

An examination of the influence of religiosity on political views of the millennial generation

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY ON
POLITICAL VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Sociology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

The millennial generation is said to consist of all those born between the years of 1978 and 1996. The majority has come of age and has the ability to be active participants in the political community. For the past three elections they have been the democratic party's biggest supporters. In the 2008 presidential election 68% of all Millennial voters voted for Barack Obama. Millennials are also reporting to be less religious and more spiritual. They are attending religious services less frequently and identify with religious denominations less often. Throughout American history, religion is known to have an effect on political ideologies. So with Millennials religiosity changing, does their religiosity have any effect on their political ideology? The purpose of my research is to examine the religious ideologies of Millennials and see how they are affecting their political ideologies. To collect my data I have surveyed 380 Millennials. I choose to take a quantitative approach to this research project and use statistics as the basis of my analysis. My research is important to my discipline as well as my society because it closes the gaps between existing research of the Millennial generation. This research also contributes to literature because it is important to understand the political and religious views of the upcoming generation. Millennials have the ability to make huge political statements, and their decisions, attitudes, and behavior will significantly impact the future of the United States.

DEDICATION

For my loving family, thank you for always supporting my dreams.

For my professors, thank you for your guidance, wisdom, and patience.

For my friends, thank you for helping me through those long nights of frustration. Your help
gave me the perseverance to never give up.

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INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation is said to consist of all those born between the years of 1978 and 1996 (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). The majority has come of age and is now able to participate in the political process. In the 2008 presidential election there were about fifty million millennial voters (Leyden and Teixeira 2007) which represent approximately 51% of Millennials. This percentage has steadily increased since the presidential election in 1996. Of the 51% of Millennials that did vote in the 2008 presidential election, roughly 68% voted for Barack Obama leaving most of the remaining vote for John McCain (Pew Research Center 2010). Millennials overwhelmingly supported Barack Obama and the Democratic Party (Halpin and Agne 2009). In essence, they have been their biggest supporters in the previous two elections (Keeter and Horowitz 2008). This has been largest discrepancy in over four decades between young and older voters. Around 50% of Americans aged 30 and over voted for Obama leaving an 18% difference between young and old (Pew Research Center 2010).

So why are Millennials voting this way? Perhaps it is because Millennials share common agendas with democrats. The Millennials have social values that are more accepting of homosexuality, pro-choice, evolution and immigration (Pew Research Center 2010). Millennials are also less religious and about one in four are unaffiliated with any particular faith (Pew Research Center 2010). Does this trend of lower religiosity have a correlation with Millennials political ideology?

Millennials are reporting that they are less religious (Pew Research Center 2010). A trend has also emerged suggesting that Millennials tend to be spiritual but not religious (Stadfort

and Haworth 2002). Some Millennials now believe that church is obsolete and teaches outdated ideas, and they feel church leaders do not relate to them personally (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). This means they are attending church less frequently, praying less often and identifying less with an organized religion. However, belief in god, life after death and the existence of miracles are still at relatively high percentages (Pew Research Center 2010). Why are Millennials becoming less religious but more spiritual and how could this be affecting their political ideology?

According to a recent study (Brooks 2002), Protestants and Catholics are most likely to vote republican because of similar ideals, and this trend has not changed in over three decades. Another study of college aged men between the years of 1948-1984 reported a trend of wavering liberal and conservative views. These variations in political views more than likely reflect the issues of the times and could be based upon who was the president at the time. (e.g., Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, Carter). Conservative views peaked in 1950 and 1984, where more liberal views peaked around 1972 (Hastings and Hoge 1986). As stated above, in 2008 Millennials voted overwhelmingly democratic which represents another swing toward more liberal positions.

Hence, the current literature raises a number of interesting questions. Why are Millennials becoming less religious and more spiritual? Why do Millennials have overwhelmingly democratic political ideologies? What correlations exist between political ideologies and religious ideologies in the millennial generation? This emerging trend of democratic ideology among the millennial generation could be directly related to the non-religious and more spiritual oriented ideology. The purpose of this research is to examine the extent to which a relationship exists between these two ideologies and why.

This study will help us understand the nature of the relationships between religious views and political views within the millennial generation and why they exist. This study will also address the gaps between existing literature regarding current political and religious trends among Millennials. This research contributes to literature because it is important to understand the political and religious views of the upcoming generation. Millennials have the ability to make huge political statements, and their decisions, attitudes, and behavior will significantly impact the future of the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Millennial generation is said to consist of all those born between the years of 1978 and 1996 (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). They are roughly between the ages of 16 and 34, which implies the vast majority has come of age or will come of age very soon. According to a recent study, Millennials tend to be more democratic and have a liberal mindset. They are more racially diverse, less religious and are obtaining more education than all previous generations (Pew Research Center 2010). The study of Millennials is important because they are said to be one of the largest growing generations (Pew Research Center 2010), at roughly 100 million strong (Leyden and Teixeira 2007), and have the potential to make huge changes in regard to the future of the United States.

Politics and Millennials

In the 2008 presidential election there were approximately 50 million millennial voters (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). This number is still smaller than older generations but only represents about 51% of Millennials. A percentage that has steadily increased since the presidential election in 1996 which was at forty % (Pew Research Center 2010) and in 2016 is expected to consist of one third of all American voters (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). As noted earlier, Millennials overwhelmingly supported Barak Obama and the Democratic Party (Halpin and Agne 2009) and have been big supporters of the Democratic Party (Keeter and Horowitz 2008). This has been largest discrepancy in over four decades between young and older voters. Around 50% of Americans aged 30 and over voted for Obama leaving an 18% difference

between young and old (Pew Research Center 2010). Most Millennial voters now believe in larger government and see Obama as an agent of change (Halpin and Agne 2009). It is apparent that a significant shift in political alliances is occurring. According to a recent study 43% of Millennials identify with the Democratic Party, 26% identify with the Republican Party and 29% identify Independent (Keeter and Horowitz 2008).

