

THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION AND THEIR VIEW ON TERRORISM:
A PERSPECTIVE FOR POLICYMAKERS

by

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Abstract

The millennial generation, or people born roughly between 1980 and 2000, have surpassed the Baby Boomer Generation as America's largest living generation. How their opinions and actions shape public policy is a topic worthy of study. After the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11th in 2001, the threat of terrorism seemed to connect with every American and shocked the entire world. This event sparked a war, "The War on Terror," which included the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, the subsequent conflicts and the emergence of more terrorist groups in the Middle East and around the world. While the oldest millennials can certainly recall the horror of 9/11, most millennials have only experienced the aftermath.

This thesis explores the views on terrorism of millennials, specifically the college-age cohort (born between 1995 and 1998), as compared with those of other generations. Two datasets (one collected from a survey of the Appalachian State University student cohort and another from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs) were utilized to support the claim that the millennial generation, specifically the college-age cohort, view terrorism less seriously than non-millennials. The hypothesis was based on an examination of the influence of several factors: the generational effect and socialization, education, and mass media.

The data also dispelled a commonly held belief that millennials are generally apathetic as they were found to be just as passionate about such other issues as climate change and the protection of U.S. jobs. Interestingly, the research also discovered that the college-age student cohort, specifically, are relatively more interested in combating international terrorism. This apparent contradiction suggests one of many possibilities for

future research. Other variables to explore could include opinion differences by gender, geographic location and educational level.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Historical Context of Terrorism and Its Relevancy Today

In a speech delivered by George W. Bush on December 18, 2005, President Bush stated that, “We do not create terrorism by fighting the terrorists. We invite terrorism by ignoring them (Transcript). Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the way that maturing generations, specifically millennials, view it. This introductory chapter examines how the millennial generation, soon to make up approximately 46 percent of the workforce by 2020 (Brack), functions in society in comparison to other generations. In addition, it considers the role that terrorism plays in the lives of millennials as contrasted with non-millennial generations.

All generations to some degree experienced the human, material and emotional effects of terrorism on September 11th, 2001 or the “Day of Fire” so named by President George W. Bush (Utley). The variance among generations in the event’s repercussions stems from the age of those alive at the time as well as their life before and after the event. The bombing of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon undoubtedly had enormous consequences on the lives of all U.S. generations. In fact, President George W. Bush reached his highest approval rating at 90 percent following the attacks; on the surface all of the U.S. seemed on board and ready to fight terrorism. The impact of this catastrophic event, which killed 2,970 people, goes deeper though as society itself changed drastically following the attacks. So, too, did the approach to governing pursued by many politicians (Utley).

Millennials have grown up in a different society because of terrorism, a society changed from pre-9/11 United States. This is a society shaped around The USA Patriot Act, a policy emphasizing the need for security and in some instances taking precedence over civil

liberties. This policy was born in an era of terrorism where according to the Patriot Act, the need for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism” was first beginning to appear at such extreme levels (The USA). This is particularly appropriate this year as President Trump signed an executive order just a few weeks into 2017 stating, “...I hereby proclaim that the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of aliens from countries referred to in section 217(a)(12) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12), would be detrimental to the interest of the United States...” and it continues “...I hereby suspend entry into the United States, as immigrants and nonimmigrants, of such persons for 90 days from date of this order” (Executive Order). By signing this executive order, President Trump was signaling his belief that the threat of terrorism was still severe. Still though President Trump is not a millennial and in many ways is not speaking to the millennials. This generation does represent his core supporters.

Excluding policy for a moment, in current society, the news media consistently covers the issue of terrorism and it seems that most developed countries today are dealing with its threat at home as well as abroad. Terrorism is a threat that has become as common a theme as such issues as the economy and jobs, healthcare, immigration and education. Polling data show that terrorism is one of the most important issues facing the United States’ population today. When examining multiple polls conducted last year, meant to identify which issues constituents kept in mind when voting for president, terrorism consistently landed in the top two (Fingerhut). According to one Gallup poll, in 2015, 49 percent of the U.S. population said that they were very or somewhat worried when asked, “How worried

are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism—very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?” (Agiesta).

According to another Gallup poll conducted in December of 2016, 73 percent of Americans believed that non-economic problems are the greatest problems facing the U.S. Breaking this down, terrorism is within the top eight, sharing the space with things like Race Relations, Racism, Dissatisfaction with government/ Poor leadership, Immigration/Illegal aliens, and others (Gallup, Inc. Most Important Problem). A more recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center states that about eight-in-ten Americans or 79 percent say that ISIS poses a significant threat to the well-being of the U.S.

According to a poll conducted by CNN/ORC in June 2016, following the shooting in Orlando, “Americans are more likely to think terrorist attacks in the U.S. are more imminent now than any point since 2003” (Agiesta). The data indicate that concern about terrorism is true of people of all ages. With that said, it could be hypothesized that to millennials, terrorism has fallen from its spot as one of the most important, eminent concerns as they have been raised in an atmosphere saturated with the threat of terrorism. In addition, while there did exist sympathy and therefore support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan following the attacks on September 11th this is not the case for the detrimental war in Iraq, which has led to an emergence of new terrorist organizations such as ISIS (Utlely). This in itself could have triggered levels of frustration with U.S. foreign policy among millennials and a wish to see less U.S. intervention in regards to terrorism.

An interesting study conducted in 2014, emphasizes this point by showing that around 70 percent of non-millennials see international terrorism as “a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States” whereas less than 60 percent of millennials see it as such.

The issue of terrorism sits just above the issue of global warming, which almost 50 percent of the millennial generation views as “a critical threat to the vital interest of the United States while only about 40 percent of non-millennials see it as an important issue facing the U.S (Thrall). These data suggest that millennials are beginning to show signs of caring less about terrorism than older generations.

Terrorism is inescapable in current society and has been for a majority of millennials’ existence to date. It is, therefore, indeed possible that this issue of terrorism is not nearly as important or relevant for the millennial generation as is the economy, immigration and the environment. When referring to immigration it is important to differentiate between immigration from Mexico, which is what is being referenced, and the immigration that has been banned (immigration from the Middle East and North Africa). While the issues with immigration from Mexico are pertinent, they do not relate to terrorism in the same way the executive order mentioned above does, titled, Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into The United States.

What role does the millennial generation, specifically the college-age cohort play in regards to this new age of terrorism in the United States? “Generations are a great key for unlocking the history of any society that believes in progress” (Howe 363). Knowing the way that millennials think and function is crucial to understanding how they will transition as time passes. “Each time adult generations reach new phases of life, and each time a rising generation comes of age, they separately acquire new perspectives on where their society is heading. The result is a regular and predictable change in that society’s mood and direction” (Howe 363).

These perspectives can come from things like war, political strife, and terrorism. As an example, knowing that the millennial generation tends to be more liberal or liberally leaning than other generations offers predictions on how the generation will react to policies such as the temporary immigration ban mentioned above. In 2014, more millennials said that they were more liberal than conservative; the millennial generation is the only one to have a negative conservative-liberal gap (Thrall). This helps one understand, for example, millennials' strong support for Barack Obama. This leads to the next point. In order to understand why millennials think the way they do, it is necessary to compare and contrast this generation with older generations also currently serving in the workforce.

The Millennial Generation and Society

Not only is the millennial generation referred to as the 9/11 generation (which has multiple important implications that will be delineated in the theory chapter), they are also a post-Cold War generation meaning that they view foreign policy much differently than previous generations. "Millennials are the generation least concerned about international terrorism and display lower levels of support for defense spending and fighting terrorism" (Thrall 10). This is interesting information given that that millennials were young and vulnerable to outside influence when the Twin Towers fell. One might think that millennials would own a hate-driven outlook of the world, one portrayed as a threat. What is proposed in this thesis is the opposite, the belief that due to events such as 9/11, the millennial generation views the world differently, and possibly more positively than other generations.

