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POLITICAL ORIENTATION AMONG GENERATIONS AND SHIFTS IN THE U.S. POLITICAL PENDULUM¹

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Abstract: This paper will analyse how core political values change from one generation to another, considering the ways groups of people experiences economic, social and political events according to their age and how that impacts on their future political preferences. As a new generation of young voters arises in the United States it is necessary to draw their voting tendencies in order to understand future possible shifts in the U.S political pendulum as younger people outvote older generations at the ballots. We will establish probable cause as to why young voters tend to be more progressive and what their turnout tendency is and how it can shape the next presidential elections. Furthermore, this paper will establish correlations between generations and their inclination to vote for one political party, how much they swing from Republican to Democratic and establish general tendencies for the future considering U.S demographics.

Keywords: U.S elections, political behavior, new generations, voter demographics and turnout.

INTRODUCTION

The midterm elections held on November 8th of 2018 in which Americans chose the new representatives for the Congress shifted party majority to Democrats in the House after eight years of Republican control over the legislative branch. Although the Democrats did not win the Senate, the seats occupied by Democratic candidates in the House of Representatives went from 193 to 223, the number of women went up by 20% and two out of the one hundred and one women that now occupy chairs are the first Muslim women to ever be elected to Congress (U.S STATE DEPARTMENT, 2018).

After the controversy of the presidential election in 2016, in which president Donald Trump was elected by the Electoral College

despite Hilary Clinton's majority on the popular vote, the 2018 midterms could represent a moment of shift in the political pendulum (SCHLESINGER, JR., 1986), whereupon the ideological liberalization happens after a period of steady conservatism. The opposite effect was observed after Barack Obama's first two years in the White House: the 2010 midterms lead Republicans to party majority at the U.S House of Representatives with 242 seats, representing a loss of 64 chairs to Democrats, a scenario that would maintain itself until the 116th Congress of 2019.

In the 2020 general elections, the Democrat Joseph Biden was elected the 46th president of the United States. This victory presents itself as a continuity of the shift in the pendulum. To understand these changes, it is necessary to explore the way in which individuals connect with the overall political structure. In democracies, this relationship is explained by many factors, including how people experience political, social and economic events (ALMOND; VERBA, 1963). In that sense, the study of political preferences within generations becomes relevant, as a group of people born in a specific time cohort and living one juncture around a similar time in their lives might acquire similar behavioral tendencies in the civic culture.

Today in America there are six generations: The Greatest Generation (individuals born before 1928), The Silent Generation (individuals born between 1928-1945), The Baby Boom Generation (individuals born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (individuals born between 1965 and 1980), The Millennial Generation (individuals born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (individuals born after 1997) (PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2019). Each group has its own particularities and understandings of citizenship, as societal norms slowly shift from duty-based citizenship into engaged

citizenship (DALTON, 2016, p. 5-6), younger generations are more engaged in politics, but also distancing themselves from formal civic engagement and questioning the impacts of individual voting as a way to address public issues (KIESA et al. 2007, p. 9-10).

More than understanding political preferences, it is key to comprehend how each generation sees itself in terms of economic activities and civic duties. This paper will focus on different variables such as employment, self-identified ideology, party identification and voter turnout to try and explain the different ways generations engage in politics and ideological tendencies within them.

Furthermore, the target of this research is to observe the tendencies of the younger generations (Millennials and especially Generation Z), not only their preferences but also their propensity to vote and how the increase in the number of younger voters might shape US elections in the next years. For such, this paper will bring a literature review in the field of political behavior, a methodological discussion and the results of the research. The methodology adopted in this research will establish an age cohort (GLENN, 1997) according to Pew Research Center's definitions for each generation². Using University of Chicago's General Social Survey (GSS) from 1974 to 2018, the databases will be segmented into generations for creating a tendency outlying timeline for the following variables: workforce, party identification and ideology. Lastly, we will present correlation indexes between the number of voters from a generation, collected from the Voter Supplement of the IPUMS Current Population Survey and the number of votes a party has received³ from 1998 until 2018.

This project is embodied in the Electoral Observatory of the Americas' research agenda that gathers researchers from different

institutes of USP and has invested in research and systematic monitoring of elections in key countries of the American continent, placing emphasis on diverse approaches.

In the area of Political Science and International Relations, there is a well-established field of research dedicated to electoral studies and political behavior (DALTON; KLINGEMENN, 2009; FISCHER et al, 2018). Apprehending the preferences of a new group of the electorate, connected to a more technological world, is central to further analyze the future possibilities of political parties and candidates, in this case, in U.S presidential elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definitions for liberal and conservative ideologies can be understood as products of the political environment as such labels are tied to symbols of self-identified groups, generating an evaluative meaning to ideology linked to a cognitive response to the opposing ideals (CONOVER; FELDMAN, 1981, p.621-623). This definition provides a more comprehensive understanding of political ideologies beyond party identification and stance on social issues (LEVITIN; MILLER, 1979, p. 768).

According to recent studies, the perception of polarization in American society has increased taking into consideration how strongly people believe and defend their political ideas (DIMAGGIO et al., 1996, p. 740). With the advent of social media, not only highly assertive algorithms and artificial intelligence models, but users' individual choices limit exposure to different political views (BAKSHY et al., 2015, p. 1131). Also, research finds that the tolerance to diverging political ideas differ between different self-identified political groups; when exposed to different political views, Republicans

2. Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins.