A recent study found that Millennials defined political engagement as being knowledgeable and informed about politics and believed voting to be essential. They thought that voting was simple and made them feel as if they were an efficient part of a community, as well as feeling that they were able to make a difference. They also experience a feeling of belonging by joining political social media groups which only strengthened Millennials feelings of being a part of a community. (Dudash and Harris 2011). A similar study reported that Millennials believe that their generation possesses a spirit of activism and leadership. They feel that they can make a difference and can change the government (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). Millennials are more optimistic and 77% believe that they will be able to or have already achieved the American Dream (Halpin and Agne 2009). They are overall less cynical about the government and far less critical of the government when compared to older generations. An exception to this trend concerns the military and war (Pew Research Center 2010). According to a recent study, 84% of Millennials reported that the person who leads the United States as president is critical. They felt that politics were relevant to their lives as well as their future. They believe that active political participation can change the way that the government is run. Lastly they believe that they do have a voice when it comes to politics and they have the ability to change government (Leyden and Teixeira 2007).

Millennials are much more liberal towards social values. The general trend is the older the generation, the more conservative the ideals concerning social values. The underlying factor of this strong generation pattern is religion (Pew Research Center 2010). A higher percentage of Millennials believe in gay marriage, are pro-choice, and support affirmative action more than any other generation. Millennials are less likely to agree that the military is the only way to peace. They are also more accepting of immigrants. Even though 59% believe some of the immigrant policies should be stricter, this is much lower than the 76% of older generations that believe in more strict immigration policies (Pew Research Center 2010). Millennials are also more sympathetic, and this is evidenced by their high volunteer rates (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). 51% of Millennials also agree that the United States should help the needy even if we go into more debt because of the help that we provide (Pew Research Center 2010).

Millennials are generally more optimistic about thought towards the government. However, some negative thoughts are evident as well. Some Millennials believe that politicians are motivated by purely selfish reason even if they are aware that their action hurt the well-being of the United States. Politician priorities whether selfish or not differ greatly from the priorities of the Millennials (Leyden and Teixeira 2007). Many believe that a president lies to get elected or remain in good light with the American society (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). According to a study the Pew Research center conducted in 2010 there was a 47%-47% split on whether millennials thought there had been a “change in the way Washington is run.” Out of the 47% that believed that there was no change, 60% said opponents and special interests groups stopped Obama and 25% blames Obama himself. The job approval rating of the president has recently decreased among Millennials from 73% in 2009 to 57% in 2010 (Pew Research Center 2010).

Millennials also believe that the Government should do more problem solving, and younger females were more likely to agree with this statement (Pew Research Center 2010). In general, Millennials are more liberal. However, there is also a conservative side. Conservative Millennials tend to be less educated. In addition, Republicans and Born-Again Christians are also more likely to express conservative political views (Halpin and Agne 2009).

Why are Millennials identifying with democrats? First, young voters are more racially and ethnically diverse than other generations and are more secular in their religious orientation (Keeter and Horowitz 2008; Leyden and Teixeira 2007). A recent study reported 62% of young voters identified as white. In 2004, 68% identified as white, and in 2000 74% identified as white. These characteristics may account for why younger voters tend to identify as democrat (Keeter and Horowitz 2008). Second, negative feelings towards the previous president could also affect the way Millennials are voting. There is a lot of negativity among Millennials towards the Bush Administration. For example, many Millennials responded negatively to Bush's social policies (e.g., the war on Iraq, the Bush Tax Cuts) along with the economic collapse believed to be started by George W. Bush. This could push Millennials to vote democrat in the following elections (Dudash and Harris 2011). Third, social media could play a role in the way that Millennials identify. Democrats form larger groups on social media websites allowing for a greater sense of belonging and community (Dudash and Harris 2011). It is also widely socially acceptable among millennial to identify as a democrat which may pressure others into identifying the same way. Or this may create a unacceptable stigma against young republicans who feel they can cannot openly share their ideas with others thus weakening the sense of community that young democrats have (Dudash and Harris 2011).

The television media does not appear to focus on young voters. A study was conducted that observed 285 campaign news stories in a particular state leading up to the 2004 presidential election and only 3.2 % focused on youth and 6% mentioned youth. The finding of the study may be small but they were reported to be higher those during the 2000 presidential election. This study concludes that news stations do not focus on youth and are not a huge political influence on the young voter. The internet and Interpersonal channels for political information are more likely the sources that the young voters are getting their information (Bystrom and Dimitrova 2007). This could indicate the television is not as important to Millennials, or receiving their political information from standard television news is of less importance to Millennials this is the first generation since televisions existence where this is an occurrence.

Religion and Millennials

Millennials are less religious than older generations. One in every four is unaffiliated with any particular faith. 68% reports that they are a member of a Christian Domination and 43% say they are protestant. Millennials are also more unaffiliated than members of Generation X were at similar points in their lives. On a side note, of the Millennials who are affiliated with a religion, their patterns of religiosity and religious affiliation are similar to that of older generations. They are also more inclined than their elders to believe their own religion is the true path to eternal life. Millennials are unaffiliated with religion for a multitude of reasons. A primary reason could be that Millennials decided to leave the religion they were brought up in without searching for an involvement in a new faith. About one in five have unaffiliated themselves with the religion they were brought up in (Pew Research Center 2010). Some are also

separating themselves from religion because of negative experiences they have had with religion during childhood (Arnett and Jensen 2002).