9/11 did indeed have an immensely profound effect on the millennial generation. In a 2009 survey conducted by the Center for American Progress, millennials cite the attacks on 9/11 as the most important influence shaping the attitudes and beliefs of their generation"

(Towns). Rather than fostering a fear of future terrorist attacks, which no data support, data seem to show that it has created a stronger sense of global awareness among millennials and reinforced the idea that the U.S. needs to use more global restraint. There is no data implying that the views held by millennials support tightening of homeland security or a more hawk-like military. Even more interesting, a study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that "...Millennials are considerably more likely than older generations to believe that the United States' own actions provoked the 9/11 attacks" (Thrall 11). Comparing this to other generations, millennials are the only generation with a majority who see it this way (Thrall 11). In addition to the attack on the Twin Towers, the wars in Afghanistan and especially Iraq have had paramount effects on the millennial generation leading them to prefer restraint when it comes to the use of military force in international affairs.

What makes this millennial generation different? It is important to first examine who makes up the generation. It is a generation who have grown up through the George W. Bush and Barack Obama presidencies and watched the world undergo tremendous change. "Millennials have voted more Democratic than older voters in the past six national elections" (Howe 71). In fact, millennials voted two-to-one for Obama in 2008, the largest margin since 1972. Millennials tend to hold liberal views on most social issues and think differently about how America should approach foreign policy (Howe 71).

The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the millennial generation may also be a factor in their politically left-leaning tendency, with 40 percent of them being non-white (Raton). In 1990, the Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press published *The Age of Indifference*, which stated in regards to the millennial generation, "A major comparative examination of what young people know, what they pay attention to, and what media they

use reveals a generation that knows less, cares less, and reads newspapers less. It is also a generation that votes less and is less critical of its leaders and institutions than young people in the past (Heimlich).” Other, older generations see this as a sign that the millennial generation is less patriotic and therefore weaker and more apathetic. This is one perspective but a more plausible answer could be that they are simply different.

It could be argued that the climate of war, violence, and controversial U.S. intervention at the international level, in which millennials have grown up, is the reason for their presumed apathy. As this group of people begins to enter the workforce, their views toward participation within the system may change. The Millennials are the most educated generation of all time, with more than 24 percent holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, and yet they are consistently criticized for being apathetic (Patten). The question, though, is whether or not they really do care less?

Arguably they just care differently. Immediately following the attacks, the United States saw a wave of patriotism flood the nation particularly among non-millennials. The millennial generation witnessed a surge of nationalistic views. The years immediately following the attacks on the Twin Towers, however, found the millennial generation displaying an alternative form of patriotism. “Millennial patriotism has translated into increased civic engagement and volunteerism stemming from a feeling of neglect from the U.S. federal government” (Towns). In a societal climate cloaked in xenophobic views the millennials have taken it upon themselves to make the changes that they wish to see; they are entering the communities and getting to work to breach the gaps between people and the community in a quickly evolving society.

The Millennial Significance

This “new patriotism” coined by the millennial generation’s actions is shaped around the belief that the United States has its flaws. According to the Pew Research Center (2012), the millennial generation considered itself to be less patriotic than other generations. This must be put into perspective. In 2011, 70 percent of the millennials saw themselves as “very patriotic,” which was the lowest of all other generations measured. The Silent Generation was the most patriotic at 90 percent.

It is important to recognize that while there is a large difference between the Silent and the millennial generations, there is something else even more important taking place. In the same table, the Pew Research Center examined how each generation felt about the question of whether or not the U.S. is “the greatest country in the world” (Thrall). The numbers here are more telling. Nearly two-thirds, 64 percent to be exact, of the Silent Generation (the cohort with the most people considering themselves to be very patriotic) felt that the United States was the greatest country in the world. In contrast, the millennial generation had the lowest percentage of people who felt this way (only 32 percent) (Thrall). This is an interesting finding likely tied to the fact that U.S. foreign policy has been so aggressive over the past few decades.

Data collected by the Pew Research Center in 2011 found that 77 percent of American adults felt that “our military strength” is a huge contributor to American success. Examining by generation, at least eight of ten Boomers and Silents agreed with this, while only around seven of ten Millennials and Gen Xers felt that way (Gewurz). The best word necessary to describe these data and their implications may be awareness. The millennial generation, the most educated and diverse U.S. generation ever, appears better able to

understand the bigger picture. Millennials' capability to see things broadly may explain their different view of terrorism. It is no longer an "us versus them" mentality that is shaping the United States but rather a "let's meet in the middle" one.

Prior research reveals a more tolerant, globally aware generation—a generation not so blind to the United States' faults. According to one millennial, "Just because the U.S. has the largest military and it sees a problem, that doesn't mean that the solution is a military one, or that military power will be able to solve that problem" (Thrall). Once again, millennials are looking for other methods to solve global issues. The "War on Terror" and the attacks on 9/11 have both had an important effect on the millennial generation and have altered their views of the world. After empirical research and conducting theoretical research on the millennial generation, specifically the college-age millennial cohort, it is the aim of this project to determine how their views on terrorism differ from those of older generations. Arguably, the quote from President George W. Bush in the first line of this chapter is no longer valid in relation to this maturing generation. This research strives to define this new, millennial perspective as it relates to terrorism.

What is critical now is a more detailed analysis of why millennials might view terrorism differently. In order to achieve this, Chapter 2 explores the formation of public opinion and three key influencers of it: the generational effect and socialization, education and mass media. These factors also appear to affect a person's political orientation and, in turn, their view of such issues as terrorism. This theoretical chapter examines these factors in detail and provides a platform for understanding the data presented in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 presents findings from the 2016 research study of the college-age student cohort at Appalachian State University. It also offers findings from the 2015 Chicago Council on Global Affairs dataset. These data focused on the opinion of millennials (including the college-age subgroup) and non-millennials on terrorism and a range of other issues. The results of this data analysis support the central thesis that millennials are comparatively less concerned about terrorism but are not apathetic about other issues. In fact, there was a surprising finding that millennials appear to be stronger advocates for combating international terrorism. Chapter 4, as the concluding chapter, explores the relevance of these findings on future public policy. It also raises questions worthy of additional research.

Chapter 2: Theory

Introduction

Terrorism is indeed a serious and formidable threat. The views of the American public about this threat, though, may largely dictate the extent to which our nation and its leaders devote attention and resources to addressing it. More specifically, as the millennial generation grows in relative proportionate size and in influence, their views on terrorism are especially important to understand. Equally vital is an understanding of how these views are shaped.

Exploring the formation of public opinion and then applying those insights to the largest generation, the millennials who are just now beginning to enter the workforce and political sphere, can help create effective public policy. Public opinion and the way it changes has become a considerable issue for those working in the current world of public opinion research, as it is very difficult to understand what causes a shift in public opinion and why that shift occurs. (Bishop 91).

This chapter will examine the ways that public opinion is formed and what that means for the U.S. population in an environment of growing mass media and cultural influence. There are three key influencers of public opinion: the generational effect and socialization, education and mass media. These factors also appear to effect a person's political orientation and, in turn, their view of such issues as terrorism. This chapter examines how these factors may be playing a large role in the formation of the millennial generation's opinions, and in particular how they view terrorism. It is imperative to learn and understand what influences and shapes the public's way of thinking since in a democracy; the citizens play the most critical role in defining society. Communication between the government and its constituency

is core to effective governance. In other words, “There can be no public and there can be no opinion without communication” (McCombs 3). Without a connection between the government and the people the significance of public opinion is irrelevant as it has no constructive outlet to affect on public policy and in turn society on tackling terrorism and managing its perceived threat.

What is Public Opinion?

While the United States is often characterized as a democracy, what that actually means is more difficult to define. In a democracy the citizens play a direct role in the formation of the government and are able to make significant changes in leadership and sometimes the direction of policy formation and implementation. In theory this makes sense, especially when the citizens are knowledgeable about issues, such as terrorism. The United States is a Representative Democracy meaning that the citizens elect officials to represent them. This is not the only way by which citizens participate and in practice the actual role citizens play is multifaceted.

“Public opinion” is not only essential to democracy but is the source of much debate and is used as a tool by public officials for many purposes. In a Representative Democracy, politicians emphasize public opinion to either help support or disprove a claim. Public opinion is often heralded as the “voice of the people” it is how these people respond to pollsters and react to governmental decisions and public affairs (McCombs 1).