3. Election Statistics, 1920 to Present | US House of Representatives

tend to have more reluctant reactions than Democrats, which shows how social media usage is a defining factor of the public discussion in America today (BAIL et al., 2018, p. 9220).

With the understanding that self-identified conservatives and liberals tend to cluster themselves within their own societal-political groups, it is necessary to understand how mutable the ideologies are, and which variables are responsible for shaping political preferences. As one's age is one of the main predictors of political behavior, a cohort analysis (GLENN, 1997, p. 247) of generations is a good alternative to investigate social ageing, political preferences among different age groups and how those predilections are reflected in election results.

This paper will start from the premise that people vote rationally in democracies, and the choice to vote relies on a set of factors, including party ideology (DOWNS, 1957, p.137-140). Furthermore, each generation is pertained by its own issues, following a self-interest hypothesis, younger people are generally more concerned about their education, as older generations are more prone to advocating for policies on Social Security, for example (DIXON; FULLERTON, 2015, p.655). Although research shows the calculation of personal utility of the vote, social utility is as important to understand voter turnout and electoral behavior (EDLIN et al, 2007, p. 305). If voters choose their candidates by assessing the impacts of the current government in their own lives and predicting the impacts of its continuity for society as whole, people's views on societal issues that might not impact them directly, such as foreign affairs, abortion regulation or LGBT rights, appear as key factors to how people understand their own vote as an action with positive externalities (EDLIN et al, 2007, p. 294).

Naturally, people with different political views will have different key metrics for understanding what the positive externality of their vote is. This logic can be applied to generations as each cohort is understood as a mainly homogenous group of people that have experienced events throughout their lives in a similar way taking into consideration how old they were (GLENN, 1997, p. 248). According to Cambridge Dictionary, a generation is "all of the people who are about the same age" and the period it lasts is about "the time it takes for children to become adults and take the place of their parents in society". This concept is applied beyond workforce, tax paying, retirement and reproduction, but also to voting as generations overtime replace each other on election turnouts (DALTON, 2016, p.9).

These changes in civic culture are due to a different set of factors, including different groups' historical experience of political events and democratic stability (ALMOND; VERBA, 1963). For example, The Silent Generation was shaped by World War II as Baby Boomers were influenced by the tension of the Cold War from an early age until their college years. These experiences are intrinsically connected to people's beliefs and to how they vote, which might explain the success of the Republican Party for much of the Cold War, as their anticommunism stances were able to mobilize social action (WHITE, 2018). On the other hand, late Generation X and Millennials were not as influenced by the Cold War, as they were born in the 1980s, when nuclear armament was placed around a moral dilemma, which led to a cooling of the tensions (MEHAN et al, 1990, p. 139).

Finally, not only the way generations experience political events, but also the economic conditions they face during college and work years are important factors for generational self-image and political

identification (WILLIAMS et al, 1997, p.253). This article aims to further investigate how generations' ideologies shift overtime, linking those changes to economic and political junctures. Furthermore, the concept of diversity will be used to understand the liberal stigma around the younger generations (COHEN, 2011, p. 2) and what the political manifestations of Generation Z mean for the future of politics in the United States.

GENERATIONS UNTANGLED

This section of the article will analyze the three main variables of this study: party identification, ideology and workforce within the five generations. Moreover, we will bring the correlation indexes and provide a discussion of the results.

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Graph 1.

The graph shows a decrease in support for the Democratic Party at the end of the 70s during Jimmy Carter's (Democrat) administration, followed by the first and clearest peak of self-identified democrats in 1982, the second year of Ronald Reagan's (Republican) term. This same year, the total unemployment rate had gone up by two percentage points (from 7.6% to 9.7%), and the GDP had a slower growth rate, according to The World Bank. These rates soon began to improve, pinning 1982 as the worst year of economic recession throughout the Reagan administration. In 1984, when the economic scenario began to improve and unemployment rates were back to 7.5%, the number of self-identified democrats came down as well.

In 1990, the second year of George H. W. Bush's (Republican) administration, Silents' rates for self-identification with the Democratic Party went up, as both Generation X's and Boomers' went down. In this year, GDP growth and unemployment rates (5.6%)

were steady, but in 1991, GDP growth rates slowed down and unemployment began to rise, reaching 7.5% in 1992, as more Boomers and Gen X identified as democrats.

