22.9%. The state and national rates climbed slightly between 1980 and 2000, going to 25.4% and 23.2% respectively. But by the 2009-2013, all had jumped (Sangamon, 25.5%; IL, 32.9%; US, 30.3).

Even so, more Millennials in Sangamon County were working than were their counterparts at the state and national levels. As shown below, in 1980, 76.8% of those aged 18-34 were employed, compared to 68.8% for the state and 69.3 for the nation. By 2000 these percentages had changed only slightly: Sangamon, 78.3%; IL, 69.8%; US, 68.7%. Unfortunately all had dropped by the 2009-2013 period (Sangamon, 71.7%; IL, 67.1%; US, 65.0%).ⁱⁱⁱ



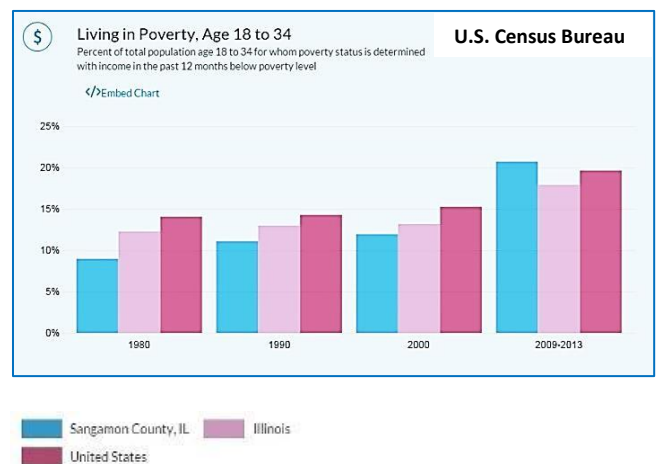
Along with the workforce numbers, this is also reflected in the Census Bureau graph, below, showing the median earnings for full-time workers aged 18-34 for the various time periods.



In 1980, the median earnings for this group in Sangamon County (in 2013 inflation adjusted dollars) were \$36,778: below the Illinois median of \$41,288, but slightly above the nation's \$35,845. By 2000, the Sangamon group was earning less than their counterparts in the state and nation, with median earnings of \$35,919; a noticeable decline from 1980. The Illinois median for this group also slightly declined during the same period, falling to \$40,984. The US median did somewhat better, growing to \$37,355.

Things were much different at the regional, state and national levels during the 2009-2013 period, as incomes for 18-to-34-years-olds fell at each level: Sangamon, \$33,599; IL, \$36,546; US, \$33,883.

This partially helps explain why the data shows more of the Millennials living in poverty than was the case for more recent generations at the same age.



In 1980 only 9% of those 18-35 in Sangamon County were determined to have poverty status based upon income over the previous 12 months, compared to 12.3% in Illinois and 14.1% nationwide. By 2000, the Sangamon figure had grown by one-third (12%), while both the state and national figures had grown slightly (13.2% and 15.3%, respectively). These numbers increased noticeably during the 2009-2013 period, with 20.7% of county residents in this age cohort determined to have poverty status: greater than both Illinois (17.9%) and the nation (19.7%).

All-in-all, the data for the local region seems to mirror the national trends, at least marginally.

Some Takeaways:

The Millennials are now the nation's largest generational population group. They are the most racially and ethnically diverse group in American history.

They are the best educated group in U.S. history, and are likely to remain so for some time.

They are marrying and having children at older ages than other generations, and are more accepting of non-traditional families.

They are economically stressed, in part by the Great Recession and heavy student loan debt, but also because the Baby Boomers are remaining in the workforce longer than previous generations, limiting the Millennials' opportunities.

Even though they are economically limited, they remain optimistic, and happy when employed.

Local demographics related to the Millennials appear to mirror national trends.

III: The “Personality” of the Millennials

With the previous brief consideration of demographics as a base, we now turn to the Millennials’ wants, wishes, desires and interests: their emerging generational *personality*. It may be inappropriate to think of generations as having a personality, although some authors have made that case.⁵⁰ Since we tend to ascribe each with a name and identity – as we do in discussing the Boomers as risk-takers who helped “ignite countercultural passions and push the nation into an era of political idealism, cultural awakening and social upheaval”⁵¹ -- it seems reasonable and useful to address the Millennials in the same way.

It is particularly relevant to do so for the Millennials, as 61% of them think that they are unique and distinct from previous generations.⁵² Granted other generations felt the same way, with 49% of Gen Xers, 58% of Boomers, and 66% of Silents seeing their generations as being unique in various ways as well. Most interesting are the differences between these generations as to why they feel they are unique.

The Millennial ‘Mystique’

A great deal of public commentary has been written about America’s newest generation and why they are anticipated to be so different from the previous ones, sometimes reaching almost mystical proportions as authors and analysts debate pros and cons. This has led to both myths about the group and a sense that they might have a particular mystique. The question is, of course, how different are they really from previous generations, and if different, will these differences become less pronounced as they age?

The table below indicates the top five responses (by percentage reporting) from a Pew survey of members of each generational group in which they were asked to respond to an open-ended question about why they felt their generation was unique.

What Members Believe Makes their Generation Unique (Pew, 2010)					
Ranking	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Millennials	Technology Use (24%)	Music/Pop Culture (11%)	Liberal/Tolerant (7%)	Smarter (6%)	Clothes (5%)
Gen X	Technology Use (12%)	Work Ethic (11%)	Conservative/Traditional (7%)	Smarter (6%)	Respectful (5%)
Boomers	Work Ethic (17%)	Respectful (14%)	Values/Morals (8%)	“Baby Boomers” (6%)	Smarter (5%)
Silent	WWII, Depression (14%)	Smarter (6%)	Honest (12%)	Values/Morals (10%)	Work Ethic (10%)

As this report is addressing the Millennials, we focus primarily on their responses, but it is important to recognize that many of the four recent generations’ top five choices as to their uniqueness are similar, and some may even be inconsequential. For example, is the Millennials’ professed uniqueness arising from “music and pop cultural” really as significant as that of the Boomers, who do not even include it in their top five? Are they really “smarter” than the Silents and Boomers, both of whom list that factor as well? What of the Boomers who answered that their generation was unique simply because they were, well, Boomers? And most importantly, will the Millennials’ choices as to their pop culture, clothes, and particularly their liberality and tolerance, remain as they age and younger generations push them out of the limelight or even clash with them?

Of course, and as we are often reminded, one of the most difficult tasks is to see ourselves as others see us, so it is reasonable to consider whether or not the Millennials show signs of having the uniqueness they claim.

It is difficult in a document such as this one to address such claims as music, pop cultural and clothing, as

⁵⁰ Strauss, W., and Howe, N. 1991. *Generations: The History of America’s Future, 1584 to 2069*. William Morrow & Co.: NY, NY.

⁵¹ Howe (2012), p. 2.

⁵² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 13.

this may change with time, be shared with other generations – as we noted at the beginning of this report that there were already more similarities in these areas between the Boomers and the Millennials than there were between the Boomers and their parents – and be seen as ephemeral differences in any event. While there can be interesting debate as to what it means for one generation to be “smarter” than another, we have already noted the educational attainment of the Millennials^{iv}, so will not address this aspect of their uniqueness here either.

But two aspects of the self-proposed uniqueness of the Millennials can be addressed, and the data is available to do so: their use of technology, and their liberality and tolerance. Both of these appear to be noteworthy aspects of the Millennials’ “personality”.

An iGeneration

It should not be surprising that the first generation to have access to the internet during their formative years has become an identifying factor for them as a group. Truly, the Millennials have “come of age in a world in which the frontiers of technology have appeared unlimited”.⁵³

They appear to recognize this, as they list their use of technology as the most important aspect of their

generational uniqueness. As the previous table showed, Millennials mentioned this twice as often as their immediate predecessors, the Gen Xers, although that generational group also lists it as the most important thing setting them apart as well.

This outcome really should not come as a surprise, as both groups were the beneficiaries of a technological expansion that began in the mid-20th Century, accelerating in the late 1970’s, and rocketing ever higher in more recent years. The Targetprocess.com technology timeline (below, left) provides a graphic display of the wide array of technological changes that have occurred just since the year the Millennials began coming of age.

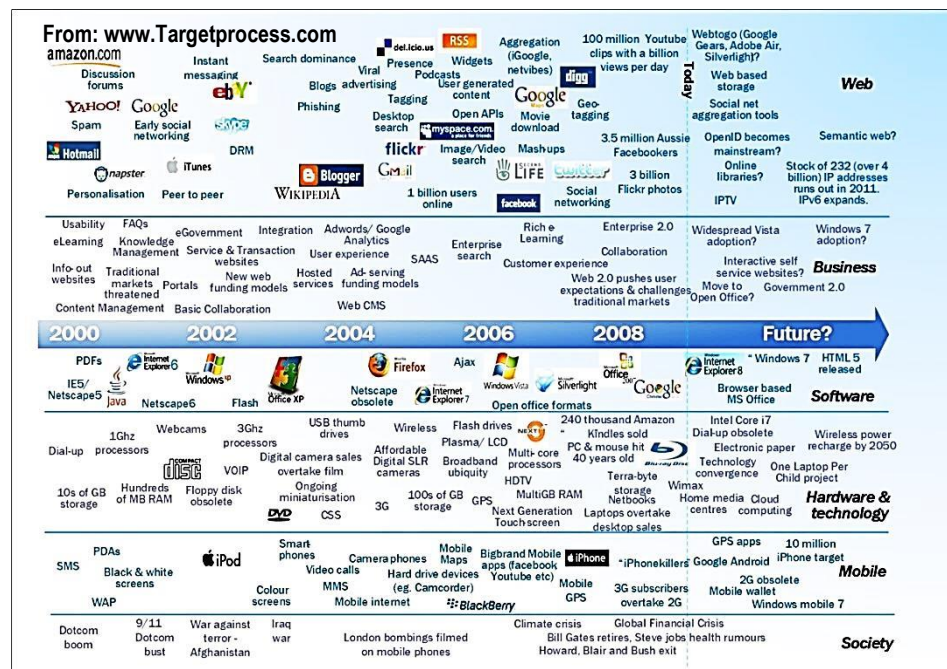
While children of the ‘50s and ‘60s were acquainted with the concept of a wristwatch phone because the newspaper comic strip character Dick Tracy had one, Millennials can now have one in real life to go with their iPads, iPods, and iPhones. So there is some sound basis for the Millennials’ perception.

And as Pew notes, the Millennials have not only been power users of the new technologies, they are *enthusiasts*, using them as, “more than a bottomless source of information and entertainment, and more than a new ecosystem for their social lives”.⁵⁴

How much do the Millennials use the new technology spawned by the World Wide Web and cell phones? The simple answer is: *a whole lot*.

Millennials outpace their predecessor generations in every aspect of technology use, including, for example:

- 75% have created a social network profile.
- 62% use wireless internet away from home.
- 88% use a cell phone for texting.
- 80% have texted in the past 24 hours.
- 64% have texted while driving.



⁵³ Council of Economic Advisers (Oct. 2014), p. 7.

⁵⁴ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 25.

- 41% no longer have a telephone landline, depending solely upon their cell phone.

And the newest generation often use their cell phones to text rather than communicate by voice, with a large majority (88%) of them texting. This presents the irony that an invention originally intended to transmit voice communications from one place to another – and for Alexander Graham Bell, one intended to help teach deaf mutes to speak – has been converted to non-voice use largely because of the Millennials. In support of this contention, and to provide some comparison, the median number of texts that Millennials send each day is 20: the Boomers send only five.

It shows up in other ways as well. By 2013, the median number of Facebook “friends” reported by Millennials was 250, compared to 200 for Gen X, 98 for younger Boomers, and 50 for older Boomers.⁵⁵ Clearly the other generations also have friends, but one supposes they are just analog rather than digital ones.

But this use is not consistent across all Millennials. The major distinction is that those who have attended college are more likely to be exhibiting these uses than those in the group who have not. This is consistent with various studies of the diffusion of technological innovations that found that educational attainment appears to be correlated with early adoption.

And the Millennials *are* early adopters compared to their predecessors, appearing to be more bullish on the use of these technologies than older groups, and embracing various modes of it.

The American public in general takes a positive view of modern technology, but the Millennials are seemingly more committed to it, with 74% saying that new technology makes life easier (compared to 26% of the total population), 54% saying that it makes people closer to family and friends rather than more isolated (50%), and 56% saying that it allows people to use their time more efficiently rather than waste time (52%).⁵⁶

Their connection with, and commitment to, new communication technologies shows up in their actions as well. For example:

- 90% of Millennials report that they use the internet or send or receive emails at least occasionally, compared to 77% of Americans in general.
- 75% report that they have created a social networking profile, compared to 50% of Gen Xers and 30% of Boomers.
- 29% of Millennials with a profile on a social networking site say that they visit these sites several times a day (55% say at least once each day), compared to 19% of Gen Xers and 11% of Boomers.
- 14% of Millennials use Twitter, compared to 6% of Boomers and 10% of Gen Xers.
- 20% report that they have posted a video of themselves online, compared to 2% of Boomers and 6% of Gen Xers.
- 62% connect wirelessly to the internet when away from home or work, compared to 48% of Gen Xers and 35% of Boomers.⁵⁷

But technology use starts to catch up when cell phone *ownership* is considered. Though 94% of Millennials have a cell phone, 90% of Gen Xers and 89% of Boomers do as well.⁵⁸ The cell phone has become as much a commodity, shared by all the recent generational groups, as it has a technology. Indeed it is becoming almost universal across all groups, with 86% of all American adults having one in 2010.

Less common are those who depend *only* on a cell phone for telephony: what we will call the “landlineless”. According to a National Health Institute Survey, only 21% of Americans depended solely upon cell phones in 2009, but 41% of Millennials said that they had no landline at home, only the cell. By comparison, only 13% of Boomers said the same. What may even be more telling is that 83% of Millennials have their cell phone near them when they go to bed. Only about 50% of Boomers do this, but then again, they have landlines!⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Pew (March 7, 2014), p. 3.

⁵⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.26.

⁵⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), pp. 27-31.

⁵⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 32.

⁵⁹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.32.



All-in-all, and absent the data provided above, the most profound proof that the Millennials are the iGeneration may come from the fact that the words “tweet”, “selfie” and “emoji” would likely not have entered the lexicon absent their engagement with the new technologies.

Liberal, Tolerant and Happy, but Not Trusting

As noted previously, while it is difficult to address the Millennials’ second choice as to why they are unique – Music and Pop Culture – any more than it would be for the Boomers (who may even believe that they invented them), their second choice – that they are more liberal and tolerant than previous generations – can be assessed based upon the Pew study results.

Previously we considered the Millennials more accepting attitudes about nontraditional marriage and parenting, but also noted that in many ways this was just representative of a generation-by-generation progression, and that while this may represent tolerance, it may not suggest approval. At the same time, their positions on various issues *do* lend support to their impression of themselves as being more liberal and tolerant than their predecessors, and they exhibit this trait in both political and social terms.

As a designation of “liberal” is often addressed as more of a political term than one of personality, we will address this in a subsequent section covering government and governance rather than here. But what may be driving the Millennials’ opinion of

themselves as being tolerant are three factors drawn from the Pew study that the generation does not mention as relevant to their uniqueness: *they are happy, but not necessarily trusting, and willing to express themselves in non-traditional ways.* It appears (to this author at least) that unhappy and mistrusting individuals are less likely to be tolerant and liberal, than those who are, so this finding may be relevant to understanding the generation’s personality and whether it may change over time.

Their Happiness

In 2010 almost 90% of Millennials said that they were either very happy or somewhat happy; about a third (31%) reported “very happy”. Only 12% said that they were “not too happy”. Those reporting they were very happy were just slightly more than the Gen Xers (27%), Boomers (29%), and Silents (27%). Only the Silent generation was outside of this range at 20%.⁶⁰

Given the various economic challenges that this group faces, which were described previously, one might be surprised by this result. Previous research found that those with higher incomes, who were married, and attended church weekly, are among the happiest members of the population. These predictors of “happiness” are particularly noteworthy given the Millennials trends regarding all three of those life aspects: lower incomes, lagging movement toward marriage, and a seeming disregard for religion (which we will address later in this report). However, the Millennials who *are* in these categories *are* happier than their peers who are not, affecting the results for the group.

Even so, not all of the Millennials fall into these categories, and the group as a whole still reports happiness in the same range as the previous generations, all of which better meet the three researched conditions for happiness in greater proportion than do the Millennials.

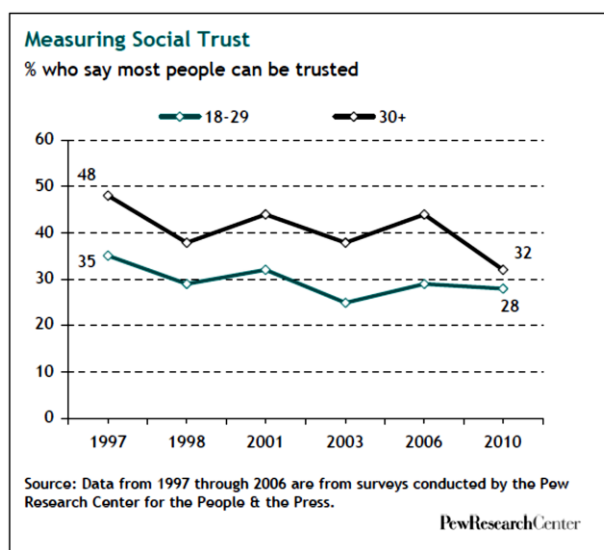
A Lack of Trust

Related to trusting other people, the Millennials are not alone: the general public lacks it. Nearly two-thirds of the public believe that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people, with only 31% saying that people

⁶⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 23.

can be trusted. Millennials feel much the same way, with only 28% of those aged 18-29 in 2010 saying that most people can be trusted compared to 32% of those who were older.⁶¹

One would normally think that younger people would be more trusting than older ones, if for no other reason than that they have had fewer negative life experiences than their elders, but this is not the case. As Pew's chart below shows, younger people – including the Millennials – are consistently less trusting than older ones, including the Boomers who made a slogan out of not trusting anyone older than 30.



There is a great deal of academic debate about the gap in trust shown in the chart, but as Pew points out, trust is strongly correlated with a number of socioeconomic factors, such as income and education. The question will remain as to whether or not the Millennials become more trusting as younger members of the group complete their educations and the generation as a whole moves into higher income-earning classes.

Even so, this aspect of the Millennial “personality” seems at odds with their contended liberality and tolerance. Perhaps it is a byproduct of their parents’ protective nature, the age of terrorism, the economic downturn that welcomed them to the working world, or the media they use to get their news which is often focused on conflicts and dangers. All-in-all, they are

wary of human nature with two-thirds say that “you can’t be too careful” when dealing with people.⁶²

But even so, and unlike the Boomers’, they are less skeptical about government and believe that government should do more to solve problems. This will be address later in another section of this report.

A New Form of Self-Expression

One form of liberality and tolerance we will consider is their acceptance of a form of self-expression that was not as acceptable among previous generations as it is among Millennials: *tattoos and body piercing*. While this may be a minor generational difference, we believe it is worthy of note because it represents a concrete break with the past view that tattoos were more indicative of military life or unsavory lifestyles than an acceptable art form, and that body piercing should be limited to the earlobes of females.

Nearly 40% of Millennials have a tattoo, and for most that do, they have more than one. About half of those with a tattoo have two to five, and almost 20% have six or more. Additionally, nearly a quarter have a body piercing somewhere other than on an earlobe. That is about six times the number of older Americans.⁶³ This form of self-expression may have an adverse effect on job seekers being interviewed by non-Millennial employers, but at least 70% of Millennials report that they placed their tattoos such that they are under their clothing and cannot be seen, showing some discretion.