One common similarity among many definitions is that public opinion “...refers to opinions on governmental and policy matters rather than on private matters” (Clawson 15). In a political system where the government is a reflection of the people, it is clear that public opinion can potentially have a strong effect. It is assumed that in a democratic society, public

opinion in some way influences public policy (what the government does or does not do) in regards to specific issues. The government faces an immense number of politically sensitive issues and the general views held by the public tend to be broad. This suggests that while public opinion does have an effect on the creation of policy in the United States it is typically not very specific or direct (Bardes 11). In essence, there exists a fairly fragile but constant link between public opinion and the formation of public policy. For this research, a good working definition of public opinion is “the aggregate of the views of individual adults on matters of public interest” (Bardes 5). This chapter will broadly focus on terrorism and its influence on public opinion.

The collective views of the people matter in society, particularly on such consequential issues as terrorism. To understand how these views originate and are shaped, research on the formation of public opinion suggests several important factors. This chapter examines three that are seen as important to understanding how the overall opinion of millennials about the threat of terrorism is determined and why the views of millennials about terrorism could differ from threat held by other generations. These three factors are generational effect and socialization, education and mass media.

Generational Effect and Socialization

On any issues, public opinion does shift. There are many examples of this—including most recently, views about the rights of the LGBT community. What causes public opinion to shift is an extremely important topic, especially in a democracy and with an issue as important as terrorism.

One possible explanation of opinion shifts is that people simply change their minds with time. What this section will explore, however, is the idea that a structured shift in public

opinion occurs when one adult generation is replaced by a new generation with differing views. This generational effect theory relies on the idea that each generation views things differently and has distinct opinions from their parents and grandparents (Mayer). These differences that were discussed in the introduction are given further examination in the analysis chapter.

In addition, major events and challenges of a given time period can have a large effect on a generation and its thinking. Arguably, a generation's opinion is shaped through some combination of socialization and major events such as wars, economic recessions and acts of terrorism. "What effect does the entrance of a new generation, or the departure of an old one, have on the state of American public opinion?" It is stated that, "With the notable exception of party identification, this question has received surprisingly little attention from public opinion scholars" (Mayer 11).

A critical question is whether U.S. citizens tend to maintain stable political opinions, or their opinions are subject to change and easily manipulated by politicians, the media, and events? The way in which each citizen learns about politics and in turn develops opinions is called political socialization. Some important socialization agents include schools, peers, and the news media (Clawson 47). A noteworthy definition of socialization is, "...the process through which the individual internalizes politically relevant attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, and values" (Bender 392).

There are two types of socialization: primary and secondary. Primary socialization relates directly to one's family while secondary relates to schools, mass media, the workplace and political parties as well as many others (Bender). In turn, this individual socialization relates to the generational effect or the political socialization of an entire age cohort

(Clawson 60). In other words, it is the tone of the era that affects the opinions of the generation growing up during that period and as time passes societal opinions' shift as each new generation contributes its uniqueness politically and economically.

Some might question why so much attention is being paid to the concept of generations. Are they not just a bunch of people grouped together based on age? How can that be relevant? According to Mannheim, a generational cohort's "practical importance becomes clear as soon as one tries to obtain a more exact understanding of the accelerated pace of social change [in a given period]" (Mannheim 286-287). He argues that generations change swiftly and that events are a stronger determinant of a generation's views than the influence of past generations. Mannheim posits that generations are bound together by events or a single event that occurred in late adolescence (Mannheim). For example, the 9/11 terrorist attacks took place in 2001, a time when many millennials were still in Pre-K and Kindergarten. The millennial generation missed, for the most part, the wave of nationalism that 9/11 caused and instead grew up trying to understand and deal with the many consequences of the event.

The wave of nationalism is characterized differently depending on age though. The next section delves into how the effects that the education millennials received have influenced them to be a different kind of U.S. citizen. While, there did exist a wave of nationalism spear headed by Generation X, the parents of millennials, as well as all other older generations the millennials experienced it differently. The millennials saw it in part, as a wave of xenophobia. Regardless, this wave of nationalism was short lived, as the millennials were quickly submerged into a culture of war.

The millennial generation is directly in the center of this new stage of growth called “emerging adulthood.” This is a period of intense individualism that is a relatively recently acknowledged stage of socialization. In this stage of self-development, many people are no longer living with their parents or guardians and thus are no longer under their influence. Emerging adulthood is a unique time for the millennial generation as they are beginning to think, live and fend for themselves (Arnett 471). The implication that terrorism has had an influential effect on millennials during this stage of socialization is profound.

“An important demographic characteristic of emerging adulthood is that there is a great deal of demographic variability, reflecting the wide scope of individual volition during these years” (Arnett 471). This realization is important as many of the negative effects of the War on Terror are being felt by millennials in different ways depending on their own personal history and circumstance. For example, with the United States committing a huge volume of national resources to fight a war on terrorism—that some would argue has had minimal positive effect—individuals have experienced varying economic and societal consequence. “As of August 2016, the US has already appropriated, spent, or taken on obligations to spend more than \$3.6 trillion in current dollars on wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria and on Homeland Security (2001 through fiscal year 2016) (Crawford). Reportedly, the millennials are the first generation in all of U.S. history threatened to have a lower standard of living than their parents (Taylor 57). While certainly aware of terrorism, the millennials are at a point in their lives when they are striving to create a future for themselves in a country dealing with a struggling economy, personal loan debt, and less than robust job prospects.

What have they done to express their unhappiness? They have generally aligned themselves with the political left or left-center, a place on the spectrum that tends to be less hawkish and, like President Barack Obama, supportive of more diplomacy with less U.S. military spending. The millennial generation, in the emerging adulthood political stage, is facing many challenging dynamics and competing foci. They are now entering a workforce crippled by a broken economy and one requiring increasing levels of education. They are responding to all of this in a politically charged environment with major public opinion differences and worldviews regarding the treatment of person's from countries in the Middle East now living within the U.S. and those seeking to migrate here. In summary, the key component of this stage is the lack of primary socializers during emerging adulthood, which leaves the millennial generation more susceptible to influence from events, education, politics, and mass media.

Education

Education plays a huge role in the lives of the millennial generation. This is especially true in the emerging adulthood stage discussed above. In the previous chapter it was stated that the millennial generation is the most diverse generation as well as extremely liberal leaning.

Prior to 9/11 the U.S. was in the process of cultivating a new type of citizen. In fact, when addressing the Cold War, David Kieran, in his book entitled, "The War of My Generation," offers an example of a middle school student, in the late 1990s who struggled to comprehend the idea of hating an enemy so much. Students were educated on other cultures and global partnership, which for many young millennials made the Iraq War unjustifiable. What does this mean for the emerging adulthood stage? It means that while the idea of racial

profiling changed drastically post 2001, "...many of the messages about cultural relativity, human rights, and interpersonal tolerance made an impression" (34). While in today's society xenophobia appears to be on the rise, a new type of citizen, one who is much more globally aware, could see things quite differently than others generations. This citizen is a millennial.

This is a generation, unlike those raised during the Cold War, who do not explicitly know what it is like to have a national enemy. While 9/11 may have had a somewhat similar effect, the consequent War on Terror, where the U.S. was humbled on the international stage, has not had the same effect on the millennial generation that the Cold War had on past generations (Grebowski). In addition, many of this generation, particularly those born in the 1990s who are currently in college or in their early 20s, recognize that their memories of 9/11 are scattered, blurry and confused. Kieran references a small group discussion held by a university professor in a first year seminar. While, the views varied as would be expected, many students saw 9/11 as an extremely sad event utilized by the U.S. government to initiate a war to obtain oil and a strategic global presence (Kieran 17). Still though, some said that it was a completely just war that needed to be fought—a counterstrike.

In general, though, the millennial generation has a hard time seeing U.S. intervention in another country as anything other than international tyranny. In high school, millennial students, particularly during the 1990s and the early 2000s, encountered two major themes, pluralism and conflict resolution. "In the 1990s, schools prepared millennials to be outer driven, ideal-following team players." Having this viewpoint, so uniquely crafted towards a global perspective, the millennials appear to be having a hard time dealing with the violence that is taking place overseas. "Cooperative engagement is a more accurate description of the millennial approach to foreign policy" (Millennials—Political Explorers). The millennial

generation was taught to think this way and because of this, there exists a generation where, according to a Pew Poll conducted in 2011, 66% feel that a reliance on military force to solve foreign political issues actually creates more violence and spawns more terrorism. In addition, roughly four out of ten millennials remain conflicted on whether or not they support U.S. involvement in other countries as method of protecting themselves against terrorism (Diggles).