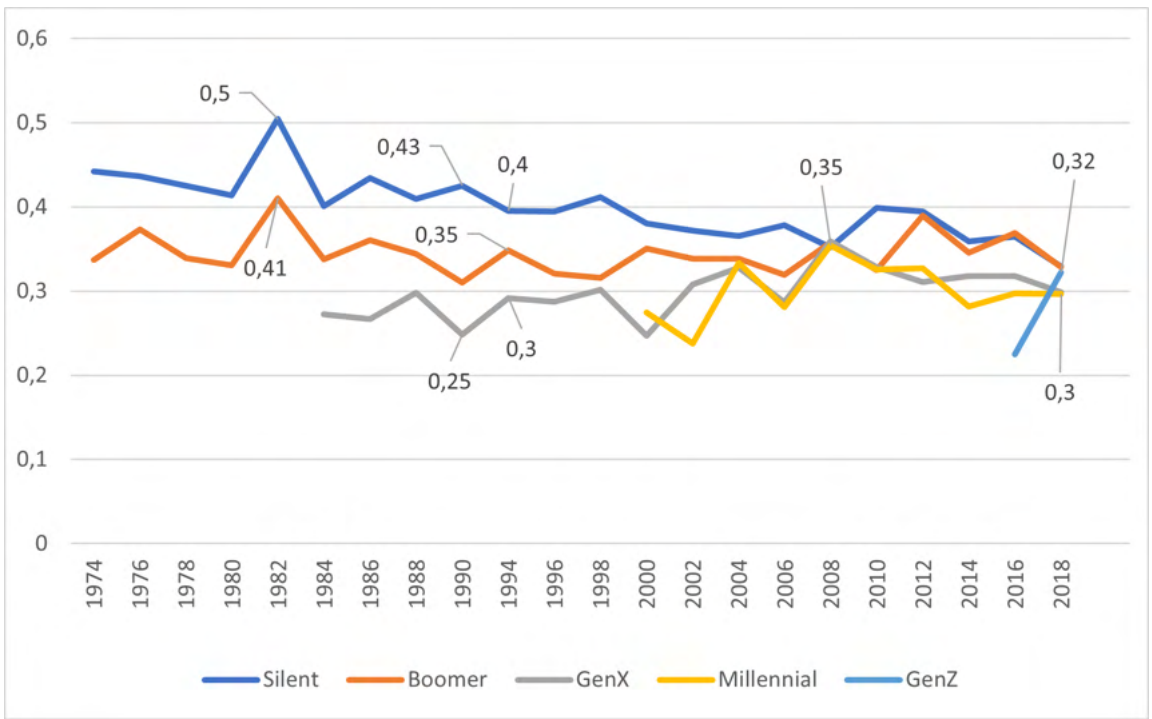
In 1994, the second year of Bill Clinton's (Democrat) term, the numbers for self-identified democrats rose again among the younger generations, opposing the numbers observed in 1990. This shift can be explained by both the descent of George H. W. Bush's approval rates, lowering the number of Republican supporters, as well as the rise in Clinton's popularity in 1994, reaching 58% at the end of the year.

Another important rate to notice is 2008, the year in which Barack Obama (Democrat) was elected president, in which all generations converged to a 35% rate of self-identified democrat, that also being the historical peak for Millennials and Generation X, the two younger generations at the time. The only generation that had a decrease in this rate from 2006 to 2008, was the Silent, all the others were more largely identified with Obama's party.

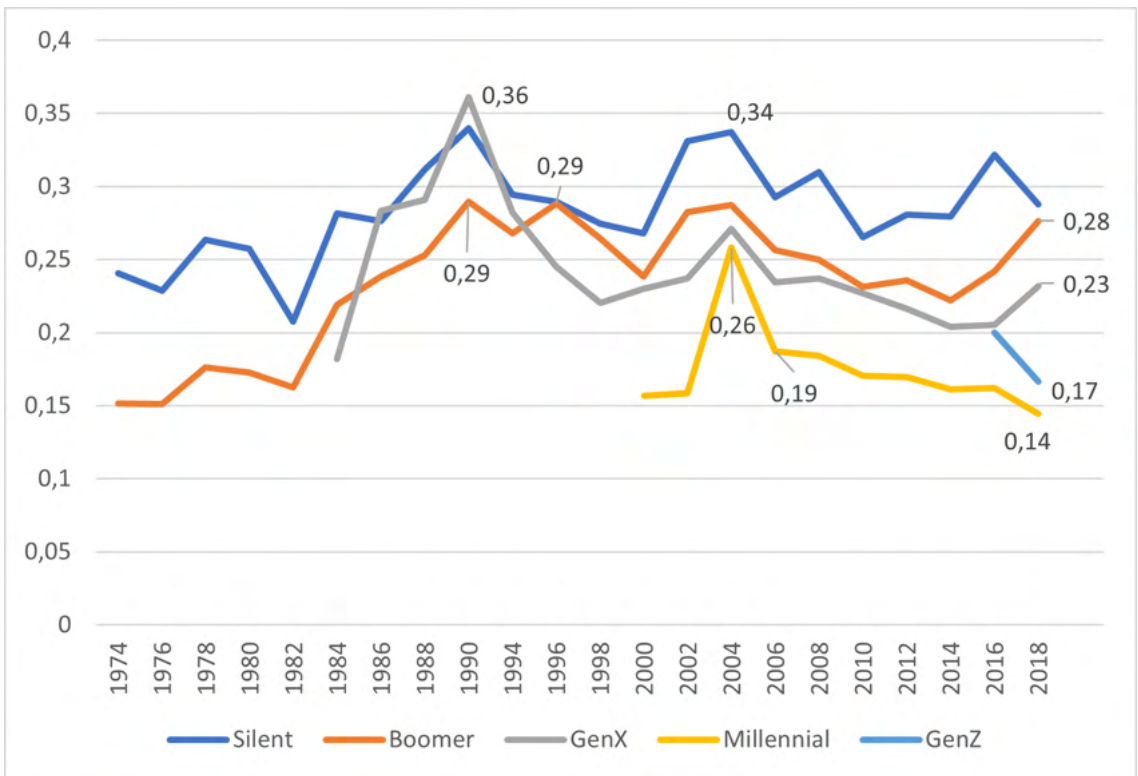
Overall, the Silent generation became less democrat overtime, as the others had little to none oscillation in their self-identification with Democrats. It is clear though that Generation Z has ramping rates of identification with the Democratic Party, and yet these are the same as Silents' and Boomers', which allows a conclusion that, from this initial data, the younger generation in the United States in 2018 was, in fact, not more democrat than the two oldest generations.

