

Literature Review and Background

Previous studies have found a significant relationship between generational identity and likelihood to be engaged in the political process. According to the PEW 2012 Political Survey, respondents ages 18-29 were far less certain they were registered to vote, had given less thought to the upcoming elections, and did not follow campaign news as closely.

There has also been an established relationship between political engagement and the religiosity of a person. People who identify as highly religious, are more likely to be involved in their community, and thus also in the political process (Gibson, 2008). In "Belonging, Believing, and Group Behavior: Religiosity and Voting in American Presidential Elections", Smith and Walker find that there is a sustained increase in likelihood to turn out and vote with religiosity, only dropping off from "high" to "highest" religiosity due to the tradeoff of time between religious and political activities.

Millennials are unique in both their low political engagement and low religiosity, according to the PEW 2014 Millennials in Adulthood report. This project specifically at the impact of religiosity on political engagement of Millennials, and how the relationship between them compares to other generations. Although both political engagement among generations and religiosity among generations have been studied, there has been no cross-comparison.

Research Question and Hypothesis

What is the impact of religiosity on political engagement of Millennials?

The greater religiosity, the higher levels of political engagement.

Data and Methodology

This research was conducted using data from PEW Research Center's 2012 American Values Survey.

Data was collected by PEW from a national, adult, non-institutionalized sample population totaling 3,008 respondents.

Interviews were administered via phone, in both English and Spanish, from April 4 – 15, 2012. 1,805 respondents were interviewed using their landline phone, and 1,203 with their cellphone.

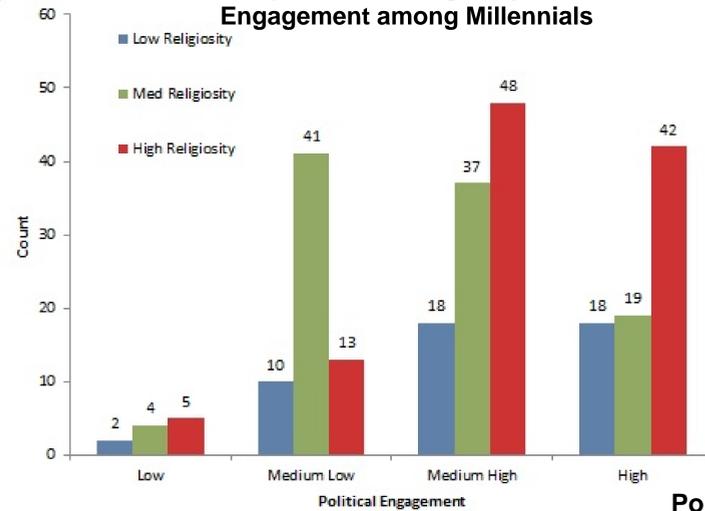
Using the survey's SPSS database, indices of both Religiosity (independent variable) and Political Engagement (dependent variable) were created after establishing relevant questions.

The Religiosity index has a Cronbach Alpha score of .786 and the Political Engagement index has a score of .769, meaning they are reliable.

After creating these indices, crosstabs between the two were ran and graphs were created (grouped by Generation) using Microsoft Excel to describe relationships.

Findings

Relationship between Religiosity and Political Engagement among Millennials

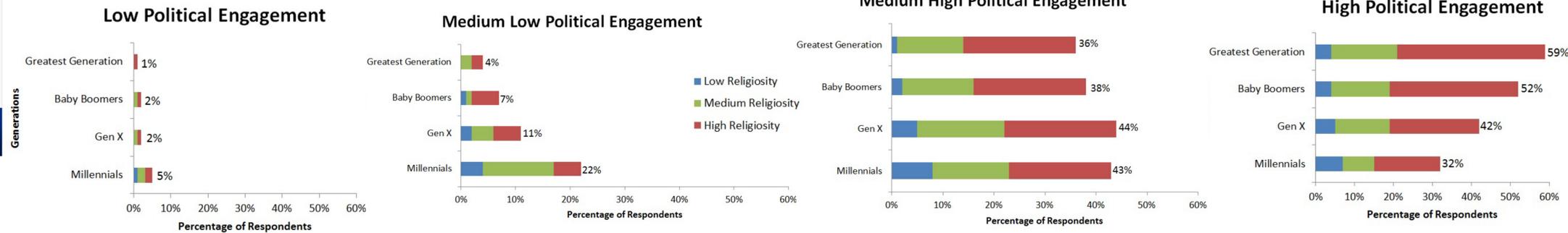


Percentage of Millennials indicating Medium High/High Political Engagement by Question

Question	Medium and Low Religiosity	High Religiosity
I feel guilty when I don't have the chance to vote.*	57%	69%
Most issues discussed in Washington affect me personally.	25%	28%
I'm pretty interested in following local politics.***	65%	82%
I'm interested in keeping up with national affairs.*	79%	86%
I feel it's my duty as a citizen to always vote.	84%	85%
How often would you say you vote? *	48%	62%
How much thought have you given to the upcoming presidential election?	42%	47%

statistical significance: * = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Political Engagement among Generations by Religiosity



Components of Indices

Components of Religiosity Index

Prayer is an important part of my life.
I never doubt the existence of God.
Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services... more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?

Components of Political Engagement

I feel guilty when I don't have the chance to vote.
Most issues discussed in Washington affect me personally.
I'm pretty interested in following local politics.
I'm interested in keeping up with national affairs.
I feel it's my duty as a citizen to always vote.
How often would you say you vote?
How much thought have you given to the upcoming presidential election?

Discussions and Conclusions

Millennials vs. Other Generations

- Support for the hypothesis that greater religiosity corresponds with greater political engagement for Millennials.
- There exists a slight dip from medium high to high political engagement.
- Millennials of low religiosity are more likely to have high political engagement than is the case for other generations.
 - Religiosity may be becoming less indicative of political engagement. The results of this study can be attributed to either the cohort, or life stage. To confirm these results, a study of the same Millennial cohort would need to be conducted in about 20 years, to see if the same relationship between religiosity and political engagement exists.
 - "Active rejection" vs. "Apathy"; Millennials are more likely to be secular, less accepting of traditional formal institutions (PEW 2014)

Patterns among Millennials

- The chart shows variation among Millennials of different religiosities by the measure of political engagement.
- High Religiosity Millennials are more interested in following local politics.
 - Medium and Low Religiosity Millennials are less likely to vote, and less likely to feel guilty when they don't vote, compared to Millennials of High Religiosity.
 - Among all Millennials, there is an increase in following national politics than local politics. High Religiosity Millennials are slightly more interested in following national affairs.
 - Among all Millennials, there is disagreement with the statement "Most issues discussed in Washington affect me personally."
 - All Millennials have given relatively the same amount of thought to the upcoming presidential election.

References

- Gibson, Troy. "Religion and Civic Engagement among America's Youth." *The Social Science Journal* 45,3 (2008): 504-14. Web.
Smith, Lauren E., and Lee D. Walker. "Belonging, Believing, and Group Behavior: Religiosity and Voting in American Presidential Elections: Religiosity and Voting in American Presidential Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* (2012): 1-15. 1 May 2012. Web.
PEW Research Center 2012 American Values Survey
PEW Research Center 2012 Political Survey
PEW Research Center 2014 Millennials in Adulthood Survey