

CONCERNING MILLENNIALS: EXPLORING GENERATIONAL COHORT EFFECTS
ON RACIAL LINKED FATE, RELIGION AND POLITICS, AND
SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES

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This research examines the political implications of the Millennial generation on American politics by exploring the interaction of generational cohort with race, social issues, and civil liberties. Relying on the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey and the 2018 General Social Survey, I examine (1) Millennial attitudes toward race and ethnicity by looking specifically at racial linked fate, (2) how Millennials interact with race and evangelical Christianity and how this interaction influences social policy preferences, and (3) how generational factors influence Millennial attitudes toward American civil liberties. I find that there are measurable effects of generational cohorts on the predicted value of Linked Fate for racial minority groups in the United States. My results suggest that Millennials are significantly more likely to have higher levels of linked fate for Latino and Asian Americans. However, I do not find sufficient evidence to suggest that African Americans' level of linked fate is affected either positively or negatively for Millennials. Second, for the investigation on social policy, the results suggest that those who sit at the intersection of the three groups- the Latino-Millennial evangelicals- hold policy preferences that contrast from those who are solely either Latino, Millennial, or evangelical. Latino-Millennial evangelicals are significantly more likely to hold liberal policy preferences on issues of climate change but more conservative attitudes on aid to the poor. Lastly, on issues of American civil liberties, the results indicate that Millennials are far more likely to support free speech (even for controversial actors), than both the Boomer generation and Generation X. Millennials are also more likely to oppose governmental intervention in religion and are significantly more likely to support abortion rights for women.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States is expected to announce decisions on multiple cases of extreme consequence dealing with issues of abortion, climate change, and religion. Additionally, the court has already agreed to hear cases for the following session dealing with affirmative action and religion. Clearly, the court is poised to address major social and civil liberties issues. The conservative makeup of the Court will undoubtedly have a significant influence on the Court's decisions that will carry implications for future generations. One question that arises is, how in line are the conservative attitudes expressed or expected by the courts with the general population, and more specifically with younger voters (Totenberg 2022; Wurgler and Brooks 2014)? This dissertation addresses this topic by focusing attention on the largest politically viable group in the country, the Millennial Generation, by testing Millennial attitudes on race, religion, social policy and American civil liberties.

A Look at the Current Literature

What is the significance of generational cohorts on political attitudes and behavior? Traditional use of generations in political science has typically been as a place holder for age (Eyerman and Turner 1998). However, unique attributes in each generational group offer insight into the political predispositions of large portions of the American Electorate that allow its use as an explanatory variable for testing and predicting of political phenomena (Ainsworth 2001). As this dissertation is focused on the influences of the Millennial generation I offer an overview of how the Millennial cohort is unique and why that matters for political behavior.

As the cohort has only recently come into adulthood, little has been written on the specific political behavior of Millennials but what work has been done sets a narrative of a

unique cohort with distinct political and social pressures and expectations (Ross and Rouse 2018; Rouse and Ross 2020). Millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) are the largest and most racially, ethnically, and sexually diverse generational cohort in American history (PEW 2015).

Millennials engage in politics through social media and new media sources at a higher rate than any current cohort and are the first generational group to become politically active in a time of fully online politics (Zukin et al. 2016). They also tend to favor non-traditional forms of political participation often involving collective action and social movements and do so at very high rates (O'Toole 2010; Milkman, 2017). Their political ideology tends to favor liberal progressivism and to a large extent is focused on the net gain of collective goods (Norman 2016; Fisher 2018). The appeal of liberal policies however has not seen them captured by the Democratic Party, instead Millennials are more likely than any other generational cohort to self-identify as political independents (Nava et al. 2014).

Millennials are also recognized as the first true native cosmopolitans (Rouse and Ross 2018). Millennial cosmopolitanism is highlighted by the exponential growth and near ubiquitous nature of social networking that have allowed the cohort to become more interconnected across all aspects of American society than any previous generational group. The use of social networking allows Millennials to extend their personal and professional connectivity across social, state, and political boundaries in a way that was previously impossible (Nussbaum 1996). The increase in connectivity for the cohort has shaped the Millennial world to be much smaller and inter-reliant than it was for older Americans (Ross and Rouse 2020). Generational change from critical junctures however is not the only explanation for distinctions between generational cohorts. While it may be attractive to theorize that the junctures are sufficient to establish entirely new generational styles it is imperative to understand countervailing arguments. For

instance, some suggest that changes in racial attitudes for millennials may have less to do with the unique attributes of the generation that establish a post-racial cohort and are more likely to be a product of changes in life cycle socialization (Watts and DeSante 2020). However, this line of research is more focused on group consciousness and intergroup competition. The nature of this investigation relies less on outgroup interactions and more so on ingroup awareness and self-association into those respective groups. How then do the generational attributes influence political behavior for the cohort and political outcomes for the country?

Layout of the Dissertation

This dissertation is focused along two fundamental empirical questions: First, do Millennials have a distinct political identity and Second, what is the effect of this identity on political behavior? More specifically this dissertation examines (1) Millennial attitudes toward race and ethnicity by looking specifically at racial linked fate, (2) how Millennials interact with race and evangelical Christianity and how this interaction influences social policy preferences, and (3) how generational factors influence Millennial attitudes toward American civil liberties.

First, Chapter 2 explores the development of the Millennial identity and how this identity influences racial and ethnic politics. I begin by drawing from literature on the development of generational identities (Mannheim 1927; 1970), and suggest that Millennials have developed a unique generational style that influences the way that they perceive themselves in both in-group and out-group scenarios. I test my assumptions by relying on survey data taken from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey and examine levels of racial linked fate across generational cohorts. This chapter highlights the political implications of Millennials specifically in dealing with issues of race and ethnicity. Given the current racial divide in American politics, if the new generational style of Millennials drives the cohort to engage with race and across

racial groups differently than previous generations it may carry significant implications for politics nationwide. As the Millennial generation is the most racially diverse cohort in American history, it can be expected that an increased awareness of racial group identity will drastically increase the political activity of racial minorities in the American electorate (Dawson 1994, McClain et al. 2009).

Second, I investigate the influence of race and generational cohorts in the area of religion and politics. Although there has been a steady decline of religiosity in the United States over the past few decades, the unusually high level of religiosity in the American electorate ensures that religion continues to play a significant role in policy preference, party identification and engagement in American politics (Schlozman and Brady 1995; Putnam 2000; Djupe and Gilbert 2006; Jamal 2005). The influence of religion is perhaps most evident in the political behavior of evangelical Christians. Evangelicals tend to hold far more conservative attitudes on social issues and thus have a distinct Republican partisan identification (Gorski 2017). Whereas the political effects of evangelicalism are most clearly defined in white voters, when considered independently Latino and Millennial voters are generally associated with favoring more liberal progressive policies (McKenzie and Rouse 2012; Rouse and Ross 2020). Moreover, Millennials are now the largest generational cohort of voting age and the increase in the Latino population over the last decade has seen Latinos pass African Americans as the largest minority group in the country. Given the high rate of religiosity in the United States, a majority of Millennials and Latinos self-identify as religious with a significant portion of the religious affiliating with evangelical denominations (Gallup, 2022). Because of this it is critical to understand the function and influence of this increasingly important subcategory, the Latino Millennials, on the role of religion in politics. In Chapter 3, I use data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election

Survey to explore the effect of being a member of the Millennial generation on social policy preferences for evangelical Christians and Latinos in the United States. Given the conservative leanings of evangelical Christians in American politics along with the liberal preferences of both Latino and Millennial voters, I examine the social policy preferences of those at the intersection of these three groups. The nature of the political behavior of Latino-Millennial evangelicals may have a significant influence in the conservative nature and effectiveness of evangelical politics in the United States.

Lastly, in Chapter 4 I explore Millennial support for civil liberties. Extant literature has found individual level characteristics to be among the leading predictors of support for American civil liberties (Chanley 1994; Marcus et al. 1995). That is to say, a person's identity affects how tolerant they are and to what extent the actions of others should be constitutionally protected. I expand on the previous research by framing support for civil liberties as a result of generational cohort effects. More specifically I argue Millennials will be far more likely to support the civil liberties of others than previous cohorts. Using data from the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS) I test my assumptions of Millennial attitudes toward civil liberties. By examining Millennial support for (1) free speech, (2) religious freedom, and (3) a woman's right to an abortion, I hope to contribute to the literature and highlight the role that the Millennial generation will play in the future of American politics. If the traditional markers of political engagement hold true for Millennials the cohort should begin to vote at much higher rates and have greater impact on political outcomes. Furthermore, the large ratio of Millennials in the Latino population will have significant influence in many of the states, like Texas and Florida, where conservative legislatures may need to adapt to maintain political control.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENERATIONAL EFFECT ON RACIAL LINKED FATE

Abstract

Recent scholarship provides evidence of an inverse relationship between age and linked fate in the Latino community, finding that older Latinos tend to have lower levels of racial linked fate. Importantly age has only recently become a significant predictor for linked fate among Latina/o Americans. I argue that not only is age an important variable, there may be unique inter-generational cohort attributes that would separate the youngest fully politically viable group, the Millennial generation, from the older generations. I theorize that Millennials may have a higher sense of group awareness, described here as *comunidad*, that would lend itself to higher rates of racially determined linked fate. The empirical analysis supports the assumption that the unique qualities of the Millennial generation predict positive relationships between minorities and linked fate and help explain the rise in significance of age as an explanatory variable. The results indicate that Millennials are positively correlated with the value of *comunidad* and that higher levels of *comunidad* are positively correlated with higher levels of Linked Fate. The study uses data from the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Post Election Survey (CMPS) to substantiate the proposed differences concerning Millennials.

Introduction

Is there a measurable effect of generational cohorts on the predicted value of Linked Fate for American racial minority groups? The study of group Identity and political behavior of racial-ethnic minorities in the United States has established unique characteristics associated with individual groups as well as many overlapping qualities and historical contexts that emphasize the effect these groups have on modern politics. In looking specifically at the salience

of group identity on political behavior Michael Dawson demonstrated that ingroup association for minorities is highly correlated with political participation (Dawson 1989). Since then Linked fate has been used to predict ideology and engagement in other minority groups across the United States (Sanchez and Vargas 2016). Likewise, recent scholarship on racial and ethnic politics provides evidence of an inverse relationship between age and linked fate in the Latino community, finding that older Latinos tend to give lower levels of importance to the notion of linked fate (Sanchez et al. 2019). This discovery raises an interesting question: is there something unique about the Millennial generation that makes age a predictor of linked fate that was not present in previous studies? If there is, how does this effect vary across racial groups in the United States?

I follow up on this finding by suggesting that not only is age an important variable, but there may be unique inter-generational cohort attributes that would separate the youngest fully politically viable group, the Millennial generation, from older cohorts. Based largely on extensions to assumptions proposed by the concept of political cosmopolitanism (Brock and Brighouse, 2009) and Robert Putnam's (2000) notion of social capital, I suggest that Millennials have a higher sense of group awareness, described here as *comunidad*, that can be used to predict higher rates of racially determined linked fate. More specifically I posit that as the sense of *comunidad* increases so does the individual's consciousness of community struggles and that this awareness will trigger a person's sense of racial linked fate.

Using data from the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Post Election Survey (CMPS) the empirical analysis supports the assumption that the unique qualities of the Millennial generation predict positive relationships between minorities and linked fate and help explain the rise in significance of age as an explanatory variable. The results indicate that Latino Millennials are

positively correlated with higher levels of Linked fate and that levels of linked fate are correlated with levels of *comunidad* associated with each generational cohort. This chapter continues with a review of relevant literature to substantiate assumptions proposed in this paper. The literature review is followed by a section describing the driving theoretical framework and hypotheses to be tested as well as a breakdown of the data and empirical design supported by analysis along with results and discussion of the findings. This chapter concludes with limitations and possible extensions to the results shown.

Literature Review

Generational Cohorts and Why They Matter

In political science the use of nominal generations has been largely as a proxy for age. Therefore, when mentioned in the literature, generational cohorts are typically studied as the arbitrary groups that describe the lineal age categories; Millennials are young, Boomers are old (Pew 2019). This however is less the case in fields such as sociology and psychology. In these fields there is a rich history of analyzing the significance of generational subgroups and the unique qualities that distinguish one group from the rest. As I propose that a generational effect exists on the significance of racial linked fate, this investigation relies heavily on empirical studies across the social sciences to support the theoretical assumptions. The following is a brief, though substantial, review of the literature directly related to the study of generations as they pertain to this investigation.

What are Generations

What makes a generation and how are they classified? The first, and most typically utilized concept of generational cohorts, is that of groups divided into predetermined categories based on chronology which has created groups of roughly 16-year blocs. For the sake of this

investigation I will include individuals born into the Silent generation, the Baby Boom generation, Generation-X, and the Millennials. The Silent generation are people born between 1928-1945, the Baby Boom generation are those born between 1946-1964, Generation X are those born between 1965-1980, and the Millennial generation are individuals born between 1981-1996.

This linear categorization creates neatly organized groups that are useful for a superficial understanding to changes in demographics and social standards (Eyerman and Turner 1998). However, it has been contended that this interpretation of generation is too arbitrary to truly gain substantial insight into societal fluctuations. The field of sociology offers a much more nuanced interpretation of generations. In 1927 Karl Mannheim issued the first of several essays dealing with the “Problem of Generations” in which he described a process necessary to the formation of new generational styles (Mannheim 1927). According to Mannheim, new generational styles (NGS) emerge due to critical junctures that shape the present society in a way that drastically differs from the previous (Mannheim 1927; 1970; Campbell et al. 2015). Importantly, Mannheim notes, not all age groups undergo this process and thus true generations are not shaped by time but by critical social, economic, and cultural intersections. While this implies that not all predetermined linear generations will meet the criteria for the establishment of an NGS they are not precluded from coinciding.

Further research has found that along with critical junctures or events, generational identities can be formed through public discourse (Pritchard and Whitting 2014). Once sufficient discursive construction of generational identity has been established, individuals within the given cohort begin to demonstrate similar participatory attributes (Ainsworth 2001). In other words, through a combination of critical junctures and discursive construction of generational cohorts,

we can expect that individuals, for instance Millennials, will have similar attributes to the Millennial generation at large with the same holding for other generational groups. This solidified identity shaped through discourse and junctures is what Mannheim describes as single generational Units (Mannheim 1970). This in itself merits investigation of generational cohorts for reasons beyond simple characterizers of age. It is well established in American culture that the nominal, linear cohorts exist and are commonly applied to individuals who fall within the specified age group. Further the acceptance of differences between generations in popular culture establish the acceptance that members of each cohort should, in the aggregate, demonstrate similar world views (Edmunds and Turner 2002). Taken together with the ideas of Mannheim and others that critical junctures occur often and help delineate between generational styles we ought to see clear breaking points between each of the conventional generational cohorts. What then are the critical junctures that have set individual generational units from other groups and do they fall in line with the preestablished linear classification?