Graph 2.

The analysis starts in 1974, as Richard Nixon (Republican) resigned office after the Watergate Scandal. It is possible to see that the numbers of this year for Boomers and Silents were one of the lowest throughout the period. With the presidency of Gerald Ford (Republican), the rates remained stable or presented a small decrease. They rose



Graph 1 - Self-identified democrats.



Graph 2 - Self-identified Republicans.

again during Jimmy Carter's (Democrat) administration, which ended in 1981, who was notably one of the most unpopular presidents in history, with an average of only 45.5% in approval rating. As analyzed before, the recession of 1982 took its toll upon Reagan's administration. As the support for Democrats increased, it is clear through Graph 2 that identification with the Republican Party plummeted the same year. These are the first clues that a president's job approval, strongly connected to economic indexes, has an imperative connection to how people identify themselves party-wise.

The peak for Republican self-identification among all generations was in 1990, the second year of Bush Senior's administration. In January of 1990, 80% of the American people approved his job as president after the invasion of Panama the previous year. As seen before in this article, the economic scenario in the United States was satisfactory and George H. W. Bush's approval ratings were overall above average, reaching 89% in 1991 after the Victory in the Persian Gulf War. After 1991, his approval rating went down, and yet at the time he left office in 1993, his popularity still managed to rise to 56% after he was beat at the ballots. Therefore the peak observed in 1990, can be explained by the overpowering popularity of George H. W. Bush's administration at the time, and the fall of the index observed in the graph can also be explained by the descent of Bush's popularity as he broke his "no new taxes" pledge and as the country went into an economic recession, as explained before. By the time Bush lost the election, his approval rate was a little over 30%, thus the decrease in his popularity as Bill Clinton (Democrat) gained momentum in the political scenario can explain the blunt downfall of self-identified republicans.

Especially for the Millennial generation, there is a second peak in 2004, the year George

W. Bush was re-elected president of the United States. From the previous year, GDP grew nearly 800 billion dollars and unemployment rates went down to 5.5% (a 0.4% decrease from the previous year). These numbers were very similar as the ones observed in 2006 -- or even better, as unemployment rates were as low as 4.6% -- , and yet Republican self-identification decreased by a large number in all generations. Bush Son's popularity had a peak in 2004 and started descending until he left office with a 34% approval rating. Overall, his first term's average approval was 62%, as his second term's was only 37%. This deepens the connection between the approval of the president and identification with the party that occupies the White House. It also shows that economic rates are not enough to explain the support for a president, for it also encompasses other policies adopted by public administration such as foreign policy, fiscal austerity, tax collection, the president's own reputation, among others.

As Barack Obama rose as the Democratic bet for the presidential office and during his administration, it is clear how the number of self-identified Republicans decreases significantly especially among the younger generations. It is imperative, though, to observe the differences between Gen X, Boomers and Silents from Millennials. In 2016, the year that Donald J. Trump (Republican) was elected president, the numbers for self-identified Republicans had been rising for Silent and Boomers, as it was steady for Gen X and Millennials. After he occupied the White House and by the time of the Congressional midterm elections, only Millennials and Generation Z's rates decreased, which is reflected by Gen Z's increase in Democratic support.

Overall, the oscillations in the number of people who identify themselves as democrats is less abrupt than those of self-identified

republicans. This could be due to the fact that in the analyzed period (from 1974 to 2018), the United States has had five Republican presidents and only three Democratic ones. In a number of terms, Republicans occupied the White House for eight terms, or 24 years, as Democrats were in the presidency for half as many years, only four terms. As seen before, the support for the POTUS' party is strongly connected to the popularity of whomever is in office at the time. As the lack of support for one party does not implicate directly on rise in support for another -- for there are third parties or people who state their support for neither -- it is clear that the tides in politics get stronger around election years and during the first years of a new administration, such as seen in 1982 with Reagan, 1990 with Bush Senior, 1994 with Clinton, 2004 with Bush Son, 2008 with Obama and 2016 with Trump.