The millennial generation is known as the 9/11 generation and yet Pew Research polling shows that this generation does not support a more assertive security presence in the U.S. nor the deployment of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan (Board). Kieran, a Gen Xer, recalls a discussion with young millennials following 9/11. He highlights the fact that he was able to recognize the “Cold War-esque turn of public discourse” (Kieran 22). He found that what was once “communist” became “terrorist” leading him to expect the reemergence of a new national enemy. This was a belief common among his and older generations and yet one that may not truly represent the millennial perspective. As mentioned previously, the millennial generation is not familiar with the notion of a “national enemy” and, therefore, could not as easily make the transition from one to the next—communism to terrorism (Kieran).

Millennials tend to be more reluctant to support international military engagements simply out of the need for national security and are more eager to evaluate the situation before acting. They are upset with a government that in many ways does not represent them especially when the millennial generation grew up seeing politics as irrelevant (Howe 103). Compared to eras like that of the “Great Society” the millennials have seen political polarization and strife. This in turn has separated them from the government forcing the

millennial generation to carry a bottom up mentality rather than the top down mentality held past generations” (Howe 103).

Education has played a significant role in shaping the way that these young millennials were raised to think and view the world. Still, it is difficult to understand the full extent to which education played in the lives of the millennial generation as a whole as those born in the 1980s were taught differently than those born in the 1990s. As Mannheim stated, “generational consciousness tends to develop when a cohort is around seventeen years of age (Kieran 34).

With that said, the global awareness instilled in those born in the 1980s has been translated to the diverse millennial generation as a whole as views were shared and debated on social media platforms and in the classroom. Even the oldest members of this generation born in the 1980s, were able to express their perspectives through their unique millennial lenses of social media tied to education. The millennial generation is one that grew up in a more globally aware education system, surrounded by a much more diverse student body. Paul Taylor, in conjunction with the Pew Research Center, characterizes the millennial generation as “...liberal, diverse, tolerant, narcissistic, coddled, respectful, confident and broke...”(56).

By being the most ethnically and racially diverse generation in all of U.S. history, the millennials are able to view the world from a new perspective a “...multicolored world engulfed by cultural, ethnic and religious divisions” (Taylor 56). This in turn contributes greatly to their opinion of how society should function and how it should allocate its time and money. This is especially true since they were raised in a society and an educational system that bolstered a world perspective. As the United States continues to fight terrorism, the

millennial generation continues to feel uncomfortable simply because of how they were raised and educated, especially since they are less aware of 9/11 and more attuned to its aftermath. Arguably it is simply a collection of ideologies that have shaped the millennial generation to view the world differently and less negatively than past generations. Kieran states, “If the United States had been able to deploy on the world stage the tools we had taught American children and teens in the 1990s, perhaps the War on Terror would not have been a war at all. Alas, it seems that the state of war following 9/11 is a war of my and my elders’ generations...” (35). Education and major events have had a major influence on shaping this worldview and more specifically, the perception of terrorism. Mass media has also had an important, confounding role.

Mass Media

Mass media is another essential socialization agent that has had an increasingly profound societal effect, especially within recent years. In a democracy, what role should mass media play—particularly since in emerging adulthood mass media can have such a large impact? This has certainly been the case in terms of millennials’ awareness and perception of terrorism and their resultant political views. The media plays an enormous role in politics by how it conveys messages and views, which helps shape public opinion. Given that millennials are the most educated generation, it is relevant that “Individuals with high levels of education typically learn from the media at a faster rate than individuals with low education levels” (McCombs 97). This may provide some insight as to what separates the millennial generation from its predecessors. For four decades, the traditional “new media” or electronic media capable of reaching the masses (initially network television) played a large role in how president’s participated with the public in the U.S. Democracy, allowing them to

“convert the flock” so to speak. Unlike “preaching to the choir” or speaking to one’s own base, “converting the flock” has meant going across the aisle with the hope of pulling support from the other side. This era is slowly coming to an end as “new media” now refers to cable television and the Internet, which increasingly dominate how much of the public glean information. In the digital world, digital natives or the millennial generation are more adept to navigating the limitless sources of news now offered through the Internet. An often overlooked reality is that television news and news in general are businesses and so their successes depend on their share of the audience rather than the accuracy of their reporting (Robinson and Levy- Corbett 260).

The implications of this new era of media are immense. Politics are becoming increasingly polarized as the gap between the two major parties and their ideologies increases. No longer are news sources striving to appeal to large audiences; they are now targeting their particular niche, especially news sources found on the Internet. These niches are becoming increasingly narrow as the political divisions become more extreme. “The average presidential soundbite on the evening news—that is, a president speaking in his own words—declined from about 40 seconds in 1968 to 7.8 seconds in 2004” (Berinsky 321). What this means for media sources is that they are specifically targeting the negative or positive remarks of the President and feeding them to the public. They are making the interpretations for the people rather than enabling people to make their own.

What role does this play in the life of a millennial in the emerging adulthood stage? Millennials are the world’s very first generation of digital natives (Taylor 56). For the millennial generation, social technology “...has played a fundamental role in shaping the

nature of their friendships, the structure of their social networks, the way they act and learn, their provision and acceptance of social support, the way they interact with groups and institutions, their posture toward the wider world, and the way they allocate their time (Taylor 178).

Research into how different age groups approach news has shown that younger news consumers, the millennial generation, are doing things quite differently than the generations before them. They do not customarily incorporate the daily newspaper or the evening network into their day-to-day routines. Instead, they are turning to new media as a way to understand the world around them (McCombs 67). While the millennial generation has not completely given up all traditional forms of media, they are now heavily relying on other sources to stay up to date. Since news absorption rates and education have proven to be related it is highly plausible that the millennials are obtaining and retaining more news in their daily lives than non-millennials.

How does this tie into terrorism in today's society? If President Obama did or said something questionable, would The Huffington Post call him out? The answer is most likely no, simply because of its left-leaning audience. The Post would probably be mum or focus on something else. The same thing happens with terrorism and other issues. Republican President George W. Bush was the first president to embark on a journey to eradicate terrorism in the Middle East. Many of his supporters did indeed stand by him on the decision to go to war. Research by Tim Groeling and Matthew A. Baum found that between 2004 and 2007 Fox News offered substantially less critical coverage of the Iraq war than CNN (Berinsky 322).

Assuming that the average citizen only relies on one or only a few source of news, the public is likely basing their political views on biased information and thereby having their opinions largely shaped by the media. While all citizens are not passively receiving this information and some are indeed critical when it comes to assessing the news, it is still difficult for the viewer to accurately distill facts and develop informed opinions. This is no less true when it comes to reacting to terrorist attacks and threats and developing a measured response. Because there are so many different sources of news, each with its own specific slant, more and more people are finding themselves in ideologically friendly, echo chambers.

New media, or new sources of media as already mentioned, has allowed people the opportunity to reinforce their established views and discount anything with which they disagree. (Berinsky 318). Why is this important? As already noted, the millennial generation, generally speaking, tends to align itself with the left or the leftish side of the political spectrum. This suggests that the millennial generation is only receiving one side of the argument.

In 2014, Gallup did a study to find the top 10 priority issues based on Party identification. This research found that terrorism was the second highest priority for Republicans while only ninth among Democrats. This Democratic echo chamber, in which the millennial generation could be immersing itself, could engender apathy towards terrorism. They are subject to influence by new media sources, with a specific political agenda (Gallup, Inc. Democrats and Republicans).

Millennials have been coined, “Political Explorers,” as “...access to information and widespread consumer choice...” (Diggles) has allowed them to demand information and then

immediately get access to it. They have been raised in a period of unlimited access to information on countries all over the world and are still expected to support the United States' intervention in these countries, justified by the threat of terrorism, all the while looking for jobs in a struggling economy. Not only this, but because of this global access via new media they are seeing the effects of terrorism spread even after decades of work and billions of dollars spent by the U.S. government to combat and control it (Diggles).