Do Generations Actually Matter?

Generational change from critical junctures is not the only possible explanation for distinctions between generational cohorts. While it may be attractive to theorize that the junctures are sufficient to establish entirely new generational styles it is imperative to understand countervailing arguments. For instance, some suggest that changes in racial attitudes for millennials may have less to do with the unique attributes of the generation that establish a post-racial cohort and are more likely to be a product of changes in life cycle socialization (Watts and DeSante 2020). Watts and DeSante (2020) suggest that much of the change seen in Millennial racial attitudes, specifically racial resentment, among white respondents is due in large part to the fact that young whites may be less willing to voice unpopular opinions than whites of older

cohorts. Moreover, because of the change in socialization, traditional measures of racial attitudes will tend to underperform in the information they aim to capture. In essence, Millennials may have been socialized to voice acceptance of post racial attitudes while not actually embracing them or simply not understanding racial arguments in the same way as previous cohorts. Watts and DeSante go further to establish the flaw in the Millennial exceptionalism view by suggesting that white Millennials hold similar levels of anti-Black prejudice and opposition to racialized policies like affirmative action as earlier generational cohorts (Watts and DeSante 2020).

While this investigation does not deal directly with racial resentment, it is necessary to explore the possibility that the Millennial generation may not be quite as exceptional in terms of racial attitudes. How might this affect the theoretical premise presented in this study? First, I must clarify that the data used in this investigation do not allow for testing of this countervailing argument. Nevertheless, a discussion may help to clarify and indeed bolster my proposition that Millennials are in fact different from older generational cohorts. Second, Watts and DeSante do not suggest that Millennials are not distinctly different from Baby Boomers, only that racial animus and tolerance necessitates new measures given the distinct socialization of the two groups. Moreover, the argument may be made that much of what is perceived to be unique to Millennials is not so but rather simply an artifact of life cycle effects. Life cycle effects theory suggests that there are particular societal and political attributes that may have little to do with actual change in birth cohorts and more to do with artifacts of being young (Kinder 2006).

For instance, partisan literature, has suggested that age is significantly associated with the deepening of partisan attitudes because the longer an individual is associated with a given party the more opportunities they have for interaction and identification with the political party (Campbell 1960). However, counter arguments suggest that the lifecycle explanations fall short

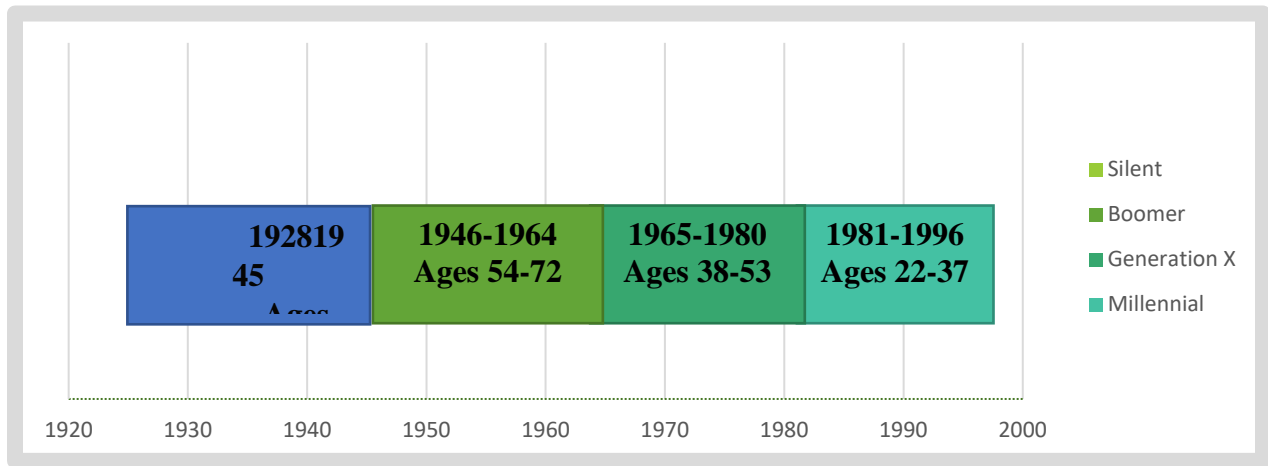
in describing partisan loyalty over time and instead offer that cohort effects more adequately explain increased partisanship in older Americans (Abramson 1979). For Abramson, it was the distinct characteristics of what partisanship meant in an individual's youth that creates the stronger attachment through old age. Partisanship was more meaningful when the current older cohort was young and thus it is more meaningful for them as they age than it is for younger cohorts coming of age in a time where partisanship is less meaningful (Asher and Weisberg 1978). Likewise, I suggest that the unique qualities of Millennials are not something that will change in time but rather are products of what is critically important in their youth. Most importantly, Millennials are distinctly more racially and sexually diverse as well as more intersectional than previous generations. This is markedly unique to the generation and will not change in time but will instead serve as a framework for the cohort's participation patterns through time.

It may well be the case that when considering other racial groups, socialization may influence how an individual perceives issues of race and interracial relations. However, this investigation focuses predominantly on group awareness for within-group associations. Therefore, as I suggest theoretically, my assumptions are sound in proposing that the cosmopolitan nature of Millennials coupled with the racial and sexual diversity of the cohort that leads to the establishment of *comunidad* will serve as triggers for respondents own group awareness regardless of expected social attitudes.

There are currently four nominal generations that are fully viable political actors in the United States; The Silent Generation, Baby Boomers (Boomers), Generation-X (GenX) and Millennials. While Generation Z or Zoomers are quickly coming of age, with the youngest of the generation still in primary school they are not considered fully politically viable and thus for this

investigation will only be used with caution as any generalizations made of the group may be misleading due to missing data. Therefore, this study focuses heavily on the four fully adult generational cohorts.

Figure 2.1: Generational Cohorts, 2018



The Silent Generation

The Silent Generation typically refers to people born between 1925 and 1945. Historically this is the generation that grew up in the time of the dust bowl and the American Great Depression. More critically, while most of this generation were not old enough to engage in military conflict, members of this generation came of age at the time of the Second World War. Therefore, this generation's critical junctures are marked by no less than three largely devastating circumstances. Having to work their way out of a depression and to begin life in an environment after World War II and at the onset of the Cold War the Silent generation has traditionally been known as a cohort of hard workers that, as the name implies, keeps socially and politically quiet.

Baby Boomers

The first critical juncture that can be identified in the creation of a new generational style

of the Boom generation is the extreme economic and social prosperity experience at the conclusion of World War Two. This is in stark contrast to the experience of prior generations as the United States industrialized as well as the two preceding generations that experienced staggering economic depression and two global wars. This enabled the Boom generation to focus greater attention to the accumulation of wealth and leisure that created a world view unique to its own time. The Second Critical Juncture is the tension of the Cold War varying in intensity from the 1950s to the early 1980s. The Cold War created an environment where a new paradigm of the United States where the youth were encased in an ideological battle of “us vs them” that ultimately shaped the Boom generation in ways that are present long after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Brooks, 2009). The final Juncture, and one critical to this investigation, is the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s. The movement isolated an already established mentality of ingroup vs outgroup disputations that highlighted and entrenched societal distinctions in the United States (Bloom, 2019).

Generation X

The Generation X is a unique group as it is cast between two much larger and often politically louder generational cohorts. Members of this generation largely came of age at the closure of the Cold War. The subsequent triumph of the United States over the Soviet Union was critical in the shaping of the Gen Xer generational style. Those born within the time frame of the Generation X also experienced critical issues such as the AIDS epidemic as well as the Challenger explosion (Rouse and Ross 2020). Gen Xers became largely politically active during formative events such as the impeachment of President Bill Clinton and key military victories in the First Gulf War in Iraq. The prominence of music and the advent of music videos during the late 1980’s and 1990s established the Generation X as the MTV generation. This was a signal

from the older cohorts that they perceived the new Gen Xers to be lazy slackers in character (Rouse and Ross 2020). The final critical juncture for this generation is that the cohort found itself at the crosshairs of political correctness (PC), in many ways having to defend the value of PC against older more conservative generational Cohorts.

Millennials

For Millennials, the new generational style begins in stark contrast to what was experienced by the Boom (and subsequent Generation-X) generation. The first critical juncture for Millennials is the economic collapse of 2008. This economic landslide occurs as Millennials first begin to actively participate in the professional workplace and imposes significant barriers to success (Rouse and Ross, 2018). The second critical juncture is the use of social movements and protests as the avenue of choice for the demographic. Beginning with Occupy Wallstreet and continuing to Black Lives Matter and Me Too, the use of collective defiance of political failures has a deep effect in the political attitudes of Millennials (Milkman, 2017; Taylor, 2016). The third Juncture for Millennials is the use of technology in socio-political life. For Millennials, technology is embedded in their daily routine in uses ranging from digital news consumption, dating, and social media connectivity (Taylor, 2014; Perrin, 2015). They are unique in being the first generation to come of age completely fluent in the use of digital technology. The final juncture in the establishment of the Millennial generational style is the election of Barack Obama. The election of America's first black president highlights the separation of racial attitudes from previous cohorts as well as solidifies the extent to which millennials are able and willing to participate politically (Talbot, 2008; Norman, 2016).

Race, Group Consciousness, and Linked Fate

Political participation patterns in the United States have long been attributed to the social economic status, gender, religion, and race of individuals and groups. The study of participation thus can largely be seen as an investigation on the social and political identity of individuals and how that identity intersects with the processes and mechanisms of democracy (Verba and Nie 1972.) Somewhat recently the study and effect of race on political engagement has risen to the forefront of political behavior. Through this deep incorporation of racial attitudes scholars have learned how voters rely on racial heuristics to develop political ideology and establish patterns of participation (Dawson 1994).

Along with the understanding that individuals within racial minority groups use racial motivators as drivers of engagement, scholars have presented the notion of group consciousness as yet another tool to predict group behavior. Broadly defined, group consciousness is the social and political awareness uniquely applied to racial and gender groups and how those groups fair in contrast to the dominant group or each other (Verba and Nie 1972; Miller et al. 1981; Leighley 2001; Conover 1984, 1988). More specifically it is the idea that increased focus on group identity by voters will create shared political goals and desired outcomes. This linked fate has been well established in the literature as highly predictive of African American political behavior (Dawson 1994; McClain et al. 2009). Although, the suggestion that Dawson (1994) makes is specifically that African Americans rely heavily on the Black Utility Heuristic to formulate individual decisions based on group consciousness, others have found similar links when studying Latinos (Fraga et al., 2010, Sanchez et al., 2019). American Indians (Nagel, 1997), and Asian Americans (Junn and Masuoka, 2008).

These findings lead to several important questions in the study of group identity and

behavior: First, to what extent is group identity adopted by individuals within the racial-ethnic subgroups? Second, does this impact the way minority groups behave politically? The literature addresses these questions rather succinctly. Extant literature finds that there are relatively high levels of group identity across each of the major racial-ethnic minorities. While African Americans have very visible and unified group identity (Dawson, 1994), Latino and Asian communities have been shown to hold far more varied identities while demonstrating recognition and self-placement into individual subgroups (Fraga et al., 1994; Junn and Masuoka, 2008). Despite disparities among racial minority groups, the research indicates the racial-ethnic group identity is, at least partially, adopted by majorities within each ethnic subgroup suggesting that racial group identity is a factor for political behavior.

The second question asks whether this identity has any significant effect on political behavior. Here too, scholars find diverse effects for each racial and ethnic minority group. For instance, while African American linked fate and shared political ideology leads to very high rates of participation (while controlling for social economic factors) the effect for Latinos and Asians is quite distinct. Asian Americans are found to have a far more latent sense of group identity that can often require racial triggers to evoke political engagement based on race (Junn and Masuoka, 2008). Likewise, Latinos have incorrectly been identified by political scientists as a group with little political engagement (Barreto 2010). Under the right circumstances, Latinos too can be triggered to engage in politics largely on racial and ethnic grounds (Barreto, 2009). Nonetheless, while the effects vary between distinct minority groups, there is substantial evidence that suggests the racial and ethnic identity, when linked to group unity, can have significant effect of policy preferences, as well as the perpetuation of minority ideologies.

In a study that specifically applied linked fate to Latina/o voters Sanchez and Masuoka

found that Dawson's theory of a racial heuristic could be applied to non-Black racial groups though in a more nuanced manner (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). In a follow-up study Sanchez et al. found that age is among the variables that determines linked fate for Latina/o voters, findings a negative relationship between age and linked fate (Sanchez et al. 2019). This investigation aims to fill the gap left by the conclusions of that study and does so by presenting an argument for a distinct identity in constant interaction with race and ethnicity which is the generational cohort of the respondent. More specifically, I aim to identify markers within generational cohorts that establish a unique political identity of the millennial voter.

Theory and Hypotheses

Comunidad and Political Cosmopolitanism

Comunidad stems largely from the combination of two concepts studied in political science. The first and most critical of these is the idea of cosmopolitanism. Political cosmopolitanism as it pertains to this study originates from the concept of democratic cosmopolitanism. This concept was traditionally used by political scientist studying international relations through a lens of globalization (Brock and Brighouse 2009). Here, scholars argued that as the world and politics became more globalized the importance of physical borders and structural differences between states would be less important than societal and normative issues. Therefore, through cosmopolitanism we might achieve a reality of a near borderless world (Ohmae 1990). Generally, scholars argued that the transcendence of a globalized worldview would promote universal principles above simply national and geographically specific needs. As cosmopolitanism was seen as a tool for democracy it followed that democratic values and needs would become universally accepted, promoted, and defended internationally (Grande 2006). While the value of democratic cosmopolitanism is debated it is certainly the case that in a vastly

globalized world social issues transcend national borders in a way that was previously impossible.

When speaking of cosmopolitanism for Millennials, I refer to the idea that the societal and social networking circumstances of Millennials have allowed the generation to become more globalized and thus more interconnected across all aspects of society. Millennials, more than any generation before them have the ability to connect either directly through social networks or indirectly through international trade networks with individuals across the globe. This connectivity extends the social boundaries for millennials to include actors across social, national, and even political lines (Nussbaum 1996). In essence this connectivity has created a much smaller world for millennials and one that is ever more interdependent than it was for members of other generations (Ross and Rouse 2020). Although this phenomenon of connectivity is not exclusive to Millennials, the simple fact that millennials have come of age during this time amplifies the impact for the generation.

As Millennials are the first true native cosmopolitans their ability to empathize with individuals throughout the world has dramatically increased (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Along with increased empathy comes increased tolerance for foreign cultures thus highlighting the positive effect of cosmopolitanism on respect for diversity within the generation (Zogby and Kuhl 2013). Because of this, American Millennials are more likely to see themselves through a lens of universal or global citizenship as having a cosmopolitan identity comes second only to being an American Citizen. (Zogby and Kuhl 2013).