Other negative views towards religion are evident among the Millennials, and these contribute to the increase in disaffiliation. Millennials no longer see churches and other places of worship as relevant to contemporary society because they believe that religious leaders teach outdated ideas which most often do not relate to them. Therefore the physical act of going to church is now obsolete (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). In addition, Millennials have social values that are more accepting of homosexuality, evolution, and the women's choice to have an abortion (Pew Research Center 2010). These values are usually frowned upon in a religious setting. Some Millennials note that they are not a part of any particular religion because their parents were not a part of a particular organized religion when they were growing up. Overall Millennials believe that their own generation values religion much less than older generations' value religion (Stadfort and Haworth 2002).

Millennials are reading religious scripture and attending religious services less often. According to Pew Research Center (2010), about one-third of Millennials attend religious services at least once a week. However those who are female, who are married or who are a parent are much more likely to attend religious services and report that religion is more important in their lives. The lower the education of the mother, the higher the attendance at religious services and the more important religion is to their lives (Arnett and Jensen 2002). Of all other Millennials 45% say that religion is important to their lives (Pew Research Center 2010). Young adults pray less often and also have a lower rate in the absolute belief in God. These results are comparable to those of older generations when they were in a similar period of

their lives. It is possible that some of the differences between generations are not generational but a function of becoming more religious with age (Pew Research Center 2010). In contrast, some religious beliefs of Millennials are similar when compared to other generations. Such similarities include the belief in life after death, miracles, and the existence of heaven and hell (Pew Research Center 2010).

Among college students, switching from one religious institution to another was not frequent; however, students were more likely to change their views about their religion (Lefkowitz 2005). Earlier research on college students found that change in religious attitude and values also followed no uniform direction (Feldman 1970). More recently, research reports that higher levels of independence leads to lower levels of church attendance (Lefkowitz 2005). Research also speculates that college does not directly influence the change in religious orientation but may indirectly do so by increasing the student's independence, knowledge and intelligence towards political-economic orientation (Feldman 1970). Further, religious change in college can be associated with (1) the college environment and (2) the student's socio-economic status (Feldman 1970). Also, the longer the student is in college, the more likely they are going to experience change in their religious beliefs (Lefkowitz 2005). Finally, the higher religious diversity or religiosity of a college campus, the greater the likelihood a student may have the thoughts of change (Patel 2007).

There is a correlation between a parent's religion and the religion of their child when they become a young adult. As stated above, roughly four out of five Millennials keep the same religion they had as a child (Pew Research Center 2010). Thus the effectiveness of religious socialization is an important consideration. Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) emphasize that

socialization can have positive and/or negative effects on the continuity of religious affiliation, attitudes, and behavior. The more positive the religious socialization the child is exposed, the more likely they are to keep the religion they have as child. And if the religious socialization was negative, the higher the likelihood of religious change (Boyatzis and Janicki 2003).

However in a different study two-thirds of a sample reported to have high exposure to religious socialization as children but showed no relationship with current religious attendance and identity. The authors suggest that this could be due to high feelings of individualism among the emerging adults (Arnett and Jensen 2002). It should also be noted that if the parent does not have a religious affiliation when raising their child, the likelihood of a child to have a religion as a young adult is low (Stadfort and Haworth 2002).

Another explanation for lower religious participation levels of the millennial generation comes from rational choice theory. Arnett and Jensen (2002) suggest that there are higher levels of individualism among Millennials. If this is the case, a rational choice model (e.g. Ellison and Sherkat 1995) may help explain why Millennials may choose to disaffiliate and stop attending religious services. Religious choices are complicated and reflect commitments of time and energy.

Religion in Millennials is giving way to a movement in personal spirituality, where they believe that spirituality is not less important than religion but different (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). One study describes spirituality for Millennials as a personal journey in which one mixes and matches religious beliefs and practices (Stadfort and Haworth 2002). Spirituality is also an emerging trend in the general population which could be influencing the Millennials. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) report that self-rated spirituality was higher than religiosity. The majority of

respondents defined themselves as being spiritual (93%) and religious (74%) and only small minority claimed to be neither (3%). The authors report significant positive correlations between self-rated spirituality and high level of education, income, frequency of prayer, experienced of being hurt by the clergy, new age beliefs, and, mystic experiences. They found that religion is associated with more authoritarianism, religious orthodoxy, parental religious attendance, self-righteousness, and church attendance. The authors found that both religion and spirituality was defined as personal but religion was also defined as organizational and concluded that the two concepts were not independent of one another (Zinnbauer et. all 1997).

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine why Millennials have moved away from public religious participation (i.e., lower rates of attendance at religious services). This study will focus on the potential impact that Millennials religious ideology and concerns, will have on their political participation and ideology. Religious ideology has affected political ideology and participation throughout American History. It is important to study these correlations in American youth and young adults because; Millennials are the next generation that could cause great political change in America.