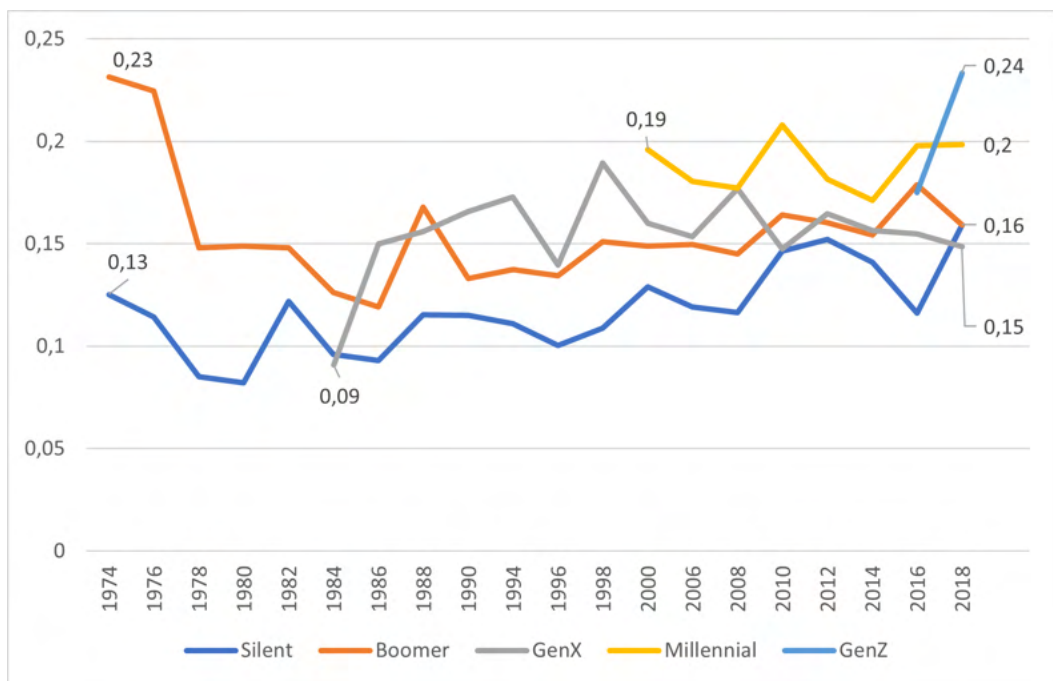
Lastly, it is imperative to notice that party identification is not as steady as one would expect. It goes up and down as the president's

approval ratings oscillate and the social and economic juncture changes. Therefore the idea that in a bipartisan system, parties tend to moderate themselves in order to capture the mean elector proves itself to be very true, as party support is not the same overtime for all people in one generation. These tendencies, though true, are not the same for ideology, as the next section of this article will show.

IDEOLOGY

Graph 3.

As party identification is intrinsic to politics, ideologies such as liberal or conservative can encompass a broader spectrum of factors, such as social and civil rights, gun rights regulations or access to public services. Democrats are usually linked to a more liberal side of the political spectrum as Republicans are notably conservative. Though this is true, at a first glance at Graph 3, it is clear how different it is from Graph 1 (Self-identified Democrats). Therefore, it is



Graph 3 - Self-identified Liberals.

necessary to analyze the prevailing ideology of a generation separate from its party support, for then it is possible to draw mean tendencies for all of the people in a cohort, even those who are not active politically, for then we can comprehend the potential of each generation's voter turnout.

The early 1970s was marked by Liberal Feminism, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), the Black Panthers, the LGBT rights movement after the Stonewall protests in 1969, personalities such as Gloria Steinem, Shirley Chisholm, Elaine Brown, Angela Davis, and other prominent activists set the tone for the beginning of the decade, which is reflected by the numbers in Graph 3, as large numbers of Boomers and Silents considered themselves to be liberals. This number faces rapid downfall during Ford's and Carter's administrations. It is possible to infer that Jimmy Carter's low popularity and dissonance from a more liberal wing of the Democratic Party might have impacted on how people identify themselves, for ideology is not only formed by your beliefs but by also the beliefs you deny (CONOVER; FELDMAN, 1981, p.621-623). Therefore to have a liberal president that in fact translated many conservative ideas into his government, a negative implication in the numbers of self-identified liberals might be observed as in Graph 3.

This is the same phenomenon that can explain the rapid rise of liberal Silents from 2016 to 2018, with the presidency of Donald J. Trump. In this case, not because the POTUS had liberal policies disguised in a conservative speech, but because the electors over 65 years old saw him as unfit for the presidency, as explained by Edward Luce at the Financial Times column. Therefore this generation that had a central role in electing Trump to office, as disagreeing with his form of government and conservatism, shifted their preferences to the other side of the pendulum.