A Social Generation

Although the Millennials do not mention it in their analysis of unique traits, others have commented on the fact that they are a uniquely *social* and *connected* generation: perhaps in part due to the technologies they most enthusiastically adopt.

Of course, previous generations socialized, whether with their neighbors over the clothesline, in their homes for a game of canasta and a cocktail, at a meeting of a local fraternal organization, or even at the bowling alley. However, and largely beginning with the Boomers, these sorts of connections with one

⁶¹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 23.

⁶² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 2.

⁶³ Pew (Feb. 24, 2010), p. 2.

another and with their communities began to wane. As one scholar, Robert Putnam, put it, Americans began “bowling alone”.⁶⁴ By that he meant that Americans had become increasingly disconnected from one another because social structures – like those listed above, but including more formal institutions such as churches, civic organizations, and political parties – had disintegrated for various reasons.

But the Millennials may be bucking this trend in their own unique and sometimes technological way.

Millennials are a uniquely social generation, at least in terms of enjoying the company of others, and this shows up in tendencies that are different from previous generations.

Fundamentally, they express their sociability online as well as in real life – or “IRL” in text-speak – especially in areas where online and offline activities and their circles of friends overlap. As Solomon describes this social interaction:

Offline, millennials are more likely than other generations to shop, dine and travel with groups, whether these are organized interest groups, less formal groupings of peers or excursions with extended family...Online, their sharing habits on Facebook, Snapchat and other social sites, and the opinions they offer on Yelp, TripAdvisor and Amazon reflect their eagerness for connection, as do their electronic alerts to friends and followers (via Foursquare et al.) that show off where they are, where they're coming from and where they're headed – online alerts that reflect behavior in the physical world.⁶⁵

This shows a desire for constant contact, and we see this social group behavior demonstrated in many ways.

For example, we will discuss the vacation habits of Millennials later in this report, pointing out that not

only do the Millennials like to travel, they like to do so with groups of their friends. It also is displayed in their shopping habits, as they have a tendency to shop in groups as well. Female Millennials particularly see shopping as a group activity, shopping twice as often with a partner or group as do non-Millennial women.

They also bring the group together for decision making. More than two-thirds of Millennials do not make a major decision until they have discussed it with a few people they trust, compared to about half of non-Millennials. Indeed, 70% of Millennials are “more excited about a decision they’ve made when their friends agree with them, compared to 48% of nonmillennials.”⁶⁶

Moreover, and as has been discussed previously in this report, they get along with their parents and often include them in their group. This could be seen as being a much different orientation than that of the Boomers, who often rejected authority (in general) and the opinions of their parents (in particular).

One author puts this desire for group decision making in a different context, speaking for other Millennials by writing that “When It’s Big, We Want a Chaperone”:

Millennials weren’t able to experience the sense of individual achievement that comes from large purchases – buying a home, car, or appliances – because of the economy. They’ve always needed a guardian to help them achieve big goals. Relying on social networking, crowdsourcing, friends, and parents is second nature when encountering anything close to foreign.⁶⁷

This social behavior is not necessarily limited to groups of close friends and peers. It is also seen in their positive, community oriented mind-set of working together to help solve problems: that is, they collaborate and cooperate. They even enjoy the possibility of collaborating with businesses if they believe the business takes their opinions seriously.

⁶⁴ Putnam, R. 2001, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Touchstone Books: NY, NY.

⁶⁵ Solomon, M. Dec. 29, 2014. *2015 is the Year of the Millennial Customer: 5 Key Traits These 80 Million Consumers Share*. Forbes.com. p. 4.

⁶⁶ Solomon (2014), p.4.

⁶⁷ George, T.S. Jan. 7, 2014. *CES 2014: Millennials in “Play”: 5 Key Millennial Behaviors with Consumer Electronics*. IPG Media Lab: NY, NY.

This effectively removes the boundary between the customer and marketer or service provider.⁶⁸

The New Generation Gap: Their Information Sources

In considering the differences between the Millennials and previous generations, particularly in terms of gaining a better understanding of their world view, it may be valuable to understand the differences between the generations in terms of where they get their information and news. Not surprisingly, and as the tables that follow show, the Millennials are turning to sources that were unavailable to their parents at the same age: the internet and cable television.

Of course the Greatest generation depended upon newspapers and radio as their primary means of keeping up with events, and the Boomers and Silents were the first to be able to draw upon television as a major source of information concerning local, state, national and international news. Both newspapers and radio have declined as the primary source with each generation, but while the Millennials may not be reading the newspaper, print is not dead. Millennials are strong magazine readers; even stronger than Boomers. The Millennials are just more likely than the Boomers to be reading women's, music, technology, and parenting magazines – rather than *Time* and *Newsweek* – than their parents are.⁶⁹

How Do You Get Most of Your News? ⁷⁰				
	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent
Television	65%	61%	76%	82%
Internet	59%	53%	30%	13%
Newspaper	24%	24%	34%	50%
Radio	18%	22%	20%	15%
Other	4%	5%	3%	5%

Television as an information source has also decreased along with newspapers and radio. What fills the void? It is the internet. The World Wide Web has increased its presence as an information and news medium, with 59% of Millennials considering it a primary source.

⁶⁸ Solomon, M. Dec. 29, 2014. *2015 Is the Year of the Millennial Consumer: 5 Key Traits These 80 Million Consumers Share*. Forbes.com. Pp. 4-5.

⁶⁹ Nielsen Company, 2014. *Millennials – Breaking the Myths*. Nielsen Holdings C.V.: New York, NY. p. 32.

⁷⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 3.

The reader will note, however, that the table above indicates an increase in television as a news source by Millennials compared to Gen X, leading one to wonder if this result is an aberration. It appears not to be, and for a very simple reason. As the table below shows, cable television news sources (e.g., CNN, Fox, MSNBC) have replaced network news (e.g., ABC, CBS, NBC) as an information source for the Millennials.

How Do You Get Most of Your News?				
	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent
Cable News Sources	43%	34%	40%	47%
Network News Sources	18%	19%	30%	30%

All of the generations surveyed report that they depend more upon cable sources than the networks when seeking news. This appears to also be the case when looking across platforms; that is, when traditional versus new media internet sources are considered. When asked what internet sites Millennials most often go to for the news, 20% mention Yahoo, 18% CNN, 10% Google, and 7% MSN. For comparison, only 4% report going to the *New York Times*, a more traditional news provider.

One particularly finds a generational divide between where the Boomers and the Millennials get their political news.

Unlike the Boomers, with 60% of them reporting that they get their political news from television, social media is the Millennials' television. Over 60% of Millennials report getting *their* political news on Facebook in a given week, a much larger percentage for them than any other news source. This in part may be due to Millennials expressing less interest in political news than either the Boomers (45%) or Gen Xers (34%), as only 26% of Millennials identify politics and government as one of the three out of nine topics they are most interested in.⁷¹

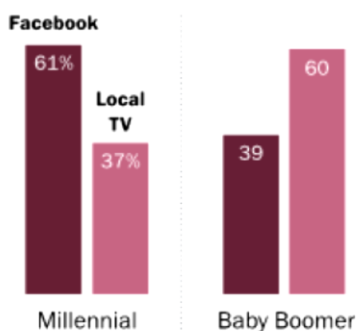
Even with Millennials expressing less interest in political news than the other generations, roughly a quarter of them (24%) who use Facebook say that at least half of the posts they see on the site relate to government and politics, higher than both Gen Xers

⁷¹ Mitchell, A. June 1, 2015. *Millennials and Political News*. Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. pp. 1-2.

(18%) and Boomers (16%) who use the site. And about a quarter of Millennials (26%) still select politics and government as one of the three topics out of nine they are most interested in. That is lower, however, than both Gen Xers (34%) and Boomers (45%).⁷²

Millennials and Baby Boomers: A Generational Divide in Sources Relied on for Political News

% who got news about politics and government in the previous week from...



American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014. Q22, Q24A. Based on online adults.

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The reasons for Millennials moving from traditional sources of information to new ones may have more to do with the personality of the group than it does to the news mediums, however.

We noted above that the Millennials are less trusting than previous generations, particularly less trusting of large institutions. We will also note later in this report, when considering their consumer behavior, that they seek “authenticity”.

Given this, one should not be surprised that 43% of Millennials rank authenticity higher than content when consuming news. They need to trust a company or news source before they bother with the content it is providing, which is why they find blogs to be more authentic as blogs are often run by single individuals rather than large corporate entities.⁷³

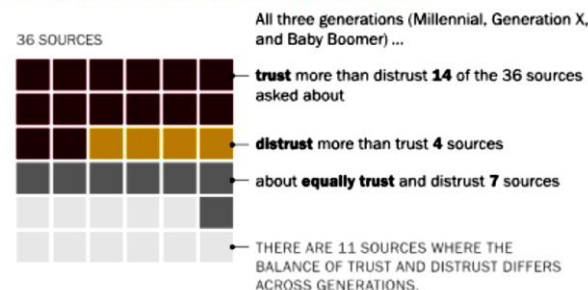
Even so, and as the graphic from Pew in the next column indicates, there is a great deal of overlap

⁷² Mitchell (June 1, 2015), p.2.

⁷³ Schawbel, D. Jan. 20, 2015. *10 New Findings about the Millennial Consumer*. Forbes.com.

among the three most recent generations when it comes to trusting various news sources.

Much Consistency Across Generations When it Comes to Trust and Distrust of News Sources



American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014. Q21A, Q21B. Based on online adults.

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What may be most concerning, however, are the limitations that the mediums most used by the Millennials (e.g., social media, cable news channels, topic specific magazines) may make on the information they receive and the trust they place in it. We believe that these limitations come in two forms, which we will term here *loss of verity* and *increased selectivity*.

Related to verity, and no matter what one might think of the traditional mass media (e.g., daily newspapers, news magazines, network television) and any bias it might be supposed to have, there is a journalistic ethic at work intended to verify the stories published or broadcast. This is in part maintained by something akin to peer review, in that their work is presented in a concrete fashion in public and other media sources – including non-traditional ones – can confirm or deny it. Such a tradition and review is not so far established for much of the new media, such as blogs, that are provided in a digital format that can be changed from second-to-second, leaving the Millennial with less assurance that an item posted on Facebook or on a blog has been in any way vetted and is not biased or presented out of context.

The use of the new sources of information the Millennials seem to prefer – be they websites that pop-up on a Google search, items shared on Facebook or on a topic specific blog – are also limiting, as they are selective to the topic of immediate interest to the searcher. This means that the searcher

does not see items outside of their specific momentary interests or personal biases, limiting their view. This is different from reading a newspaper or listening to a news program, as both may cause the reader or listener to see or hear about, if not learn about, topics, issues or points-of-view they may not otherwise read or hear about if they use more selective sources.

Even information provided on Facebook and cable news networks can be selective and therefore limiting. For example, what one finds on one's Facebook feed is effectively limited to what is posted by the user's self-selected friends and feeds, and information provided by cable news networks may be limited by whether or not the network's focus is on specific markets or even political points of view.

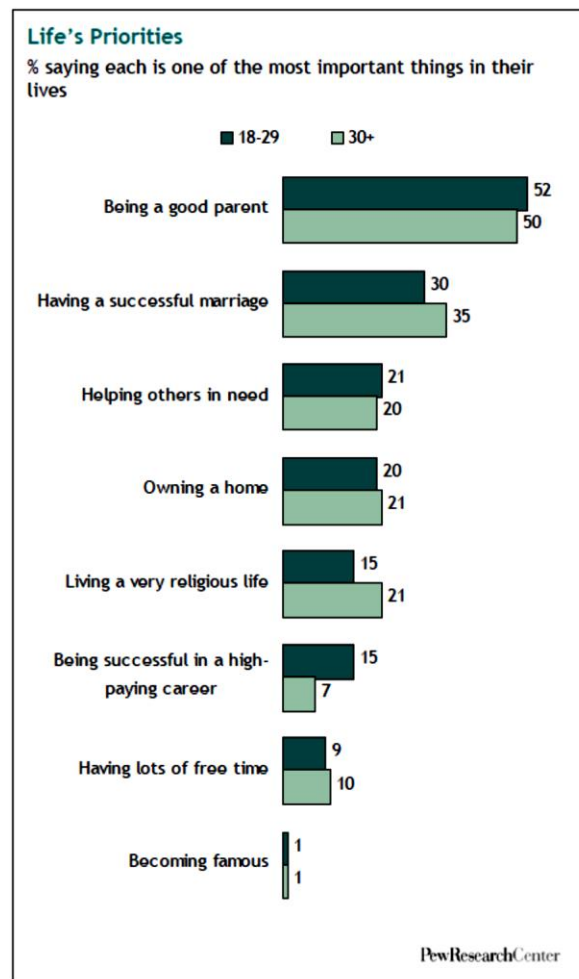
In either case, they do not provide as broad of a scope of reporting and information as one might expect from the more traditional news sources, leading to an informational "bowling alone" similar to the social one discussed previously. This type of information seeking and gathering may lead a Millennial user to feel that the source is more trustworthy largely because it agrees with what the user already thinks or believes. Such information seeking by Millennials is consistent with other behaviors ascribed to them, such as those described above about their social behaviors, and some that will be addressed below concerning work behaviors.

What They Want Out of Life

Of all the ways in which Millennials differ from previous generations, what they want out of life is not one of them.

One of the common myths about the Millennials is that they are narcissistic, but the facts do not bear this out. Nielsen reports that while the Millennials do care about self-expression, and we previously mentioned tattoos as a personal indication of that trait, "they aren't totally self-absorbed". For example, and as noted previously, unlike previous generations they place importance on taking care of their parents while still making the social impact that the Boomers desired at the same age.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Nielsen (2014), p. 4.



As the bar chart above shows, parenting, success in marriage and helping others matter more to the Millennials than financial rewards. For example, while 50% of those over 30 years of age believe that being a good parent matters, a slightly higher percentage (52%) of the Millennials Pew studied do, even though only 34% of the younger group have children. And even though Millennial women see a role for themselves outside of the home and in the workplace, 56% of them (compared to 48% of Millennial men) place a premium on good parenting. No similar gender gap is shown in older populations.⁷⁵

Having a successful marriage, as noted previously, is one of their goals, even though only 62% of them say that their parents were married during the time they were growing up, and 31% report that they lived with only one parent. The number of Millennials raised by both parents is significantly lower than that of

⁷⁵ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 17.

previous generations, with 71% of Gen Xers, 85% of Boomers, and 87% of Silents reporting that they grew up in traditional two married-parent households.⁷⁶

They also place a high priority on helping others in need, with 21% saying that this is a life priority. This finding is not fundamentally different from that of their elders, where 20% of those over 30 years-of-age consider it important, and is demonstrated in what the Millennials think about certain social issues. They will be addressed later in this report when we consider government and politics.



Their commitment to others is also demonstrated in their philanthropic nature. Even though they are generally feeling financial stress, about three-quarters of them made a financial gift to a not-for-profit in 2011. Given their limited financial means, they typically gave less than \$100, but made up for it in other ways. For example, slightly more than 70% reported raising money on behalf of a non-profit, and 57% reported doing volunteer work in the past year.⁷⁷

So while the Millennials do not differ dramatically from their elders in what they want out of life, there are two areas where they do differ noticeably.

First, only 15% of them regard living a very religious life as a priority, compared to 21% of those over 30 years-of-age. Over a quarter of them (26%) say that living a religious life is not important at all.⁷⁸ This is supported by the finding that about a fourth are unaffiliated with any religion, far more than the share of previous generations when they were of the same age.

What is confusing about this group is that even though they are more disassociated from religion than their elders, they pray about as much as their elders did at the same age.⁷⁹ Even so, the results of the Pew study mark the Millennials as the least overtly religious generation in modern times.

Second, they differ from their elders in terms of wanting to be successful in a high-paying job. While not reported by a large percentage of Millennials as a life priority (only 15%), this is still noticeably different from those 30 years-of-age or more, where only 7% report this to be a life goal. What may be more noticeable is that this is the same percentage of Millennials as report living a religious life as a priority.

We will look again at the Millennials interest in work, careers and pay in the next section.

Some Takeaways:

The Millennials believe that they are a unique generation due to their wide use of technology, and the data supports their view of themselves.

They also see themselves as being more liberal and tolerant than previous generations, and their positions on various social issues supports this view as well.

Although they may be tolerant, they are not trusting; especially of large, traditional institutions.

They are a social generation, but in ways noticeably different from previous generations.

The Millennials receive their information from non-traditional news sources – such as the social media, blogs and cable television – that may limit their worldview, creating a different type of generation gap.

What they want from life is not fundamentally different from what previous generations desired.

⁷⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 53,

⁷⁷ Nielsen (2014), p. 11.

⁷⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 18.

⁷⁹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.2.

IV: Millennials at Work

Many major corporations, like IBM, have taken a keen interest in the Millennials as they are seen as “rising up the ranks at work and shaping – or making – key business decisions.”⁸⁰ Because of this, numerous reports have been written in the business press about the changes they will bring to the workplace. Some authors see the group in a negative light (using terms like “lazy”, “entitled”, “selfish” and “shallow”) while others are more complementary (calling this generation “open-minded”, “tech savvy”, and “community spirited”).

While most of these reports include more opinion than fact, all have the same theme: this group will be different from their predecessors in the workplace. But will they? Beyond what is often anecdotal observation, the research is mixed. In any event, reaching a better understanding of this group as workers is important for community as well as business leaders, so we will try to sort through some of what is known about them; and why opinions may differ.

Overall, the data available appears to find a group somewhat buffeted by recent events, yet in many ways not much different than their predecessors.

The Great Recession, the Boomers, and the Millennials

When considering the work habits and career goals of any generational group, it is important to remember that these may be driven more by life-cycle events than any attitudes or orientations inherent to the generation. Pew points out that this is particularly true when comparing younger age groups to older ones, as the younger groups are still moving through such typical life stages as finishing their education, finding their first job, beginning a career, starting a family, and establishing their household.⁸¹

This is as true for the Millennials as it was for previous generational groups, and young adults are typically more vulnerable to economic events than older

populations. For this reason it is particularly important to keep such differences in mind when assessing the Millennials, as one unique economic challenge faced them as they begin their working lives, the Great Recession, and another will face them in future years, limitations caused by the Boomers who remain in the job market.

As these challenges are both likely to set the stage for the Millennials’ economic lives and how they see their futures, we begin this section by briefly addressing both of these issues.

The Great Recession

Given that they faced a world war and the Great Depression, it may be difficult for the Greatest generation and the Silents to have much sympathy for the economic challenges the Millennials faced as they began entering the workforce. Yet the Millennials have certainly contended with some issues earlier in their working lives than did the Boomers or Gen Xers.

The Millennials began reaching their majority after the year 2000, immediately facing the relatively short recession of 2001, and then six years later – just as some of them were getting a foothold in the job market – they were battered by the Great Recession of Dec. 2007 through June 2009.

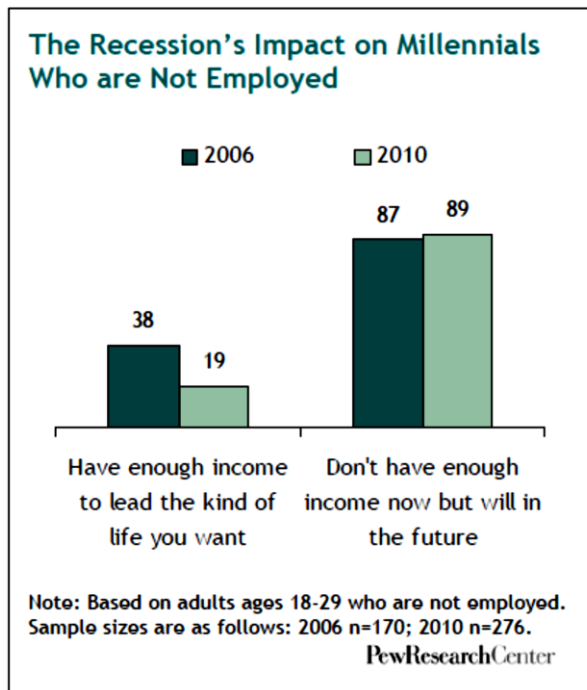
It should not come as a surprise, then, that when Pew studied the Millennials in 2010, it found substantial differences in terms of employment between the Millennials and previous generations. At that time Millennials aged 18-28 – which represents an age group just beginning its working life – were less likely to be employed (63%) compared to Boomers (66%) and Gen Xers (70%) when they were of the same age. This is not seen as being due to lack of interest in jobs and work – and we will address some of the workplace myths concerning the Millennials below – but because overall economic conditions at the time were not as positive as they were when the Gen Xers and Boomers were of that age. There are several factors that may account for this difference.