Conclusion

While the media plays a constant role in shaping each generation, as previously noted, what can have an enormous effect and fuel the media are the significant events that take place affecting political orientations and strength. This includes, for example, elections, other political occurrences, and terrorist attacks. For example, after the Reagan Presidency the Republican Party saw an increase in membership (Bardes 110). Another historical example is the decline in political party affiliation in the years following World War II. This was a period where politicians began to focus on themselves by marketing their own values rather than affiliating closely with political parties, which had been unable to garner support during the war. This generation of people had been socialized and was less tied to a specific party. They were more concerned with the candidate, which contributed to a decline in the membership of Democratic and Republican Parties.

Rosalee A. Clawson and Zone M. Oxley in their book, *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, suggest that the millennial generation has weaker political ties than other generations because they have grown up in a time of extreme political polarization and government stalemate (62). The societal changes that have taken place during the millennial generation's lifetime—such as more women entering the workforce, a more

ethnically diverse society, and higher levels of immigration—have most likely contributed to their liberalness and tendency to vote Democratic in recent elections, particularly in 2004, 2006, and 2008 (Rosentiel). One seismic indicator of the generation's liberal tendencies was the election of Barack Obama (Clawson 63). In 2008, 66% of those under 30 voted for Obama, "...making the disparity between young voters (millennials) and other age groups (older generations) larger than in any presidential election since exit polling began in 1972 (Rosentiel).

If the correlations between the media and major events exist, it would seem plausible that millennials' views on terrorism and their political leaning have been strongly influenced by years of war in the Middle East and the corresponding U.S. deficit and other casualties (including massive refugee flight and resultant security concerns). "The war on terrorism had a much greater impact on American life than did any military conflict since World War II," and U.S. citizens have seen airport security tighten and new laws pass that restrict certain rights to privacy (Bardes 258).

Public opinion scholars are fascinated with the transition of generational cohorts and the shift in public opinion that coincides with these transitions. Could it be that as people age their views simply change? It is more likely, as already addressed these generations are socialized differently and as one generation dies out, another generation replaces it and exhibits different values, opinions and priorities.

The concept of the generational effect is one of the strongest explanations for the shift in generational political views. Persons in the same generation who experience the same event(s) during the time they are heavily socialized are more likely to share similar political views. Not surprisingly, then, the attacks on 9/11 had monumental effects on the millennial

generation. While it is known that the public is affected by these events. The question still arises about the extent to which the 9/11 attack had on the young millennial generation just beginning to enter the political realm of society. Were the millennials equally influenced by the attack as well as the subsequent wars and their effect on society?

War is a difficult political move to justify let alone undertake. “For war’s outcome to have purchase on people, they need to accept it’s meaning; if they do not, they may well see things differently” (Simpson 31). It is the goal of political leaders to convince the constituency that a war is necessary and just. Policymakers have the ability to shape perceptions during times of war, but these opportunities—even when associated with a major terrorist attack like 9/11—are often short-lived and have limits.

Massive support for the removal of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan radiated from the U.S. public following the attacks on 9/11, and President Bush and his cabinet took full advantage of this by relying on the media to associate the war on terror with the attacks on 9/11 (Nacos 105). This simple move to captivate the public and maintain support proved to be more complex than originally thought.

The millennial generation may be the perfect example of what happens when society is overwhelmed for extended periods of time by unpleasant subject matter such as war and terror. By conducting research on the millennial generation and examining prior research on non-millennials, this study seeks to examine how the views of millennials have been shaped by the media and such events as the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent War on Terrorism. It also compares millennials’ concern about terrorism with that expressed by older generations. This examination can have important implications for shaping and predicting future United States’ foreign policy.

This chapter considered several different variables and how each one may affect the creation of public opinion. It seems logical that these factors generational effect and socialization, education, mass media and political orientation are influencing the position that millennials hold vis a vis terrorism.

As a generation in the heart of the emerging adulthood stage, secondary sources of influence or socializers like education, news sources, and the words of political leaders can have a high level of influence on their views. This includes their views about terrorism. The millennials, educated in a more global environment and characterized as digitally savvy, are able to find news sources that align with their personal views. Functioning in the aforementioned echo chamber, their own views may be reinforced at the expense of differing ones, creating a generation that generally tends to be more liberal. Millennials are also a generation eager to create a future for themselves and their peers—one with jobs and opportunities—one not driven by such terrorist acts as 9/11 but shaped by their aftermath. The 21st century has left millennials exhausted from a recession and a decade of the War on Terror. It is for this reason that millennials are tiring of a U.S. presence in countries where the fight against terrorism persists. While the threat of terrorism continues, millennials still cannot justify global intervention on its behalf because they have not experienced a threat as serious as nuclear war like that during the 20th century (Diggles).

This chapter explored why it is reasonable to think that the millennial generation may view terrorism less seriously than older generations. Their political orientation, influenced by socialization, education, the mass media and major events, would suggest that the millennial generation, and specifically the college student cohort, views terrorism less seriously in their own lives than non-millennial generations.

Chapter 3: Empirical/Methodology and Data Analysis

Question: What are the relative views of the millennial generation, specifically the college-age millennial cohort (born between 1995 and 1998), on terrorism as compared with the views of other generations?

Hypothesis: The millennial generation, specifically the college-age cohort, view terrorism less seriously than non-millennial generations.

Methodology

The theory chapter delved into the possibilities as to why millennials and the college-age cohort subgroup might view terrorism less seriously than older generations. Based on the theory chapter, it can be expected that because of the generational effect and socialization, education and mass media as well as political orientation, millennials, specifically the college-age cohort subgroup, do in fact view terrorism less seriously. While the theory behind the initial question was crucial to explaining why and how this phenomenon may exist, the empirical data collected and examined in this chapter were the only formal confirmations of this theorization. The data collected offer an entry point into a field with very little empirical work conducted with the goal of emphasizing and explaining a generation that will in short time shape the culture and policy of the United States in the global arena. This research employs two surveys to examine the views on terrorism of the millennial generation, particularly the college student cohort.

Data Collection and Discussion: *The College-age Student Cohort Analysis*

In the college-age student cohort survey, 106 college students anonymously took a 27-question survey. It was a combination of opinion and fact-based questions with a goal of testing the college student millennial cohort's basic knowledge of terrorism while also gathering a more detailed understanding of their personal views on issues such as the economy and jobs, immigration, global warming, the role of the government, and most importantly to this research, terrorism. Analysis was the next step, including compilation of the data into tables after certain results were filtered. The findings are quite interesting. They largely support the original hypothesis while also contradicting it in intriguing ways offering striking implications.

The anonymous survey was distributed through Facebook on Appalachian State specific, private pages with the first question asking for age; 18-22. These pages required access, only granted to Appalachian State students. With that said, it is important to note that it was still possible for a non-student to participate. This may have been avoided had a survey been administered on campus, in person. In addition, by targeting students online, a bias did exist, as students who participate in social media may be more informed and in turn differently opinionated than people who do not.

Throughout this research those aged 18 to 22 will serve as a subgroup of the millennial generation named the college-age cohort. The survey was conducted to better understand and more effectively analyze this specific cohort—the initial goal of this research. In order to more easily and quickly gather data, the survey was submitted through these private pages, which provide a concentrated way to gather data specifically from college students. Because it was anonymous, the survey did not take into consideration certain

demographics. The only consistent factors were age, educational level and gender. While student major was not included, this would be an interesting addition to a future survey on this subject. In the course of conducting this quantitative research, one respondent challenged the validity of question 20 and suggested that it was biased. Question 20 read, “Do higher levels of education positively correlate with support for government involvement in society?” Possibly a more effective, less biased question would have been, “If a correlation exists between support for government involvement in society and education, is it a positive or negative?” Awareness of bias is important in quantitative research as it can influence the validity of outcomes and analysis.

The college-age student cohort survey conducted at Appalachian State University did not take into account certain demographics including race and family income, which could possibly have large implications. It did, however, take into account gender and age, with age being the most important for this research. By asking for only two defining characteristics, the anonymity of the survey was preserved. The anonymous survey had no negative repercussions and in no way harmed the participants. There was no reward offered for taking the survey; the only incentive was the opportunity to share a perspective.

Table 1 is a compilation of all the responses collected from the survey of the college-age cohort at Appalachian State University. In this college-age cohort student survey, the participants were asked whether or not each identified topic was a serious issue facing the United States.