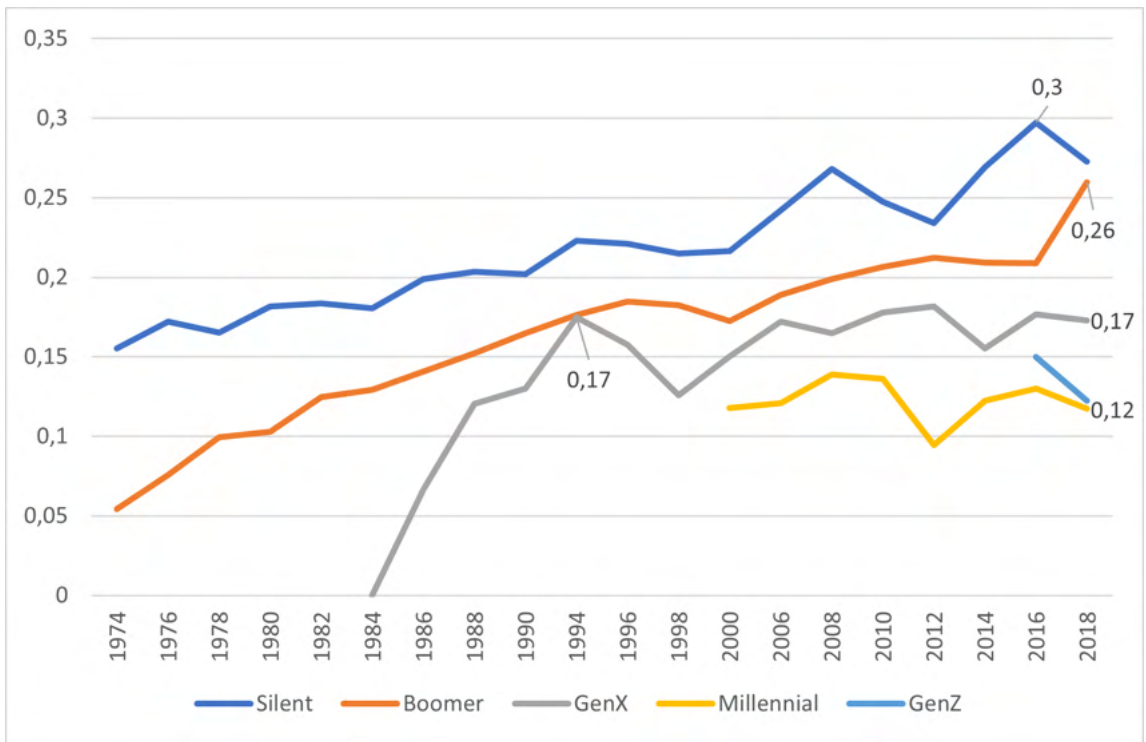
In consonance with common sense, younger generations such as Millennials and Generation Z are, in fact, more liberal than older generations though this number is not linear. In other words, not every generation is more liberal than the one that precedes it at a constant rate. Clear examples are Silents and Boomers, both at 16% of self-identified liberals, and Gen X being the least liberal generation (15%) in spite of being younger than the two aforementioned ones, and presenting rates constantly lower than Boomers since 2014.

The generations that do follow the rule of being always more liberal than the precedent one are Boomers and Millennials. The number of liberal Boomers in 1974 are only as high as the number of liberal Gen Z in 2018. It is key to note that most of these generations during these periods were in their college years. This does not by any means point towards a conservative tendency for Generation Z overtime, as political, social and economic junctures of the formative years of this generation's civic culture are completely different from those of Boomers. Gen Z is pointed out to be the most liberal generation nowadays, as the graphic shows, therefore, in the short-term, their turnout at the ballots can be of great impact, especially since every year more people from this generation turn 18 and thus eligible to vote.

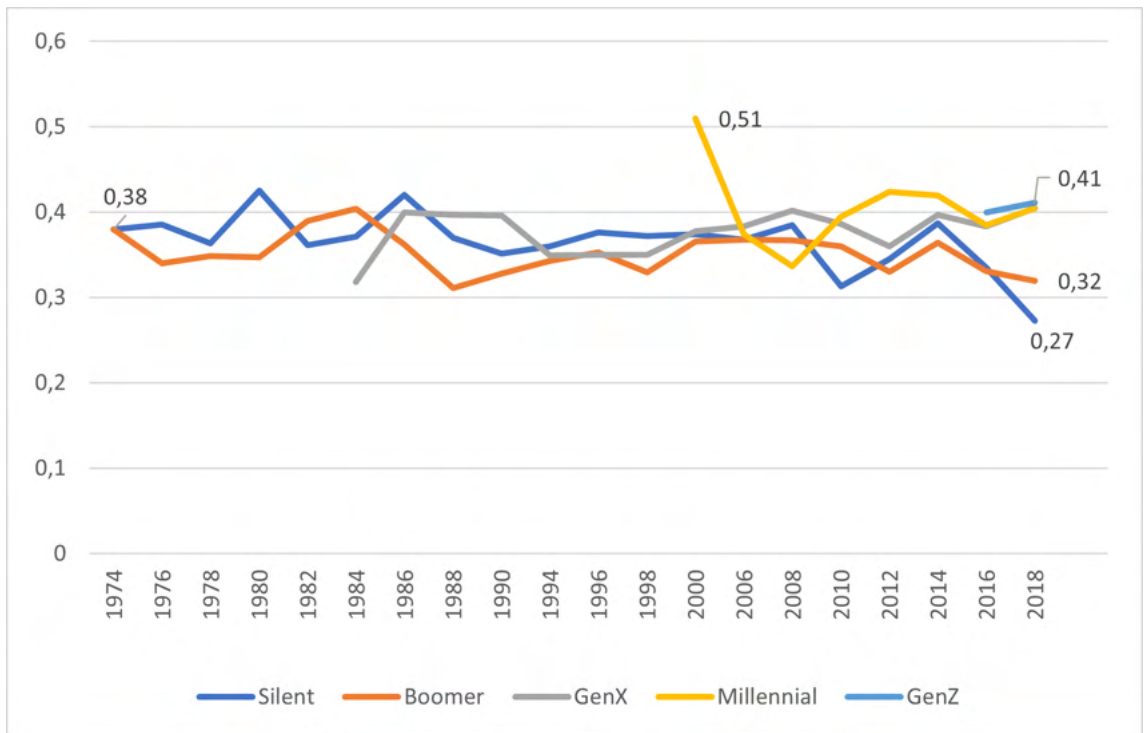
Graph 4.