Cosmopolitanism in the American Context

How then does political cosmopolitanism influence American political behavior specifically? Where extant literature suggests that a cosmopolitan attitude affects how

individuals and groups internalize and react to events across national boundaries, I extend this concept to how cosmopolitanism shifts the way in which Millennials engage with politics within the United States. If, as the prevalent literature suggests, Millennials' cosmopolitanism can create a sense of empathy for what occurs to people outside of their country then that same principle of empathy for diversity should apply to people outside of their own "in-group" within the United States. The demographic composition of those within the Millennial generation in the United States lends itself well to test the premise of cosmopolitanism. Millennials are the most racially diverse generation in American history (PEW 2015). Nearly 40% of Millennials belong to at least one racial minority group. This racial diversity creates a unique environment where nearly half of the cohort has the opportunity to experience or has experienced racism first hand (Rouse and Ross 2020).

Scholars working on the politics of Millennials suggest that the racial diversity of America's largest generation is at the forefront of Millennial political activity and will continue to define the political outcomes of the cohort (Frey 2016). In keeping with the notion of cosmopolitanism, the sheer density of racial minorities in the cohort should raise the groups' empathy toward the plight of racial minorities in general. This can be seen in the real-world by looking at the support for the Black Lives Matters movements in the summer of 2020. Interestingly, the post-Millennial generation or Gen-Z are a fully majority-minority generation. Support for BLM within the Gen-Z cohort is upwards of 90%, lending support for the position that racial diversity might increase the sense of cosmopolitanism as described in this chapter.

Comunidad and Social Capital

In the formation of *comunidad* I also draw on the work done on the concept of social capital in the American social and political structures. Robert Putnam argued for the importance

of political and civic participation, describing social capital as a sense of collective values and social networks that would facilitate the function of democracy by raising trust between citizens and by extension in the institutions of democracy (Putnam 2000). It stands that as more people engage in politics and society there is a parallel increase in connectivity for the members participating within the systems (Fukuyama 1995, Inglehart 1997). An electorate that connects more frequently socially and politically, that is to say an electorate with high levels of social capital, will have far greater opportunity to interact with one another and it is in these interactions that levels of trust are formed throughout the country (Coleman 1990)

What can we then expect when the opportunities to connect with other members of a community or country grow exponentially? This is the case for Millennial communication and activism through the use of digital social networks. While the social networks may be tangibly different than those presented by Putnam, they nevertheless allow for clear and timely communication and interaction among users of any given platform. However, because social networks extend beyond neighborhoods, cities, and states Millennials have learned to be coparticipants with all people within their extended social networks. The advancement and utility of social networks has in fact created a societal group, the Millennials, that have never nor will likely ever go bowling alone.

When looking at social capital in terms of trust for Millennials, it is undoubtedly influenced by the racial diversity of the cohort. If those within a minority group can show solidarity with another group in need (BLM) then they might naturally expect reciprocal levels of trust and support if and when their own group's political disadvantages are highlighted. In line with these arguments I suggest that a similar measure of collective mindfulness- *comunidad*- may serve to highlight racial attitudes in the American electorate. By participating in civic

focused organizations and engaging with community groups and family either directly or through the use of technology and social media, individuals will develop a sense of their environment and will thus see the way race relates to their own plight.

Comunidad vs Group Consciousness

A question that should be address at this point however is how *comunidad* differs from the conventional use of group consciousness for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Sanchez and Vargas define group consciousness as a perspective of in-group status as seen in competition with a more dominant group(s) (Sanchez and Vargas 2016). Group consciousness often leads to political collective action responses in an attempt to reconcile discrepancies between groups (Miller et al. 1981). Social Identity Theory suggests that group affiliations have a significant influence in the formation of participants' social and political attitudes and behaviors (Hogg and Hardie 1992). The more integrated individuals become within particular groups, the more salient that group's identity becomes for those individuals creating the basis for in-group vs out-group socialization (Huddy 2013). Individuals then use this distinctiveness to create greater separation from out-groups and begin to establish intergroup hierarchical categorizations while highlighting their own group's distinctive characteristics (Tajfel and Turner 1979)

Millennials and Politics

Literature on Millennials is relatively limited but what has been put forth helps clarify the unique characteristics of this cohort and why it is important to give a greater focus to this as an explanatory variable when considering identity politics. Millennials have been shown to have a distinct political identity to that of previous generations. Millennials have demonstrated that unless properly engaged they are significantly less likely to vote than competing cohorts

(O'Toole et al. 2013). Nevertheless, Millennials show unique characteristics in their political engagement and participation.

Millennials engage in politics through social media and new media sources at a higher rate than any other cohort and are the first generational group to become politically active in a time of fully online politics (Zukin et al. 2016). They also tend to favor non-traditional forms of political participation often involving collective action and social movements and do so at very high rates (O'Toole 2010; Milkman, 2017). Their political ideology tends to favor liberal progressivism and to large extent is focused on the net gain of collective goods (Norman 2016; Fisher 2018). The appeal of liberal policies however has not seen them captured by the Democratic Party, instead Millennials are more likely than other generational cohorts to self-identify as political independents (Nava et al. 2014).

The unique characteristics of their political identity is likely to stretch beyond simple politics and engage the topic of racial awareness and the sense of *comunidad* presented above. For instance, Millennials have demonstrated having significantly greater support for inter-racial marriage and social movements centered on race than Boomers (Horowitz and Livingston 2016). Millennials collectively are racially diverse and racially motivated in a way that is far different from any previous cohort (Milkman, 2017). The election of Barack Obama too highlighted Millennials' willingness to engage along the issue of race as they overwhelmingly supported America's first Black president. Put plainly, Millennials see race as a significant attribute whether for the fostering of intra-group cohesion or inter-group competition (Cohen, 2011)

Moreover, as discussed previously Millennials are uniquely primed to think in terms of communal goods rather than individual benefits. Therefore, having heightened sense of community awareness, responsibility and belonging (*comunidad*) in Millennial minorities will

trigger the value of linked fate for what is now the largest generational cohort in American Politics. This leads to the first hypothesis of the investigation. In relation to other generational groups:

H1- Millennials will tend to have higher levels of comunidad

As race plays a pivotal role in American communities I expect *comunidad* to affect levels of linked fate among respondents. The utility heuristics of racial minorities will be triggered with an increased focus on an individual's community. Again, unlike group consciousness however, *comunidad* suggests that even when not primed to think in terms of racial competition or struggle a greater appreciation and focus on local community and family will highlight the inherent importance of racial solidarity among respondents. This is the driving assumption behind the second hypothesis of this investigation:

H2- Higher levels of comunidad will lead to higher rates of linked fate

Data and Analysis

To evaluate change in social policy preference I use data from the 2016 CMPS. The CMPS survey consists of 10,142 interviews conducted online and available in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese between December 3, 2016 and February 15, 2017. The data set is particularly useful for this investigation given its large sample of Millennials as well as explicit oversampling of racial minorities. The CMPS data is weighted for each racial and ethnic group based on age, ancestry, education, gender, nativity, and voter status making the survey sample more representative of the general United States population (Barreto et al. 2018). Specifically, the CMPS includes responses from 3,003 Latinos, 3,154 African Americans, and 3,005 Asian Americans (Baretto et al. 2017).

To test *comunidad*, I created an index variable comprised of 7 survey questions from the

CMPS. The questions address respondents' social and civic group participation, engagement with friends and family about important issues, political engagement within their community, and respondents' use of social media for important social, community, and/or political issues. All of the responses are dichotomous and coded either 1 or 0. The first question asks respondents "Do you participate in one or more than one social, cultural, civic, political group or union or do you not participate in the activities of any such groups?" Responses are coded 1 if individual attended at least one group or union. The second question asks "Do you regularly attend meetings and participate in the activities of any of these groups?" Responses are coded 1 if answer is yes. The third question in the index asks respondents if they have, "In the last twelve months, discussed politics with family and friends?" Responses are coded 1 if respondent answered yes. The fourth question ask respondents if they have, "In the last twelve months Attended a meeting to discuss issues facing the community?" Responses are coded 1 if respondents answered yes. The fifth and sixth questions asks respondents if they have, "In the last twelve months, Discussed a candidate or political issue on social media like Facebook or Twitter or other?" Responses are coded 1 if respondents answered yes. The seventh question asks respondents which, "of the following political activities are important to do?" Responses are coded 1 if respondent selected, "Working with others to solve community problems." The Index is set up so that the highest level of *comunidad* is a 7 and the lowest is 0. The Cronbach alpha score for the index is .89. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression is used to test generational cohorts on *comunidad* and results are found in Table 2.1. To measure respondent level of racial linked fate the CMPS asks, "Do you think what happens generally to {respondent's racial group} people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" Responses are coded 1 if respondent answered yes.

The key explanatory variables are (1) *comunidad*, and (2) generational cohort. The *comunidad* variable is taken from the index created and utilized in Table 2.1. Respondents are coded as Millennials if they are born between 1981 and 1996. Respondents are coded as Generation X if they are born between 1965 and 1980. Respondents are coded as Baby Boomers if they are born between 1946 and 1964. The models also include five individual-level control variables: Democrat, independent, female, income, and education. Democrat is coded 1. Independent is coded 1. Female is coded 1. Income is coded using a categorical variable that ranges from 1 (less than \$20,000) to 12 (\$200,000 or more). Education is coded using categorical variables ranging from 1 (eight grade or less) to 6 (post graduate education). Logit regression results for the effects of *comunidad* on racial linked fate are found in Table 2.2.

Results

Looking at Table 2.1, I find support for the first hypothesis which suggests that millennials will have higher levels of *comunidad* than older generations. The findings indicate that the relationship between Millennials and *comunidad* is both positive and statistically significant at the .05 level. The relationship for Generation X is negative and slightly outside of the conventional level of significance. Nevertheless, as the substantive effect is greater than that of Millennial and in the opposite direction, it merits significance for this study even if only in the 90% confidence interval. The results for the Boomer generation are far less conclusive. While the direction of the relationship with *comunidad* is negative, the results fail to meet even minimum levels of significance.

This alone does not detract from the diving theoretical assumptions, as they suggest that Millennials will be uniquely characterized by having higher levels of *comunidad* than their generational counterparts. The findings support this assumption as the results show Millennials

as the only cohort with a positive and significant relationship to *comunidad*. The findings also bolter the notion that Millennials stand apart from the other generational cohorts as the group is the only one with a positive association with the *comunidad* variable.

Table 2.1: Ordinary Least Squares Estimates for Generational Cohort Effect on Comunidad

	OLS Est
Millennial	0.669*
	(0.313)
GenerationX	-0.278
	(0.318)
Boomer	0.119
	(0.320)
Income	0.168*
	(0.0749)
Female	0.260*
	(0.117)
Education	0.0116
	(0.0216)
Democrat	0.797***
	(0.134)
Independent	0.467***
	(0.141)
_cons	1.713***
	(0.431)
N	10142
adj. R2	0.112

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2016CMPS. *p < 0.10 ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

The result for the models of the effect of *comunidad* on linked fate by racial group are somewhat more complex. First, I note that the initial assumption in hypothesis 2 is that higher levels of *comunidad* lead to higher levels of linked fate. The results of the model find that is hypothesis is supported for Latino/as, Blacks, and Asians. For Latino/a respondents the

relationship between *comunidad* and linked fate and *comunidad* is positive and significant at the .01 level. The substantive and statistical significance of this result is almost identical for Black and Asian respondents as well. As predicted, there is a clear association with sense of community and racial awareness and intergroup cohesion.

Table 2.2: Logit Probabilities for Effect of *Comunidad* on Linked Fate

	Latino/a	Asian	African American
<i>Comunidad</i>	0.287***	0.290***	0.287***
	(-0.012)	(-0.012)	(0.313)
Millennial	0.054*	0.121*	-0.093
	(-0.07)	(-0.069)	(-0.081)
Generation X	-0.408***	0.117	-0.046
	(-0.076)	(-0.087)	(-0.078)
Boomer	-0.653***	0.007	0.115
	(-0.127)	(-0.11)	(-0.11)
Income	-0.005	-0.011	-0.007
	(-0.008)	(-0.008)	(-0.008)
Education	0.090***	0.088***	0.104***
	(-0.023)	(-0.023)	(-0.023)
Female	-0.081*	-0.074	-0.084*
	(-0.049)	(-0.049)	(-0.049)
Foreign Born	-0.214***	-0.263***	-0.243***
	(-0.055)	(-0.057)	(-0.056)
Constant	-1.890***	-2.029***	-1.823***
	(-0.144)	(-0.123)	(-0.139)

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2016CMPS. * $p < 0.10$ ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

The results become interesting when looking at the generational effects for the sense of linked fate as control variables. The results suggest that Latinos are more heavily influenced by generational cohorts than are Asians and African Americans. The effect of generational cohort assignment on linked fate by racial group was virtually inconclusive for Asians and Blacks. The

only group that demonstrated even slightly measurable effects was for Millennial Asians' having a positive relationship and significance slightly outside of conventional standards.

The story is different for Latino/a respondents. Interestingly, Millennial assignment had only marginal effect on the probability of a respondent affirming a sense of linked fate, and this again only at the .1 confidence range. Conversely, Boomers and Gen X respondents both show highly significant correlations with linked fate. Both Generation X and Boomer respondents are less likely to associate their own fate with that of their racial group at the .01 confidence level. This finding fully supports the theoretical assumptions that Millennials are uniquely different from other generational cohorts. While the results are inconclusive for Millennials there is a clear distinction between them and Generation X and the Baby Boom generation.

Moreover, the results for the control variables fully match that of the investigation by Sanchez et al. (2016) upon which this study was based. Education and having a sense exclusion from political mechanisms are both highly and positively related to a sense of linked fate. On the other hand, being a female, and being foreign born both have negative effects on linked date across all racial groups. These findings suggest that *comunidad* does not invalidate previous studies on linked fate but instead offers clarity and furthers our understanding of what drives racial attitudes in the United States.

Discussion and Conclusion

Is there a measurable effect of generational cohorts on the predicted value of Linked Fate for racial minority groups in the United States? The results of the investigation largely indicate that there is. Sanchez et al. (2019) found age to be a predictor of linked fate for Latino/a Americans. This finding was a stark difference to a previous study conducted in 2006. What changed between the two studies that suddenly gave rise to the effect of age, I suggest it was the

introduction of Millennials as active participants to the political arena. Millennials are unique in their social and communal engagement. They participate politically in ways that require far more social engaging and interaction than is required from simply voting. As was indicated by the results in this study, Millennials also have higher rates of *comunidad*, or community centered connections, communication, and concerns than previous generations. As was predicted there was a significant and positive association between *comunidad* and millennials as well as the converse for GenX and Boomers. There is moreover, a positive and significant correlation between *comunidad* and Linked Fate. Both of these findings offer insight into an already complex understanding of racial political identity in the United States and suggest that Millennials may present a diverging point from previous cohort patterns of behavior.