Correlations between religion and politics in the American Society

Approximately 82% of Americans say they identify with religion and 58% report that they belong to a church (Wald and Colhoun-brown 2007). Approximately 35% of registered voters identify with the Democratic Party, 28% identify independent and 33% identify with the Republican Party (Pew Research Group 2012). A further breakdown by religious group will

show that Catholics identify as 49% democrat and 38% republican, Protestants identify 33% democrat and 61% republican, Black Protestants identify 86% democrat and 6% republican, Jewish identify 72% democrat and 28% republican and No religious preference identified as 58% democrat and 35% republican. This can be matched up with the 2004 presidential election where the higher the particular political sway the more likely they were to vote for a specific candidate. For example, Protestants voted for George W. Bush. It could also be noted that registered voters who attend religious services at least once a week are more likely to identify or lean towards the Republican Party (Pew Research Group 2012).

A recent study could provide a brief example to why certain religious groups may identify with particular political parties. Protestants are most likely to vote republican because of similar ideals (Brooks and Manza 2004), such as the concern of family decline (Brooks 2002), and this trend has not changed in over three decades (Brooks and Manza 2004). This study could provide support to why Black Protestants have overwhelmingly democratic lean, because of similar ideals.

Another study of college aged men between the years of 1948-1984 reported a trend of wavering liberal and conservative views. These variations in political views more than likely reflect the issues of the times and could be based upon who was the president at the time. (e.g., Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, Carter). Conservative views peaked in 1950 and 1984, where more liberal views peaked around 1972 (Hastings and Hoge 1986). As stated above in 2008 Millennials voted overwhelmingly democrat which represent another swing toward more liberal positions.

The Current Study

The literature raises a number of interesting questions. What are the relationships between political ideologies and religious ideologies in the millennial generation? That is, what is the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and political ideology? The emerging trend of Democratic Party identification among the millennial generation could be directly related to a non-religious and more spiritual oriented ideology. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of religious identification, religious participation, subjective religiosity and spirituality on political views and ideology.

The findings of this research will help us understand the nature of the relationships between religious views and political views in the millennial generation and why they exist. This study will close the gaps between existing literature regarding current political and religious trends among Millennials. This research contributes to literature because it is important to understand the political and religious views of the upcoming generation. Millennials have the ability to make huge political statements, and their decisions, attitudes, and behavior will significantly impact the future of the United States.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the correlations between religious ideology and political ideology of the Millennial generation at the University of Central Florida?

HYPOTHESES

- 1.** A correlation exists between religious ideologies and political ideologies of the Millennial generation at the University of Central Florida
- 2.** The more religious a millennial is, the more likely they will possess conservative ideologies.
- 3.** The less religious a millennial is, the more likely they will possess liberal ideologies.
- 4.** Conservative Millennials will be more religious, and Liberal Millennials will have a higher chance of being non- religious.

METHOD/SAMPLE

This study examines the effect that religious ideology has on political ideology amongst the Millennial generation at the University of Central Florida. The aim of the study is to explore the relationship between religious ideology and political ideology.

Online surveys and paper surveys were used for this research. The surveys were administered to UCF students between the ages of 18 and 30. The paper surveys were distributed to UCF students. The primary purpose of using both paper and online surveys was to increase the number of potential students in the survey. The online survey was made available to students in order to reach students that I do not have personal contact with and increase the diversity of survey respondents through different majors and groups. Through both methods, the sample consisted of students between the ages of 18 and 30 because this age group has been identified as the Millennial generation. The total sample size for the analysis was 380.

MEASUREMENTS

Dependent variables. Two different sets of questions were used for the dependent variables. The first set of questions includes measures of political attitudes and was measured using five--point Likert scales. Mixtures of traditional conservative and liberal political statements were presented to ensure a variety in the respondent's answer. The scales ranged from one to five, one meaning "Strongly Disagree" to five meaning "Strongly Agree". The political statements are: (A) Gay marriage should be legal, (B) Women have the right to have an abortion if they choose, (C) Gun laws should be stricter, (D) Marijuana should be legal, (E) Americans should pay fewer taxes, (F) Small businesses should have fewer regulations, (G) The preservation of our rights and freedoms should be entrusted to a strong national defense, (H) I believe in a large government presence in our society, and (I) There should be a separation between church and state. All nine variables were coded or recoded so that higher scores represent more liberal views and lower scores represent more conservative views.

The second set of questions includes measures of religious attitudes and was also measured through five-point Likert scales. The respondent was presented a list of religious concepts. These religious concepts are used to measure the respondent's religiosity and/or spirituality. The five-point Likert scale ranged from one to five, one meaning "Strongly Disbelieve" to five meaning "Strongly Believe". The concepts are coded or recoded so that higher scores reflect higher religiosity or belief and lower scores indicate lower religiosity. The religious measures are: (A) Belief in God, (B) The effectiveness of prayer, (C) Belief in life after death, (D) Belief in miracles, (E) Certainty of Karma, (F), Belief in spirits, (G) Belief in Heaven/Hell, (H) Good/Evil, and (I) The effectiveness of organized religion.

Independent variables. Religious ideology was measured by constructing religious or not religious categories by combining answers from the question measuring religiosity and spirituality. The question asked the respondent “Which statement best describes you?” The answers are religious and spiritual, religious and not spiritual, spiritual and not religious, and neither religious nor spiritual. The responses are recoded to create a dichotomous religious variable. The two answers that describe the respondent as religious were combined to construct the religious category. The two responses that described the respondent as not religious were combined to make the non-religious category. The political ideology variable was measured by a question tapping their political views. The question is very similar to the one used by the General Social Survey. The following was presented to the respondent: “I tend to have political views that are...” The response categories were very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, and very liberal. A three category political ideology variable is constructed by recoding the original responses. Very conservative and conservative are combined to constitute the conservative category, moderate became the moderate category, and very liberal and liberal are combined to create the liberal category. As a result, the independent variables are nominal level variables. The religious ideology variable is dichotomous and the political ideology variable is a three category variable.