In contrast to Graph 3, it is possible to draw more solid tendencies for each generation's conservative preferences, for its oscillation is smaller and the growth tendencies are steadier, especially among Boomers and Silents.

As analyzed before, there was an increase in the number of liberal Silents during Trump's administration, as hereby reflected with a decrease in conservative Silents after 2016. In contrast, the number of conservative Boomers has increased, following the decrease tendency for the generation in Graph 3 during these



Graph 4 - Self-identified Conservative.



Graph 5 - Self-identified Moderates.

years, which could signal a clearer preference of Boomers for Trump's policies and ideals. It is important to note that unlike the peak of Republican support, the highest rates for conservatism among these older generations happen in the 2010s.

Generation X shows steady growth in the late 1980s, a peak in 1994, a steady decrease in the next four years before starting to rise again, reaching the same high rates of 1994 again in 2018. Unlike the older generations, the oscillations of Gen X's conservatism is less standardized and the general tendency does not point towards steady growth or decrease, but a more stable number, such as the Millennials with the exception of the year 2012, as we will now analyze.

Graph 5.

From 2010 to 2012, Millennials have a decrease in liberals and conservatives as well. Graph 5 shows that instead of an oscillation in one ideology meaning an automatic transfer to the other, it can mean an impoundment -- or the opposite -- on the number of people who consider themselves to be moderate. It is important to note that all generations present very similar numbers for a moderate ideology, the rupture of these steady similar rates happens in 2014 and deepens, as especially Silents and Boomers migrate from moderate to conservative, and lastly to liberal in the case of Silents. This can indicate a period of larger polarization in the country, for even those who considered themselves to be moderate are shifting to one side of the pendulum, may that be for identification with the president's ideology or the denial of it.

The two most moderate generations are the same as the two most liberal ones, meaning that, according to a general tendency, those voters could be more easily captured by liberal candidates than by conservative ones overall. In terms of turnout and political pendulum shifts potential, Gen Z and

Millennials tend to be more liberal, therefore are most likely to vote Democrat. In the contrary, Boomers and Silents present steady growth in conservatism, with the exception of the shift in Silent's preferences motivated partly by the disapproval of Donald Trump's administration.

In general, Boomers and Silents tend to be more conservative as Generation Z and Millennials are mostly liberal. Generation X on the other hand, does not present very clear patterns for ideology, but is mostly conservative by only two percentage points as of 2018. This means that larger turnouts for older generations in general mean a larger chance of win for the Republicans, the opposite being true for the younger generations and the middle generation, Gen X, could represent a type of "swing generation" with many moderate voters to be captured by one of the sides of the spectrum and generally similar indexes for liberals and conservatives overtime. In conclusion, the voting preferences for Generation X could be the hardest to predict, and yet the most decisive one.