So what is the significance of these findings? Millennials are quickly becoming the largest politically active generational cohort in the history of the United States. If previous relationships of age and voting persist, we will find Millennials will transition from predominantly non-traditional forms of political participation to include a heavier reliance on voting. If Millennials will comprise the most numerous voting bloc in the country's history and they are categorically and empirically distinct from previous generations, it is incumbent on political scientists to confidently explain the political behavioral patterns of this generation. This chapter makes a concerted effort at discovering the political habits and behavioral unknowns concerning Millennials. It does however have significant limitations that should be addressed in subsequent literature. For one, the CMPS offers a unique sample of the American population. It would be interesting to see however, if the results found in this investigation hold using different survey data such as the American National Elections Study (ANES) that have a longer and more consistent history with measuring linked fate across racial groups in the United States.

There are a few methodological shortcomings of this paper that, given time constraints, are addressed in this section rather than being incorporated into the study. The measure of *comunidad* while promising, merits independent and more thorough examination. Interactions between *comunidad* and other prominent explanatory variables may lead to interesting even if contradicting results. I present this study largely as a starting block upon which future research can stand. Likewise, there may be an entirely distinct way to measure linked fate by including level of support for linked fate as well as a respondent's view of her/his own racial group. The inclusion of these measures may offer more substantive results of what exactly is driving linked fate in racial groups.

CHAPTER 3

THE EFFECT OF RACE AND GENERATIONAL COHORT ON EVANGELICAL VOTERS

Abstract

In this study I observed the influence of race and generational cohorts in the area of religion and politics. Specifically, this chapter addresses three empirical questions; First, how do the social policy preferences of Latino evangelical Christians compare to non-Latino evangelicals? Second, what effect do Millennials have on the social policy preferences of evangelicals? Lastly, how do Latino Millennials interact to influence the policy predilections of evangelicals in the United States? Using data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) I observe the social policy preferences of Latino-Millennial evangelicals. My results highlight several key findings. First the models suggest that being either Latino or Millennial has substantive effects on the social policy preferences of American evangelicals. The results of the three-way interaction show Latino-Millennial Evangelicals are significantly more likely to support governmental intervention to combat climate change but are less likely to support government spending to aid the poor.

Introduction

Extant research on religion and politics has found a strong correlation between high levels of religiosity and social conservatism among evangelical Christians (Gorski 2017). Moreover, whereas white evangelicals are most likely to match this trend, when considered independently Latino and Millennial voters are generally associated with favoring more liberal progressive policies (McKenzie and Rouse 2012; Rouse and Ross 2020). How then might we expect those at the intersection of these three groups to behave politically? Literature suggests that while still influential, religiosity weighs less heavily for Latinos than for whites (Kelly and Kelly 2005) and

that Millennials are the least likely generational cohort to identify as highly religious (Rouse and Ross 2020). Notwithstanding, alongside the independent growth of the general Latino population in the United States over the past decade, the rapid upsurge of evangelical Protestantism in the Latino population may have a significant impact on the future of evangelical politics.

Additionally, the Millennial generation comprises the largest voting bloc in the country and nearly half of the U.S. born Latinos belong to the Millennial or post-Millennial generations.

Because of this it is critical to understand the function and influence of this increasingly important subcategory, the Latino Millennials, on the role of religion in politics.

Using data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) this chapter investigates the potential policy implications regarding the trends of growth of this demographic group. This chapter addresses three empirical questions; First, do the social policy preferences of Latino evangelicals align more closely with that of the general Latino population or with that of traditional evangelical Christians? Second, what is the significance of generational cohort, specifically the effect of being a member of the Millennial generation, on social policy preferences for evangelicals? Lastly, how do race and age cohort interact to influence the Policy predilections of religious Americans?

The results for this investigation offer some insight into these questions. The models suggest that being either Latino or Millennial has substantive effects on social policy preference. Moreover, the results suggest that those who sit at the intersection of the three groups- the Latino-Millennial evangelicals- hold policy preferences that contrast from those who are solely either Latino, Millennial, or evangelical. While the results for the interactions between Latinos and evangelicals do not offer enough evidence to support a shift in political stance, the interaction does confound the propensity for conservative preferences in non-Latino evangelicals. The most

substantial results are found in the models where Millennials and Latinos are interacted with evangelicalism. Here the data point to several full reversals in policy preference at statistically significant levels that help validate the investigation concerning Latino and Millennial evangelical voters.

Literature Review

Why Religion Matters in American Politics

Literature in American political behavior often focuses on the effects of religion in politics and there is a growing body of work that supports the notion that levels of religiosity influence the political sophistication, engagement, and overall behavior of the American voter (Putnam 2000; Djupe and Gilbert 2006; Jamal 2005). The attention given to religion in political science is based in large part on consistently high levels of religiosity within the American electorate (Presser and Chaves 2007). Secularization theory suggests that as levels of economic and social development increase there is an inverse effect on the levels of religiosity within states (Norris and Inglehart 2004). The United States is an obvious exception to this rule with consistently high levels of religiosity, especially when compared to other Western democracies.

How does the higher level of religiosity influence American politics? Religion plays a valuable role in the civic development of citizens where participation in religious organizations can have a positive increase on the types of civic skills individuals possess that are necessary for effective political engagement (Schlozman and Brady 1995; Brown and Brown 2003). For instance, churches offer individuals the opportunity to engage with other members of the congregation in settings that resemble those in professional fields (Djupe et al. 2006). Religion thus helps bridge the gap between abilities not typically offered to disadvantaged groups and serves to counteract the loss of social capital by fostering group relationships and promoting a

sense of community (Djupe and Gilbert 2008). Religious practice can also mitigate the negative effects of interactions with people of distinct backgrounds (Djupe and Calfano 2013). The civic skills that individuals build in religious organizations are often directly transitioned into political behavior to such an extent that levels of religiosity as well as specific religious affiliation serve as substantial predictors of political engagement and political ideology (Olson and Warber 2008).

Scholars have identified how prospective voters actively rely on party identification as a tool providing cognitive shortcuts to formulate voting decisions (Campbell 1960; Zaller 1992). While party identification remains among the most powerful indicators of voter preference (Bartels 2000) the literature has steadily begun looking into group affiliations outside of strict party association. This literature focuses on the voting behavior influenced by group consciousness at various levels of social engagement (Walsh 2012). Furthermore, there are distinct political and social characteristics uniquely correlated with religious groups and practices (Albertson 2011; Campbell 2004).

Religious groups have been shown to promote knowledge and serve to empower American voters to participate, at different levels, in the democratic process (Jamal 2005). Churches serve as centers for civil society that are highly inclusive and provide frequent opportunities for interaction which are crucial for marginalized groups (Smith 2017). Additionally, social group literature suggests a strong link between group identity and party affiliation that tends to vary with religious affiliation (Campbell 2007; Green 2010; Layman 2001). However, unlike the largely dichotomous distinction between party identification and voter preference (Republican identification leads toward conservative preferences while Democratic identification leads to liberal progressive preferences), the influence of religion on

social policy preference is more nuanced. The level of competence among religious groups varies greatly with regard to efficacy in encouraging and enabling group members to participate politically and therefore so does their influence on perspective voters' decisions (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Djupe and Grant 2001; Djupe and Gilbert 2006).

The effects of religiosity in American social and civic life is compounded by the sheer level of religious affiliation and participation. The United States has the highest level of religiosity among all fully developed states (Baker et al. 2020). Levels of religiosity in the United States are high enough that despite a consistent decline in overall religious attendance over the past decade, nearly 90% of Americans surveyed still convey a belief in God to any given extent (Gallup, 2022). Coupling such high levels of religiosity with the positive effect religion has on civic and political engagement, it is evident that religion should have significant influence on political behavior in the United States. This combination has, for instance, led to the growth of what has been coined as Christian Nationalism. Christian Nationalism is characterized as an ideology that fuses particular Christian values and identity with practices within American civic and political engagement (Whitehead and Perry 2020). While this investigation does not deal directly with the influence of Christian Nationalism, it is relevant for two reasons. First, Christian Nationalism is in large part driven by the political engagement of evangelical Protestants on which the study focuses directly (Perry et al. 2020). Second, the rise and political salience of Christian Nationalism highlights both how relevant religiosity is to a large demographic of the American population and how influential that demographic can be on American politics.

Moving beyond the personal beliefs of the electorate it is necessary to understand the effect of religion within the political structure and institutions of American politics. Perhaps the

simplest, yet most notable, measure is found by looking at the religious composition of the U.S. Congress. Of the 531 elected members of the current Congress only 20 members- or roughly 4 percent- were religiously unaffiliated, didn't know their affiliation, or refused to answer (Pew 2021). The vast majority, nearly 97 percent of individuals elected to the US Congress are affiliated with a specific religion. How does this compare to the American electorate? In slight contrast to members of congress, American adults who are unaffiliated or refuse to establish belonging to a particular religious denomination is closer to 30 percent (Pew 2021). Interestingly then, while a significantly larger proportion of the US electorate is unaffiliated religiously, it seems affiliation with religious tradition is much more significant for elected members of government.

The influence of religion stretches beyond descriptive representation of Congress and extends to a clear delineation between the Democratic and Republican party largely along religious lines (Layman and Weaver 2016). Specifically, this divide is one where the religiously affiliated tend to support or identify as Republicans while the religiously unaffiliated are far more likely to identify as Democrats (Baker and Smith 2009). The divide extends past simple distinction between those with religious affiliation and those without. For instance, while mainline Protestants in general are more likely than non-protestants to identify as Republicans, the association with the Republican party and conservatism is even stronger among evangelical Protestants (Putnam et al. 2012). Moreover, the concentration of evangelical Protestants in the American South has historically helped to bolster the support for the Republican party in congressional, gubernatorial, and presidential elections (Oldmixon and den Dulk 2014). This investigation thus focuses directly on this group, the evangelical Protestants and uses the terms evangelical and evangelical Protestant interchangeably throughout the study.

Latinos, Evangelicals, and Catholics

Both historical and contemporary literature contrast Protestant Christians with Roman Catholics. While this investigation does not specifically control for Catholic voters, choosing instead to place individuals into a dichotomous grouping of evangelical or other I will not delve too deeply on this literature. However, as a plurality of the Latino population in the United States lays some claim to Catholicism this section may provide insight to the patterns of non-evangelical Latino voters. Therefore, I will offer a brief review of some of the fundamental claims on the comparison between Roman Catholic voters and evangelical Protestants.

Green (2010) demonstrated significant shifts in the political pressures associated with the major religious cohorts in American politics. For instance, historically, Catholics had been largely associated with the liberal democratic party with support peaking in the election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency of the United States (Green 2010). However, after the election of 1960 trends began to change with the Catholic vote becoming more ambiguous and therefore less predictable (Campbell et al. 2010). Conversely, evangelical Protestant voters have seen a rise in cohesiveness and political efficacy in the past decades. Like the Catholic vote the evangelical political leaning has shifted over the years however unlike the Catholic vote it has consolidated overwhelmingly as a major part of the Republican Party (Green 2010).

As has been established, there is a significant relationship between the Republican Party and religious evangelical groups in the United States (Campbell et al. 2010, Bolce and DeMaio 2008). Conversely, evidence suggests Latino voters are far more likely to support the electoral and policy preferences of the Democratic Party (Campbell et al. 2010; Green 2010). Hispanics are in fact among the strongest supporters of liberal values with nearly 60% associating most closely with the democratic party. (Campbell et al. 2010). However, previous research has done

little to disaggregate the Latino vote regarding within religious group analysis. Therefore, it is essential to examine what has been demonstrated and interpret its level of significance to this investigation.

Djupe and Gilbert suggest that homogeneity within religious groups has been demonstrated to offer greater opportunities for skill development (Djupe and Gilbert 2006). Thus, the more similar an individual is to the group the more likely they are able to take advantage of the political and civic opportunities offered by church groups. Therefore, given the growing population of evangelicals in Latino communities and as Latinos begin to assimilate into evangelical culture and establish Latino majority churches and parishes; Latino evangelicals may begin to adopt many of the politically conservative preferences of white evangelicals or assume the more liberal qualities of their racial group. But what has given rise to the Latino population growth in the evangelical denominations? In the field of comparative politics Anthony Gill addressed this issue in market terms that perhaps offers some value in the American context. What Gill discovered was that in Latin America the evangelical population grew in large part because of greater benefits offered by evangelical churches to local parishioners (Gill 1994). For Gill it was the Catholic Church's inability as a whole to fulfil the nonreligious needs of the communities that led in large part to the rise of Protestantism in the region. The availability of civic and social engagement lessons and opportunities within evangelical churches may offer Latinos a highway to assimilation that is simply not present as members of Catholic churches.

As evangelical Protestantism overwhelmingly dominates the American South one can draw inference of the connection between the two. However, as states like Texas and California now have two possibly competing driving forces as the growth of the Latino community

comprises an ever-growing portion of the state electorate, it is critical to understand whether the dominant pressure for political participation and engagement is race and ethnicity or religious affiliation.

The Politics of Millennials

From the election of Barack Obama to the role played in social movements over the last decade, the political significance of Millennials has become quite evident. It is impossible to examine Millennials without considering the sheer size and complexity of the generational cohort. Millennials now comprise the largest and youngest fully politically viable generational cohort in American politics. Decades of political research has demonstrated strong evidence that younger citizens are less likely to vote and overall tend to be less interested in politics (Fry 2017; Mitchell, Gottfried, & Matsa 2015). Nevertheless, with the youngest of the group nearing thirty and the oldest now above forty years of age, the same data also suggests that Millennial political participation will only become more frequent and critical in American elections.

The significance of the generation's size is compounded by its diversity. With higher levels of racial diversity than any previous generation, Millennials are shifting the balance for a national transition toward making the United States a fully majority-minority state (Frey 2016). Approximately 43% of Millennials belong to at least one racial minority group and importantly 40% of American Latinos are themselves Millennials (Rouse et al. 2015). The diversity of the cohort has established Millennials as far more tolerant and empathetic to the plight of people across different racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds (Schwadel and Garneau 2014). In the aggregate millennials are more open-minded about homosexuality and other issues of sexual identity than older cohorts and are nearly twice as likely to identify as members of the LGBT community than previous generations (Jones and Cox 2015).

The levels of cohesion in spite of the high diversity within the group have led scholars to note the existence of a “Millennial identity” (Rouse and Ross 2018). This identity is largely one of social and political tolerance, liberal values, and connectivity. One might logically assume then that given the nature of their political identity, Millennials would fit well within the Democratic party. This is not however, entirely accurate. While Millennials do tend to favor liberal progressive policies, politically Millennials are most likely to identify as independents (Nava et al. 2014). The distinction between liberal and Democrat carries significant implications for Millennial politics. For instance, Rouse and Ross, find that while Millennials support the regulation of firearms in the country, their support is lower than Democrats at large and even more distinct from voters outside of their cohort (Rouse and Ross 2018). This nuance makes understanding the politics of Millennials all the more critical.