First was the Great Recession itself. The Pew study notes that during this recession the Millennials found that as jobs were shed and businesses closed, they were among the last hired and the first fired. For example, in 2006 Pew found that half of those 18-29

⁸⁰ Baird, C.H. 2015. *Myths, Exaggerations and Uncomfortable Truths: The Real Story Behind Millennials in the Workplace*. IBM Institute for Business Value: Somers, NY. p. 1.

⁸¹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 39.

were employed in full-time jobs, but by 2010 – after the recession – only a bit more than 40% of this same age group was so employed. This does not represent just a 10% decline, but a reduction of almost a quarter of this age group who were working. In contrast, about the same proportion of older adults was working in 2010 as was working in 2006, so was much less affected by the recession than were the Millennials.⁸²



They were also affected in ways significantly different from other generations *because* of their loss of job opportunities: moving back in with their parents, sharing living quarter costs with roommates, putting off home buying, and going without health insurance.

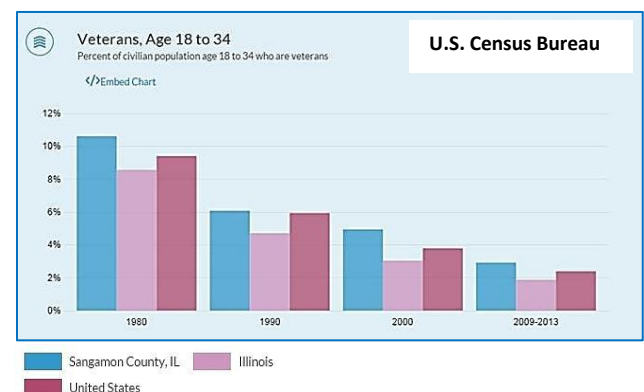
Some of the demographics of the Millennials also had an adverse effect on their placement in the workforce.

For example, and particularly when comparing the Millennials to the Silents, a large share of women in the latter generation did not enter the workforce because they were stay-at-home moms. This reduced a competitive pressure in the job market that is not available to the Millennials given the changing face of the workforce as women enter it in numbers similar to men.

⁸² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 39.

Additionally, many of those in previous generations were counted as being in the workforce and employed because they were in military service. This is not the case with the Millennials.

In 2010, only 2% of Millennial men aged 18-28 had served in the military, compared to 6% of Gen Xers, 13% of Boomers, and 24% of the Silent generation. It seems clear from these numbers that the change from the military draft to all-volunteer service had an effect on the number of people selecting the military as an employment option, increasing job seeking pressure for the Millennials. To demonstrate the degree of this shift since 1980, the chart below from the Census Bureau shows the percentages of those ages 18 to 34 in Sangamon County, Illinois and the nation who are veterans. This is particularly telling given that the armed services expanded their recruitment of women during this period.



There was at least one aspect of this new generation that may have helped buffer them during this period. As mentioned above concerning education, Millennials are more likely to be in college during their 18-28 years than previous generations, and thus out of the workforce to begin with.

The Boomer Effect

As even more Millennials leave school and seek jobs, added job pressure will likely come from an additional source – the Boomers – due to changes they will cause in the economic climate as they grow older.

Previously we mentioned that as the Boomers age they are continuing in the workforce, leaving less opportunity for the Millennials. But other aspects of their aging will have an effect on the economy, their children, and children's-children will inherit as well.

Howe contends that:

First and foremost, of course, health-care consumption will skyrocket, along with massive spending increases in federal entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare. As retirement-age Boomers begin to move out of the workforce, there will be a depressing effect on employment, production, revenues and GDP. Consumption rates will increase, while savings rates will fall. Public capital investments in areas such as training, education and work-related infrastructure will likely decline.⁸³

In other words, as the Boomers finally move out of the workforce, offering new opportunities for the Millennials to fill the employment gaps, the economy could be such that there are fewer gaps to fill.

All-in-all, and as one might guess, the Millennials who did enter the job market and obtain a job during the poor economic climate Americans have faced during the past several years, were mostly dissatisfied with

their pay, with just 31% saying that they earn enough money to lead the kind of life they want to lead.⁸⁴

As you might also guess, older workers are more satisfied.

But what is interesting is that the Millennials are more optimistic (88%) about their future earning power than either Gen X (76%) or

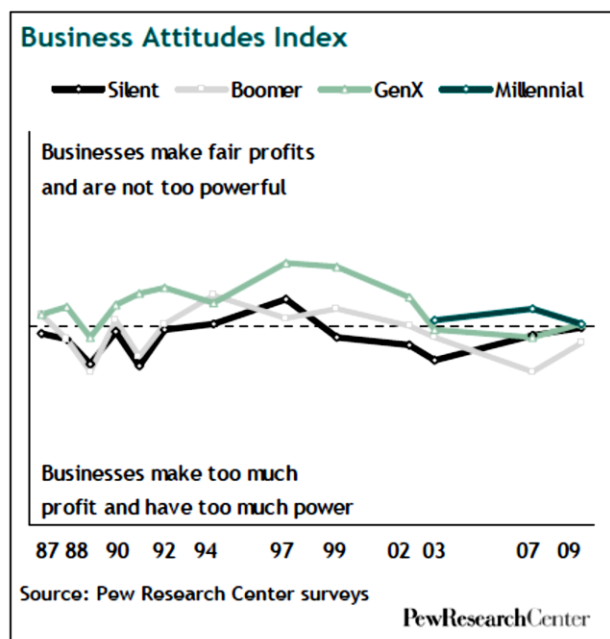
Boomers (46%). This optimism exists at the same

time as wage dissatisfaction, perhaps due to the fact that 15% of Millennials believe that being successful in a high-paying career is one of the most important things in their life, and 47% believe that it is very important if not the most important. Only 7% of those over 30 believe that.⁸⁵

So if a career is highly important to Millennials, how will they fit into the workplace?

How They View Business

One answer to the question of how the Millennials will fit in may be drawn from how they view businesses in general. The results may surprise many who contend that the Millennials' political and ideological positions will make them a poor fit, as the newest generations' views about business are not much different from those of their predecessors.



The Pew study asked Millennials three questions about their opinions concerning business power and profits, and from this developed a "Business Attitude Index" to compare the Millennials to the three previous generations. As the graph above shows, they are not much different.

⁸³ Howe (2012), p. 2.

⁸⁴ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 20

⁸⁵ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 12.

Pew assesses these results in this way:

...Millennials' opinions mirror those of Gen Xers and members of the Silent generation and are slightly less critical of business than are the views of the Baby Boomers. Millennials are not 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.⁸⁶

For some, this is not the result they would expect from a group that lists as one of its unique features its liberality.

Indeed, on one question the Millennials appear to be more supportive of business than their elders. When asked if they believe that business corporations generally strike a fair balance between making profits and serving the public interest, 44% of Millennials think they do. Only 35% of Boomers and Gen Xers, and 32% of Silents, agree.⁸⁷ At the same time, one study found that 83% of Millennials agree with the statement, "there is too much power concentrated in the hands of a few big companies", a greater percentage than all other generations.⁸⁸

What They Desire in the Workplace

As the graph on the following page shows, today more than a third of American workers are Millennials, surpassing Gen X as making up the largest share of the American workforce. This prominence occurred in the first quarter of 2015 as the number Millennials available for work reached 53.5 million, surpassing the Boomers.⁸⁹ And this number is expected to increase as immigration disproportionately enlarges Millennial ranks and young people between 18 and

25-years old complete their educations and begin to seek jobs.

As we noted at the beginning of this section, if there is any area in which the Millennials are sometimes being harshly judged, it is in how they will perform as workers. Some of the popular literature has called them supersized, unrealistic, lacking in understanding the relationship between reward and performance, and even, as we noted previously, narcissistic.⁹⁰

Fortunately for both businesses and the Millennials, the data does not tend to support this view.

For example, IBM found^v that Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers often share quite similar opinions about the workplace. For example:

- 54% of Millennials report that they do not understand their organization's business strategy, making them somewhat less critical of their employers than the Boomers' 58% response.
- Although one of the charges made against the Millennials is that they are likely to jump from one job to another, 47% of Gen Xers would leave their current job for another offering more money and a more innovative environment, while 5% less of Millennials (42%) feel that way.
- 70% of Boomers do not think that their organization is effectively addressing the customer experience, but only 60% of Millennials responded similarly.

Not a great vote of confidence in management for any of the groups, but one that does not show Millennials responding differently to their work environment than the two previous generations, who often provide these younger workers with their workplace examples and mentors.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 74.

⁸⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 74.

⁸⁸ Dews, F. June 2, 2014. *11 Facts about the Millennial Generations*, Brookings Now. Brookings Institution: Washington, DC..

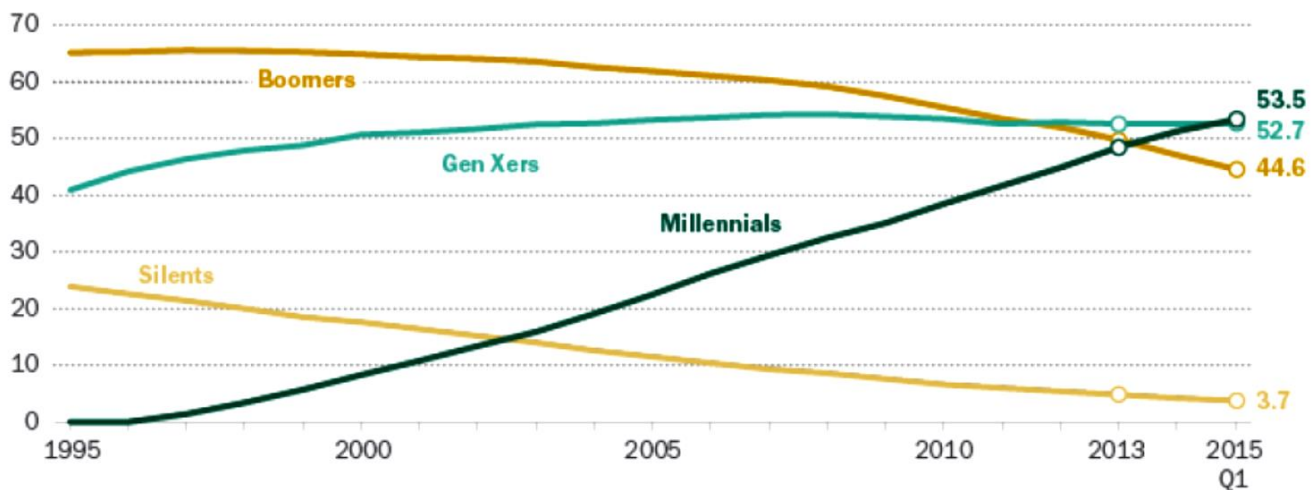
⁸⁹ Fry, R. , May 11, 2015. *Millennials Surpass Gen Xers as the Largest Generation in U.S. Labor Force*. Pew Research Center. pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ Ng, E.S.W., Lyons, S., Schweitzer, L. Feb. 16, 2010. *New Generation, Great Expectations: A Field Study of the Millennial Generation*, Journal of Business Psychology. 25:281-292.

⁹¹ Baird, C.H. 2015. *Myths, Exaggerations and Uncomfortable Truths: The Real Story Behind Millennials in the Workplace*. IBM Institute for Business Value. Somers: NY. p. 2.

U.S. Labor Force by Generation, 1995-2015

In millions



Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, Silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of monthly 1995-2015 Current Population Surveys, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)

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The IBM study also found that the Millennials' career goals and expectations are no different from those of older generations; results not in conflict with other studies. For example, Ng and his colleagues found five major workplace-related themes based upon existing literature about the Millennial generation. They desire: reasonable work/life balance; good pay and benefits; opportunities for advancement; meaningful work; and a nurturing environment.⁹²

Since similar themes show up in many of the articles addressing the expected workplace habits of the Millennials, we will use them as the basis for comparing them to the two most recent generations (Gen X and the Boomers) based upon the IBM study results.

A Reasonable Work/Life Balance

Ng concludes that the Millennials do not wish to be put in a situation where they must choose between "making a life" and "making a living", as they believe their parents had to do. But is this desire actually

different from that of previous generations? The IBM study's results indicate it is not, with 21% of Boomers and 22% of Gen Xers desiring a better balance as well, compared to only 18% of Millennials.⁹³

The nature of this balance may be best represented in comments made to the *Los Angeles Times*.⁹⁴ Monica Marquez, reporting on the results of a survey done by Ernst & Young, writes that:

Generation X and boomers have this kind of misconception...that these people that want flexibility might be less committed to their work, less committed to their career progression...For the millennials, they're saying we want this flexibility, but we aren't any less aggressive about our career.

Michael Elliott, a Millennial as well as a principal at Dittrick and Associates, in Burton, Ohio, phrased it a

⁹² Ng, et al. (2010), p.282.

⁹³ Baird (2015), p. 2.

⁹⁴ Mansunage, S. May 29, 2015. *What Do Millennials Want from a Workplace?* From: Digital Communities. GovTech.com.

different way in the same article, in addressing “work-life balance” as a myth:

I think it was a term that previous generations believed in...I know for me and most of the millennials I talk to, work-life balance is nonexistent. There's only work-life integration.

Good Pay and Benefits

Ng reports finding that the Millennials have a high need for achievement, with an emphasis on financial reward. This emphasis may reflect, in part, their need for feedback. It may also reflect a sense of entitlement, thusly narcissistic, but more benignly could also be related to a differential they have seen between achievement and the capability to achieve: the “real world” placing more emphasis on what one accomplishes than what one thinks one could accomplish if given the chance.

Yet just looking at the outcomes of financial reward, IBM found that 18% of Boomers and 16% of Gen Xers see achieving financial security as a primary career goal, compared to only 17% of Millennials.⁹⁵ This does not on its face represent a significant difference among these groups. In fact, Millennials align closely with the Boomers in their interest in having “performance-based recognition and promotions”.⁹⁶

And the IBM data does not support the contention that Millennials have a sense of entitlement: the “constant acclaim and think that everyone on the team should get a trophy.”⁹⁷ When asked, for example, to rank the top three attributes of their perfect boss, the Millennials gave priority to a manager that is ethical and fair, and who values transparency and dependability. They think that a boss who recognizes their accomplishments and asks for their input is less important. In fact, the IBM study points to Gen Xers as those most likely to want the pats on the back, and Boomers as they ones who want a boss who solicits their views.⁹⁸ This is in keeping with our earlier

discussion as to how Millennials like to make decisions.

Opportunities for Advancement

It seems intuitive that most people want to advance in their careers in one way or another. But Ng contends that the Millennials exhibit an impatience to succeed and do not see “paying dues” as necessary. Again, this reflects the narrative that the Millennials have a sense of entitlement. If true, this could lead to the Millennials’ displaying a willingness to move on to something “bigger and better” rather than wait for a promotion.

The IBM data offers a slightly different interpretation, with 18% of Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials all reporting that they want to become a “senior leader” in their careers, and 20% of Millennials and Gen Xers reporting among their primary career goals as becoming an expert in their field, compared to only 15% of Boomers.

We believe that other data also rejects the narrative of the Millennials having a sense of entitlement, and is more indicative of their willingness to be open to change.

Given the career and job pressures we noted at the beginning of this section, it should not come as a surprise that one of the charges lodged against Millennial workers is that they are more likely than their predecessors to switch careers or change employers: they do – to some extent -- as was noted previously. But one must keep in mind that the Millennials inherited a different economic situation than their predecessors.

Previous generations, particularly the Silents and Greatest, largely found a home in their place of initial employment, making life-time careers there. Sometimes entire families owed their incomes to the same large employer. The Boomers, and to some extent even the Gen Xers, moved into growing economies. The Boomers themselves may have caused the economy they moved into grow, as some economists argue that population growth itself may contribute to economic growth,⁹⁹ and others have

⁹⁵ Baird (2015), p. 2.

⁹⁶ Baird (2015), p. 3.

⁹⁷ Baird (2015), p. 4.

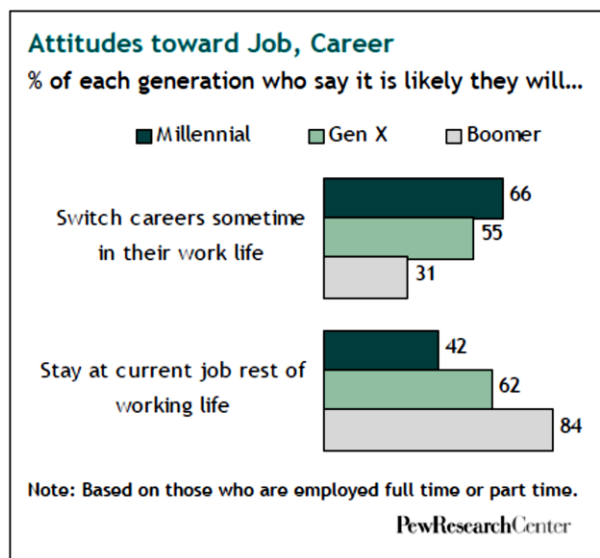
⁹⁸ Baird (2015), p. 4.

⁹⁹ Doherty, P.C. Oct. 2010. *The Next Real Estate Boom: How Housing (Yes, Housing) Can Turn the Economy Around*, Washington Monthly: Washington, D.C.

pointed to slow population growth as one of the reasons for the sluggish recovery to the Great Recession.¹⁰⁰

But as the economy changed, so did the career patterns and expectations of workers, and the Millennials are simply a new data-point charting that trend.

The Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) reported that contrary to popular belief, Millennials actually stay with their employers longer than Gen X workers did *at the same age*.¹⁰¹ The SSCRPC believes that this reflects the impact that the Boomers continue to have in the job market – leading to their longer job tenures and fewer employer switches – as well as lower overall “headroom” in the labor market, rather than the nature of the Millennials themselves. It may also point out, as the CEA believes, that the Millennials understand that when people become unemployed they tend to stay unemployed for longer periods of time. If so, this may in part explain why Millennials leave the door open to change, as they may see a different job as being one that is more secure.



As the chart above demonstrates, about two-thirds of all employed Millennials say that they are “very likely” (39%) or “somewhat likely” (27%) to switch careers

¹⁰⁰ Kinghorn, M. July-Aug. 2012. *Population Growth Continues to Slow Amid Sluggish Economic Recovery*, In Context. Indiana Business Research Center, Indiana Kelly School of Business: Bloomington, IN.

¹⁰¹ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 29.

during their working lives. This compares to only 55% of Gen Xers and 31% of Boomers who respond similarly. And as of 2010, Pew found that nearly 60% of Millennials had already switched careers once.¹⁰²

Pew interprets this result as being due to the Millennials “trying out” different careers, or their survey respondents defining a change in job as a career switch. But there is an additional possibility.

As noted previously, the Millennials are well educated, desire a better life, do not have household entanglements, and are in only the early years of their careers. They also have entered the job market during a period of great unsettledness. All of these factors might lead to both job hopping and job shopping, as their introduction to the world of work was and is noticeably different from that of the previous generations.