Table 1: College-age Student Cohort Responses, Appalachian State University					
	Immigration	Climate Change	Terrorism	Combating of Terrorism	U.S. Jobs
1 (Yes, an important issue/concern)	77	93	84	49	94
3 (Not an important issue/concern)	22	9	6	29	6
Do not know	0	0	10	27	0
Percentage of people who perceive each variable (seen in columns) as an important issue/concern	0.78	0.91	0.84	0.45	0.94
N=	99	102	100	105	100

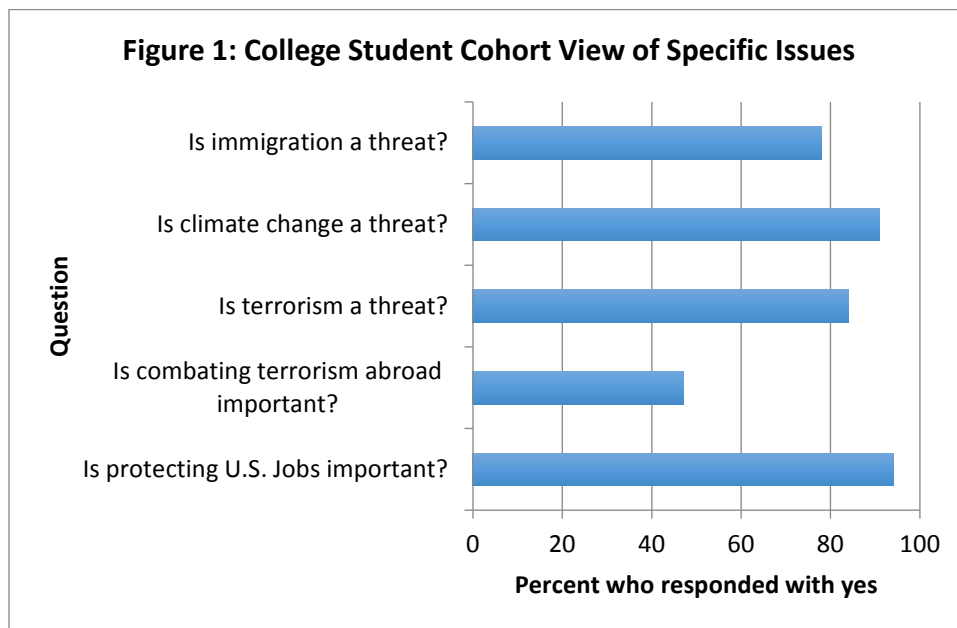
Table 1 presents the data from the Appalachian college-age student cohort. In the college-age student cohort survey, those who responded with “Do not know” were included because in two cases there were large numbers of students who selected these options. The numbers in Table 1 represent those who responded to the questions with a “yes,” “no” or “Do not know.” These numbers were calculated to formulate a percentage as an easy means of comparison. These percentages are seen at the bottom of the table.

While generally the data for those participants who refused to partake were removed, there were instances (specific questions) in the college student cohort survey where 10 or more participants responded with “Do not know” and so were included. It must be acknowledged, however, that because, in some cases, such large numbers of “Do not know” responses were included the outcome looked a lot different than it would have had they not

been included. For example, with the “Do not know” responses included in the Combating Terrorism column there is 47% in support but once removed that number jumps to 62% suggesting a different picture of the cohort’s viewpoint.

The argument that the millennial generation tends to be apathetic across the board could have been supported by a multitude of “Do not care” responses on the college-age student cohort survey. With that said, this category of response was removed, as there was not a large enough collection of “Do not care” responses to warrant their consideration. As already stated and can be seen, this was not the case for “Do not know.”

Figure 1 simply displays the college-age cohort percentages from Table 1 for an effective visual means of comparison. Note that the “Do not know” responses are included here.



In addition to the percentages displayed in Figure 1, this survey also offers some very interesting results in regards to the views of the college-age student cohort. For example, 94% of college participants considered themselves to be globally aware citizens or concerned

with what happens outside of the United States and yet 47% still felt that the United States should not combat terrorism abroad. While 47% is remarkably low, by removing the 27 respondents who selected “Do not know” it settles at 62% or nearly two-thirds. Based on the information presented in the theory chapter which support the findings of this survey, it is plausible that less than one third of the college-age student cohort think of terrorism in their daily lives (31%) and believe that the United States is the greatest country in the world (30%).

In addition, a new question arises: What role does level of education play? This is an area that could be expanded in future research. For example, 70% of the college-age student cohort believe that higher levels of education have a positive correlation with the acceptance of immigrants, and 66% feel that immigration is not a contributor to domestic terrorism. In addition, 15% show uncertainty by responding with “Do not know.”

In the college-age student cohort survey the participants were given the opportunity to respond with “Do not know” and “Do not care.” This may have allowed participants an easy way out if they did not feel completely comfortable responding to a question which in turn could have skewed the data. This is important to recognize in understanding the implications of the data, and in considering how to improve future polling that would be required for a thorough study of the hypothesis. One could speculate that the uncertainty among some millennials, as seen in the number “Do not know” responses, indicates that the question is unsettled. This offers grounds for future research.

Data Collection and Discussion: *Chicago Council on Global Affairs Dataset Analysis*

In addition to the abovementioned cohort survey, a much larger and more professional dataset from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) was utilized and examined extensively in order to draw conclusions in regards to what was predicted in the theory chapter (Dina). While the college-age student cohort survey was very helpful, I felt that incorporating a more legitimate survey, conducted by a non-partisan think tank, would serve to reinforce the work that I did. In addition it strengthens the integrity of my research. The CCGA dataset was fundamental in highlighting the millennial generation's views as a whole as well as those of the college-age cohort in comparison to other, older generations.

This dataset contained not one specific group (determined by age) but rather three: non-millennials, millennials, as well as the college-age student cohort. It was titled, "The Chicago Council on Global Affairs Poll: 2015 Annual American Survey." The dataset, which was created in 2015, contains 339 variables and examines the views of 2,182 people, all of whom are 18 years and older. The variables examined in this research include: the threat levels of international terrorism, immigration, global warming and the importance of protecting U.S. jobs. The goal was to separate the data by age so as to understand the views held by the millennial generation and the views held by non-millennials as well as the views of the college cohort ages 18 to 22.

Having extrapolated the data by age, using the variables above, it was possible to examine the similarities and differences between the millennial and non-millennial generations. Through the use of the survey specifically conducted for this research as well as the data collected from the CCGA, it was possible to consider the relative views of the college student cohort of millennials. This dataset, which compared and contrasted the three

different groups, was crucial to this research as it could be argued that even if the millennial generation views terrorism less seriously than non-millennials it is simply because they are apathetic across the board. This is a common belief among many who study this topic, as “A major comparative examination of what young people know, what they pay attention to, and what media they use reveals a generation that knows less, cares less, and reads newspapers less. It is also a generation that votes less and is less critical of its leaders and institutions than young people in the past (Heimlich).” In order to test this common theory of apathy, questions not only relating to terrorism but also opinions about the economy and jobs, immigration, global warming and the role of the government were asked.

The only change or filter that occurred among the data was removing those who refused to respond (selected -1) in the dataset taken from the CCGA, as these participants offered no contribution to the dataset. In addition, in the CCGA dataset, for each variable the different variations of “yes” were combined to make it easier to interpret and compare. For example, when asked if international terrorism was a threat to the United States the respondents had the choice of “critical threat,” “important but not critical threat,” or “not an important threat.” To make things less complicated the first two choices were combined under “yes” (denoted as 1 in the table).

In order to examine the statistical significance of the data below, I conducted a chi-square test of independence for each table as a way to obtain a p value (presented in the table as well as the following interpretation). This number allowed me to determine whether the data collected and explored in the tables below could be extrapolated to larger samples.

Table 2: Large Numbers of Immigrants and Refugees Coming into the U.S.		
	Over 35	Under 35
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	701	154
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	117	54
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who perceive large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. as a threat or issue	0.86	0.74
N=	818	208
p=.001		

As seen in Tables 2 and 3, the data from the CCGA have been disaggregated and compiled into two tables depending on age group. The information in both columns in each table is from the CCGA dataset and separated based on age. In order to simplify the data, those who refused to participate were removed, as were those who simply did not respond at all.

Using Tables 2 and 3 as a representation of all tables constructed in this section, the numbers in Table 2 represent those who responded and did so with a “yes” or “no.” It must also be noted that there was a difference between the two surveys (one conducted by the

CCGA and the one specifically targeting the college-age student cohort conducted at Appalachian State University), which will be explored in more detail later in this section.