Millennials are also more likely than members of previous generational cohorts to identify as non-religious. Nevertheless, given the extreme levels of religiosity already discussed in the general electorate, religious Millennials continue to play a pivotal role in political outcomes. Just how religious are Millennials? The 2020 Religious Landscape Study conducted by the Pew Research Center noted of the religiosity of Millennials that while levels are consistently lower than that of the general population outside of the cohort, 64% of Millennials are affiliated with a specific church or religious denomination (PEW 2022). Moreover nearly 80% of the Millennial generation claim to believe in God to any extent and fully half of the cohort believes in God and are absolutely certain in their convictions (PEW 2022). Critically, of Millennials who believe in God and are affiliated with a religious group, one in five identify as evangelical protestants (PEW 2020). Given what has been established on evangelical political participation and that Millennials should become consistently more active in politics, especially

voting, how might those at the intersection of these groups be expected to engage politically?

Theory and Hypotheses

Social identity theory should allow us to make inference as to how millennials and Latinos may behave within their religious group. Political psychologists and sociologists have found unique characteristics that help form a national identity (Citrin and Sears 2014), that identity can be influenced by religion to create intragroup competition (Citrin et al. 2000), and most critically that individuals' identities are flexible and adapt to social and environmental pressures (Butler 1990; Young 1997). Among the most influential social identities in the United States are partisanship, religious affiliation, and racial and ethnic identity. The rise of partisanship as a social identity has been largely used to explain the high levels of polarization and competition between partisans in the current political climate (Iyengar et al. 2018). Further evidence demonstrates that partisan divides are largely driven by social cleavages including race and ethnicity (Mason 2018).

Critically for this investigation, partisan sorting consists of evangelicals predominantly being associated with the Republican party and Latinos' high favorability of the Democratic party. What might we expect when the social identity of individuals in the intersection of these two groups becomes too cluttered to clarify policy choices. As the Latino population in evangelical churches rises the cohesiveness of the group may either grow based on the Latino or evangelical experience. If Latino evangelicals are more disposed to follow the social cues from fellow evangelical congregants than the traditional Latino cues we may see a shift in how this group addresses issues of social policy.

Having established that Latinos traditionally hold liberal values and evangelicals hold conservative values it is necessary to investigate the capacity of this growing demographic to

reconcile the two opposing truths. At the heart of this question arises the notion of cognitive dissonance. Latino evangelicals will receive both Latino and evangelical political cues in forming political decisions. Because the evangelical political stance is traditionally more concrete than that of Latino, especially when disaggregating Latinos by country of origin, in the process of clarifying the opposing moral, social, and political values, Latino evangelicals may experience a surge of anxiety that may well lead them to further embrace political cues traditionally aimed at conservative Christians. Moreover, if the reasons behind the growth of evangelicalism within the Latino population is as Gill described in Latin America, there may be a driving urge to satisfy the predilections of evangelical social policy preference.

If Latino evangelicals are being primed to accept messages more relatable to their religious group than their racial category, the cues used by political actors and politicians may carry equal weight for Latinos as it does for White evangelicals (Margolis 2016¹). This premise leads to the first hypothesis in this chapter:

H1- Latino evangelicals will demonstrate more conservative policy preferences than non-evangelical Latinos.

However, because Latino evangelicals will also be receiving cues from within their own racial groups and from political messages aimed to prime voters to think in terms of race and ethnicity;

H2- Latino evangelicals will demonstrate more liberal policy preference than Non-Latino evangelicals.

How do Millennial evangelicals compare to their non-Millennial evangelical counterparts? What little work has been done paints a somewhat muddled portrait of evangelical

¹ The context of Margolis' argument is not under the same circumstances as I am using it here. For her, individuals will seek out religious comfort in order to cope with instances of political or social dissonance. I use her piece to suggest that the cognitive dissonance felt by Latinos in Conservative evangelical communities may result in similar feelings of discomfort and insecurities which Margoles does argue lead to greater religiosity which in this case would lead Latinos to embrace the evangelical culture over their own ethnic culture.

Millennials. First off, the coming of age for Millennials has seen a far less cohesive, politically conservative church. The move away from hardline conservatism over the past decades has given rise to more devolved evangelical pastoral groups and has thus allowed for the emergence of less partisan congregations (Altman and Scherer 2012). Millennial evangelicals then have “grown up” in a church that has had to become concerned with contemporary social issues such as global warming and racial relations in a way that does not ostracize members within their increasingly diverse congregations. (Harden 2005; Wadsworth and Plotke 2001). This new environment may affect how Millennial evangelicals approach socio-political questions, such as partisan identification and support for conservative policies that had previously been clearly defined for church goers (Layaman 2001; Leege and Kellstedt 1993). Conversely, Millennials as a whole tend to hold somewhat more conservative stances to issues such as abortion than non-Millennial Democrats.

Therefore, a similar case can be made for the competing identities of Millennials and evangelicals. Like Latinos, Millennials are more likely to be liberal than evangelicals. However, unlike Latinos, the lack of partisanship for Millennials may allow for a clarification of political choice. Without the competing partisan cues felt by Latino evangelicals, evangelical cues may have a more weighted effect on the policy preference of Millennials whenever the Millennial cue is not readily established. Therefore:

H3- Millennial evangelicals will demonstrate equally conservative views on social policies aside from climate policy and aid to the poor than non-Millennial evangelicals

Moreover, when the interaction of Latino-Millennial evangelicals is done the liberal ideology of both Latinos and Millennials should drastically outweigh conservative bias even for evangelicals in the group. Therefore:

H4- Latino-Millennial evangelicals will demonstrate more liberal views on social policy issues

Data and Methods

To evaluate change in social policy preference I use data from the 2016 CMPS. The CMPS survey consists of 10,142 interviews conducted online and available in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese between December 3, 2016 and February 15, 2017. The data set is particularly useful for this investigation given its large sample of evangelicals and Millennials as well as explicit oversampling of racial minorities. Specifically, the CMPS includes responses from 2,314 evangelicals, 4,514 Millennials, and 3,003 Latinos (Barreto et al., 2017). The CMPS data is weighted for each racial and ethnic group based on age, ancestry, education, gender, nativity, and voter status making the survey sample more representative of the general United States population (Barreto et al. 2018).

Given this study's focus on social policy preference I have chosen four dependent variables that address issues of support for the death penalty, aid to the poor, climate change, and voter ID laws. The CMPS uses an ordinal scale to capture respondents' preferences for each of these social policies. The dependent variable to measure attitudes toward the death penalty asks respondents "Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?" (Responses: (1) "Strongly in favor," (2) "Somewhat in favor," (3) "Somewhat oppose," (4) "Strongly oppose."). To measure attitudes toward supporting the poor the respondents are asked to, "indicate whether you would like to see federal spending increased or decreased or stay the same" regarding "Aid to the poor." (Responses: (1) "Decrease," (2) "Stay the same," (3) "Increase."). To measure respondents' attitudes toward climate change the survey asks the respondents to indicate the level to which they either agree or disagree with the policy that "The Federal Government should pass laws to combat the effects of climate change." (Responses: (1)

“Strongly agree,” (2) “Agree,” (3) “Neither agree nor disagree,” (4) “Disagree,” (5) “Strongly disagree.”). Finally, to measure respondents’ attitudes toward voter id laws the survey asks respondents to indicate the level to which they either agree or disagree with the policy that “Everyone should be required to obtain and then show a state-issued photo identification in order to vote on election-day.” (Responses: (1) “Strongly agree,” (2) “Agree,” (3) “Neither agree nor disagree,” (4) “Disagree,” (5) “Strongly disagree.”). While this measure does not fit under the conventional definition of what constitutes social policy, I include it as a dependent variable as voter id laws are shown to disproportionately affect people of color and the poor. Advancement of social policies in the United States has a strong historical connection with political enfranchisement. From poll taxes to literacy tests, barriers to voting have been used as a tool to discourage participation from the very people who are likely to support and benefit from increased spending on social programs and historically, the abolition of these barriers coincides with the growth of social spending in the United States (Edwin 2000). In line with this argument, I include the measure for support of voter ID laws as a policy demonstrating support for the political engagement from the historically disenfranchised. Because social policy is decided by voters, laws aimed at excluding certain portions of the population from full political participation should also be understood as social policies.

Given the nature of the study is to find the effect of the explanatory variables to increase respondent propensity toward more liberal policy preferences the data were adjusted so that the greater value in the scale of the respective dependent variable should indicate the traditionally liberal perspective. This change was performed only on the dependent variables dealing with climate change where a complete reversal of values was required and on the dependent variable for aid to the poor where the maximum value was given to the traditionally liberal stance and the

middle value was given to the response for no change.

The key explanatory variables are (1) being evangelical, (2) being Latino, and (3) being a member of the Millennial generation. Three dummy variables were created for each of these. The CMPS asks respondents directly whether they identify as evangelical according to their religious affiliation. Because I am particularly interested in the policy choices of evangelical Protestants, the evangelical variable was coded as a 1 if the respondent replied in the affirmative to being a Protestant Christian as well as indicating that she/he identified as evangelical. The variable was coded as a 0 if both of the criteria were not met. To generate the Millennial variable, I created a dummy where Millennial is coded as 1 if the respondent was born between 1981 and 1996 and as a 0 if they were born outside of that range. Lastly the Latino variable was coded 1 if the respondent self-identified as a Hispanic or Latino. The analysis does not disaggregate based on country of origin or generational status.

The models also include six individual-level control variables: democrat, female, income, education, foreign born, and interest in politics. Democrat is a binary variable coded as 1 if respondent identifies as a Democrat and a "0" if Independent or Republican. Female is coded 1. Income is coded using a categorical variable that ranges from 1 (less than \$20,000) to 12 (\$200,000 or more). Education is coded using categorical variables ranging from 1 (eight grade or less) to 6 (post graduate education). Foreign born is coded 1. Interest in politics is measured using the survey question: "Some people are very interested in politics while other people can't stand politics, how about you? Are you: Very interested in politics, somewhat interested in politics, Not that interested in politics, Not at all interested in politics." Values are arranged so that higher values indicate greater interests in politics. Given the ordinal nature of the dependent variables using the CMPS I use ordered logit regressions for each of the models. As the analyses

require the use of interactions between the key explanatory variables Table 3.1 presents the frequencies of each interaction grouping used in the regression models. Given the size and specific nature of oversampling in the CMPS sample the cell count for each of the groups is sufficient, including in the three-way interaction in the final model, to infer significance from the results.

Results

First, I observe the effect of the Latino evangelical interaction and report the findings in Table 3.1. Table 3.1 contains the logit models with coefficients and standard errors for each of the social policy dependent variables. Looking first individually at the Latino and Evangelical explanatory variables I find that being evangelical has a statistically significant effect on three of the four social policy variables. Being evangelical has a strong correlation to holding more conservative preferences than the baseline non-Latino, non-evangelical control group for two of four policy issues. This is to say being evangelical increases the likelihood that an individual will hold more conservative positions on government engagement in issues of climate change and on voter ID laws. In contrast, evangelicals are more likely to hold liberal positions- that government should increase spending on the issue of aid to the poor. The models also indicate that Latinos are significantly more likely to hold liberal views on issues of climate change. The directional change and statistical significance on the issue of climate change allows me to test my expectations in the first hypothesis that posits the fragmented nature of Latino opinions will lend more weight to the more concrete evangelical stance when the two variables are interacted. Looking at the interaction however, I find no statistically significant result on policy preference. While the results do not offer support for my first hypothesis, they do indicate the interaction

confounds both the Latino and evangelical predispositions for those at the intersection of these two groups.

Table 3.1: Ordered Logit Model: Latino Evangelical Interaction on Social Policy Preference

	Death Penalty	Aid to Poor	Climate Change	Voter ID
Latino Evangelical	0.0668 (0.0983)	-0.169 (0.116)	0.0342 (0.0995)	-0.0574 (0.0994)
Latino	-0.0391 (0.0455)	0.0638 (0.0516)	0.223*** (0.0460)	-0.0329 (0.0453)
Evangelical	-0.0917 (0.0501)	0.328*** (0.0600)	-0.412*** (0.0507)	-0.294*** (0.0507)
Democrat	0.345*** (0.0450)	0.805*** (0.0483)	1.021*** (0.0486)	0.447*** (0.0448)
Female	-0.214*** (0.0388)	0.340*** (0.0435)	-0.0171 (0.0392)	-0.0576 (0.0385)
Income	-0.00176** (0.000666)	-0.00104 (0.000748)	-0.00131* (0.000670)	0.00270*** (0.000650)
Education	0.0192 (0.0164)	-0.192*** (0.0189)	0.128*** (0.0165)	0.0966*** (0.0163)
Foreign born	-0.0947* (0.0429)	-0.129** (0.0487)	0.252*** (0.0436)	-0.309*** (0.0428)
Political Interest	-0.0269 (0.0210)	-0.169*** (0.0234)	-0.378*** (0.0214)	0.0757*** (0.0208)
cut1	-2.251*** (0.110)	-2.809*** (0.126)	-3.098*** (0.118)	0.176 (0.107)
cut2	-0.992*** (0.108)	-0.904*** (0.122)	-2.162*** (0.112)	1.466*** (0.108)
cut3	0.730*** (0.108)		-0.239* (0.109)	2.715*** (0.111)
cut4			1.264***	3.735***
N	10142	10142	10142	10142

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2016CMPS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Consistent with existing literature and the theoretical assumptions of this chapter, being

Democrat is significantly associated with more liberal preferences across all four policy issues. Conversely, income had a significant effect on three of the four dependent variables. Individuals with higher income were significantly more likely to hold conservative views on the death penalty and climate change but more liberal positions on voter ID laws. Also, in line with scholarship on women in politics, being female is significantly associated with being in favor of government spending on aid to the poor. Education is also a strong predictor for three of the four policies. Not surprisingly, the more educated respondents are the more likely they are to support increased spending on climate change policies. Higher levels of education also lead respondents to view voter ID laws less favorably. Being foreign born has a significant effect across all dependent variables and all but one lead respondents to hold more conservative policy preferences. Only on the issue of climate change does being born outside of the United States increase the liberal preferences.

Table 3.2 contains the logit models with coefficients and standard errors for each of the social policy dependent variables for the Millennial evangelical interaction. The results support Hypothesis 3 and find that Millennial evangelicals are significantly more likely to support government intervention to mitigate the effects of climate change. This result indicates a reversal to the position held by non-Millennial evangelicals who are significantly more likely to oppose governmentally imposed policies on climate change and is in line with the preferences of non-evangelical Millennials. As expected, climate change is the only policy issue where the Millennial evangelical interaction provides statistically significant results. This is most intriguing given both the Millennial and evangelical variables statistically significant effects on all four policy issues and highlights the assumption that only when issue salience is strong, the Millennial influence will overwhelm other political tendencies. Being Millennial makes

respondents significantly more likely to hold liberal preferences on all four policies while being evangelical significantly decreases the likelihood a responded will hold liberal positions regarding climate change and voter ID laws.