The IBM study comes to a slightly different conclusion. It found that to the extent that Millennials change jobs, they do it for many of the same reasons as the previous generations. When asking Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials why they would leave their jobs for another, four primary motives came forward: to “enter the fast lane” (Millennials – 42%, Gen X – 47%, Boomers – 42%), “shoot for the top” (24%, 19%, 28%), “follow one’s heart” (21%, 24%, 16%), or “save the world” (13%, 11%, 14%).

But as the percentages show, there were “no overwhelming generational differences. It seems that aspirations – more than age – determined why people move on, and Millennials care as much as older workers about getting ahead.”¹⁰³

Even so, one-third of Millennials say that their current job is their career job, and 63% say that they are likely to stay with their current employer for the rest of their working lives.¹⁰⁴

To the extent that there is an indication that Millennials will change jobs more than the other generations – and 27% of Millennials had already worked for five or six employers at the time that IBM conducted its study – this was found to be more likely a function of the economic climate faced by

¹⁰² Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 46.

¹⁰³ Baird (2015), p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.47.

Millennials than any innate group inclination, as 75% of them reported having worked in their current positions for three years or more.¹⁰⁵

In terms of moving on to bigger and better things, the Millennials are also open to change in ways that their predecessors are not: 17% of Millennials state that starting their own business is a major career goal, compared to 12% of Gen Xers and 15% of Boomers.¹⁰⁶

Meaningful Work Experiences

Ng's fourth theme contends that Millennials want more from their hard work than a paycheck. For this reason it is believed that one of the items they look for in future employers is that they demonstrate values and missions the Millennials share, and that they also demonstrate a corporate responsibility that goes beyond only turning a profit.

Since they want to make a contribution, and believe that they can (some contend that they desire to do so with little effort), the Millennials place a high value on professional growth that enables them to take on more challenging and impactful assignments, showing a low tolerance for less-than-challenging, high-volume, non-stimulating work. For example, 64% of Millennials report that they would rather make \$40,000 per year at a job they love, rather than \$100,000 at a job they think is boring.¹⁰⁷

It is not shocking, then, that currently employed Millennials list as their ideal employers Google, Apple, Facebook, the U.S. Department of State, and Disney. Along with the State Department, four other government agencies are listed in the Millennials' top 15 ideal employers: the FBI, CIA, NASA, and Peace Corps.

Comment must be made, though, to the nature of the employers indicated as offering the Millennials their dream jobs. Even the government employers listed can be considered elite or even glamour assignments, causing one to turn back to the perception of the Millennials as being unrealistic and even narcissistic. On the other hand, all of these employers are places where the Millennials feel they might make a difference. It also helps explain why 63% of

Millennials want their employers to contribute to social or ethical causes, compared to only about half of Boomers and Gen Xers.¹⁰⁸



And this is not substantially different from previous generations when other data is considered. For example, the IBM study reports that: 25% of Millennials, 21% of Gen Xers and 23% of Boomers want to make a positive impact on their organizations; and 23% of Boomers, 21% of Gen Xers, and 20% of Millennials wanting to do work they are passionate about.¹⁰⁹ The Millennials also appear to align more closely with the Boomers in stressing the importance they place in inspirational leadership and their employer having a clearly articulated vision/business strategy.

A Nurturing Work Environment

Finally, Ng and his colleagues contend that Millennials are often seen as being group oriented, particularly interacting with small networks of friends and associates, and we commented upon this behavior in an earlier section. He believes this may be related to their going to school during a period when group projects were assigned and emphasized, showing up now in workplace behaviors, via the Millennials' tendency to emphasize the social value of work, particularly situations in which they may collaborate closely with coworkers and managers they respect, and hopefully form friendships with them.

But despite their reputation for "crowdsourcing", IBM found the Millennials to be no more likely than older workers to solicit advice at work. Granted more than half of them believe that better decisions get made when a variety of people provide input (56%), but

¹⁰⁵ Baird (2015), p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ Baird (2015), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Dews (2014).

¹⁰⁸ Dews (2014).

¹⁰⁹ Baird (2015), p. 2.

nearly two-thirds of Gen Xers say the same thing (64%). Gen X even believes it is more important to have group consensus when making business decisions (61%) than Millennials (55%). The outlier here are the Boomers, where only 49% believe it important to have input from a variety of people, and an even smaller number (39%) believe group consensus to be important. Those numbers could be taken to indicate that it is the Boomers, not the Millennials, who are self-centered. It also means that Boomers – who are more accustomed to doing it “my way” – will find it more difficult to shift to more collaborative business and social structures, creating a new generation gap between them and their younger colleagues.

On a related note, the IBM study reports that: 22% of Millennials and Gen Xers, and 21% of Boomers wish to work with a diverse group of people; and 21% of Millennials, 25% of Gen Xers and 23% of Boomers want to “work for an organization among the best in my industry.”¹¹⁰ All-in-all, the responses of the Millennials related to aspects of the work environment are not noticeably different from those of their predecessors.

But this collaboration can take different forms than one might think. For example, even though Millennials are often discussed in terms of their unique relationship to new technologies and their use – and they are slightly more comfortable with virtual learning, self-paced interactive modules, apps and on-line simulations than previous generations – when it comes to acquiring new work-related knowledge and skills, they prefer face-to-face contact. Indeed their top three sources for seeking additional work-related information are attending a third-party sponsored conference/event, attending in-person classroom training, and working alongside knowledgeable colleagues.¹¹¹

Related to this, previously we made note of the contention that the Millennials’ may need more feedback on the job than previous generations. This is partially supported in that Millennials see a nurturing environment as one in which supervisors and managers are constantly available for this purpose.

The Millennial Work Ethic

It appears to the SSCRPC that if the Millennials are or could be a different type of worker, they are not fundamentally different from the previous two generations, and could make valuable contributions in the workforce. This is not just because of the level of education they have achieved and aspire to, but because of their higher expectations *for themselves*.

Some of the reasons why their assimilation into the workplace is being questioned may be driven largely by their own orientation toward work as displayed in several of the themes mentioned above, and is most often addressed by the contention that their work ethic is different.

For example, of the four generations considered when we discussed the Millennial “personality” previously, they were the only generation not citing “work ethic” as a distinctive characteristic. Gen Xers considered it their second most important trait, Boomers their first, and Silents their fourth. The Millennials admit this difference.

Almost 60% of the group cited work ethic as one of the major sources of difference between them and older Americans. Pew reports, “Asked who has the better work ethic, about three-fourths of [Millennial] respondents said that older people do.”¹¹²

But this does not mean that the Millennials are not willing to work, and may even be noticeably entrepreneurial. If necessity is the mother of invention, some of those in the newest generation have put themselves to work by investing in startups and becoming entrepreneurs themselves. One study found that over half of the Millennials surveyed expressed interest in starting a business, and this generation is just “beginning to reach the peak age for entrepreneurship, which generally occurs in one’s 50s or early 60s.”¹¹³

All-in-all:

When it comes to work, Millennials are mostly similar to previous generations: they want to be successful, and they want

¹¹⁰ Baird (2015), p. 2.

¹¹¹ Baird (2015), p. 6.

¹¹² Pew Research Center (Feb. 24, 2010), p. 7.

¹¹³ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 7.

the type of prosperity that means that their children will be better off. They are somewhat more likely than previous generations to report that they consider creativity to be a very important job feature. Perhaps this is no surprise for a highly-connected generation for whom technology was a key part of their upbringing.¹¹⁴

This may be a reason why they are less likely to report that they have an interesting job, one in which they can see results, or one that offers advancement opportunities.

Some Takeaways:

As they entered the workforce, the Millennials were significantly affected by the Great Recession, however normal life-cycle events may have a great influence on their employment status.

They have a positive view of business, which is surprising given some of their positions on various political and ideological issues, and their distrust of large institutions.

They desire many of the same things in the workplace that their elders also desire: a reasonable balance between life and work; good pay and benefits; opportunities for advancement; and meaningful work experiences, particularly work that they can see as making a difference.

They also seek a nurturing work environment, particularly one that allows interaction with their colleagues and employer, consistent with their social group orientation.

Where they may be faulted is their work ethic, which they themselves question. But they want to work, are happy when they do, and seek to put their creativity and knowledge of technology to use.

¹¹⁴ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 10.

V: Millennials as Consumers

As Millennials are now the largest population group in the U.S. – about 80 million and a quarter of the population – they accounted for more than \$1 trillion in U.S. consumer spending in 2013 alone.¹¹⁵ It is not unimportant, then, for businesses and localities interested in economic development to better understand their role as consumers.

The SSCRPC found that the Millennials may be particularly open to buying local and expanding the region's opportunities for tourism and visitor travel, *if* the marketing approach is a savvy one that takes into account their unique interests and uses of technology.

Looking for the Best Authentic Deal

Nielsen finds Millennials to be shoppers looking for a deal, while at the same time desiring authenticity, reporting:

Given their small paychecks, they are savvy shoppers always on the lookout for a good deal. Millennials put a premium on authentic, handmade, locally produced goods – and they're willing to pay more for products from companies with social impact programs. Getting a good deal is a priority, but they won't compromise on quality. They want to feel good about what they buy.¹¹⁶

Their interest in feeling good about what they buy is demonstrated in the fact that in a 2013 study, 89% of them expressed a stronger likelihood to buy from companies that supported solutions to specific social issues.¹¹⁷ One notes that this result is also consistent with what they were looking for in an employer.

This also shows up through their use of technology. Nielsen reports that when interacting with companies through social media, they "value authenticity – they want to feel like they have a personal, direct

interaction with the brand – and in return, they'll advocate and endorse that brand."¹¹⁸

Given that there are now as many Millennials as Boomers, this is an important fact for companies to keep in mind as they work to tap this important market.



Looking for Adventure

At the same time that Millennials seek authenticity, they also seek adventure. Millennials, "often view commerce and even obligatory business travel as opportunities rather than burdens, due to the adventures that can be had along the way."¹¹⁹

This does not appear to be just one youthful data point that will change as the Millennials age, as it is demonstrated in a number of ways. For example, Solomon reports¹²⁰:

- When shopping they prefer an "experiential" retail environment, so that it is not just a transaction but a pleasure to be in the store or shopping area. This has been noted by some commercial property developers who now plan and develop "lifestyle centers" instead of the traditional mall or shopping centers. Shopping becomes just one other form of entertainment provided by the retail experience that requires something different from what most "strip" centers offer.
- More than twice as many Millennials as those in other age brackets say that they are

¹¹⁵ Cone Communications. Oct 2013. *Social Impact Study of 1,200+ U.S. Adults*. Boston, MA.

¹¹⁶ Nielsen (2014), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Dews (2014).

¹¹⁸ Nielsen (2014), p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Solomon, M. Dec. 29, 2014. *2015 Is the Year of the Millennial Customer: 5 Key Traits These 80 Million Consumers Share*. Forbes.com. P. 9.

¹²⁰ Solomon (2014), p. 9.

willing “to encounter danger in pursuit of excitement.” But danger may be more broadly considered than only putting at risk life and limb. It may be standing in line for hours on a lark waiting for a “popup” store with no history and no advice from friends and peers. The point again is that they are looking for an experience, rather than just a purchase.

- Millennials also show these behaviors when dining out. They often search for something exotic, adventuresome, memorable or new to add to their dining experiences, which has transformed cuisine searches into a new form (“tastespoting”) and energized interest in food trucks.

These consumer tendencies can affect a number of consumer behaviors.

For example, as tourism is among the major economic engines for the Springfield-Sangamon County region, it is relevant to consider Millennials as consumers of this product as well. While there is not a great deal of research regarding Millennials and the visitor experience they desire, Dana Communications does address it in part, again reflecting on authenticity as well as their adventurous spirit.

For example, Dana reports¹²¹ that one study (*Meet the Millennials*, done by Jerry Henry & Associates for Delaware North Companies and Resorts) found that 75% of Millennials wanted to visit all 50 states and most want to travel abroad as much as possible. Demonstrating their group behavior, half wanted to vacation with friends. And being well-educated, they report seeking “immersive experiences” in which they can learn while still having fun.

They also appear to travel a great deal. Those under 30 years-of-age take over eight trips per year when combining business and pleasure, with about 60% extending their business trips to serve leisure purposes. As Dana notes:

With that number of experiences to compare, they may very well become the most critical generation – with social media, they will surely be the most vocal and influential. No matter the source, no matter the data, it’s easy to conclude that

Millennials will become the world’s most traveled generation.¹²²

Reaching Millennials

Because of their drive toward authenticity and their wide use of new technologies, traditional marketing approaches, which cast relatively large nets seeking consumers through print and other mass media, may not be the most effective approach. Only 1% of Millennials surveyed by *Elite Daily* – which is billed as the “voice” of this generation – said that a compelling advertisement would make them trust a brand more. Why? Because they see advertising as “all spin and not authentic”. That is why they use their DVR to skip commercials and avoid banner ads on Facebook.¹²³

But they still seek input before they make a purchase; *by reviewing blogs*. A third of Millennials look to blogs before making a purchase, compared to fewer than 3% for TV news, magazines or books. Millennials look to social media – rather than the traditional media used by older generations – for that “authentic” look, “especially content written by their peers whom they trust.”¹²⁴



Photo: flicker.com

Solomon reports¹²⁵ that if a business seeks Millennial customers through the new technologies, the business needs to make sure that the technology works.

Millennials have grown up with digital devices, particularly those that bundle communication, entertainment, shopping, mapping and education.

¹²¹ Kaniper, L., 2014. *Marketing to Millennials*. Dana Communications.com. Hopewell, NJ.

¹²² Kaniper (2014), p. 2.

¹²³ Schawbel (2015).

¹²⁴ Schawbel (2015).

¹²⁵ Solomon (2014), pp. 2-3.

Since this generation has adopted new technologies faster than previous ones, and grew up during a period when it has become more-and-more user friendly, the Millennials accept this as the norm. They expect technology to work, because that has been their experience with it, so businesses seeking to reach this generation must take ease of use, reliability and the bundling of uses across platforms to heart. Ease of use also translates into establishing platforms for mobile devices, as mobile is the technology closest to the Millennials heart.

However, due to their expressive and creative nature, they respond well to celebrity endorsements as well as to advertising that features celebrities (particularly music artists they like), has “relatable characters”, or strong visual elements.¹²⁶

Authenticity also shows up in relationship to localism and community character and pride. The “Made in America” label is not as important to Millennials as it was to older generations, but they are attracted to the distinctive character and labeling of locally made goods. They look for this in the places where they shop as well.

As one might guess from their use of the new technology, Millennials shop online and use their mobile devices for this purpose. Still, e-commerce made up only 6% of overall retail trade in 2011 as Millennials are still visiting malls. As mentioned previously however, their tendency is away from traditional malls and toward the “lifestyle centers” or other venues that provide more of an experience. These shopping venues mix traditional retailers with upscale leisure uses, offering a place to gather as well as buy.¹²⁷

Businesses also need to realize that the spending habits of Millennials may not change as they earn more. One indicator of this may be drawn from their response to the question of how they would use an inheritance if they were to receive one, and this is not an unimportant question as one study indicated that \$30 billion dollars will transfer from the Boomers to the Millennials in upcoming years. One would normally think that a transfer of wealth in this amount would cause Millennials to spend more, but current research does not support that belief, as 57% of

Millennials report that the money will not change their spending habits.¹²⁸

They will continue to look for a deal, and hope that this will be as part of authentic shopping adventure.

Some Takeaways:

Because of their economic limitations, the Millennials search for deals.

They also search for the “authentic”: a quality product that they can feel good about buying, from a company that shares their values.

As part of their search for the authentic, they value those things that are local, particularly products that demonstrate local character and pride.

When they shop, they look for an experience, even adventure, rather than just make a purchase.

Their unique social nature causes them to often shop in groups – making their buying decisions based on the collective opinion of their peer group, or others in their age group who share their experiences and interests.

This input can come from non-traditional information sources, such as blogs. As they are a technologically-oriented group, Millennials depend upon these technologies in shopping and making buying decisions.

Given their experiences with technology, they expect it to work, and work well. Businesses seeking to market to them in this way must make sure that the systems they use do work well.

There is some limited evidence that their consumer behaviors will not change as they age and have higher incomes.

¹²⁶ Nielsen (2014), p. 9.

¹²⁷ Nielsen (2014), p. 30.

¹²⁸ Schawbel (2015).

VI: Where Millennials Live, Want to Live, and How

A great amount of discussion – both locally and nationally – has centered on the Millennials’ lifestyle and how that may change where people work and live. A good part of this conversation is the often quoted contention that the Millennials seek a more urban lifestyle than the Boomers or Gen-Xers, who tended toward suburban living, raising the possibility that the Millennials may be the trigger for a resurgence of older city centers. As the Nielsen Company notes as a key finding of its study of the Millennials, this generation *is* driving a social movement back to the cities:

If they are not still living with mom and dad, Millennials are fueling an urban revolution looking for the vibrant, creative energy cities offering a mix of housing, shopping and offices right outside their doorstep. They’re walkers and less interested in the car culture that defined the Baby Boomers.¹²⁹

It is important in this regard to note that to the extent that the Millennials do seek more urban living, this may not be unique to the Millennials but a continuation of a long-standing general trend of Americans leaving rural areas.

It also leaves us considering the nature of the “vibrant”, “creative energy” cities they are seeking, and whether or not our region can provide such an environment.

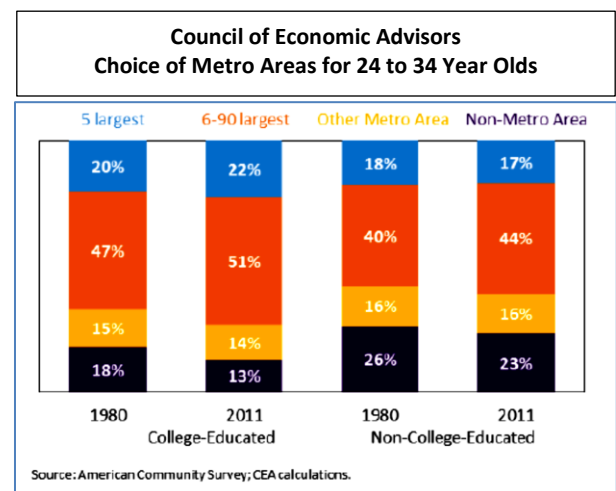
Moving Away from Rural Living, But Mixed on the Burbs

Pew reports¹³⁰ that Millennials are much less likely to live in rural areas than previous generations were at comparable ages. For example, while 36% of Silents and 29% of Boomers lived in rural areas, only 14% of Millennials do.^{vi} Granted this demonstrates a greater differential between Millennials and Boomers than between Silents and Boomers, but even so, it represents a previously identified trend that has been affecting the United States for many, many years and is not unique to any generational group. The trend in

its entirety, not just in relationship to the Millennials, is one that governments and businesses in rural areas must consider and develop strategies to address.

Setting aside the question of how Millennials might view the desirability of rural living (which the previous two generations have also been less inclined to adopt), brings us to the on-going contention that Millennials will eschew suburban living for the more “urban experience” one finds in larger cities, in general, and their urban cores, in particular. The data supporting this contention is somewhat mixed.

Pew reports that while Millennials are more likely to live in central cities than are older generations – for example, 32% of Millennials live in central cities compared to 23% of Silents – they have not rejected suburbs. The survival of suburbs can be found in the data, with 54% of Millennials still living in them in 2010, compared to 41% of Boomers at the same age (in 1978) and 31% of Silents (in 1963). On its face this would appear to indicate that the Millennials are more prone to a suburban life style than the two immediately previous generations. This view might be deceiving, for as previously noted, a greater number of Millennials continue to live at home and to start families later than did the Boomers and Silents. What is still in question is whether or not the living arrangement of the Millennials will change as they move away from home *and* start families; whatever the nature of that family might be.



There is also a difference shown between college educated versus non-college educated, as the bar

¹²⁹ Nielsen (2014), p. 2.