Both tables are used here to highlight the way in which the data will be structured allowing easier readability and access. The percentages at the bottom of each column provide a common means of comparison. There is also a row titled “no answer,” which will actually not be used in this section.

Table 2 examines the difference between millennial and non-millennial generations and their views on large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. In testing the statistical difference between the generations—the millennials (people under the age of 35) and non-millennials (people over the age of 35)—in terms of whether or not they view immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. in large amounts as a threat, it was determined that the results are statistically significant ($p=.001$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 3: Large Numbers of Immigrants and Refugees Coming into the U.S.		
	Under 35	18-22
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	154	34
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	54	10
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who perceive large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. as a threat or issue	0.74	0.77
N=	208	44
p=.65		

Table 3 examines the views of the millennial generation and then the college-age cohort subgroup. This group was included in the millennial generation data as well and pulled out for closer examination and comparison. The test of the two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and more specifically the college-age cohort (people ages 18 to 22)—found that there is not a statistically significant difference between them in whether or not they view immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. in large amounts as a threat ($p=.65$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 5% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 4: Climate Change and the Environment		
	Over 35	Under 35
1 (Yes, threat or serious issue)	572	159
3 (No, not a threat or serious issue)	207	50
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who perceive climate change and the environment as a threat or issue	0.73	0.76
N=	779	209
p=.44		

Table 4 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the threat of Climate Change and the Environment. There is only a slight difference between millennials and non-millennials, around 3 percentage points. The difference between two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and non-millennial generations (people over the age of 35)—in whether they view climate change and the environment as a threat to the U.S. is not statistically significant ($p=.44$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 5: Climate Change and the Environment		
	Under 35	18-22
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	159	32
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	50	10
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who perceive climate change and the environment as a threat or issue	0.76	0.76
N=	209	42
p=.08		

Table 5 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the threat of Climate Change and the Environment. Both groups view climate change and the environment almost equally as a threat. The negligible difference between two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and more specifically the college-age cohort (people ages 18 to 22)—in terms of whether they view climate change and the environment as a threat to the U.S. is not statistically significant ($p=.08$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 6% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 6: Should the United States Protect U.S. Jobs?		
	Over 35	Under 35
1 (Yes, an important issue/concern)	780	196
3 (Not an important issue/concern)	16	13
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who believe that the United States should protect U.S. jobs	0.98	0.94
N=	796	209
p=.001		

Table 6 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to whether the United States should protect U.S. jobs. Notably, non-millennials view this protection more seriously than millennials but both groups show support above 93%. The test to find the difference between two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and non-millennial generations (people over the age of 35)—in terms of how they view the United States’ protection of U.S. jobs is statistically significant ($p=.001$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 7: Should the United States Protect U.S. Jobs?		
	Under 35	18-22
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	196	45
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	13	3
No answer		
Percentage of people who believe that the United States should protect U.S. jobs	0.94	0.94
N=	209	48
p=.99		

Table 7 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to whether the United States should protect U.S. jobs between the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and the college-age cohort. In this sample, both groups view this protection nearly equally as important. The slight difference is not statistically significant ($p=.99$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 6% at a 95% confidence level.

The college-age cohort was even more concerned about “Protecting U.S. jobs” and “Large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S.” as compared to the millennial generation in general and to non-millennial generations. This would provide support for the hypothesis that millennials, and the college-age cohort in particular, do in fact care relatively less about terrorism specifically and not just political issues in general. This acknowledgement of the millennial generation’s political awareness and differentiation

among issues is critical to this research about terrorism and supports the relevance of the influences identified in the theory chapter.

Older generations tend to see the millennial generation as apathetic across the board, which is why other questions above were examined with the goal of testing this belief. By utilizing other questions in the CCGA, it was possible to disprove the claim that both the millennial generation in general and the college-age cohort more specifically, were universally apathetic. Millennials saw issues such as immigration almost equally as important, if not slightly more so, than non-millennial generations. After examining the data above and determining that the millennial generation is not apathetic when it comes to political issues it is now time to examine the tables associated with terrorism. The data below offer a sharp contrast to the data above as the millennial generation and the college-age cohort sampled view terrorism with much less concern.

Table 8: International Terrorism		
	Over 35	Under 35
1 (Yes, threat or serious issue)	795	183
3 (No, not a threat or serious issue)	23	17
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who perceive international terrorism as a threat or serious issue	0.97	0.92
N=	818	200
p=.001		

Table 8 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the threat of international terrorism. Note that millennials tend to view international terrorism less seriously than other generations. This difference between the two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and non-millennial generations (people over the age of 35)—in their views of international terrorism as a threat to the U.S. is statistically significant ($p=.001$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 9: International Terrorism		
	Under 35	18-22
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	183	44
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	17	10
No answer	0	
Percentage of people who perceive international terrorism as a threat or serious issue	0.92	0.81
N=	200	54
p=.03		

Table 9 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the threat of international terrorism among millennials including the college-age cohort. Note that, in this sample, the college-age cohort views terrorism much less seriously than the millennial generation as a whole. The difference between these two groups of people—the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and the college-age cohort (people ages 18 to 22)—as to whether they view international terrorism as a threat to the U.S. is statistically significant ($p=.03$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 6% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 10: Should the United States Combat International Terrorism?		
	Over 35	Under 35
1 (Yes)	794	220
3 (No)	27	15
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who believe that the United States should combat international terrorism	0.97	0.94
N=	821	235
p=.03		

Table 10 shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the combating of international terrorism by the United States. Notably in this table, non-millennials view the combating of terrorism more seriously than millennials. The statistical difference between these two groups of people on the issue is significant ($p=.03$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence level.

Table 11: Should the United States Combat International Terrorism?		
	Under 35	18-22
1 (Yes, threat or issue)	220	60
3 (No, not a threat or issue)	15	1
No answer	0	0
Percentage of people who believe that the United States should combat international terrorism	0.94	0.98
N=	235	61
p=.07		

Table 11 also shows the breakdown of respondent views in regards to the combating of international terrorism by the United States. Interestingly, the college-age cohort views the combating of international terrorism more seriously than the millennial generation in general. Also, by referring to both tables 10 and 11, which deal with all three groups, the college-age cohort shows broader support for the combating of international terrorism even more seriously than non-millennial generations. The difference between the millennial generation (people under the age of 35) and the college-age cohort (people ages 18 to 22) in how they view the combating of international terrorism by the U.S. is statistically significant ($p=.07$). There is a margin of error of plus or minus 6% at a 95% confidence level.

Unexpected was the strong support chiefly held by the college-age cohort for the combating of international terrorism indicated in the CCGA dataset. The numbers associated

with this specific group in this dataset as well as those affiliated with the millennial generation as a whole are striking. This implies that while these generations are not as concerned about terrorism in their own lives, they are in support of ridding the world of it. This was not predicted or even discussed in the theory chapter, as it was not expected. With that said, an important new opportunity for discovery has been identified and further research to confirm this distinction and examine its basis is warranted.