Table 3.2: Ordered Logit Model: Millennial Evangelical Interaction on Social Policy Preferences

	Death Penalty	Aid to Poor	Climate Change	Voter ID
Millennial Evangelical	-0.0379 (0.0874)	-0.147 (0.105)	0.238** (0.0884)	-0.0280 (0.0882)
Millennial	0.367*** (0.0423)	0.157** (0.0481)	0.161*** (0.0425)	0.132** (0.0419)
Evangelical	0.115* (0.0565)	0.349*** (0.0662)	-0.488*** (0.0567)	-0.285*** (0.0572)
Democrat	0.347*** (0.0449)	0.805*** (0.0483)	0.823*** (0.0454)	0.450*** (0.0448)
Female	0.198*** (0.0388)	0.335*** (0.0436)	0.0230 (0.0390)	-0.0655 (0.0386)
Income	0.00181** (0.000665)	-0.00104 (0.000748)	-0.00159* (0.000668)	0.00272*** (0.000650)
Education	0.00835 (0.0164)	-0.184*** (0.0189)	0.127*** (0.0165)	0.110*** (0.0163)
Foreign born	0.0841 (0.0430)	-0.130** (0.0488)	0.200*** (0.0434)	-0.313*** (0.0429)
Political interest	0.00860 (0.0210)	-0.177*** (0.0234)	-0.429*** (0.0212)	0.0718*** (0.0208)
cut1	-0.513*** (0.107)	-2.744*** (0.125)	-3.199*** (0.118)	0.294** (0.106)
cut2	1.223*** (0.108)	-0.837*** (0.121)	-2.265*** (0.111)	1.586*** (0.107)
cut3	2.486*** (0.110)		-0.351** (0.108)	2.835*** (0.110)
cut4			1.139*** (0.108)	3.855*** (0.115)
N	10142	10142	10142	10142

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2016CMPS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The results suggest that being a Democrat increases likelihood of liberal preferences across all four dependent variables. Female respondents are significantly more likely to hold liberal views on the death penalty and aid to the poor. The socioeconomic variables of income and education share similar directional effects on all but the climate change variable. Here an increase in income has a significant conservative effect while higher education has a significant liberal effect on policy preference. Respondents with higher political interest are significantly more likely to hold conservative positions regarding aid to the poor and government intervention in climate change but are significantly more likely to oppose voter ID laws.

Table 3.3 contains the three-way interaction of Latino-Millennial evangelicals with coefficients and standard errors for each of the social policy dependent variables. The Latino-Millennial evangelical interaction is statistically significant in both aid to the poor and climate change. The results offer some support for Hypothesis 4 that the liberal values of both Millennial and Latinos will outweigh conservative attitudes of evangelicals. The three-way interaction shows that those who are at the intersection of these three groups are significantly more likely to hold liberal views on government intervention on issues of climate change. While the effect size is not as large as the two-way interaction tested in Table 3.2 the directionality at significant levels at greater than the .05 level remain for both models. Interestingly the three-way interaction model also finds a significant result for aid to the poor. Latino-Millennial evangelicals are significantly more likely to hold conservative preferences on government spending on aid to the poor. This is somewhat counterintuitive as both Millennials and evangelicals are significantly more likely to hold liberal views on the policy issue. There is no significance in the Latino group alone on aid to the poor. However, Latinos are significantly more likely to support government spending to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Table 3.3: Ordered Logit Model: Latino Millennial Evangelical Interaction on Social Policy Preferences

	Death Penalty	Aid to Poor	Climate Change	Voter ID
LatMilEvanl	-0.00997	-0.413**	0.198*	0.149
	(0.122)	(0.144)	(0.124)	(0.123)
Latino	0.00188	0.0599	0.181***	-0.0676
	(0.0426)	(0.0485)	(0.0428)	(0.0424)
Millennial	0.359***	0.150***	0.191***	0.120**
	(0.0383)	(0.0442)	(0.0386)	(0.0381)
Evangelical	0.101*	0.347***	-0.404***	-0.320***
	(0.0464)	(0.0554)	(0.0468)	(0.0469)
Democrat	0.347***	0.806***	0.831***	0.449***
	(0.0449)	(0.0483)	(0.0454)	(0.0448)
Female	0.198***	0.334***	0.0179	-0.0649
	(0.0388)	(0.0436)	(0.0390)	(0.0386)
Income	0.00181**	-0.00103	-0.00148*	0.00269***
	(0.000666)	(0.000749)	(0.000669)	(0.000650)
Education	0.00832	-0.181***	0.141***	0.106***
	(0.0166)	(0.0192)	(0.0167)	(0.0165)
Foreign born	0.0829	-0.132**	0.200***	-0.313***
	(0.0430)	(0.0487)	(0.0434)	(0.0428)
Political interest	0.00858	-0.175***	-0.422***	0.0695***
	(0.0211)	(0.0235)	(0.0213)	(0.0208)
cut1	-0.516***	-2.717***	-3.053***	0.244*
	(0.110)	(0.129)	(0.120)	(0.110)
cut2	1.219***	-0.809***	-2.119***	1.536***
	(0.111)	(0.125)	(0.114)	(0.111)
cut3	2.483***		-0.203	2.785***
	(0.113)		(0.111)	(0.113)
cut4			1.289***	3.804***
			(0.112)	(0.118)
<i>N</i>	10142	10142	10142	10142

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2016CMPS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Being Millennial is significant across all four dependent variables showing Millennials are significantly more likely to hold liberal views on the four policy issues. The evangelical group also shows statistical significance on all four response variables. Evangelicals are significantly more likely to hold liberal positions on the death penalty and aid to the poor and conservative positions on climate change and voter ID laws. As with the previous interaction models, Democrats are significantly more likely to hold liberal positions across all four dependent variables. Females are significantly more likely to hold liberal preferences on the death penalty and aid to the poor but do not have a statistically significant effect on either climate change or voter ID laws. Higher income is associated with significantly more conservative positions on aid to the poor and climate change but it is more likely to cause liberal views on voter ID laws. Being foreign born has a significant effect on three of the four variables with conservative predilections on aid to the poor and voter ID laws while leading to more liberal positions on climate change. Political interest too has conflicting associations as having a greater interest in political issues leads to significantly more conservative positions on aid to the poor and climate change but more liberal views on voter ID laws.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study I observed the influence of race and generational cohorts in the area of religion and politics. Specifically, this investigation addressed three empirical questions; First, how do the social policy preferences of Latino evangelical Christians compare to non-Latino evangelicals? Second, what effect do Millennials have on the social policy preferences of evangelicals? Lastly, how do Latino Millennials interact to influence the policy predilections of evangelicals in the United States? My results highlight several key findings. First the models suggest that being either Latino and Millennial has substantive effects on social policy preference

of American evangelicals. The first interaction did not find any statistically distinguishable preferences for Latino evangelicals from the non-Latino evangelical control group. The absence of variation in this case is quite telling. As was hypothesized, the lack of Latino centrality in terms of policy preferences allows for the conservative ideology evangelical Protestantism to hold more weight. This is critical as a significant portion of the evangelical electorate, especially in the American South is comprised of Latinos. If Latinos evangelicals hold similar policy preferences to non-Latino Evangelicals this may partially explain the enduring conservative stronghold in places like Texas.

A much clearer ideological contrast is found in the comparison of evangelicals and Millennials. Independently the two groups show much more variation than evangelicals and Latinos. Millennials clearly hold more liberal views on climate change and voter identification laws than evangelicals, so it is here that we might find if the interaction of the two groups yields predilections for the Millennial or evangelical status quo. The results show that on most issues the interaction fails to show distinguishable effects from the control group of non-Millennial evangelicals. Not surprisingly however, as climate change is a central policy issue for Millennials, the Millennial predisposition favoring government expenditure on policies to mitigate the effects of climate change is clear. This is significant as it indicates that while the Millennial-evangelical group may be indistinguishable from the non-Latino evangelicals on most issues, whenever it is distinguishable it is significantly more liberal.

Finally, the results for the interaction of Latino-Millennial-evangelicals offers significant results on both aid to the poor and climate change. As with the interaction between Millennials and evangelicals the issue of climate change clearly favors the Millennial preference as the interaction shows that Latino-Millennial evangelicals are significantly more likely to support

government spending to control climate change. However, perhaps the most intriguing finding of this investigation is the negative association between Latino-Millennial evangelicals and government spending on aid to the poor. This negative directionality is only found in the Latino evangelical interaction group, although not at significant levels. Neither Latinos, Millennials, nor evangelicals have negative independent effects on aid to the poor. While unexpected, this offers an opportunity for future research in order to better understand the dynamics of the final interaction.

CHAPTER 4

MILLENNIAL SUPPORT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

Abstract

In this investigation I explore Millennial support for civil liberties. I expand on previous research by framing support for civil liberties as a result of generational cohort effects. More specifically I argue Millennials will be far more likely to support the civil liberties of others than previous cohorts. Using data from the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS) I test my assumptions of Millennial attitudes toward civil liberties by examining Millennial support for (1) free speech, (2) religious freedom, and (3) a woman's right to an abortion. The results offer evidence of a clear separation of the Millennial generation from previous cohorts regarding support for civil liberties as Millennials were significantly more likely to show greater support for all three of the civil liberty dependent variables even for controversial actors.

Introduction

In May 2021, the state of Texas enacted a new law, Senate Bill 8, or “The Texas Heartbeat Act”, that grants individual citizens the ability to sue any person who facilitates an abortion they believe to be in violation of state policies (Douglas 2021). The bill was passed and signed into law despite the fact that nearly 80 percent of Texans believe abortion should be a legal recourse for women in some form (Oxner 2022). Likewise, across the country conservative state legislatures and executives are proposing legislation that limit access to abortions, limit free speech by proposing book bans, and mandate time for prayer in public schools (Associated Press 2021; Hall 2022). Moreover, journalists and political scientist alike have noted that the conservative party of the United States may be out of touch with the general population and more so with younger voters regarding attitudes toward issues of civil liberties (Wurgler and Brooks

2014; van der Merwe 2020; Totenberg 2022). Therefore, this study investigates Millennial support for free speech, religious freedom and abortion.

Extant literature on civil liberties has found individual level characteristics to be among the leading predictors of support for American civil liberties. That is to say, a person's identity affects how tolerant they are and to what extent the actions of others should be constitutionally protected. I expand on the previous research by framing support for civil liberties as a result of generational cohort effects. More specifically I argue Millennials will be far more likely to support the civil liberties of others than previous cohorts. Why might Millennials be expected to stand apart from other cohorts when dealing with tolerance and support for civil liberties? The literature emphasizes the effect of political partisanship and elite signaling on mass public opinion. Marcus et al. (1995) for instance suggest cues are constantly sent and reaffirmed by political leaders as to which outgroup is of greatest concern and these cues are received by the mass public in ways that instill fear and thus promotes a less tolerant society. Additionally, higher education is among the most critical factors in predicting support for civil liberties (Sniderman et al., 1989).

Millennials clearly stand apart in both markers as they are more educated and far more politically independent than previous generational groups. Moreover, Millennials came into political consciousness in a post-9/11 paradigm where a struggle between security and the protection of civil liberties largely framed political discourse. Ultimately scholarship in political science examining the effect of generational cohorts on attitudes toward civil liberties is scarce. However, what has been done carries positive implications for this particular investigation. Literature finds that generational differences affect the way in which outgroups are perceived (Davis 2007). For instance, Davis (2007) suggests much of the change in support of leftist

groups can be attributed to the fact that newer generations simply do not hold the same paradigmatic notions that lead to the stereotyping of specific groups.

Thus, generational cohorts clearly matter, but why and to what extent is yet to be settled. Using data from the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS) I test Millennials support for various civil liberties including freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression, and a woman's right to abortion. The results indicate that Millennials are far more likely to support free speech (even for controversial actors), than both the Boomer generation and Generation X. Millennials are also more likely to oppose governmental intervention in religion and are significantly more likely to support abortion rights for women.

Literature Review

Civil Liberties

The study of civil liberties in the United States has presented a somewhat clashing narrative of just how tolerant Americans are and what leads specific groups to accept and promote citizens' civil rights and liberties. In general, Americans tend to heavily favor protection and even expansion of civil liberties. However, when the general population is parsed into distinct groups the universal support for civil liberties begins to diminish (Marcus et al., 1995). For instance, during and immediately following the Cold War, focus on extreme leftist groups by scholars found a strong correlation with limited support for such groups by the general population (Stouffer, 1995). As was expected, given the lingering effects of the Cold War, group threat associated with leftist groups heavily weighed on the opinions of Americans. Importantly, this effect is not limited strictly to leftist groups and as the threat from specific groups varies so does public opinion toward those groups where threat becomes highlighted (Davis, 1975; Nunn et al., 1978). Therefore, while the focus of which group to distrust may vary, what persists is that

citizens hesitate awarding full access to civil liberties to members of groups that are perceived to be a threat. (Sullivan et al., 1982). However, the effect of perceived threat on civil liberties extends beyond outgroup tolerance. Scholarship has found that in times of extreme insecurity, where threat is believed to be imminent, individuals are willing to allow governmental incursion on their own constitutionally protected civil liberties in order to increase personal security (Davis and Silver 2003). Furthermore, scholars noted that political elites, in striking contrast to the general population were consistently more tolerant and willing to extend protection of civil liberties even to groups perceived to be threats (Prothro and Grigg 1960; McClosky 1964). What are Americans' views on tolerance and support specifically for free speech, religious freedom, and abortion rights?

Free Speech

Perhaps the most critical civil liberty explored in this study is that of free speech. Although often contentious, the right of individual expression has long stood as a cornerstone of American social and political values. Much of the contestation of Free speech occurs in attempting to find adequate balance between individuals' freedom of expression with the civil rights and protections of others (Kersch 2003; Lindner and Nosek 2009). How then do Americans typically feel specifically about freedom of speech? On January 8, 2021, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube- three of the largest social media platforms in the United States- suspended former President Donald Trump's accounts blocking any communication from the President on their sites. What was in essence a social media silencing of the President quickly sparked debate of First Amendment protections. While the constitutional guarantee only provides individuals protection against governmental encroachment on their freedom of speech, the action taken by the social media platforms was nevertheless perceived by many (including the president

and his legal counsel) as a First Amendment issue (Zakrzewski 2022). In this instance, even on the eve of a mass insurrection against the federal government, only 50% of Americans supported the proposition that President Trump be banned from the media platforms indefinitely (Anderson 2021). The literature on tolerance and free speech suggests this is not all too surprising.