¹³⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 12.

chart from the Council of Economic Advisors¹³¹, above, shows.

The move toward cities is more prevalent among college educated Millennials. Overall, 73% of 25-34 year-olds lived in large or mid-sized cities in 2011, compared to 67% in 1980. This drops to 67% for non-college graduates; 58% in 1980. However, research has shown this trend previously for all Americans, so is not limited to Millennials alone, and is seen as being driven by demand for differently-skilled labor across cities.¹³²

The Nielsen study, however, opines that:

The American Dream no longer means a comfortable home in the suburbs. Millennials aspire to stay in the cities rather than moving into the suburbs or rural areas, presenting a potential problem for Boomers who will eventually want to downsize and sell their large suburban McMansions.¹³³

But what exactly does it mean to think of the Millennials as primarily city dwellers?

Where They Live Now

We see some noticeable differences in comparing where the Millennials live now to the Boomers. For example, while Boomers are most concentrated east of the Mississippi River, Millennials are mostly concentrated west of it.¹³⁴ One should not take this as an indication of preference, however, as this simply demonstrates larger on-going shifts in the U.S. population into the west and Sunbelt states, which the Millennial concentration continues.

More noticeable is the difference between the top 10 Millennial and Boomer “markets”. This information is available on the tables to the right drawn from data provided by Nielsen.¹³⁵ The first table presents the markets based upon the percentage of each generation living there as well as an index that compares the local

concentrations for each generational group compared to the national concentration, where 100 represents the general concentration.

While the data in this table is not confirmative, it is illustrative of the fact that Millennials are tending toward much larger urban areas than are Boomers, and much larger urban concentrations than the largest in Sangamon County: Springfield.

But these findings are somewhat different when one considers affluence, comparing wealthier Millennials (those earning more than \$100,000 per year) to similar Boomers. This is shown in the second table. When wealth is taken into account, the top 10 markets change, and as one might guess, larger metro areas prevail.¹³⁶

This listing should not be surprising, as wealthier people tend to live in wealthier areas – where job opportunities may be greater – and these areas have higher costs of living, which is also reflected in higher salaries. At the same time, some Millennials are quite affluent, making up almost 15% of those with assets greater than \$2 million, just behind Boomers. In fact, roughly 8% of Millennials own a business, similar to the percentage of their older counterparts.¹³⁷

Top Markets by Concentration – Millennials vs. Boomers

Rank	Millennials	Boomers
1	Austin, TX (16%, 120)	Portland-Auburn, ME (31%, 117)
2	Salt Lake City, UT (15%, 117)	Burlington, VT (30%, 114)
3	San Diego, CA (14%, 117)	Albany, NY (29%, 111)
4	Los Angeles, CA (14%, 109)	Hartford & New Haven, NY (29%, 110)
5	Denver, CO (14%, 109)	Pittsburg, PA (29%, 109)
6	Washington, DC (14%, 109)	Tri-Cities, TN-VA (29%, 109)
7	Houston, TX (14%, 108)	Wilkes Barre, PA (29%, 109)
8	Las Vegas, NV (14%, 108)	Charleston, WV (28%, 108)
9	San Francisco (14%, 107)	Boston, MA (28%, 108)
10	Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX (14%, 106)	Green Bay-Appleton, WI (28%, 108)

Top Markets by Affluence – Millennials vs. Boomers

Rank	Millennials	Boomers
1	Washington, DC (1.9%, 232)	Washington, DC (8%, 193)
2	San Francisco (1.7%, 206)	San Francisco (7%, 167)
3	Boston (1.4%, 172)	Boston (7%, 166)
4	New York (1.3%, 166)	Baltimore (6%, 166)
5	Baltimore (1.3%, 161)	Hartford-New Haven, CT (6%, 160)
6	Seattle-Tacoma (1.2%, 151)	New York (6%, 147)
7	San Diego (1.2%, 139)	Philadelphia (5%, 135)
8	Austin (1.1%, 139)	Seattle-Tacoma (5%, 133)
9	Chicago (1.1%, 137)	Denver (5%, 124)
10	Denver (1.1%, 132)	NA

¹³¹ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 42.

¹³² Council of Economic Advisors (2014), pp. 42-43.

¹³³ Nielsen (2014), p. 14.

¹³⁴ Nielsen (2014), p. 17.

¹³⁵ Nielsen (2014), p. 17.

¹³⁶ Nielsen (2014), p. 23.

¹³⁷ Nielsen (2014), p. 22.

Even so, the data is illustrative of Millennials' interest in larger urban areas than those provided in central Illinois.

But this should not be taken to indicate that mid-range urban areas are not competitive for this age group. Growth in the share of 25 to 34 year-olds living in cities has been largest among mid-sized metro areas, which the Council of Economic Advisors reports as the 6th through 90th largest metros. These mid-sized metros have attracted both college and non-college educated Millennials, seeing growth of around 5% in

According to the Council of Economic Advisors, Millennials are attracted to mid-sized cities, defined as the 6th through 90th largest. Springfield is ranked 233rd.

the share of young adults living in them compared to that of 30 years ago. Again, this is in keeping with long-term trends in the U.S. showing the population as a whole moving from non-metro areas to mid-sized cities over the past 30 years.¹³⁸

Unfortunately, and if the Council of Economic Advisors is correct in its

assessment of what constitutes a mid-sized city attracting Millennials, this does not bode well for our region. To place this in some context, the July 2014 U.S. Census Bureau estimate of city populations shows the 6th largest city as Phoenix, AZ, with a population of 1,537,058, and the 90th as Hialeah, FL, with a population of 235,563. Springfield, on the other hand, ranked 233, with an estimated population of 116,809.¹³⁹

City Dwellers

In the main, Millennials do desire city living, with 62% saying that they “prefer to live” in the type of mixed-use communities found in urban centers where they can live in close proximity to a mix of shopping, restaurants and offices.¹⁴⁰ As noted above, they are acting on their desires, living in urban areas at a

higher rate than any previous generation, making our current period the first time since the 1920s that growth in cities has outpaced growth outside of them in ex-urban and suburban areas.

This is also reflected in Millennial lifestyles. For example, and except for shopping at mass merchandisers, Millennials make fewer trips each week to the grocery store, super centers, convenience and gas stations, and warehouse clubs than any other generation.¹⁴¹ One might contend that this is due to their limited incomes and many of them being students or living at home with their parents, but it is still fewer trips than the older Greatest generation (which also has lower incomes), and their visits to drug stores match both Gen X and Boomers. The SSCRPC believes that this is indicative of their desire to live in more accessible urban surroundings.

Another indication of their interest in urban life is their low auto ownership.

In 2011, 66% of Millennials under age 25 owned a car, a *decline* from 2007 when 73% did.¹⁴² This is also demonstrated by Millennials in the workforce being more likely than any other generation to walk to work, expressing their preference for walkable communities with good public transportation systems.¹⁴³

This does not mean that they no longer need a vehicle, particularly those who do not live and work in city centers. The Census Bureau reports that last year about eight out of 10 young adults still relied on a car to get to work, which was largely unchanged from 1980.¹⁴⁴ The Millennials may desire a more, literally, pedestrian lifestyle, but they have not yet achieved it. This may be due to the fact that many of them still remain in the suburbs.

A New Suburb?

Although Millennials are opting for urban living, the death of the suburbs may be over stated. As Nielsen reports, “The concept of ‘urban burbs’ is becoming more popular in redevelopment as suburban communities make changes to create more urban environments with walkable downtown areas and

¹³⁸ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 42.

¹³⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *American Fact Finder*, Population Division. Retrieved May 29, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Nielsen (2014), p. 15.

¹⁴¹ Nielsen (2014), p. 25.

¹⁴² Nielsen (2014), p. 18.

¹⁴³ Nielsen (2014), p. 18.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Census Bureau (Dec. 4, 2014).

everyday necessities within close reach. The New York Times has coined this ‘Hipsturbia’.”¹⁴⁵

The suburbs may remain, but with a different configuration and style. Neilsen sees support for this in various concepts of “New Urbanism” which applies urban design principles to suburban development, such as that shown in the photo below.



To the extent that there is a decline in the suburbs, it may also be postponed by the number of Millennials who currently live there with their parents. As noted previously, almost a third of Millennials lived with their parents in 2010, up from a quarter five years before. But they will not be living there forever.

Rent vs. Own

For the various reasons discussed in other parts of this report, Millennials are slow to settle down. Two-thirds are renting, and more likely to live with roommates or family members than alone. While Millennials account for 43% of current heads of household who plan to move within the next two years, and because of the recent recession, many of those who were homeowners went back to renting: 14% compared to 4% of the general homeowner population.¹⁴⁶ One of the reasons why Millennials may be looking to rent goes beyond their slowness to create households, reduced job opportunities, or so many of them still being in school. It may have more to do with the housing market itself, as rents across major metro areas, choice locations for this generation, were depressed by the Great Recession.¹⁴⁷ And taking the longer view, the decline in homeownership by Millennials may only be notable

because it is being compared to homeownership among 18 to 34 year olds during the housing boom, as this boom attracted a particularly large share of this age group.

As the Council of Economic Advisors opines in its 2014 report, if a longer view is taken, homeownership among Millennials is largely in line with a tangle of forces:

- Gradual shifts in labor force participation, increased college enrollment, delayed marriage, and their stronger relationship with their parents.
- Challenges in the labor market due to the Great Recession, as homeownership decisions are often tied to job prospects and the locational decisions they may require.
- The current tight lending environment, particularly when one takes into account the rising student loan debt held by many Millennials.¹⁴⁸

These are just some of the factors driving additional interest nationally in the rental market, particularly that supportive of affordable housing.

Some Takeaways:

The Millennials are moving to more urban areas, but this is a continuation of long-standing U.S. population trends.

They do desire an urban experience, particularly in mixed-use communities where they can walk or bike to work, shop and play.

The urban experience they seek is not limited to the largest metro areas, and mid-sized cities can be competitive. However, most central Illinois communities are smaller than those the Millennials find most attractive.

This movement may not necessarily indicate a decline of the suburbs, and many live there now.

¹⁴⁵ Nielsen (2014), p. 15.

¹⁴⁶ Nielsen (2014), p. 18.

¹⁴⁷ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), p. 38.

¹⁴⁸ Council of Economic Advisors (2014), pp. 38-41.

VII: Millennials, Government and Governance

A great deal of discussion continues to occur at the national level about the influence the Millennials will have on politics and government, perhaps because of the influence the Boomers had on various national issues when they were young, but also because of the influence the Millennials were seen as having on the 2008 Presidential election. Because of this, it may be useful to reflect a bit on the Boomers and the influence they are likely to have now that they are older in order to provide some basis for comparison with the Millennials.

We noted at the beginning of this report that the Boomers invented the “generation gap” due the differences in their beliefs and expectations compared to their predecessor generations. Yet while the Boomers and their Millennial counterparts have much in common, a new gap may be in the making as the Millennials take center stage and the Boomers begin to leave it.

Looking Again at the Boomers

As demographer Neil Howe suggests, in comparison to their parents, the Boomers have always “lived on the edge”, with the oldest Boomers moving onto college campuses:

...in the mid-1960s, helping to ignite countercultural passions and push the nation into an era of political idealism, cultural awakening and social upheaval...In so doing, this generation began to manifest so many of the collective attitudes and behaviors for which they have since become famous: their individualism, their attraction to personal risk, their distrust of big institutions, their carelessness about material wealth, their cultivation of self, their die-hard moralism.¹⁴⁹

So how might they affect the political scene as they continue to age, particularly given the notion that “elders are active, engaged citizens and one of the biggest, most organized political blocks”?¹⁵⁰ While those of the Greatest and Silent generations were and

are active and engaged in government and politics, the Boomers were different when they were younger, and remain so today.

Unlike their parents, Howe contends that Boomers are more likely to “bowl alone” than come together as activist “gray panthers”, finding that this group has never been big on group cooperation (unlike the Millennials), and that this is not likely to change:

With every age bracket they’ve entered so far, boomers have marked a decline in civic participation, including voting, municipal meetings, petition campaigns, letter-writing and responding to pollsters. That attitude will start to transform the reputation of seniors as highly engaged civic participators to something far less – or at least different. The media keeps reiterating the idea that boomers will add their vast numbers to the powerful senior associations that exist today. But the me-first boomers don’t join associations.¹⁵¹

That does not mean that the Boomers will be silent partners in things civic. They are expected to engage on issues, but they will tend to be single-cause issues that rile their passions and “push their buttons”, and are less likely than their parents to do so as a unified front.



Photo: Takver (flicker.com)

While they took on large issues in their youth, the Boomers have never successfully organized around their own self-interests, largely because they tend not to respond until their passions are aroused.¹⁵² Unlike the Silents, who were given their name because of

¹⁴⁹ Howe (2012), p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Howe (2012), p. 5.

¹⁵¹ Howe (2012), p. 6.

¹⁵² Howe (2012), p.6.

their stable and non-confrontational civic-mindedness, the Boomers' distrust and cynicism of institutions may lead to "uncivil" engagement, regarding passion as a sign of commitment, and show disrespect for expertise. Governments may wish to gird themselves for "a plethora of angry bloggers and retired professionals who know how to file an obstructive lawsuit in a heartbeat."¹⁵³

They are also less likely to offer a unified front on partisan issues. As Gurwitt points out, referencing Pew Research Center data, in the 1960s and 1970s Boomers as a whole wanted little to do with the Republican Party, but by the 1980s they had significantly swung in that direction. To make assessing the Boomers even more complicated, "Older boomers, who cast their first ballots in the Nixon elections of 1968 and 1972, have voted more Democratic than have younger Boomers who came of age under Ford, Carter and Reagan."¹⁵⁴

While the Boomer vote may be all over the partisan map, perhaps just suggesting that age does bring attitudinal change, this does not mean that the Boomers will be politically disengaged.

As Gurwitt notes, looking at the impact of the Boomers on elections, there is no shortage of political conflict points that could see state and local voters polarized along Boomer vs. Millennial age-lines: taxation, schools, long-term care, Medicaid, urban design, public parks and recreation, and transportation, to name but a few. But that assumes that the Boomers react to them in some organized way.¹⁵⁵

This should not be taken to mean that Boomers cannot be helpful to local governments, but that if they are, it will be in a different way.

Howe points out that where the Boomers' parents were the ground troops of civic engagement – licking envelopes, making phone calls, passing petitions, *and* following directions – that role is not as likely for the Boomers. They will need to be brought into the process much earlier, listened to, and provided with a process to identify for themselves the need for a new government initiative or program. Once that occurs, *then* they may be willing to communicate their vision to the community in their own way. As Howe puts it,

¹⁵³ Howe (2012), p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Gurwitt, R., 2012. *Baby Boomers' Impact on Elections*. Governing.com. Washington, DC.

¹⁵⁵ Gurwitt (2012).

"...boomers have always been better talkers than doers. Don't even try to give them orders. Instead, inspire them to become passionate advocates of your cause."¹⁵⁶

Howe says that this may require local governments to rethink how they communicate and interact with the public. The typical approach is to start with older generations – especially seniors – as the best way to get the public's support, on the assumption that tuned-out youngsters will simply accept what they are given. As the Greatest and Silent generations pass away, leaving the Boomers in their place at the top of the demographic pyramid, communities may wish to take a different approach: connecting with a more social, optimistic, networked and plugged-in generation – the Millennials. Howe contends that this will mean "communicating more through K-12 schools, colleges, youth groups and on Facebook – and leveraging the power of young parents and volunteers to spread the message and sway opinion through their own networks."¹⁵⁷

Fortunately for governments, one supposes, the Millennials tend to be different from the Boomers in terms of their opinions of, and about, government.

In looking at this difference we will focus on three aspects of the Millennial persona that were mentioned in earlier sections of this report: their lack of attachment in institutions; their optimism; and their liberality.

Millennials are Unattached

While the activist Boomers of the 1960s and early-70s may be known for the counter-culture, political demonstrations, and use of popular music as a means of protest, one has to remember that neither the hippies nor the campus political radicals generally represented the bulk of their generation. Even on most campuses the radicals were few.^{vii}

And while Howe mentions the Boomers distrust of large institutions, the rhetoric of the day was not *anti-institution* as much as *anti-establishment*. This might seem a distinction rather than a difference, but we will contend here – in order to better distinguish between the Boomers and the Millennials – that the more passionate politically-active Boomers rejected the *authority* of large institutions rather than the

¹⁵⁶ Howe (2012), p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Howe (2012), p.6..

institutions themselves. This may seem conflicting, but to the activist Boomer it seems not. They did not seem conflicted in rejecting the authority of national political leaders while at the same time working for political candidates. They objected to the authority that their universities had over their lives – particularly the concept of *en loco parentis* – at the same time they were establishing both on and off-campus student organizations to challenge them. And they were using established media channels so often to promote their causes that newspapers and magazines were created and institutionalized to support their movement (e.g. *The Berkeley Barb*, *Scanlan's Monthly*, *Ramparts*, and even *Rolling Stone*) and a counter-movement was created to the counter-culture (the Youth International Party, or “Yippies”). The Millennials, on the other hand, appear to be rejecting large institutions themselves, which will have an effect on both governments and governance. A 2014 study by the Pew Research Center found noticeable differences between 18- to 33-year olds and their elders, including their relationship with political institutions.¹⁵⁸

Political Institutions

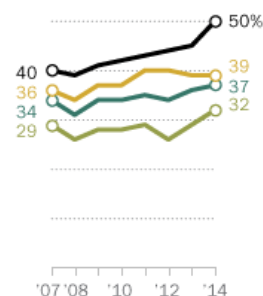
Previously we mentioned that the Millennials are more disconnected from traditional religious institutions than previous generations, the continuation of a trend toward Americans becoming more secular. But they also have fewer attachments to traditional political institutions. This appears to be an outgrowth of their tendency to interact with their networks of friends, colleagues and affinity groups through social and digital media.

As the graph at the top of the next column shows, half of all Millennials now describe themselves as political independents, which is at or near the highest level of political unaffiliation seen for any generation in the last 25 years.

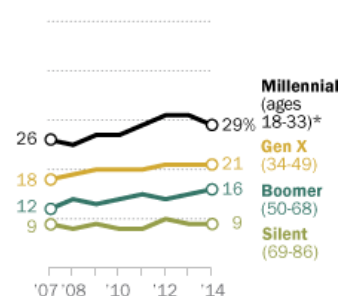
Indeed, Millennials see fewer differences between the parties than their elders, as the chart to the right shows, with only 31% of them saying that there is a great deal of difference between Republicans and Democrats. As the reader will note, the older generations see a much greater difference, particularly the Silents.¹⁵⁹

Millennials: Unmoored from Institutions

Percent who consider themselves political independents



Percent of adults in each generation who are religiously unaffiliated



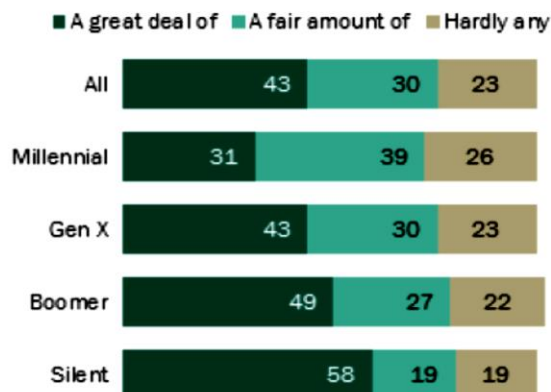
* Age ranges are for 2014

Source: Data points represent totals based on all Pew Research surveys of the general public conducted in that calendar year.

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Fewer Millennials See Big Differences Between Parties

% saying there is ... difference in what the Republican and Democratic Parties stand for



Source: Pew Research survey, Feb. 12-26, 2014

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At the same time, Millennials stand out for voting heavily Democratic, continuing to view the Democratic Party more favorably than the Republican one.¹⁶⁰ This party split – which supposes a conservative versus

¹⁵⁸ Drake, B. March 7, 2014. *6 New Findings about Millennials*.

Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. p. 1.

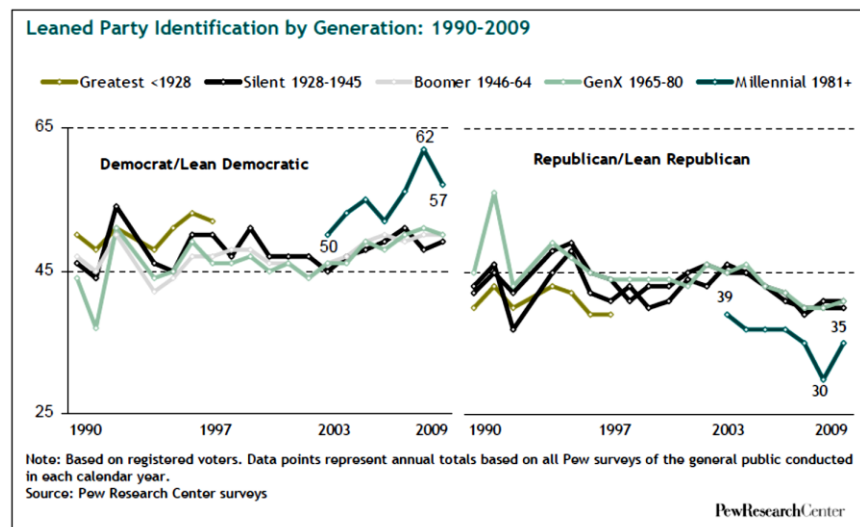
¹⁵⁹ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶⁰ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.9.

liberal divide – should not come as a surprise, for as one wag once put it, “if you are not a liberal at 25, you have no heart, and if you are not a conservative at 35, you have no brain.” Whether that generalization about generations and their political orientation is true or not, the Millennials currently hold liberal views on a range of political and social issues, and, as Pew puts it, they may be the only generation today in which liberals are not significantly outnumbered by conservatives. When one adds to this that Millennials tend to support an activist government that seeks to address the problems they see, one starts to see a potential new generation gap forming.¹⁶¹

Where they do differ, and do so significantly, are along racial and ethnic lines. Among white Millennials, 51% say that they are political independents, with the remainder roughly divided between Republican (24%) and Democrats (19%). In this regard white Millennials demonstrate their uncoupling from the traditional political parties. However, while 47% of non-white Millennials said they are independents, 37% say they are Democrats and only 9% identify as Republicans.¹⁶³

Going beyond the political, Pew reports that white and non-white Millennials also have different views on the role of government:



On balance, white Millennials say they would prefer a smaller government that provides fewer services (52%), rather than a bigger government that provides more services (39%). Non-white Millennials lean heavily toward a bigger government: 71% say they would prefer a bigger government that provides more services, while only 21% say they would prefer a smaller government.¹⁶⁴

However this racial divide is similarly wide among Gen Xers and Boomers, so is more telling about the opinions of non-whites than the Millennials as a group.

Moreover, the results seem to indicate that while the Millennials may be feeling some “liberality”, it is represented less in whites than non-whites.

Ethnic and Racial Differences

Some analysts believe that this may be misleading, as like the Boomers, not all Millennials are alike. It is, as previously mentioned, a large and diverse group (with debate even as to when the generation began and will end), so likely represents a broad range of opinions. We have already seen, for example, some areas in which college educated Millennials’ opinions differ from those of less well educated members of the group, so it is also possible that older Millennials will differ from their younger generation mates on matters political. But Pew found in its 2014 surveys that the shares of younger and older Millennials who identify themselves as Democrats “are roughly comparable”.¹⁶²

Lack of Trust

In terms of their generation, this may come in part from the lack of trust in others that the Millennials show, as mentioned earlier, even though they remain optimistic about the future as well as the role government can play in creating the future they want.

Few Millennials, for example, believe that Social Security will provide them with full benefits when they are ready to retire, but they are not in favor of cutting benefits to current recipients as a way to fix the problem. This is even though over half believe they

¹⁶¹ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.2.

¹⁶² Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.13.

¹⁶³ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.13.

¹⁶⁴ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.14.

will get no benefits, and 39% believe that if they get benefits, they will be reduced.¹⁶⁵

Half of Millennials and Gen Xers Doubt They'll Receive Any Soc. Sec. Benefits

When you retire, Social Security will provide ...	Millennial %	Gen X %	Boomer* %
Benefits at current levels	6	9	26
Benefits at reduced levels	39	36	42
No benefits	51	50	28
Don't know/Ref. (Vol.)	4	5	4
	100	100	100

Note: *Includes only Boomers under age 65. Based on those ages 18 to 64. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Source: Pew Research survey, Feb. 14-23, 2014

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This result also seems to reflect their inclinations toward more activist government, as we will see in commentary below. For example, 61% of Millennials oppose benefit cuts as the means of addressing the Social Security funding gap, a view held by about 70% of older Americans.

But the Millennials differ considerably from their elders on whether or not government should give a higher priority to supporting social programs to assist the young versus the old. Unsurprisingly, over half (53%) of Millennials give their nod to the young, compared to 36% of Gen Xers and 28% of Boomers. This shows some of the potential for a policy-based generation gap.

Optimistic about Government and Its Role

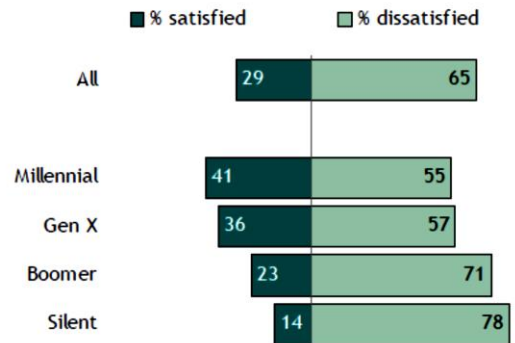
Previously we commented upon Millennials being a rather optimistic group in spite of the number of economic barriers they face. This optimism also presents itself in their view of government and the role it can play in improving conditions and solving problems.

As the chart in the next column shows, even though all age groups were more dissatisfied than satisfied with the state of the nation in 2010 when the Pew

research was done, the Millennials were more satisfied than the other age groups.

Different Views on the State of the Nation

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

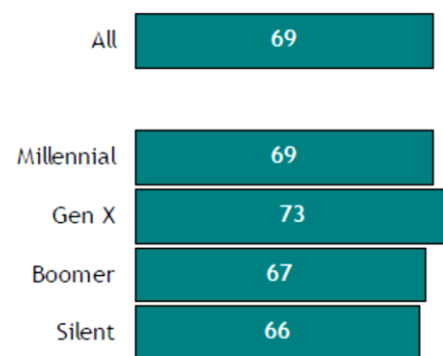


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Noticably dissatisfaction increases with age, with almost 80% of Silents saying they were dissatisfied. Previous research has regularly shown younger people more upbeat than older ones about the course of the nation, so the opinions of the Millennials will likely change over time.¹⁶⁶

Satisfaction with Local Communities

% satisfied with the way things are going in their local community today



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But what may be more telling for local leaders in the Springfield-Sangamon County area, is the chart

¹⁶⁵ Drake (2014), p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.22.

above that compares satisfaction with local communities by age group.

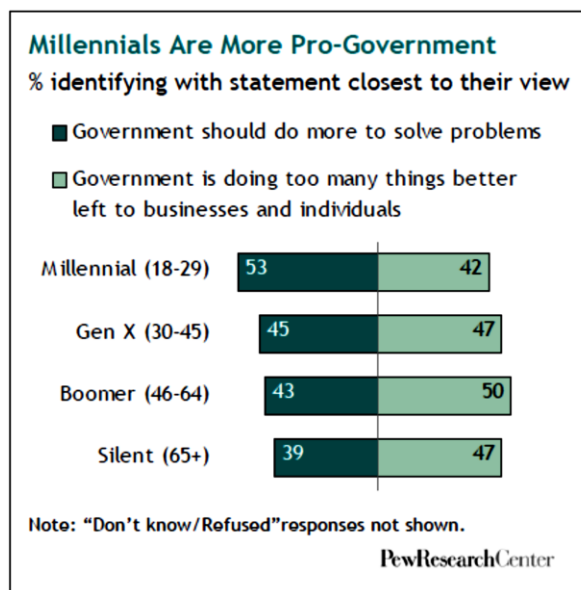
In this case there is a good deal of similarity, with no age group showing the same negative opinions of their communities that they showed in terms of the nation. Even the Silents, 78% of whom reported they were dissatisfied with the way things were going in the country, approved of their communities by 66%. Not quite a complete reversal of their position on the nation, but a noticeably significant change nevertheless.¹⁶⁷

The Millennials approved of the course of their communities by 69%, the same as the population as a whole, and only slightly less than the highest generational group, the Gen Xers.

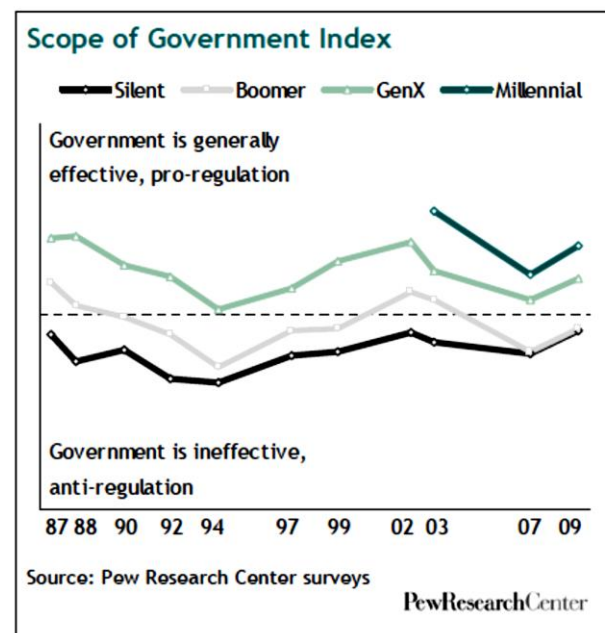
Since we previously noted that the Millennials were trending toward more urban lifestyles, especially in at least mid-sized urban areas if not even larger ones, we believe that the results for Millennials concerning community satisfaction is particularly worthy of note. We typically associate larger urban areas with more observable and complex problems – from crime, to transportation gridlock, to problem schools – than smaller ones. The Millennials appear to not. This may be due to the number of them still living in suburban areas, with their parents or in school, but even so, we believe that their positive attitudes about their local communities is of relevance to local leaders and important in understanding the role they may play in local governance.

This is because the Millennials are not only more optimistic than previous generations about the nation and their communities, they are also more positive about the role government can play in solving problems.

As the first chart in the next column shows, in 2010 over half (53%) of all Millennials reported that they believed that government should do more to solve problems, with only 42% contending that government was trying to do things that would better be left to individuals and businesses.¹⁶⁸ We suggest that this indicates support for a more active role for government, consistent with a more liberal generational identity.



Some of their pro-government leanings may come from the fact that, more than any other generational group, the Millennials find government effective and are significantly less critical of it.



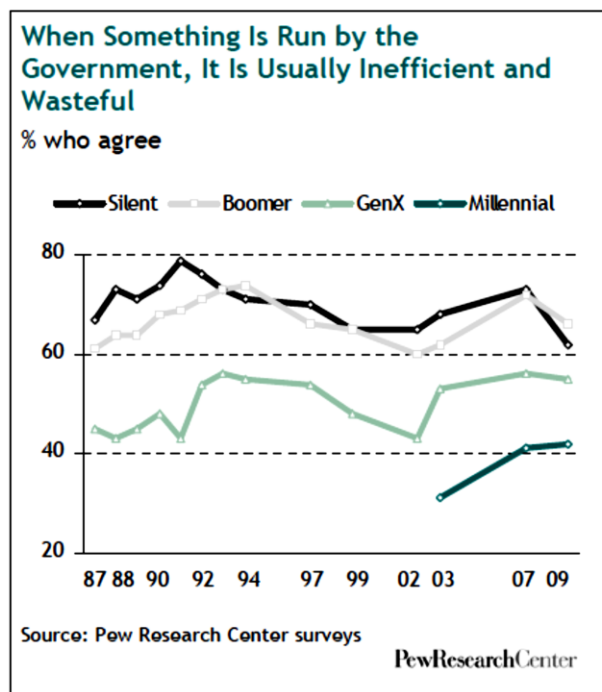
Because the public's attitudes about government and its role has fluctuated over the years, Pew developed an index of items from its political values survey to assess the various generations' opinions about government's effectiveness, regulation of business, and whether or not it has too much influence over people's lives. The results of this study are shown in the chart above, which covers the period from 1987 to

¹⁶⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.22.

¹⁶⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.63.

2009. Pew found that Boomers were more supportive of active government than Silents through much of the period considered, but by the 2007-2009 period, their views had converged. Gen X is more supportive than the Boomers during this time, and Millennials more supportive than Gen X.¹⁶⁹

Millennials also have different views about the efficiency of government than their predecessors.

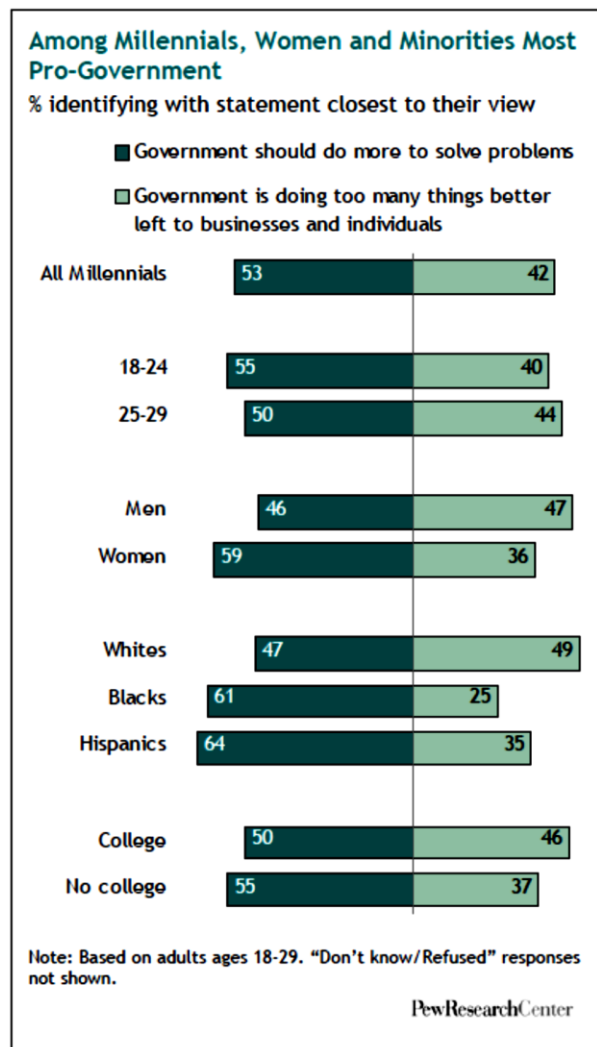


Pew points out that since 1987 majorities of the public have agreed with the statement that government is often wasteful and inefficient. But as the graph above shows, Millennials have been much less likely to agree with that statement than the other groups. In 2009, only 42% of Millennials shared this view, compared to 55% for Gen X, 66% for Boomers, and 66% for Silents.¹⁷⁰

Again it appears rather clear that the attitude that government is inefficient and wasteful increases with generational age, with older age groups holding this opinion more than younger ones. The question remains as to whether or not the Millennials' current, more positive, attitude will shift as they age. It may, but if so this shift will likely be moderated by demographic differences.

Demographic Differences among the Millennials

There has long been the belief that attitudes toward government are affected both by interactions with government as well as the benefits received from that interaction. We may see some of that playing out when we distinguish pro-government attitudes by gender, race, ethnicity and education. The chart below does that for Millennials.¹⁷¹



Female, black and Hispanic Millennials all believe that government should do more to solve problems than do Millennials as a whole. One also sees some a difference between younger and older Millennials, and those with a college education compared to those who do not.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 71.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 71.

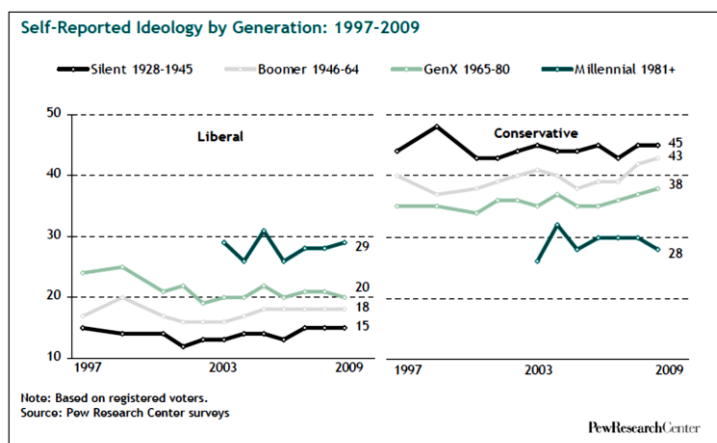
¹⁷¹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 72.

For example, while 53% of all Millennials believe that government should do more to solve problems, 55% of younger Millennials hold this view, as well as 55% of those without a college education. The groups seen as most dependent upon governmental programs and services are the strongest supporters of government action, with 59% of Millennial women, 61% of blacks and 64% of Hispanics holding this view. This should not come as a surprise as similar results have been found for the population at large, and as we noted in a previous section of this report, these are the segments of the Millennial population most stressed by economic conditions.

Overall, it appears that the Millennials are more positive about government in general, and more prone to support a more activist government, than are those of previous generations. Women, minorities, and those who may be facing economic barriers are more supportive than others.

More Liberal

One might typically suppose that those who are supportive of a more active government would tend to be more liberal than those who do not. If so, this supposition is supported by the results of the Pew study. As the graph below shows, Millennials report themselves as being more liberal than conservative compared to the other generational groups.



Even so, 40% of them report that they consider themselves Moderates, compared to 38% for Gen Xers, 36% of Boomers, and 35% of Silents.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Taylor and Keeter (2010, p. 70).

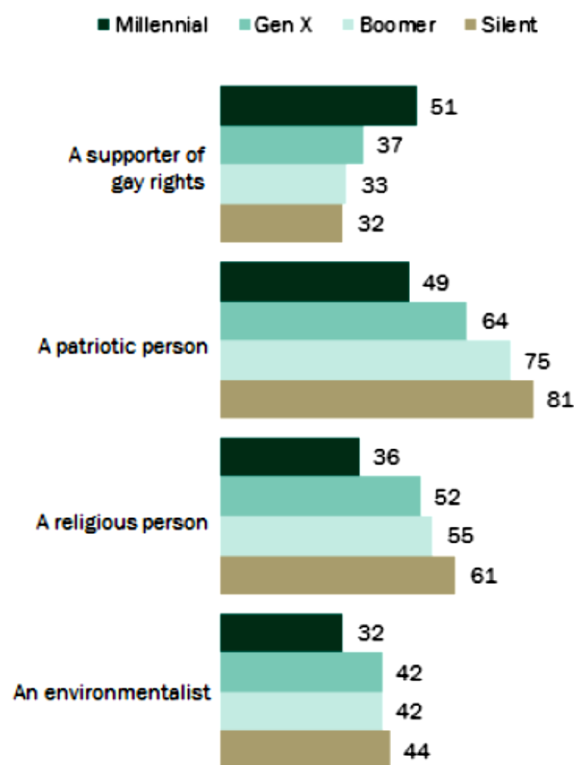
A Nuanced Response

However, while more Millennials self-report a liberal ideology than do members of previous generations, tending toward a more activist role for government, the Pew survey shows a more mixed and nuanced result than one might think; at least in terms of stereotypes.