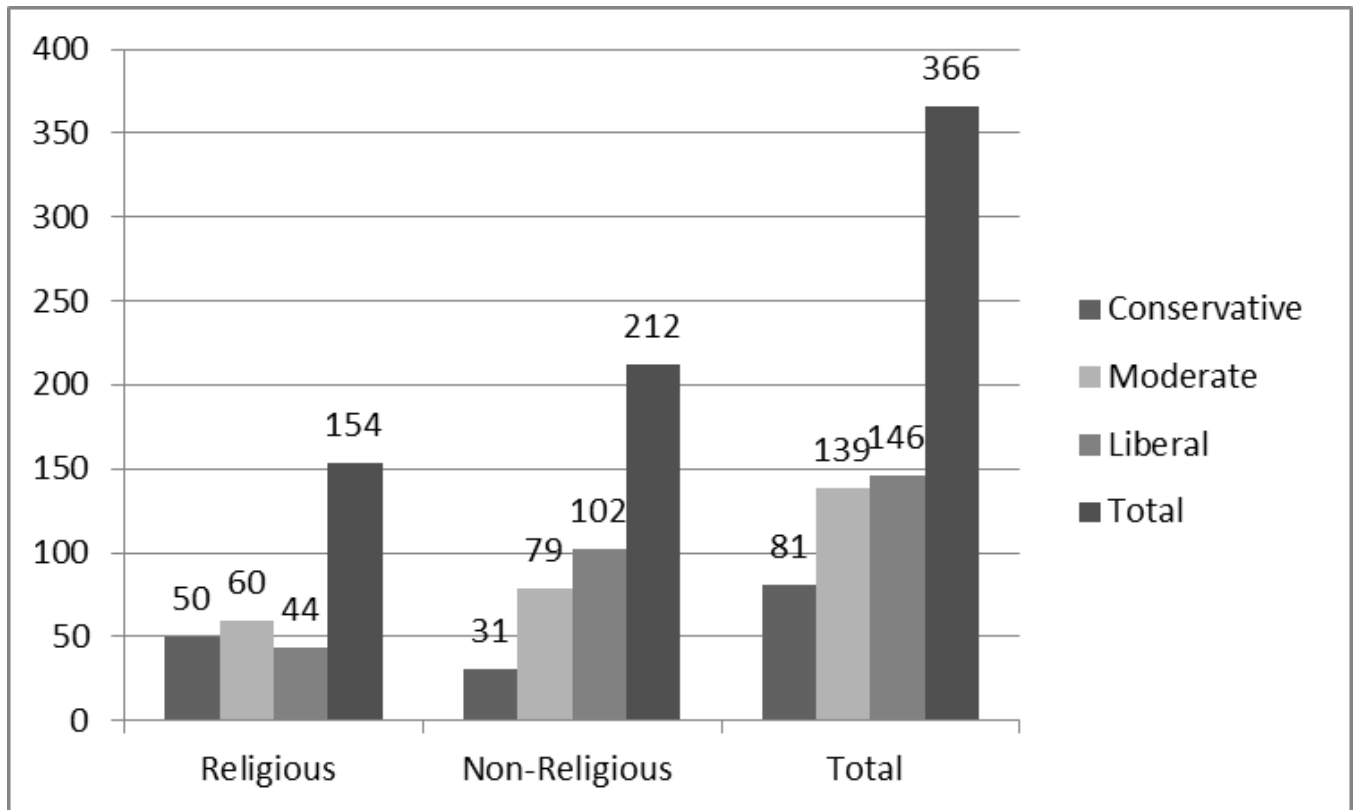
Demographic. Out of the total sample size of 380 Millennials; approximately 66% identify female and 34% identify male. Regarding race and ethnicity 59.3% identify White, 13.5% identify Black, 14.3% identify Hispanic and 12% identified with another racial category. Regarding class standing 27% identified as a freshman, 21.9% Identified as a sophomore, 23.5 identified as a junior, 23.8 Identified as a senior and 3% identified as graduate students.

ANALYSIS

SPSS was used to analyze the data. A cross tabulation is used to exhibit the relationship between the religious ideology variable and the political ideology variable. A Chi-square test is used to test the first hypothesis. Independent T-Test tests are used to test the impact of religious ideology on political attitudes. One-Way analysis of variance is used to analyze the hypothesis that religious attitudes vary by political ideology.

Graph 1 shows the relationship between religious ideology and political ideology. It reveals the distribution of political ideology by religious and non-religious Millennials. Millennials may be less religious than older generations, but not by as much as some studies may claim. Out of the total number of respondents 42% reported being religious, and 58% reported being non-religious. Though 42% may still be considered a relatively low percentage, if compared to other generations, it is important to acknowledge that not all Millennials are non-religious. Just a little more than half are, so religion still may play a strong role in the decision making of a significant portion of Millennials.

Table 1: Religiosity in Compassion to Political Ideology



When political ideology is considered out of all of the respondents only 22.1% reported having conservative political views, 38% reported having moderate political views, and 39.9% reported having liberal political views. Millennials are simply not overwhelmingly liberal, like some studies may claim, not even half the total respondents have liberal political views. What Millennials do have is underwhelming conservative views. This means Millennials are much more likely to identify as moderate or liberal than conservative. So what happens when religious ideology is compared to political ideology? Of the total number of Millennials who reported being religious only 32.5% said they had conservative political views, following 39% who said they had moderate political views, and 28.5% who said they had liberal political views.