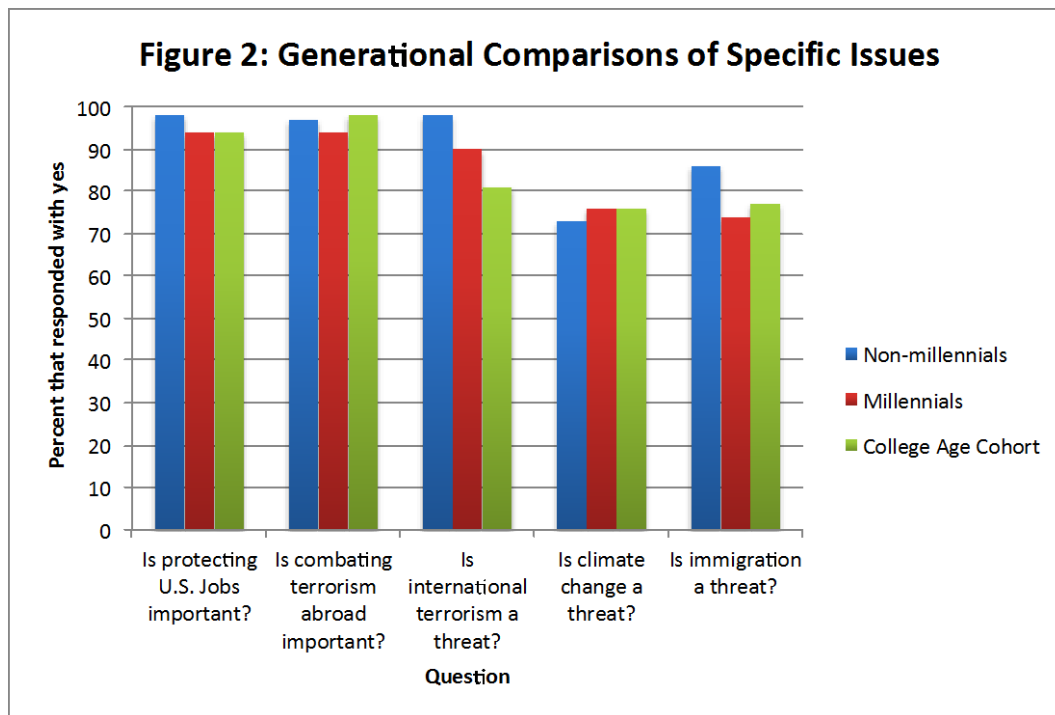


Figure 2 offers an enhanced view of the data presented in the tables above. It is easier to compare and contrast as all three groups are represented for each issue. The key on the right-hand side explains which colors signify each group and the y-axis provides the percent that each group responded with a “yes;” the x- axis contains the questions. The middle cluster dealing with international terrorism as a threat emphasizes the decline in concern for international terrorism as age decreases. Now looking to the left, the support for combating terrorism abroad drops off with the millennial generation but bounces back up with the

college-age cohort. There is little variation among the three comparison groups with respect to the remaining issues, although the millennial generation and the college student cohort feel more strongly that climate change is a threat to the United States and less strongly that immigration is.

*The source of all of the data shown in this graph is the CCGA dataset

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The millennial generation, specifically the college-age cohort, view terrorism less seriously than non-millennial generations. Millennials as a whole are seemingly not apathetic and rather just as concerned with important political issues facing the United States as non-millennials. The empirical data from these studies support the hypothesis that the college-age cohort views terrorism less seriously than non-millennials and even millennials in general. Interestingly though, they appear much more willing to combat international terrorism than either of the other age groups. The formation of these unique perspectives is at least partially explained in the theory chapter by examining specifically the generational effect and socialization, education, and mass media.

Terrorism has broad implications and while this research maintained a more universal but consistent definition of the word, future research could hone in on specific kinds of terrorism—for example, domestic or foreign. Having completed this research project and reported findings that may have important policy and influential political implications, clearly there is more to be verified and learned. For example, other future areas of research among millennials, specifically the college-age cohort, could include an examination of differences by gender or the effect that geographic location (e.g. south, north, east, west) would have on views about terrorism.

Knowing that a larger survey sample would be even more telling, future researchers should expand their reach. A survey of only 106 participants has its limitations for analysis and application, which is why the CCGA dataset was so important. Even with an enlarged survey population, it is imperative to collect data from multiple generational sub-groups, as was done with the CCGA dataset, to allow an even sharper understanding of the differences

and similarities among them. While the college-age student survey addressed terrorism, both domestic and foreign, the CCGA data did not. Thus, while the CCGA dataset was still vitally useful, more could be done in the future to examine thoroughly the millennial generation as a whole as well as non-millennial generations as was done for those ages 18 to 22 in the college-age student survey. Note, too, that education appears to be an important factor in shaping a person's perspective. The exact nature of the role that education may play warrants further attention. In addition, the exact relationship between the military and the millennial generation is something that might warrant more extensive research. The millennial generation, specifically the college-age cohort, being such a young generation, may have a different, less supportive view of the U.S. Armed Forces than older generations.

An interesting finding was the small level of difference among non-millennial generations, the millennial generation and the college-age cohort in regards to their support of the issues studied. This raises the question about the degree to which public opinion shapes public policy? It seems that the influence of public opinion may not be as much as one might assume. Possibly political attention has a larger effect than public opinion on the formation of public policy. In other words, awareness of the relevant issues currently facing the nation could be more influential. This presents yet another question. As the theory chapter emphasized, the millennials are the most educated generation of all time and generally more able to obtain news quickly and effectively. The effect that current issues, in addition to the historical legacy of a generation, have on the millennial generation also warrants further investigation. More research expanding on this concept could be very important and could potentially lead to necessary information for policymakers as they work to interpret and predict the current state of society.

The implications of this study and those to follow on this subject could provide crucial insight to aid and predict the direction of the United States' foreign and domestic policy. If the United States continues to maintain a strong global presence in the so-called "War on Terror," this study may help identify what effect this policy approach will have on society. Millennials, both liberal and conservative, view the world as a less threatening place than do their elders. As a generation having grown up in a recession and time of war where the U.S. has been somewhat humbled on the global stage, they are hopeful and less skeptical of the world—holding a more realistic view of the United States' place internationally. This globally concerned, more tolerant perspective may be the necessary mentality for the U.S. population and its policymakers to have in order to see a lessening of the violence and fear created by terrorism in today's society.

The future of the world will soon be in the hands of this unique generation. Having examined the role this generation may play in the United States it also important to recognize that this generation, while different, exists in every country of the world. The opportunity for a global shift in perspective and new form of international interaction when dealing with global issues like terrorism could be achievable. Does this mean that the end of terrorism is in sight? Probably not, but it is possible that a new, more effective approach to dealing with it is. Another important question is then raised: At what point will the millennial perspective begin to influence policy? It is difficult to tell but with the entire millennial generation capable of voting, it is likely already happening.

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Appendix

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The Current State of Terrorism ▾

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The Current State of Terrorism

▾ Default Question Block

Block Options ▾

■ Q2 How old are you?



- ☐ 18
- ☐ 19
- ☐ 20
- ☐ 21
- ☐ 22

■ Q3 What is your gender?



- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

■ Q4 Is the issue of terrorism increasing or decreasing in relevance?



- ☐ Increasing
- ☐ Decreasing
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

■ Q5 Is terrorism an issue that must be addressed by the U.S. government?




- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

■ Q6 Have there been any terrorist attacks in Europe within the past two years?



- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

https://appstate.az1.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/?ClientAction=EditSurvey&Section=SV_8bMmzyJgdJ3WJv&SubSection=&SubSubSection=&PageActionOptio... 1/5


 Q7 Do you think of terrorism in your daily life?

-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 Q8 Should the United States be fighting terrorism at home?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care


 Q9 Should the United States be fighting terrorism abroad?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care


 Q10 Is immigration a contributor to domestic terrorism?











-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 Q11 Should countries allow immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa to cross their borders and enter their nations legally?

-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care


 Q12 How important do you rank your civic responsibility/role in your community?


-  ☐ Very
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all


 Q13	<p>Is gun violence a threat in the United States?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not know</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not care</p>
 Q14	<p>Do you think that stricter gun laws should exist in the United States?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not know</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not care</p>
 Q15	<p>Do you support a U.S. government that plays a greater role in society?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not know</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not care</p>
 Q16	<p>Is a xenophobic (having or showing a dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries) government a positive thing?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not know</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not care</p>
 Q17	<p>On which date below was there a terrorist attack on U.S. soil?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> September 11, 2001</p> <p><input type="radio"/> October 30, 1998</p> <p><input type="radio"/> June 3, 2004</p> <p><input type="radio"/> January 14, 2008</p>
 Q18	<p>Was there a terrorist attack on U.S. soil in 2016?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not know</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Do not care</p>

 **Q19** In your opinion, do higher levels of education have a positive correlation with acceptance of immigrants?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q20** Do higher levels of education positively correlate with support for government involvement in society?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q21** Do you think that healthcare is a serious issue facing the United States?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q22** Do you think that the environment is a serious issue facing the United States?

-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q24** Do you think that the economy and the job market are serious issues facing the United States?


-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q25** Do you think that immigration is a serious issue facing the United States?

-  ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

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 **Q26** Do you consider yourself to be a globally aware citizen? In other words, do you care about what happens outside of the United States?



- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

 **Q27** Do you think that the United States is the greatest country in the world?



- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Do not care

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