Pew asked members of four generations how they saw themselves, as shown in the chart below.

How the Generations See Themselves

% saying ... describes them very well



Note: Percentages reflect those who rated each description 8-10 on a scale of 1-10 where "10" is a perfect description and "1" is totally wrong.

Source: Pew Research survey, Feb. 14-23, 2014

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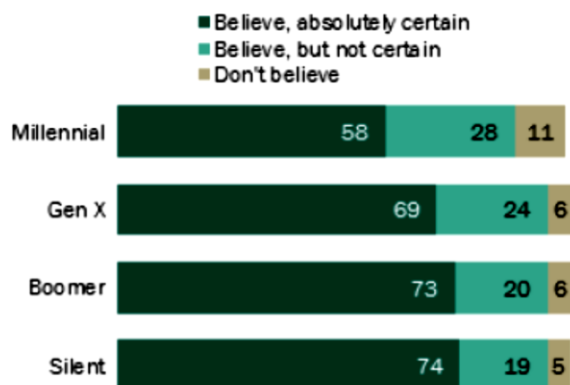
About half of the Millennials (49%) said that the phrase "a patriotic person" described them very well, with 35% saying it was a "perfect" description. This is in contrast to the much higher percentages for the

older generations, but this may only be due to their age and stage in life, as the reader will note that the percentage of those seeing themselves as patriotic declines with each age group, and when Gen Xers were younger their response to the same question also lagged behind their elders.¹⁷³ Even so, this response by the Millennials may fit more with how conservatives view liberals (seeing them as less patriotic) than with how liberals view themselves.

The same is true concerning the Millennials' answer to the question of whether they are or are not very religious. When asked that question, Millennials again scored lower than the other generations. Surprisingly enough, however, while only 36% of Millennials said they were religious, 58% said that they were absolutely certain there was a God, with only 11% saying they did not believe (see chart below).¹⁷⁴

Millennials and God

% saying they ... in God



Note: "Don't know/Refused" and "Other" responses not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project survey, Jun. 28-Jul. 9, 2012

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Granted that the percentage saying they were non-believers was about twice that of previous generations, but the vast majority of Millennials express belief. How then can the two results be reconciled?

We consider the results of this question not because we see being religious or belief in God as being indicative of any political orientation (both liberals and

conservatives can be believers or non-believers), but because we believe it again says something about the Millennials orientation toward institutions. The two results can be seen as reconcilable if they are taken to represent the Millennials rejection of another traditional institution – the church – rather than one of belief. Looked at in this way, it is consistent with other results related in the Pew study and presented in this report.

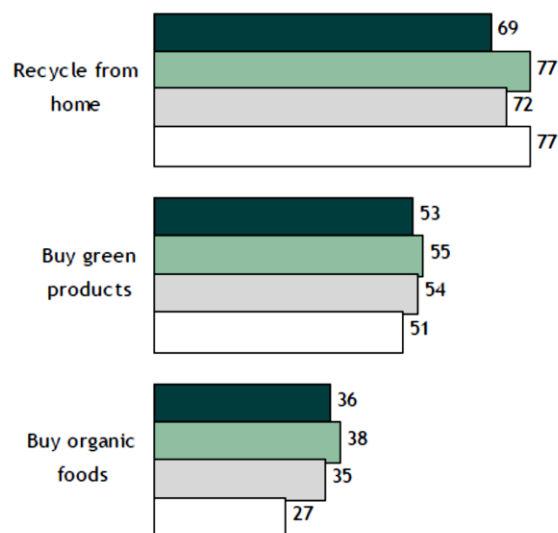
But the response to another question is more in conflict with the common notion of liberal policies and governance.

When Millennials were asked if they would describe themselves as environmentalists, only 32% said that this described them very well. Every other generational group responded *more* favorably, and noticeably so.

Environmentally Conscious Behaviors

% who do each

■ Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer □ Silent



PewResearchCenter

And this result appears to be confirmed by their behaviors. Pew tested the four generations to determine whether or not they engaged in such environmentally conscious behaviors as home recycling, buying green products and buying organic foods. The supposition we make is that if one is environmentally conscious, activities such as these

¹⁷³ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p. 12.

¹⁷⁴ Pew Research Center (March 7, 2014), p.11.

would be in one's repertoire. The chart above shows the results by generation.¹⁷⁵

In none of these three areas did the Millennials report that they were considerably more active than those of other generations, falling behind all of the others in regard to recycling, responding better than only the Silents in buying green products, but performing better than all but the Gen Xers in buying organic foods. Perhaps this only means that the Millennials are more honest in reporting the extent to which they would describe themselves as environmentalists than the other generations, but their actions appear to match their response.

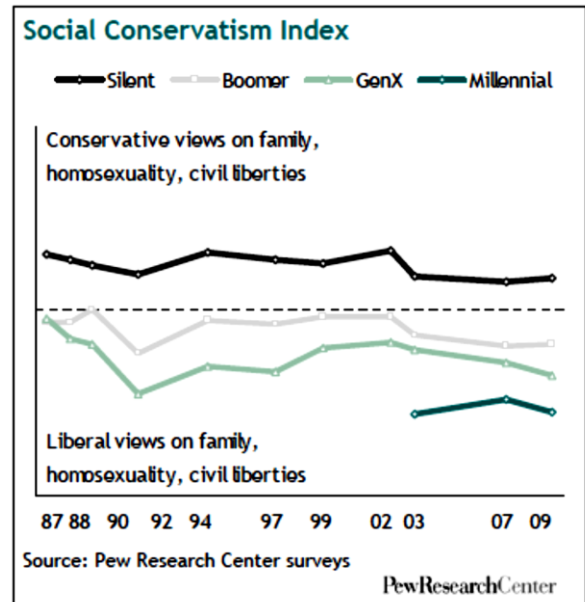
It was on the question of gay rights that the Millennials demonstrated a significantly more liberal attitude, with 51% of them responding that being a supporter of gay rights described them very well. This represents another factor related to the Millennials which we commented upon earlier in considering their attitudes toward families and parenting, and that is their openness to change.

Many issues that seem to create the ideological and political divide in this country are social ones; gay rights being a prime example. Pew found that the Millennials were not only more likely to be politically liberal, but significantly more liberal on social values as well.

As part of its survey of the four generations, Pew developed a social conservatism index based upon a number of questions pertaining to family, homosexuality, gender roles, and civil liberties. The results of that index are shown in the graph at the top of the next column.

Again age differentials come into play, with Silents tending most conservative, the Boomers falling just slightly below the mean for all four groups, and the Gen Xers being noticeably more conservative than the Millennials.

The reader might notice, however, that the Boomers and Gen Xers were very similar in their views in the late 1980s, and then began to diverge. Conversely all four generations have tended slightly less conservative on the index since the 2002-03 period.



Related to the generational pattern the graph shows, Pew reports that 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.¹⁷⁶

Since Millennials register as less religious than other generations, as reported previously, these results are not unexpected.

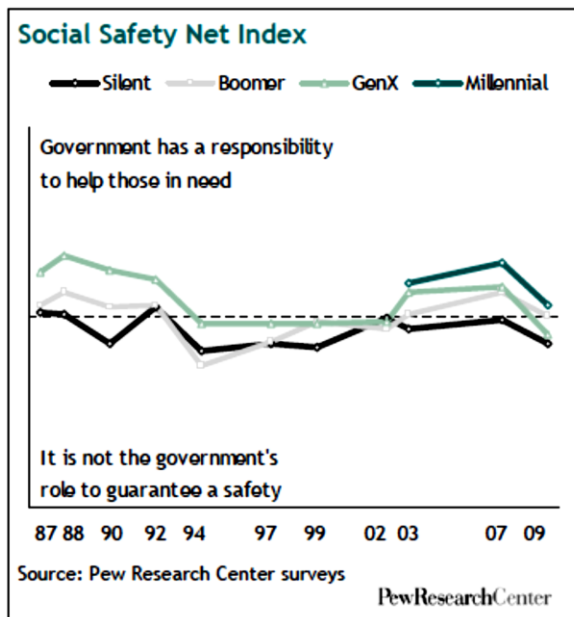
When looking at specific issues we begin to see a more nuanced picture of the Millennials. Two are offered here as examples.

First, as was mentioned previously, Millennials are less skeptical than the other age groups about the effectiveness of government, tending toward a more activist government intent on solving problems. Because of this, it is with some surprise that one finds them to not be very supportive of expanding the social safety net.

Pew reports that a 2009 survey found that those under 30 years-of-age were no more likely than the Boomers, and only somewhat more likely than the Silents, to favor an activist role for government helping the poor. These results are shown in the graph on the next page.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 59.

¹⁷⁶ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 73.



Pew reports:

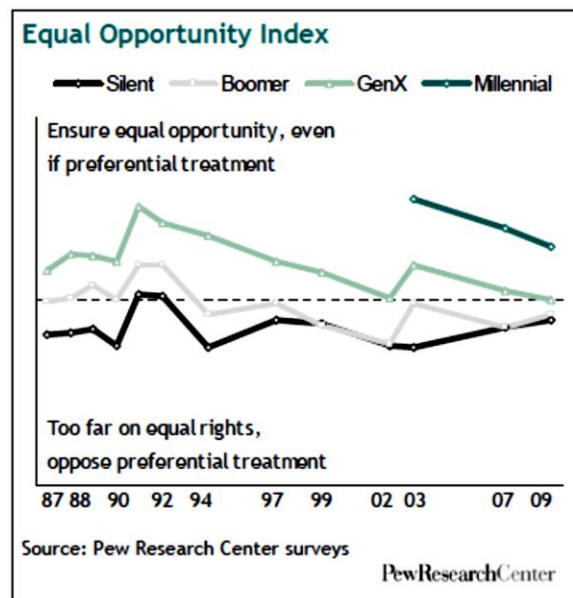
Since 2007, there has been a decline in the overall proportion favoring more generous assistance for the poor, a downturn that was true for Millennials as well as older groups. In 2009, for instance, 51% of Millennials agreed that “the government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt”: two years earlier, 59% of Millennials agreed with that statement.¹⁷⁷

And Pew notes that this change was not limited to the Millennials, affecting all of the generational groups. The decline was equally large among Gen Xers, who fell to about the same low level as the Silents, with the results for the Millennials being about the same as the Boomers.

At the same time that one finds a decline among the Millennials for strengthening the social safety net, they are more supportive of efforts to ensure equal rights than are the other age groups. However Pew suggests that this result may not be generational, finding it linked to a specific social policy issue.

The graph in the next column shows the results of an equal opportunity index developed by Pew that is based upon a set of questions designed to measure support for equal rights and opportunities. Millennials have shown to be more favorable than the other generations on this measure every year since 2003,

but there is evidence based upon the Gen Xers that could indicate a change.



One looking closely at the Equal Opportunity Index graph will see that in the early 1990s, the Gen Xers were at least as supportive as the Millennials are now. In fact, the results for Gen X were clearly as different and distinctive from the Boomers and Silents as the Millennials are from all three of the other generations now. But since that time the differences between the older generations have vanished.¹⁷⁸

Pew appears to conclude that this may be due to one factor: improving the position of blacks and other minorities “even if it means giving them preferential treatment”.¹⁷⁹ The influence of this issue is shown in the graph on the next page relating to Affirmative Action.

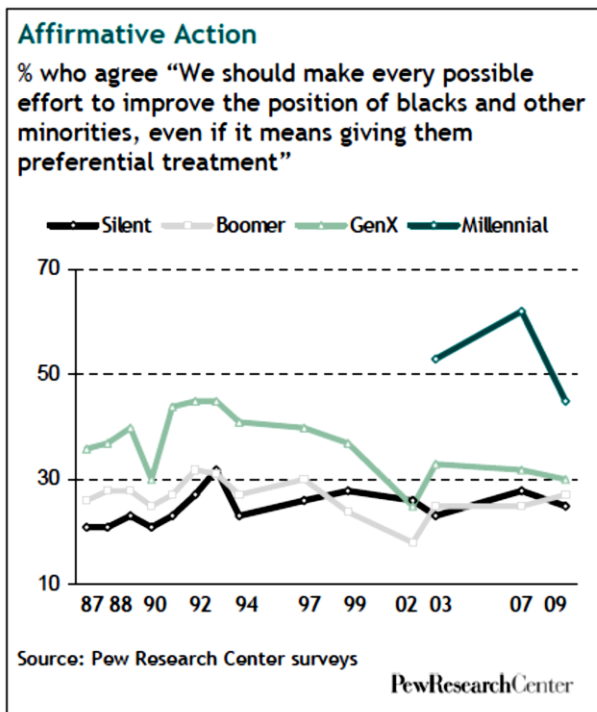
In 2009, 45% of Millennials agreed that preferential treatment should be provided, a much higher level of support than Gen Xers (30%), Boomers (27%), and Silents (25%). But for this one matter, Millennials would appear much more similar to the other generations on the equal opportunity index, and thusly less stereotypically liberal.

And Pew reports that support for such efforts has fluctuated among Millennials over time as more of its members reach adulthood. For instance, 53% of Millennials supported the proposition in 2003, and 62% did so in 2007, dropping to 45% in 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 76.

¹⁷⁸ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 77.

¹⁷⁹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p. 77.



What remains uncertain is whether this is an ideological position that will remain with the generation, or an outcome of the Millennials' racial and ethnic diversity, representing the increasing number of blacks and Hispanics in its generational make-up.

In the popular press, the Millennials do tend to be seen as more liberal than the members of the earlier generations. We contend that this largely due, as we suggested at the beginning of this section, to their significant support for President Obama in his first election, but also because the Millennials themselves make this claim. Political affiliation is not necessarily a clear indicator of ideology, and even if it were, the Millennials split evenly between the Democrats and Republicans, with 40% reporting they are independents. In addition, we find that on specific issues, the responses of the Millennials are rather nuanced.

So, while Millennials see themselves as being more liberal than those of the earlier generations, and at this point in time there are indications that they are correct, the results are actually somewhat mixed, seeming to indicate that their ideological position may not be as fixed as some might think. If so, their positions on many issues could fluctuate, if not change, as they age. The evidence indicates that this has occurred with the previous generations, and so

the ageing of the Millennials is likely to moderate their positions on a number of issues.

Engagement

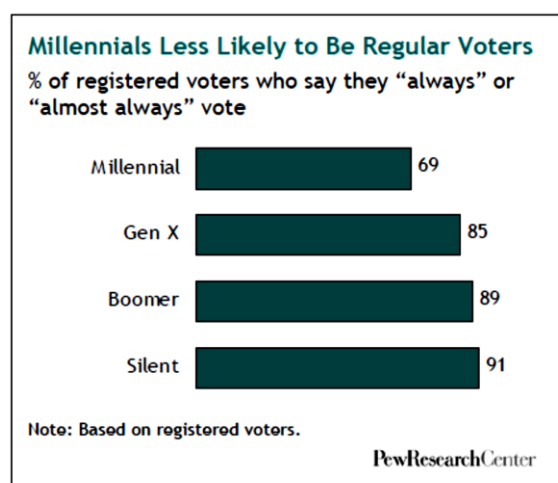
At the beginning of this section we reported on the Boomers and the direction in which they are tending in terms of governmental engagement so that a better comparison could be made with the Millennials. So how are the Millennials tending?

Pew reports that they again offer a mixed picture:

On some measures, such as volunteering or boycotting a product or service, Millennials match their elders. On other measures, such as frequency of voting, Millennials lag behind other generations. It is true that Millennials narrowed the age gap in voter turnout in 2004 and 2008. But the relatively low turnout of Millennials in more recent elections raises questions about the durability of that change. Moreover, even though Millennials made extensive use of social media in the 2008 campaign, it is too early to judge the long-term impact of these technologies on their level of engagement.¹⁸⁰

Voting Behaviors

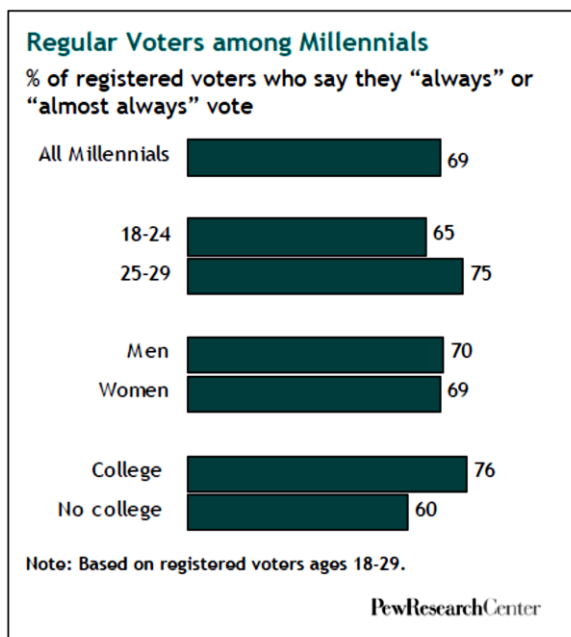
It is not unusual for younger people to be less likely to register and vote than their older counterparts, and with the exception of the two national elections noted above, the Millennials have followed this pattern.



¹⁸⁰ Taylor and Keeter (2010), p.64.

As the chart above shows, Pew found that only 69% of Millennials who were registered voters claimed that they “always” or “almost always” voted, a much lower percentage than for the other generations studied. And the results given were those of Millennials following the 2008 Presidential election, which showed a significant increase in voter turnout among young people, meaning that it may be less representative of a generational trend than it was the circumstances of the time.¹⁸¹

There are also differences in voting behavior within the Millennial cohort itself. The chart below considers this in terms of age, sex and education, finding that even among Millennials, older ones were more likely to vote than those younger^{viii}. Additionally, those with a college degree were significantly more likely to vote than ones without.



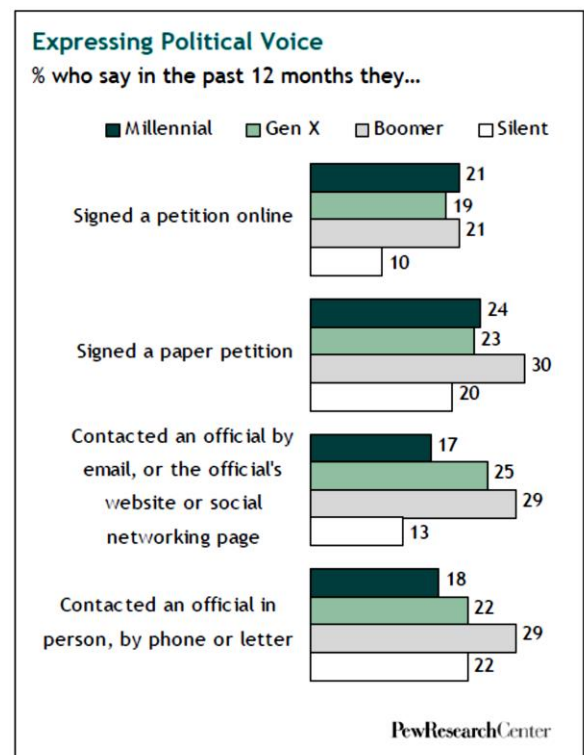
However, in recent years the Millennials have matched their elders in some other civic engagement activities other than voting.

Volunteering and Expressing an Opinion

While their voting behaviors may be similar to that of past generations when they were young, Millennials do engage in other ways. For example, 57% of Millennials report having volunteered in their communities over the previous 12 months, a slightly better percentage than Gen Xers (54%) or Boomers

(52%), and a good bit better than Silents (39%), although one must remember that the Silents may have less ability to do so because of their advancing age.

The question remains, of course, as to what they will volunteer for, and how they might best be reached for this purpose. We believe that some of the same factors will come into play relating to their volunteering that they show in their consumer and workplace behaviors: an orientation toward selective peer group activities not associated with traditional institutions, that involve social issues or causes that they believe in, are experiential and adventurous rather than long lasting, and that they see as “authentic” rather than just symbolic.