These percentages break the stereotype that all Religious people have conservative political views, or at least in terms of Millennials in this study. The majority or at least the highest percentage of political views amongst religious Millennials is moderate. There is also only a 4% difference between religious Millennials who have conservative view and those who have liberal views. So what kind of political views do religious Millennials have? Well that's kind of a hard question to answer because the distribution is very similar across the three categories.

Moving to the non-religious Millennials and political ideology, only 14.6% reported having conservative views. 37.4% reported having moderate views and 48% reported having liberal views. Nearly half of non-religious Millennials had liberal views. This was the majority but not overwhelmingly so. Not even in the confines of non-religiosity is the liberal ideology a vast majority for Millennials. What kind of political views do non-religious Millennials have? It would be pretty safe to say either liberal or moderate. On a side note out of all conservative Millennials (N=81), fifty reported being religious and 31 reported being non-religious, this is almost a 40/60 split. After all this is taking into consideration does a Millennial's religiosity affect their political thoughts and views regardless of political category? The following analysis addresses this issue.

Political Statements in Comparison to Religiosity

As described in the analysis section, a comparison of means was used to determine the difference between religious Millennials and non-religious Millennials and their level of agreement with specific political statements. These political statements were set up so that the

higher the mean, the more liberal the ideology of the group. Table 1 shows five of the nine political statements were statistically significant. In each case, the non-religious category had the more liberal score.

Table 2: Political Statements in Comparison to Religiosity

	Religious		Non Religious		Significant
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	
Legalization of Gay Marriage	3.662	1.327	4.523	0.9906	*
Legalization of Abortion	3.516	1.3474	4.477	1.0312	*
Stricter Gun Laws	3.229	1.3769	3.352	1.4238	
Legalization of Marijuana	3.242	1.3769	3.794	1.2326	*
Americans should Pay Fewer Taxes**	2.554	1.0646	2.872	1.1502	
Sm Buisness should have Fewer Regulations**	2.513	0.9332	2.523	0.8834	
Rights/Freedoms entrusted to Military Defense**	2.401	0.9396	2.872	1.0124	*
Large Government Presence in Society	2.892	1.129	2.716	1.0031	
Seperation between Church and State	3.635	1.1864	4.436	0.855	*

** Likert scale has been flipped so "1" now equals "strongly agree" and "5" equals "strongly disagree"

Political statement (A), states “Gay Marriage should be Legal.” Religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.662 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 4.523. Non-religious Millennials quite clearly support the legalization of gay marriage more than religious Millennials. Non-religious Millennials have a mean that is almost an entire point higher than religious Millennials; this would make these two means significant. This statement also has the largest mean discrepancy between the two groups. It should be noted that religious Millennials by no regard disagree with gay marriage, their mean actually puts them right between neither agree or disagree and agree. This would contrast the stereotype that those who are religious disagree with gay marriage. Millennials in fact agree with the legalization of gay marriage, it

simply depends on their religiosity to what degree. Political statement (B) states “Women should have the right to have an abortion if they choose”. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.516 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 4.477. Non-religious Millennials are more likely to agree with pro-choice laws; there is also a significant difference between these two means. Religious Millennials do not outright disagree with pro-choice laws either as stereotype may imply. In general Millennials regardless of religiosity agrees with pro-choice laws, it simply depends on the particular Millennials religiosity to determine to which extend they may agree. Political statement (C), states “Gun laws should be stricter”. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.229 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.352. Though non-religious Millennials do have a slightly higher mean, these two means are not significant so it cannot be said which group agrees that gun laws should be stricter more than the other. What can be said is both groups have means that are close to 3.0 which suggest that Millennials regardless of religiosity are not sure, or they neither agree nor disagree with stricter gun laws. Political statement (D), states “Marijuana should be legal”. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.242 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.794. Non-religious Millennials agree with the legalization of Marijuana more than religious Millennials, these means are also significant. The mean for this legalization of marijuana may be lower than expected by some; it is not as high as the previous two political statements for the legalization of specific rights. This could allude that Millennials primarily non-religious do agree with legalization of marijuana but not to the staggering extent as to be expected. Political statement (E), states “Americans should pay fewer taxes”. It should be noted that for this particular political statement the Likert scale and its responses has been flipped so a response of “1” now

suggests ‘Strongly Agree’ and a response of “5” suggests “Strongly Disagree”. This was done because Americans paying fewer taxes is traditionally a conservative perspective, which would make a high mean a conservative ideology, so flipping the Likert scale would keep a high mean at a more Liberal ideology. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.554 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.872. Though religious Millennials are more likely to agree with this statement, these means have tested to be non-significant which signifies that one group cannot agree more than the other. However both groups responded in the higher range of 2 (between 2.5-2.9) this conveys that slightly more Millennials agree with paying fewer taxes than disagree, which can be conceived as a conservative economic ideology. Political Statement (F), states “Small Business’ should have fewer regulations”. It should be noted that like the previous statement (E), the Likert Scale for this question has been flipped so a high mean would result in a more liberal ideology. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.513 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.523. These means are not significant because neither group agrees with this statement more. However, more Millennials agreed with small business’ having fewer regulations than disagreed. This Conveys that all Millennials regardless of religiosity agree with this statement. Political statement (G), states “The preservation of our rights and freedoms should be entrusted to a strong military defense”. It should be noted that like the previous statements (E F), the Likert Scale for this question has been flipped so a high mean would result in a more liberal ideology. Religious Millennials have a mean of score 2.401 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.873. Non-religious Millennials are more likely to disagree with this statement than religious Millennials. There is also significance between these means. Millennials again scored in the 2 point range for this particular statement. This could mean the