Research shows that people are more likely to support free speech for individuals within their own social groups and to be far less tolerant of controversial forms of speech that directly affect them personally (Chanley 1994; Marcus et al. 1995). Moreover, tolerance of free speech is deeply skewed in favor of those within the same political party and ideology (Fisher et al. 1999). Therefore, while a broad interpretation of Trump's social media ban would suggest the populace is evenly torn on the issue, that the support for the ban was split along party lines with 95% of Republicans opposing the ban and 89% of Democrats in favor of it, offers support for the partisan skew.

The issue of tolerance for free speech extends to more controversial topics such as hate speech and pornography. Traditionally, hate speech, even racist speech, has been constitutionally protected by the First Amendment (Kersch 2003). However, the issue of pornography is far more complicated and imbedded with governmental constraints. For instance, while advocates of pornography contend it is a form of expression protected under the First Amendment (Braddon-Mitchell and West 2004), opponents argue it has a negative effect on free speech and protections of women in particular (Dworkin 1996). Nevertheless, whether protected or sought to be banned pornography clearly relies on subjective interpretations of the First Amendment (Levin 2014).

Religiosity and Religious Freedom

Along with free speech, the First Amendment of the Constitution provides protections for individuals to form and practice religious beliefs. Certainly, the American public has benefited

greatly from the expressed right to practice faith as they so choose. Despite a trend of decreasing religiosity, the United States stands apart as the most religious fully developed country in the world with more than three quarters of the population identifying as religious (The 2020 Census of American Religion 2021). Although the vast majority of religious Americans identify as Christian, there remains a wide range of diversity both within Christian sects and non-Christian faiths that has often led to interfaith contention and apprehension (Wuthnow 2011). Scholars studying the influence of religion on civil liberties have noted that religion has historically often been a barrier to tolerance, both of other religious practices as well as civil liberties including dissenting free speech (Putnam et al. 2012).

In the United States, tolerance has historically been driven by a self-interested live and let live desire of individuals to be allowed to practice their own religion free of governmental or societal prejudice (Storselee 2019). However, tolerance of religious freedom, like other civil liberties varies widely based on the in-group/our-group pressures and insecurities (Wuthnow 2011). For instance, following the attacks of September 11, scholars noted many were generally in favor of the infringement of civil liberties of Muslim Americans in an effort to prevent further terrorist acts from occurring (Huddy et al. 2002, Davis 2007). Moreover, in the aftermath of the attacks many Americans were outraged and indeed lobbied to block the building of a mosque near the sight of the fallen World Trade Center towers (Johnson 2010). Importantly, despite fluctuations in perception of feared or disliked outgroups, scholars have observed that younger Americans are more tolerant of others' religious practices than their older counterparts (Campbell 2013).

Abortion

Unlike speech and religion, the right to abortion is not explicitly enumerated in the

American Constitution. Until the early 1970s the regulation of abortion had largely been delegated to the various states of the Union. Nevertheless, legal interpretations of the founding document have elevated a woman's reproductive rights into the scope of civil liberties protected by the American Constitution. In the landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade* the Supreme Court asserted that the Due Process clause of the 14th Amendment guaranteed a "right to privacy" and thus established abortion as a constitutionally protected right for women (*Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 1973). The decision prohibited states from outlawing abortion but offered avenues for states to limit abortion rights and practices through subnational legislation (Maddow-Zimet et al. 2021).

Abortion also differs from speech and religion in that while the freedoms found in the first amendment generally hold broad acceptance the public is more divided in support for abortion. Roughly 60% of Americans demonstrate some support for legal abortions (PEW 2022). However, as literature suggests, there is a steep religious divide, with the religiously affiliated traditionally having significantly less support than the unaffiliated or non-religious (Harris and Mills 1985). Opposition is highest for white evangelical Protestants with nearly 75% asserting abortion should be illegal under most or all cases (PEW 2022). Notwithstanding, attitudes toward abortion have remained relatively steady since the decision of *Roe v. Wade* in large part due to the clear partisan divide (Wheeler 2014). Additionally, unlike speech and religion, following the decision of *Roe v. Wade* there have been and continue to be active legal battles aiming to limit if not fully outlaw abortion in the United States (Jaffe 2019).

Generational Cohorts and Why They Matter

Extant literature in Political Science often relegates the use of generational cohorts as a simple proxy for age fully missing the nuance of each categorical group. However, some scholarship does offer support for the significance of generational cohorts as possible predictors

of social and political phenomena (Eyerman and Turner 1998). So then, what establishes generational cohorts and how are they classified? The most distinctive use of cohort and one this investigation does not deviate from is that of groups that are divided into largely predetermined chronological cohorts of roughly 16-year blocs. This chapter places critical attention to the Millennial generation which is typically the cohort born between 1981-1996. I also use the Generation X – those born between 1965-1980 as an explanatory variable to evaluate the distinction between the younger generational cohorts and the Baby Boom (Boomer) generation which includes those born between 1946-1964.

While the linear categorization of generational groups serves as a useful measure for understanding social phenomena, without further theoretical development of why cohorts are critically different from each other it remains largely an oversimplified proxy for age (Eyerman and Turner 1998). Instead, generational cohorts must be understood as individual groups whose shared social and political experiences have established unique generational identities. Karl Mannheim originally termed these cohort shaping experiences as critical junctures (Mannheim 1927). These junctures are unique to each generational group and help establish new generational styles that shape the way cohorts engage with, and react to society in drastically different ways from previous groups (Mannheim 1970). Moreover, as the generational cohorts actively engage in public discourse within their own group and between the other generational cohorts in society, the social and political identity of the groups becomes embedded in individual members of the generational groups in such a way that the cohorts ultimately begin demonstrating shared participatory attitudes – Millennials act like Millennials and Boomers act like Boomers- (Ainsworth 2001).

The Millennial generational style is formed by lived experiences that lie in stark contrast

with that of previous cohorts, most specifically with the Boomer Generation. Millennials are the first generation to come of age fully technologically literate (Taylor 2014). Technology is deeply embedded in the daily routine of Millennials and has shaped the way in which the cohort communicates, consumes media and news, and has drastically extended their social networks (Perrin 2015). While this juncture is not traceable nor attributable to a singular event, the ubiquity of technology has undeniably shaped Millennial identity. A second juncture critical to the formation of the Millennial generational style is the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In 2016, the Pew Research center released a study in which it asked Americans to name the historic event they believed to have the greatest impact on the United States. The results showed that 86% of Millennials listed the attacks of September 11 compared to only 70% of Boomers citing the same (Dean et al. 2016). So, while the attacks were a significant event for most Americans they clearly had a greater impact on Millennials.

A third juncture critical to the formation of the Millennial style was the economic collapse of 2008 that led to the Great Recession. The crash of the housing market and sudden drop in overall economic performance occurred just as Millennials first began actively participating in professional fields. According to Rouse and Ross the recession created lifelong economic barriers for the cohort (Rouse and Ross 2018). A fourth critical juncture for Millennials were the social movements and demonstrations that began with Occupy Wallstreet as a protest of the economic recession. The predominance of collective defiance of political and societal failures, which continue today in movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too had a deep effect in the political attitudes of Millennials and how they engage in politics (Milkman, 2017; Taylor, 2016). The final juncture in the establishment of the Millennial generational style is the election of Barack Obama. The election of America's first black president with

overwhelming support from Millennials highlights levels of racial tolerance unmatched by previous cohorts. The election also served to emphasize the extent to which Millennials engage as unitary actors in general elections (Talbot, 2008; Norman, 2016).

Theory and Hypotheses

How then can the inclusion of generational cohorts as explanatory variables help clarify American attitudes toward civil liberties? Extant literature suggests support for civil liberties varies largely based on notions of ingroup and outgroup dynamics (Stouffer, 1955; Davis, 1975). The concept of group competition underscores the significance of threat perception as a driving predictor in support for civil liberties. For instance, when asked about the importance of protecting the first amendment rights in the Constitution, the American public has generally held strong and steadfast beliefs in the protection of these as civil liberties (Nunn et al., 1978). However, when given the option, respondents of social surveys show they are much more likely to minimize the extension and protection of civil liberties for their least liked groups (Lawrence, 1976; Sullivan et al., 1982). This exception-based support for civil liberties becomes more pronounced in times of general insecurity such as war or threat of war (Gibson and Gouws, 2003).

Moreover, the level of tolerance can vary depending on the level of homogeneity of the target group, with more diverse out-groups receiving higher levels of tolerance than more homogenous groups (Sullivan et al. 1982). The literature suggests several other individual level factors that help determine a person's tolerance for other groups. Scholars identified early on that a respondent's level of education drastically affects the level of tolerance someone has toward the outgroup (Adorno et al., 1969; Davis 1975). Party identification also plays a significant role in the perpetuation or rejection of intolerance as elites within the political party, namely those

holding political office, work to send cues about which groups are to be feared or tolerated (Marcus et al. 1995). Another line of research also tends to frame the argument over the extension or curtailment of civil liberties as a struggle between national security and freedom (Davis and Silver, 2004). This draws a clear distinction from previous studies as the limitation of civil liberties is no longer constrained to an outgroup but rather on the respondents themselves.

This change creates a dynamic in which trust in government is critical to the level of encroachment allowed into individual civil liberties and thus varies depending on partisanship and party in office (Davis, 2007). Thus, the primary factors influencing individual support for the extension and protection of civil liberties are the level of threat perceived from a given outgroup, partisan identity, ideological lean, and education.

Millennial Identity

This study asserts that the distinct social and political identity of Millennials will influence support for various civil liberties across a multitude of groups and circumstances. In order to do so more effectively, I first must delve deeper into the Millennial identity. Literature on Millennials is relatively limited but what has been written helps clarify the unique characteristics of this cohort and why it is important to give a greater focus to this as an explanatory variable when considering identity politics.

Millennials engage in politics through social media and new media sources at a higher rate than any current cohort and are the first generational group to become politically active in a time of fully online politics (Zukin et al. 2016). They also tend to favor non-traditional forms of political participation often involving collective action and social movements and do so at very high rates (O'Toole 2010; Milkman, 2017). Their political ideology tends to favor liberal progressivism and to a large extent is focused on the net gain of collective goods (Norman 2016;

Fisher 2018). The appeal of liberal policies however has not seen them captured by the Democratic Party, instead Millennials are more likely than other generational cohorts to self-identify as political independents (Nava et al. 2014).

Millennial Cosmopolitanism

One aspect of the Millennial identity critical to this chapter is that of Millennial cosmopolitanism. The origins of cosmopolitanism, as it pertains to this chapter, is in the study of international relations and globalization in particular (Brock and Brighthouse 2009). Scholars have suggested that a globalized world would highlight the importance of normative issues over physical borders (Ohmae 1990). Because normative issues transcend territorial boundaries, globalization would promote universal principles – cosmopolitanism- that supersede geographic and cultural traditions (Grande 2006). While scholars of cosmopolitanism envisioned an interstate commonality of values, I extend this concept to Millennials specifically within the United States. For Millennials, I refer to the exponential growth and near ubiquitous nature of social networking that have allowed the cohort to become more interconnected across all aspects of American society than any previous generational group. The use of social networking allows Millennials to extend their personal and professional connectivity across social, state, and political boundaries in a way that was previously impossible (Nussbaum 1996). The increase in connectivity for the cohort has shaped the Millennial world to be much smaller and inter-reliant than it was for older Americans (Ross and Rouse 2020). Because this phenomenon of interconnectivity occurred throughout their formative years, the effect should be amplified for Millennials as the first native cosmopolitans. As such Millennial cosmopolitanism has a significant influence on the level of empathy the cohort has for individuals across the globe (Vertovec and Cohen 2002).

Likewise, Millennials are more tolerant of foreign cultures and have a greater respect for social, racial, and ethnic diversity (Zogby and Kuhl 2013). If, as the prevalent literature suggests, Millennials' cosmopolitanism can create a sense of empathy for what occurs to people outside of their country then that same principle of empathy for diversity should apply to people outside of their own "in-group" within the United States. Finally, the demographic makeup of the Millennial generation should influence the way in which in-group and out-group pressures affect the cohort. Millennials are the most racially diverse generation in American history with nearly 40% of Millennials belonging to at least one racial minority group (PEW 2015).

Given the significance of individual level factors including social and partisan group pressures that influence tolerance and support for civil liberties coupled with the cosmopolitan, largely intersectional, and politically unaffiliated nature of the Millennial generation I expect the following to be true of Millennial support for various civil liberties:

H1- Millennials will be more likely to support free speech than Baby Boomers

Millennial engagement with religion also differs from previous cohorts. They are more likely than previous cohorts to be religiously unaffiliated with only 64% associated with a specific church or denomination (Pew 2022). Nevertheless, the vast majority of Millennials claim to believe in a god and nearly half are fully certain of their conviction (Pew 2022). Most importantly, scholars have noted that the unique qualities of Millennial attitudes allow the cohort to be more open and tolerant to religious ideas critically different to their own (Kamalia et al. 2019). Thus, the cosmopolitan and intersectional nature of the cohort will see that

H2- Millennials will be more likely to accept the spread of any religion without government interference.

I expect Millennial support for abortion to be heightened for several reasons. First, Millennials are the only fully political viable group to still be largely of child bearing age.

Moreover, as Millennials are also still in the upward trajectory portion of their careers, the ability to choose to not have a child will weigh more heavily for the cohort than for older Americans. Most importantly, as with free speech, the nature of the Millennial identity will see Millennial men and women as more likely to support a woman's right to choose.

H3- Millennials will be significantly more likely to support abortion rights than Boomers regardless of the reason for the abortion.

Data and Methods

This study seeks to understand American Millennial attitudes toward civil liberties by testing support for four dependent variables; freedom of speech, religious freedom, and a woman's right to abortion. I do so by utilizing data from the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS). Because this study is concerned with the most contemporary analyses of U.S. respondents, the study uses the 2018 cross-sectional data. The 2018 GSS data set employed full-probability sampling to gauge views on numerous social and civic issues and contains responses from 2,348 interviews completed in English and Spanish. However, because of missing data the total number of respondents that answered the questions concerning civil liberties used in this investigation are 1,673 for the questions on free speech, 1,057 concerning religion, and 2,151 regarding abortion.

To measure freedom of speech, I created an index variable comprised of nine survey questions. In forming the index, I first look at respondents' attitudes toward banning controversial books from public libraries on issues of militarism, racism, religious extremism, and homosexuality. All of the questions are dichotomous and coded 1 if the respondent believes the book should be allowed in public libraries. The question on militarism asks the respondent to "Consider a person who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country- Suppose he wrote a book advocating doing away with elections and letting the military

run the country. Somebody in your community suggests that the book be removed from the public library. Would you favor removing it, or not?" The racism question asks respondents to, "consider a person who believes that Blacks are genetically inferior. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote which said Blacks are inferior should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?" The question on religious extremism asks, "Now consider a Muslim clergyman who preaches hatred of the United States. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote which preaches hatred of the United States should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?" Finally, the question regarding homosexuality asks, "And what about a man who admits that he is a homosexual? If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote in favor of homosexuality should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?"