Some of these factors can be seen in their mixed response in expressing their opinions. Pew asked members of four generational groups if they had been involved in four different activities over the past 12 months, and the chart above shows the results.¹⁸²

Surprisingly, given their wide use of technology, the Millennials were no more likely to sign a petition online than the Gen Xers or the Boomers. In only one means of engagement – signing a paper petition – did

¹⁸¹ Taylor and Keeter (2010), pp.80-81.

¹⁸² Taylor and Keeter (2010), pp. 83.

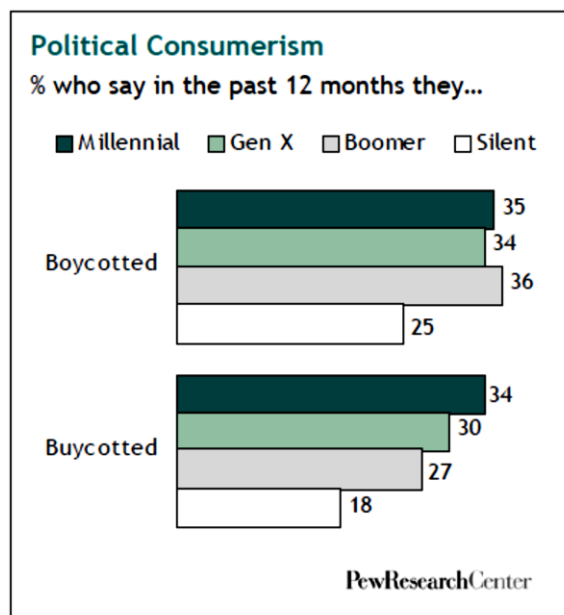
they engage more, and even then, the Boomers were more likely to do so than the Millennials.

All-in-all, one does not find the Millennials more engaged than the other generations, and particularly less engaged in what one might consider those behaviors that require them to directly interact with traditional institutions.

Consumer Activism

Another way in which a person can be engaged is through consumer activism: boycotting products and services for ideological reasons, or conversely, choosing to buy from companies that share their values – “buycotting”.

As with the other engagement activities discussed above, Pew asked members of the four generations if they had engaged in either of these activities over the previous 12 months. The results are provided in the chart below.



The results show that the Millennials were no more likely to boycott a company, product or service than were the Gen Xers and Boomers, while all were more likely to do so than the Silents.

However, and as suggested in the earlier section of this report addressing the Millennials as consumers, they are more likely to buy from those who share their beliefs – that is, engage in a “buycott” -- than any of the other generations, and to do so in palpable numbers.

We will offer some suggestions related to engaging the Millennials in our closing comments in the next section of this report.

Some Takeaways:

The Millennials may have a far different effect on government and politics than did the Boomers, and could become a more positive force that what local governments might see from the Boomers as they age.

A new generation gap may present itself as the needs of the Millennials and their elders diverge, putting additional stress on local leaders.

The Millennials are not as attached to traditional institutions as previous generations, continuing a trend started by the Boomers. This may simply create a new version of “bowling alone”.

Even so, the Millennials are much more optimistic than their elders about government and the role it can play in solving problems. The Millennials are particularly satisfied with their local communities.

While they are seen as being more liberal than their elders – and they are on many social issues – there are many surprising areas where they are not. This may represent the fact that while they may be accepting of various social changes, that does not represent whole-hearted support for them.

Engaging the Millennials in local government and its activities will require local leaders to rethink the approaches they have used to encourage public involvement in the past.

The Millennials can be creative and technologically savvy problem solvers.

Closing Comments

Nations, regions and communities change over time, and ours will as well. As one author recently put it, “America might not resemble the country’s current demographics very much several decades from now.”¹⁸³ The changes the author was describing are not unanticipated as they represent trends that demographers and planners have been following for some time, and many of these changes are noted in various sections of this report.

For example, the United States and its communities are:

- Becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.
- Being affected by immigration, particularly in larger urban areas.
- Developing populations with larger numbers of retirees and elderly than in the past.
- Made up of more-and-more non-traditional households and families.
- Expected to deal with a greater portion of their populations not in the workforce and therefore more dependent upon the services that government provides.
- Changing as a greater share of the population continues to shift away from rural areas and small towns to larger urban areas.

While the Millennials are playing a role in these changes, they are not the sole cause of them, as these changes represent trends that have been developing for some time. So what effects will the Millennials have?

Different in Unimportant Ways?

We began this report by noting that a wide array of interests – academic, commercial, political, social and financial – are paying close attention to the Millennial generation because its size leads to the expectation that it may have the same kind of significant impact on our nation, states and communities that the Baby Boomers did. Our task was to try and come to grips with the ways in which this young generation is similar to or different from the ones immediately preceding it to determine the extent to which change may occur.

Our research found that there *are* differences, but that many of these differences are simply representative of on-going trends, while others may be marginal or relatively unimportant.

We found that some of the demographic characteristics of the Millennials simply represent trends previously observed in the larger population. For example, we found that the Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse of American generations, but that this does not represent a new generational trend. The nation has been getting “brownier” for some time. What may be different is the degree to which immigration is affecting this group. But again, the impact of immigration on the U.S. population has been mentioned as a factor for at least three decades.

Their movement toward larger urban areas is also indicative of long standing trends in the national population, as American’s have been moving from more rural areas to more urban ones since the late 19th century. What may be different is the extent to which the Millennials are seeking to locate in places larger than those represented by the communities in central Illinois, effectively bypassing them for even larger urban areas.

Some of the differences we found were likely due to common lifecycle events affecting the Millennials that faced the previous generations as well. We note, for example, the lack of trust in others that they show, but also note that the same lack of trust was shown by other generations when they were the age of the Millennials. It appears more common to younger people than older ones.

We also found that there were events outside of their control that have helped shaped their interests and behaviors. The Great Recession had a significant impact on the career plans of this group, for example. The Millennials’ increased interest in education may be driven by the interests of their parents and the economic times we live in rather than any unique generational interest they might have. Their delay in marriage and raising families may also be due to the economic conditions that confronted them on their coming of workforce age, and it is also consistent with other generational groups when increased education is taken into account.

Additionally it is important to understand that in some of the areas in which the popular press has criticized the group, particularly how they may meld into the workplace, we found their interests to be not much

¹⁸³ Maciag, M. March 4, 2015. *What America Will Look Like Decades from Now*. Governing.com: Washington, DC..

different from that of their elders, and in some cases is even more positive. When one considers what the Millennials seek in a place of employment – a desire for a reasonable balance between work and life, good pay and benefits, opportunities for advancement, meaningful experiences in their work, and a nurturing work environment – would not most workers have the same desires?

Even in one area in which the Millennials have been called to task, their work ethic, they are willing to admit that it may be a difference. But even so, many of their behaviors, such as the desire to start their own businesses and how they approach personal involvement with managers and colleagues, call this generational stereotype into question.

And many of the areas in which they differ from past generations may simply change over time. Their self-professed liberal positions on many social issues, for example. We provided data showing that such a tendency appears to be the case for the two generations that immediately preceded the Millennials.

Overall, we find that many of the cautions presented in the popular press are more mythical than real, and that in most significant ways the Millennials are not fundamentally different from the two generations preceding them. They simply represent the continuation of trends that have been noticeable in the American population for a number of years.

Some Important Differences

But we do believe that there are two areas in which there are important differences that should be brought to the attention of local leaders, as both are relevant to their engagement in civic life. All have been addressed in other parts of this report, but deserve restatement here as they are so inter-related.

Constant Contact

We commented previously on the tendency of the American public to become more disconnected from civic life over the past several decades; what Robert Putnam has termed “bowling alone”.¹⁸⁴ One may get a better understanding of what is meant by this by considering the way Americans generations previously interacted.

In the past, a great deal of local social life centered around three sets of civic establishments: formal institutions, like churches, political parties and schools; voluntary organizations, like fraternal organizations and athletic clubs and leagues; and neighborhoods, mostly populated by traditional nuclear families. These became the networks through which civic engagement and participation occurred. They were networks of *affinity*, establishing relationships between individuals who were naturally – or even involuntarily – drawn together.

But beginning in the 1970s the public started to shy away from such institutions, beginning to look inward and become less involved with these institutions and organizations. Many reasons have been given for this, and several of them are represented in the data presented previously concerning the Millennials, such as their movement away from religious institutions, disconnection from political parties, lack of trust in other people, and their establishing households and having children later in life.

We believe that other factors entered into this as well due to the growth of residential developments and lifestyles that reduced neighbor-to-neighbor interactions. For example: the trend toward a suburban lifestyle that was largely automobile-base; a reduction in family size and the nature of the family, meaning that there were fewer children living in suburban neighborhoods post-Baby Boom, which reduced interactions among neighboring families caused by their children’s play; and even the loss of neighborhood shopping areas and schools due to a trend toward larger, more centralized locations for the former, and changes in school transportation patterns for the latter.

However, the Millennials appear to be reversing this trend to the extent that they now interact – and appear to want to be in constant contact – with their own self-established and limited affinity groups and peers. We see this as potentially creating something like “virtual neighborhoods” with all of the technological linkages this implies. On its face this appears to be a positive movement toward a reconnection of individuals, even if it is a virtual one that may occur only through the intervention of technology; but it is a reconnection none-the-less.

It does have a few aspects for which local leaders might be wary: it can create very homogeneous groups with limited diversity of thought (and we mentioned some aspects of this in discussing earlier

¹⁸⁴ Putnam (2001).

the limitations on information sources used by the Millennials); it limits network-to-network contacts, which were likely to occur in some of the institutions through which civic engagement occurred previously (such as different families of different social and economic backgrounds becoming familiar with one another through their children's school activities, like PTA); and it may make it more difficult for local governments to engage the Millennials in their activities. We will address this further below.

A Technological Generation

As was also pointed out previously, the Millennials are not just a well-educated generation, they are a technologically savvy one, and some critics might even say they are technologically dependent. The means of reaching, informing and communicating with them is far different than was the case with previous generations, and local governmental leaders need to not just be aware of this fact, but find ways to come to terms with it.

Keep in mind that the Millennials are not just *users* of technology, but are *creators* of it, acting both directly and indirectly through the marketplace. Governments, as well as business and industry, will be forced to make changes in how they reach and interact with the public, for if they do not, they will lose access to a large portion of it.

Many of the new systems for social contact and interaction are being created by and for the Millennials, and given the size of this group, these changes are likely to continue for some time. If the Millennials are to have the same influence on social life that the Boomers did, we can expect that many of these changes will be due to the opportunities that various advances in communication and information technology will afford them.

Some Rules of Engagement

So how might local governments engage the Millennials? Clearly the rules of engagement are changing, particularly given the Millennials tendencies to seek comfort in their own peer groups rather than institutions, and seek information and access through non-traditional, electronic means.

And it is *important* for them to be engaged and involved in government and governance. This is not simply because all residents – including the young – should be so engaged, but because, as we noted in

the section pertaining to their place in the workforce, they are now rising up the leadership ranks and shaping – or making – key policy decisions that will affect communities now and in the future. This they will be doing at a critical time for government. One in which the previously largest generation – the Boomers – may be more disrespectful of, and confrontational with, governments and their role than previous generations, potentially generating fundamental conflicts between generations.

In the face of such potential generational conflicts, which will stress the resources of local governments and likely try the patience of their leaders, it will be valuable for local governments to seek the involvement of this new and large generation, as we have found it to be one that is now both positive about the communities in which they live, and more supportive of the role of government in general.

Minimally the governments of smaller communities – particularly those in more rural areas – will need to find ways to not only engage the young, but attract them to their jurisdictions as residents. If they do not, and the Millennials do follow the trend toward living in more urban places, local governments will face the problem of managing residential decline (and therefore revenue).

We believe that Howe's assessment of the takeaways for local leaders is rather clear:

Even as officials push communications about rules, regulations, cooperation, and compliance toward the young, they will want to invite the old to frame the rhetoric and announce the vision around which the community is being asked to come together. In the 2020s, young people will listen to the old on values – in a way they never dreamed of doing back in the 1970s.¹⁸⁵

Give this, what is the best way to encourage Millennials to become part of community life, help build the places where they live, and entice them to stay, live and work there?

In best Millennial fashion, we turned to a blog written for Millennials (*Twentysomething Life* at allgroanup.com) finding relevant comments there. Paul Angone (author of the book *101 Secrets for Your Twenties*), reports on this blog that while many people

¹⁸⁵ Howe (2012), p. 7.

are talking *about* the Millennials, few are actually talking *with* them. He offers seven tips for engaging them which we believe are consistent with what we discovered in our review of the literature about them.¹⁸⁶

First, we should not do what we have done throughout this paper; refer to them as if they were some different and alien group, “The Millennials”. Our research found, as Angone points out, that this is too broad a label. It has become replete with myths about them and stereotypes of them, not taking into account the vast differences in scope of events, technologies, and individual experiences that have shaped this large generation. We found, for example, numerous differences among them when education, age, race, sex and financial conditions are taken into account. We also found that in many areas their interests and behaviors are little different from those of their predecessors, or are simply the continuation of existing population trends.

It is human nature to try and categorize, as we have done in this report, but we must remember that simply naming a thing does not explain it.

Second, to be successful in engaging Millennials, a relationship must be built. As we noted previously, this generation places great stock in relationships and what is “authentic”. They lack trust in general, particularly in traditional institutions, so local leaders will need to get to know those in this age group in their locality, listen to them, and form new relationships with them.

As Howe suggests in the quotation above, these may be different kinds of relationships than we have had in the past, but they will be valuable none-the-less.

This leads to the third tip: to help build trust, share your story with them, including your flaws and mistakes. Angone contends that the Millennials are interested in hearing this story, what you are “currently wrestling with and the strategies you are using” to overcome them. They are not looking for leaders who are *super-human*, but those who are *super-human*. We find from their openness, desire for authenticity and interest in social issues, that they seek leaders who have a heart and are willing to speak from it (or tweet it). As in their connection with their own social groups, they seek real people they

can trust, and it is “your mistakes openly shared that become great connecting points.”

Fourth, this young age group is looking to be part of a community in a world that seems struggling. They have experienced many events during their young lives that have shaped them, and many, such as recession and terrorism, are not positive ones. These events have left them anxious about their futures even though they remain optimistic. Local leaders can help them create a vision for their lives, in part by asking them to help answer important questions and creating a place where they feel understood. As Angone writes, “Can you create an environment that is fluid and flexible, that is more dedicated to the end goal than it is to policies, procedures, and ‘this is how we’ve always done things’”. The person seeking to engage this group needs to understand that they are looking for room to grow, explore, be heard and create. They can help their communities in this way.

Because of this, the fifth tip is to give them a seat at the adult table. They fear being considered insignificant and want to have a role in something bigger than themselves. If you let them be heard, they will stay and help you solve problems because they look at them from a different perspective, through a different lens.

Keep in mind that they believe things will get better, and that they can be a part of that. They are positive about their communities, and even believe that government can be a positive force in improving them. These are valuable starting points for successful dialogue as well as engagement.

Sixth, practice “To the Point” communication. They have grown up in a world in which they have had to become “proficient at mega-messaging-multi-tasking.” This generation seeks communications that get to the point.

We pointed out previously – when addressing this group’s consumer patterns – that businesses will need to use the new communication and information technologies to reach them, but that they would expect these technologies work and work well. A poorly designed website, for example, will not be a plus. But the same is true for other communications.

They are likely to receive many emails, texts, messages, and tweets, so local leaders will need to find ways to get their messages to the top of the stack. As Angone suggests, writing long emails, leaving long voicemails, or having a “bunch of

¹⁸⁶ Angone, P. (accessed Nov. 19, 2015). *7 Tips to Engaging Millennials*. Allgroanup.com.

meetings with numerous 'key stakeholders' who all dance around the topic with verbal calisthenics...is not a way to do it."

And finally, paint the bigger picture...*and give them a brush*. Tell them where you want to go and the importance of the different steps to get there, and then give them a chance to imagine their roles within that. This will help them to see the "purpose, impact, and importance of the work, and you'll be surprised at the passion and purpose" they will bring to your goals and their assignments within the context of this bigger picture.

All-in-all, we find that much about America's newest, large generation is not dissimilar from what has come before, but even so, they have the potential to make a significant and positive contribution to our communities if local leaders make an effort to understand them and engage them constructively in the important work to be done.



ENDNOTES

ⁱ Throughout this report, and unless otherwise noted, the generational comparisons will be for those aged 18-28.

ⁱⁱ This same information is not available for minorities as the sample was too small to draw a conclusion.

ⁱⁱⁱ The interested reader may wish to review the SSCRPC's 2015 report, *Planning for Growth: Reviewing Economic Growth Trends in the Springfield-Sangamon County Economic Area* for additional information.

^{iv} Assuming, of course, that there is a relationship between being "educated" and being "smart".

^v The reader should note that the IBM study reported here was not limited to American Millennials, but included those from 12 countries and six industries. While the SSCRPC believes the IBM results are valid as well as informative, they may not catch the same distinctions and nuances between generations that a study solely fixed on those in the U.S. might.

^{vi} This may also be affected by the number of Millennials living with their parents.

^{vii} Numerous analysts have contended that the Boomers of the 1960s and 1970s were no more liberal than their parents, and often point to the results of the two Nixon elections as well as polling data related to support for the Vietnam War as evidence. But it cannot be dismissed that while those Boomers off the campuses may have held different attitudes than those on them, the activist Boomers became opinion leaders and agents of political change during this period, so are relevant foils in looking at the Millennials views concerning government and governance.

^{viii} Pew suggests (page 82) that this may be due to younger people, particularly those that recently turned 18, having fewer opportunities to vote than the others. However, even the older Millennials age groups report voting less than their elders.

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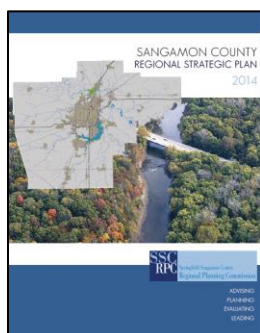
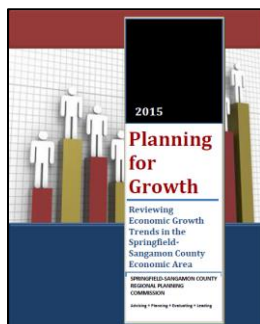
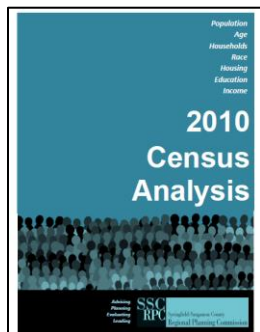
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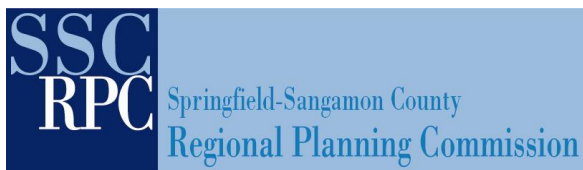


Other Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission studies and reports on related topics that may be of interest to readers:

All SSCRPC studies and reports are available in electronic form, free of cost, on the Regional Planning Commission's website: [www. SSCRPC.com](http://www.SSCRPC.com).







The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield, as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning in the region.

It is committed to its on-going mission of providing the professional expertise and objective analysis that communities in the region need to assess their opportunities, sharpen their visions, and design the strategies they will need to achieve them.

In carrying out its mission, the Commission works with other public and non-profit agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists Sangamon County communities with their planning needs. Through its professional staff, the SSCRPC brings its research, analytic and planning expertise to bear on such important matters as land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economic development, hazard mitigation and environmental protection.

Along with studies such as this one, the SSCRPC produces many reports and other publications of regional and community interest. These can be found on the Commission's website.

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