Millennials still believe in the use of Military for protection but it depends on the religiosity of the millennial to determine to which degree. Political statement (H), states “I believe in a large government presence in our society”. Religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.892 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 2.716. These means are not significant which conveys that neither group agrees with this political statement more than the other. In fact the means for both groups fall right below the 3.0 range, which would suggest that Millennials regardless of religiosity are simply not sure, or neither agrees nor disagrees with a large government presence in our society. Political statement (I) states, “There should be a separation between church and state.” Religious Millennials have a mean score of 3.635 and non-religious Millennials have a mean score of 4.436. These means are significant which signifies that non-religious Millennials are more likely to agree with the separation between church and state than religious Millennials. It should be noted that religious Millennials do not disagree with this statement, more religious Millennials actually agree than disagree. This could allude that Millennials agree with the separation between church and state, it simply depends upon the Millennials religiosity to determine to which extent they may agree with this statement. Overall when all of the political statements are taken into perspective non-religious Millennials are more likely to have a liberal ideology than religious Millennials.

Religious Concepts in Comparison to Political Ideology

As described in the analysis section a comparison of means was used to determine the difference between conservative, moderate, and liberal Millennials and their belief in particular religious concepts. These religious concepts were designed to measure religiosity. These

religious concepts were also coded so that the higher the mean score, the more religious the Millennial is. The means, standard deviations, and significance for each political statement can be observed in Table 2. It should be noted that significance has been marked if there is significance between any of the means, because there are three categories it is beyond the constraints of my project to determine which exact mean was significant from another. However, a look at the pattern of the means shows that conservative means tend to be the highest and liberal means the lowest.

Table 3: Religious Concepts in Comparison to Political Ideology

	Conservative		Moderate		Liberal		Significant
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	
God	4.494	0.9371	3.879	1.3819	3.438	1.5357	*
Prayer	4.198	1.1227	3.536	1.4953	3.041	1.5087	*
Life After Death	4.346	0.9376	3.679	1.283	3.301	1.4306	*
Miracles	4.222	0.9747	3.616	1.2975	3.13	1.4397	*
Karma	3.519	1.2561	3.87	1.1062	3.63	1.3747	
Spirits	3.778	1.1832	3.377	1.2912	3.247	1.316	
Heaven/Hell	4.209	1.0807	3.442	1.4348	2.966	1.4875	*
Good/Evil	4.432	0.8506	4.073	1.0508	3.706	1.3502	*
Organized Religion	3.79	1.126	3.066	1.2731	2.774	1.2731	*

Religious Concept (A) is “God”. Millennials who are conservative have a mean of 4.494, moderate mean of 3.807, and liberal mean of 3.438. These means are in some way significant to each other. Conservative Millennials are more likely to believe in God than moderate or liberal Millennials. Moderate and Liberal Millennials do however believe in the concept of God, moderates more so than liberal, it depends on the Millennials political ideology to determine to what degree they believe. Religious concept (B) is “The Effectiveness of Prayer”. Conservative

Millennials have a mean of 4.198, moderates have a mean of 3.536 and liberals have a mean of 3.04. These means are in some way significant to each other. Conservative Millennials are also more likely to believe in the effectiveness of prayer more so than moderate or liberal Millennials. One could argue that both conservative and moderate Millennials believe in this concept however, liberal Millennials simple do not know or neither believe nor disbelieve. Religious concept (C) is “Life after Death”. Conservative Millennials have a mean of 4.346, moderates have a mean of 3.679 and liberals have a mean of 3.301. There is significance in some way between these means when compared to each other. Conservative Millennials are more likely to believe in the concept of life after death more than moderate or liberal Millennials. Conservative and moderate Millennials generally agree with this concept, however liberal Millennials are closer to neither believing nor disbelieving or simply not knowing whether they believe. Religious concept (D) is “Miracles”. Conservative Millennials have a mean of 4.222, moderates have a mean of 3.616, and liberals have a mean of 3.13. These means are in some way significant to each when compared. Conservative Millennials are more likely to believe in the concept of mircales more than moderate or liberal Millennials. Conservative and moderate Millennials in general believe in this concept, however liberal Millennials are closer to not knowing whether they believe, or neither believing nor disbelieving. Religious concept (E) is “Karma”. Conservative Millennials have a mean of 3.519, moderates have a mean of 3.87 and liberals have a mean of 3.63. There is no significance when comparing these means to each other. Though it may be noted that this is the only religious concept where conservatives do not have the highest overall mean score. Generally speaking Millennials believe in the concept of Karma regardless of their political ideology. Religious concept (F) is “Spirits”. Conservative Millennials have a