The second part of the index is derived from questions on the same topics, (militarism, racism, religious extremism, and homosexuality) using similar language but deal directly with the individuals in each category being allowed to speak in the respondent's communities. Again, responses are coded 1 if the respondent states the individuals in question should be allowed to speak in a public forum in their community. The final question of the index looks at respondent attitudes toward pornography laws. The GSS asked respondents to select one of the following options; "1.) There should be laws against the distribution of pornography whatever the age, 2.) There should be laws against the distribution of pornography to persons under 18, 3.) There should be no laws forbidding the distribution of pornography." The pornography variable was coded 0 if respondents believed laws should prohibit the distribution of pornography whatever the age and 1 if they believed pornography should be permissible to any extent. The Index thus

ranges from 0-9 with a higher score indicating greater support for the protection of free speech and expression. The Cronbach alpha score for the index is .81. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression is used to test the hypotheses regarding Millennial support for freedom of speech and results are found in Table 4.1.

To measure respondent attitudes on freedom of religion the GSS asks to indicate support for the statement that “Governments should not interfere with the attempts of any religion to spread its faith” (Responses: (1) “Strongly disagree,” (2) “disagree,” (3) “neither agree nor disagree,” (4) “Agree,” (5) “Strongly agree.”). Ordered Logit regression results for Millennial support for freedom of religion are presented in Table 4.2.

Finally, I use four questions to test Millennial support for a woman’s right to abortion. For all variables the GSS asks respondents to “Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion” (1) for any reason, (2) If she became pregnant as a result of rape? (3) If the woman’s own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy? And (4) If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby? Given the recent struggles for constitutional support of abortion I chose to keep the variables disaggregated rather than to create an index of general support for abortion rights. The Logit regression results for Millennial support for each of the abortion variables are presented in Table 4.3.

The key explanatory variables for this investigation are the generational variables of Millennial and Generation X. Each of the cohort variables is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent birth year falls within the traditional generational brackets. Millennials are those born between 1980 and 1996 and Generation X are those born between 1965 and 1979. The excluded control group for this study are white males in the Boomer and silent generation who are born before 1965. The Models also include seven individual-level control variables: Latino,

Black, female, income, education, democrat, and independent. The Latino and Black variables were coded using the respondent's self-identification as a Hispanic/Latino or Black/African American. Female is coded 1. Income is coded using a categorical variable that ranges from 1 (under \$1,000) to 26 (\$170,000 or over). Education is coded as a continuous variable indicating the total number of years of schooling completed by the respondent ranging from 0-20. Democrat is coded 1. Independent is coded 1.

Results

First, I observe Millennial support for freedom of speech and report the findings in Table 4.1. Table 4.1 contains the OLS model with coefficients and standard errors for the free speech index. Critically I find that Millennials are significantly more likely than Boomers to support free expression even for controversial actors. The Millennial effect is also the largest positive effect found in the regression model. Members of the Generation X are also more likely to support free speech although the effect size is smaller than that of Millennials and at a lower level of significance.

Table 4.1: OLS: Millennial Support for Freedom of Speech

	Free Speech
Millennial	0.795***
	(0.216)
Generation X	0.600*
	(0.239)
Latino	-1.129***
	(0.289)
Black	-1.095***
	(0.255)
Female	0.139
	(0.185)

(table continues)

	Free Speech
Income	0.0497**
	(0.0171)
Education	0.155***
	(0.0354)
Democrat	0.115
	(0.229)
Independent	0.170
	(0.258)
_cons	2.823***
	(0.530)
<i>N</i>	1673
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.125

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2018GSS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Both Latinos and Blacks are significantly less likely to support free speech as defined in the model. Furthermore, consistent with extant literature greater income and increased education are both significant predictors for increased support for free speech. Education has a greater effect on support for free speech than income although both are significant at the .01 and .001 levels respectively. Being female demonstrated no significance in support of the free speech index. However, the disaggregated models show females are significantly less likely to support no regulation of pornography. Results for this can be found in Table 4.2. Neither Democrat nor independents show statistical significance in the free speech model. However, both are significant predictors for support of allowing pornography at any level.

Table 4.2 presents the ordered logit model for Millennial support of religious freedom. Again, the GSS question for this variable asks respondents to what level they agreed with the statement that, “Governments should not interfere with the attempts of any religion to spread its faith”. The results indicate that Millennials are significantly more likely to support the religious

organizations' freedom to exist and develop in the United States without governmental interference or impediments. Interestingly, Millennials are the only group in the model that show significance in any direction. While unexpected, this only bolsters support for the significance of Millennial identity as an explanatory variable for issues of civil liberties.

Table 4.2: Logit: Millennial Support for Freedom of Religion

	Religious Freedom
Millennial	0.527***
	(0.142)
Generation X	0.187
	(0.145)
Latino	-0.0730
	(0.161)
Black	-0.127
	(0.169)
Female	0.0275
	(0.117)
Income	-0.0184
	(0.0111)
Education	0.0250
	(0.0226)
Democrat	-0.0229
	(0.153)
Independent	-0.0904
	(0.165)
cut1	-0.859*
	(0.348)
cut2	1.312***
	(0.350)
cut3	2.211***
	(0.356)
cut4	4.169***
	(0.410)
<i>N</i>	1057

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2018GSS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

I present the results for the Logit models for Millennial support of a woman’s right to abortion in Table 4.3. First the Millennial effect is positive and significant for all four dependent variables on abortion. As expected in hypothesis three, Millennials are significantly more likely than the oldest generational cohorts to support a woman’s right to an abortion in cases of child defects, to preserve the mother’s health, in cases of rape, and for any reason at all. Being a member of the Generation X only had a significant effect on two of the variables. In instances of rape and for any reason, members of Generation X are significantly more likely to support abortion rights. Latinos are significantly less likely to support abortion for any reason, for defects in the unborn child, and for cases of rape. Latino’s are also less likely to support abortions that occur where the woman’s health is in jeopardy at nearly significant levels with a P value of .07. Blacks are significantly more less likely than whites to support abortion rights for any reason or for instances of child defects. The negative effect is present for abortions cases of rape nearing significance with a P Value of .06.

Table 4.3: Logit: Millennial Support for Right to Abortion (Privacy)

	Any Reason	Child Defect	Woman’s Health	Rape
Millennial	0.594***	0.213*	0.373***	0.504***
	(0.115)	(0.106)	(0.108)	(0.107)
Generation X	0.335**	0.170	0.212	0.320**
	(0.121)	(0.110)	(0.111)	(0.111)
Latino	-0.297*	-0.285*	-0.236	-0.372**
	(0.144)	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.133)
Black	-0.511***	-0.344**	-0.146	-0.225
	(0.138)	(0.127)	(0.129)	(0.128)
Female	-0.00917	0.0185	-0.131	-0.101
	(0.0967)	(0.0890)	(0.0900)	(0.0895)
Income	0.0138	0.000483	0.0102	0.00293
	(0.00922)	(0.00838)	(0.00844)	(0.00842)

(table continues)

	Any Reason	Child Defect	Woman's Health	Rape
Education	0.0778***	0.0386*	0.0229	0.0366*
	(0.0189)	(0.0172)	(0.0173)	(0.0172)
Democrat	1.200***	0.745***	0.510***	0.691***
	(0.129)	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.113)
Independent	0.654***	0.296*	0.111	0.172
	(0.141)	(0.122)	(0.121)	(0.122)
_cons	-2.957***	-0.986***	-0.460	-0.963***
	(0.295)	(0.255)	(0.255)	(0.256)
N	2151	2151	2151	2151

Standard errors in parentheses. Source: 2018GSS. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Neither female nor the education variable meet standard significance levels to serve as predictors for support of abortion. Higher levels of education increase the likelihood that individuals will support abortion rights for women for any reason, for cases of birth defects, and in instances of rape. Democrats are more likely to support abortion rights for women across all four circumstances at the highest level of significance. Independents are also significantly more likely to support abortion rights for any reason and for cases of possible child defects.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results offer evidence of a clear separation of the Millennial generation from previous cohorts regarding support for civil liberties. Millennials were significantly more likely than Boomers to show support for civil liberties, even for controversial actors. Moreover, while members of the Generation X were at times also more likely than Boomers to show support for civil liberties these effects were less frequent and the results show they were mostly indistinguishable from the Boomers. The models offer support for the theoretical premise of the investigation that the intersectionality of Millennials coupled with higher levels of education and

lack of strict partisanship allows the cohort to form a sense of American cosmopolitanism and community that allows for greater outgroup empathy.

The results for the test on freedom of religion truly exemplifies the argument made on Millennial identity as the Millennial variable was the only factor found to significantly increase in support for the unobstructed spread of religions in the United States. Lastly, as Millennials are the largest voting bloc in the United States and given the general patterns of participation established by countless investigations of American Political behavior it is critical that we understand how this cohort is likely to behave in the following years. Given that the post-Millennial Generation-Z mirrors, and in various instances intensifies, many of the attributes that contribute to the Millennial Identity as discussed in the chapter, understanding the political behavior of Millennials may offer the greatest insight into the future of American politics.

The findings offer significant implications for policymakers in the United States. Looking specifically at the case of abortion, as the models show, being female offered no statistically significant deviation from the control group of white Boomer men. However, the current rhetoric in American politics continues to frame abortion rights as primarily or even solely as a women's issue. Nevertheless, the evidence seems to suggest that this may not be the most effective approach if policy makers wish to protect or extend abortion rights across the nation. The results suggest that the issue seems to be far more statistically significant for Millennials than for any other group including women. Therefore, I offer that proponents of abortion rights as civil liberties may be better served by deviating from the current female centric focus and begin framing abortion as an issue of the American youth.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines the influence of Millennial generational effects on political behavior. I evaluate the role that generational styles have in shaping policy preferences for Millennials across religion and racial and ethnic groups. Relying on survey data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) and the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS), I observe the significance of the Millennial cohort on racial linked fate, religion and social policy, and support for American civil liberties.

Findings

First, in Chapter 2, I analyze the association of generational cohorts with the new measure of *comunidad* and theorize that the sense of community in association with the cosmopolitan nature of the cohort has a significant effect in the way Millennials perceive race and ethnicity. Through the models I find that Millennials are significantly more likely to have higher levels of *comunidad* than older generational cohorts and that both the Generation X and Baby Boom Generations are associated with significantly lower levels of *comunidad*. Moreover, the results indicate that Latino Millennials are significantly more likely to have higher levels of Linked fate and that levels of linked fate increase with the levels of *comunidad* associated with each generational cohort. Consistent with previous literature, Latinos belonging to either the Generation X or Baby Boom generation are significantly likely to have lower levels of racial linked fate.

Second, in Chapter 3, I examine the influence of Millennial Latinos on the social policy preferences of evangelical Christians. Given the conservative leanings of evangelical Christians in American politics along with the liberal preferences of both Latino and Millennial voters, I

examine the policy preferences of those at the intersection of these three groups regarding Free speech, religious freedom, and abortion. The results suggest that the interactions affect the policy preference of evangelicals. First Latino evangelicals do not hold the significant association with conservative preferences of non-Latino evangelicals for issues of climate change and Voter identification laws. While the results do not offer enough evidence to suggest preferences are completely reversed, the fact that preferences are confounded is significant in itself. Second, the models suggest that Millennial evangelical policy preference for climate change is reversed at statistically significant levels from non-Millennial evangelicals. Lastly, the three-way interaction of Latino-Millennial evangelicals offers similar results in terms of climate change with Latino-Millennial evangelicals being significantly more likely to support government spending to combat climate change. However, perhaps the most interesting finding in the models is that the three-way interaction also shows that Latino-Millennial evangelicals are significantly less likely to support government spending on aid to the poor. This is somewhat counterintuitive as both millennials and evangelicals are significantly more likely to support government spending for the poor. Clearly, there is something that must be explored as to the reason for this reversal of policy preference.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I investigate the effect of the Millennial political identity on support for American civil liberties. As I do in Chapter 1, I theorize that the cosmopolitan and intersectional nature of Millennials creates a cohort with higher levels of political empathy that will establish Millennials as more supportive of free speech, religious freedom, and a woman's right to abortion. The results support the proposed hypotheses in the following ways. First, the models suggest that Millennials have significantly more support for freedom of speech than Baby Boomers. While members of the Generation X are also more supportive of free speech than

Boomers, the effect for Millennials is greater and at higher levels of significance than for Generation X. Second, the models indicate that Millennials are the only significant predictor for support of religious freedom as presented in the CMPS. The results offer evidence that the unique generational attributes within the cohort allow Millennials to be significantly more likely to support the spread of religion without governmental intervention. Lastly, Millennials are significantly more likely to support abortion in cases of child defects, in cases where the woman's health is in jeopardy, in instances of rape, and for any reason at all.

Contribution and Value

This research examines the political implications of the Millennial generation on American politics by exploring the interaction of the Millennial generational cohort with race, social issues, and civil liberties. In doing so It offers distinct value for academic research as well as public policy. Extant literature on political behavior often looks at the effect of age on patterns of behavior. However, much is lost by not considering the unique characteristics of age cohorts. A deeper focus on these cohorts may highlight distinct generational effects mobilizing the American electorate. The value of this dissertation is threefold: First, in terms of general contribution this investigation offers a new, distinct measure of political engagement with significant predictive value for participation. As it is used in this study, *comunidad* serves as a predictor of linked fate for Latino, Asian, and African Americans. It also helps substantiate the theoretical premise that Millennials are deeply influenced by their cosmopolitan nature.

Second, in terms of Race and Ethnic Politics, this study attempts to disentangle the influence of the generational effects on linked fate. Increased levels of linked fate for the Millennial generation is inherently important as extant literature in the field suggests that increased levels of group identity, group consciousness, and linked fate are significant

contributors to increased political participation in all form, including voting. Given the racial diversity of the Millennial generation, if group identity is triggered in a way that increases the sense of linked fate it can be expected that the participation of racial minorities within the Millennial generation will also increase.

Lastly, this dissertation offers several significant implications for public policy. First, it is noteworthy that Millennials are the only predictor of increased support for free religion. This is most important given the decreased levels of religiously for the cohort compared to older generational groups. When taken in hand with the reversals of policy position for Latino-Millennial evangelicals, it may be expected that a more religiously tolerant, less religiously cohesive generational cohort may limit the stability and efficacy of evangelical politics.

Furthermore, this dissertation establishes that Millennials are key supporters of civil liberties. As the Supreme Court of the United States seems intent on reversing manly longstanding precedents, especially those dealing with a woman's right to an abortion Millennial engagement in the following decade may sit directly at odds with the conservative decisions expected by the highest court in the land.

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