mean of 3.778, moderates have a mean of 3.379 and liberals have a mean of 3.247. There is no significance between these means. In general Millennials fall somewhere between believing in the concept of spirits, or not being sure or, neither believing nor disbelieving in spirits. Religious concept (G) is “Heaven/Hell”. Conservative Millennials have a mean of 4.209, moderates have a mean of 3.44, and liberals have a mean of 2.966. These means are in some way significant when compared to each other. Conservative Millennials are also much more likely to believe in the concept of Heaven/Hell than moderate or liberal Millennials. It should be noted that this religious concept holds the biggest discrepancy in mean scores between conservative and liberal Millennials. Religious concept (H) is “Good/Evil.” Conservative Millennials have a mean score of 4.432, moderates have a mean score of 4.073 and liberals have a mean score of 3.7055. These means are in some way significant when compared to each other. Conservative Millennials are much more likely to believe in the concept of Good/Evil when compared to moderate or liberal Millennials. Millennials regardless of political ideology believe in this concept it simply depends on which political ideology to determine to what extent they may believe. It should also be noted that this concept had the highest mean scores for all three political ideologies, this alludes that Millennials believe in the concept of Good/Evil the most out of all the religious concepts. Religious concept (I) is “The effectiveness of organized religion”. Conservative Millennials have a mean score of 3.79, moderates have a mean score of 3.068 and liberals have a mean score of 2.774. These means are significant in some way to each when compared. Conservative Millennials are more likely to believe in the effectiveness of organized religion more so than moderate or liberal Millennials. It should be noted that this concept hold the lowest mean scores for moderate and liberal Millennials, signifying moderate and liberal Millennials believe in the

effectiveness of organized religion the least out of all other religious concepts listed. Overall when every religious concept is taken into perspective, conservative Millennials are much more likely to be religious when compared to moderate or liberal Millennials.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 states that there is a relationship between religious ideologies and political ideologies of the millennial generation at the University of Central Florida. Is this hypothesis correct? Yes, non-religious Millennials are more likely to support liberal ideologies than religious Millennials. This statement holds when looking at liberal social political views, such as Gay Marriage, and pro-choice laws. However, as mentioned above religious Millennials by no regard disagree with these liberal social values, so Millennials in general could be considered to have social liberal political views. It simply depends on how religious a Millennial is to determine how liberal their social views may be. It was also observed that not all the political statements that had means scores that suggested Millennials would agree were Liberal. Statements (E F G) could all be considered conservative views. This could allude that Millennials still possess conservative ideologies in regards to certain aspects (Taxes, business regulations, and the military). It is also interesting that twenty-eight point five % of religious Millennials reported to have liberal political views, but by this hypothesis their religiosity still effects there political ideologies.

Hypothesis 2 states the more religious a millennial is, the more likely they will possess conservative ideologies and Hypothesis 3 states the less religious a millennial is, the more likely they will possess liberal ideologies. Both of these hypotheses have been addressed above and

both have been confirmed. Non-religious Millennials have more liberal political views than religious Millennials. Religious Millennials are more likely to have conservative views than non-religious Millennials.

Hypothesis 4 states Conservative Millennials will be more religious, and Liberal Millennials will have a higher chance of being non-religious. This has also been confirmed, when looking at mean scores for religious concepts; conservative Millennials have the highest score for all but one concept (Karma). This conveys that conservative Millennials are more religious than liberal Millennials.

In conclusion all hypotheses have been confirmed and it can be observed that at the University of Central Florida a Millennials religiosity dose effect their political ideology regardless of the political ideology they may identify with. This research shows that religious Millennials are more conservative than non-religious Millennials. It will be important to observe factors that may determine a Millennials political ideology because Millennials are the political future of the United States of America. Understanding the effects of religiosity on political views is one step closer to understanding what affects a Millennials political ideology, and possibly understanding the political behaviors they may pursue in the future.

APPENDIX: SURVEY

Religious and Political Ideology Survey

1). Are you between the ages of 18 and 30?

- A. Yes
- B. No

2). Which Statement best describes you?

- A. Religious and spiritual
- B. Religious and not spiritual
- C. Spiritual and not religious
- D. Neither religious nor spiritual

3). Rate the following concepts from 1- Strongly Disbelieve to 5- Strongly Believe

	Str Disbelieve	Disbelieve	N/IDK	Believe	Str Believe
A. <u>God</u>	1	2	3	4	5
B. <u>Effectiveness of Prayer</u>	1	2	3	4	5
C. <u>Life after Death</u>	1	2	3	4	5
D. <u>Miracles</u>	1	2	3	4	5
E. <u>Karma</u>	1	2	3	4	5
F. <u>Spirits</u>	1	2	3	4	5
G. <u>Heaven/Hell</u>	1	2	3	4	5
H. <u>Good/Evil</u>	1	2	3	4	5
I. <u>Effectiveness of organized religion</u>	1	2	3	4	5

4). I tend to have political views that are...

- A. Very Conservative
- B. Conservative
- C. Moderate
- D. Liberal
- E. Very Liberal
- F. I don't know

5). Rate the following statements from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Str	Disagree	Disagree	N/IDK	Agree	Str
Agree						
A. <u>Gay Marriage should be legal.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
B. <u>Women have the right to have an abortion if they choose.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
C. <u>Gun laws should be stricter.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
D. <u>Marijuana should be legal.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
E. <u>Americans should pay fewer taxes.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
F. <u>An Individuals behavior including criminals can be blamed on society.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
G. <u>Small businesses should have fewer regulations</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
H. <u>The preservation of our rights and freedoms should be entrusted to a strong national defense.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
I. <u>I believe in a large government presence in our society.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	
J. <u>There should be a separation between church and state.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	

25). What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female

27). What is your race/ethnicity?

- A. White
- B. Black
- C. Hispanic
- D. Asian
- E. Pacific Islander
- F. Native American
- G. Other _____

28). What is your class standing?

- A. Freshman
- B. Sophomore
- C. Junior
- D. Senior
- E. Graduate Student

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