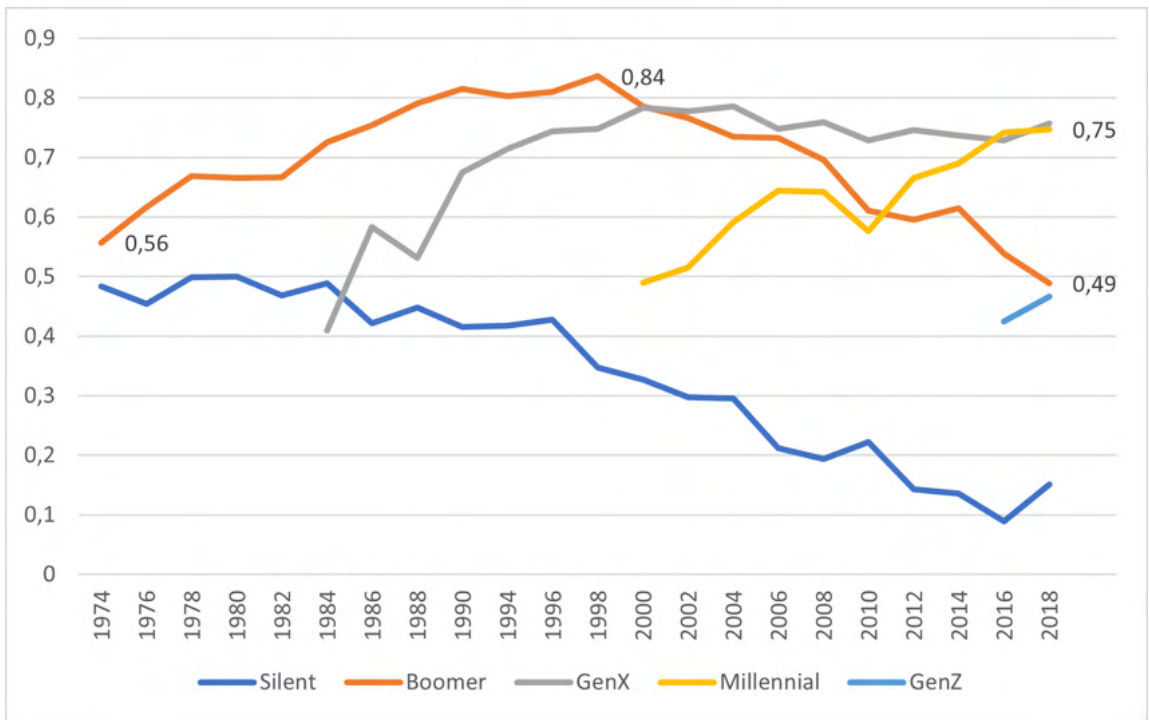
WORK STATUS

By understanding the status of the workforce of a generation overtime, it is possible to infer important conclusions about their preferences and answer important questions such as are college students more liberal and tend to moderate themselves or turn more conservative overtime?

Graph 6.

In the graph below it is possible to see the amount of individuals of one generation that work either full or part time. The decrease of Silents in the workforce is mainly due to its mean age, as most of the generation is now retired.

Boomers in 1974 were in their college years, and yet 56% of the generation integrating the



Graph 6 - Currently working class.

workforce might mean that a large part of this group either studied while working or did not go to college. It is clear how this generation faced a time of economic prosperity and full employment in the country as 84% of the cohort was employed in the late 1990s. By the time the crisis of 2008 came, the share of the cohort working was already in decline, and it decreased even more sharply after. According to Graph 4, the levels of conservatism were rising at the time, and continued to rise at a nearly constant rate, not demonstrating any abrupt shift in tendency. What Graph 3 shows is that among Boomers, the levels of self-identified liberals actually increased with the crisis and unemployment, perhaps demonstrating a clear preference for policies of social welfare often pushed forward by Democrats. The same happened to Millennials, who not only increased their levels of liberalism, but also decreased in conservatism. Silents had the same shift in

ideology, and yet an increase in their share of the workforce.

As for Generation X, that represented the largest share of the workforce in 2008, the biggest increase in conservatism and abrupt descent in liberalism happened in this generation. It was also the one least affected by unemployment at the time, as Boomers and Millennials decreased from 7% to 9% their participation in the labor market, as Gen X had a fall of only 3%.

As of party support, paradoxically, the number of people of all generations who supported both the Republican and Democratic parties decreased, with an exception of Silents who increased their support for the Democrats. This might indicate an even more disconnected relationship between party support and ideology, showing that in the time of crises, people tend to discredit politics overall. What might explain the increase in support for the Democrats by

the Silents can be more of a historical memory brought by the years of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (Democrat) New Deal, than actual support for Obama. As the only here analyzed generation who's had the Great Depression as a part of their formative years (during the New Deal years, Silents were 5 to 9 years old, if not enough to remember, they have at least been told the story of World War I, the Great Depression and FDR's policies by their parents), the memory of a successful policy of government investment can bring up a tendency to support the party who has pushed it forward when a similar situation arises.

What the analysis of the work status of the generation, their ideology and party support suggests is that in the time of deep crises, such as the one in 2008, people might tend towards liberalism and social welfare policies if they were the most affected ones (Boomers and Millennials). On the contrary, those who were not as affected by the crises might continue to support more conservative policies like fiscal austerity and control of public expenditure (Generation X). What is observed in all generations, though, is the discredit in politics overall, with decrease for support for both parties. There is still a third category, those who have more vivid memories of previous deep crises and the policies adopted to reconstruct the country (Silents). For those, the support for the party who has beat recession once before tends to rise again.

HOW DO GENERATIONS VOTE?

In the 2018 elections, most voters were Baby Boomers, making up over 35% of the electorate. As for Generation X alone, it represents around a quarter of the electorate as Silent and Greatest oscillate around 13% and Millennials around 21% (PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2019). Generation Z represents around 4% of the vote (PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2019), and yet makes up around 20

percent of the country's population (STATISA, 2020). This framework is key to understanding how important the volatility of preferences of one generation is, for it directly impacts the results of an election.

By observing the way in which different generations behave according to their political preferences, it is possible to draw hypotheses on how they vote and how it will impact the overall result of the ballots. At first glance, it would be safe to assume the younger the generation, the more liberal the vote. The purpose of the last section of this article is to explore the former hypothesis by using correlation indexes between the number of voters of one generation and the number of votes one party has received at a given election year.

As Glenn (1997) formulated in his analysis of the cohort methodology, correlations alone cannot be used to draw strong conclusions of the cohort. Therefore this analysis will be complementary to the prior section of the article, with the intention of only beginning to understand how generations behave in the ballots. That being said, only three out of five generations will be analyzed for the data revealed was statistically significant.

BOOMERS

As Boomers show themselves to be the most conservative generation in the General Social Survey, they are in fact more strongly correlated with the Republican Party (0.7881 correlation index) than the Democratic Party (0.6999).

Although this leads to a conclusion that Boomers would vote more Republican than Democrat, a difference of less than 0.1 in the correlation indexes raises a hypothesis that Boomers do not vote strictly for the Republican candidates and often shift their preferences to Democrats. Another idea that could be raised is that most Boomers do vote

Republican, and yet there is a very significant part of the generation that votes for Democrats. Either way, it is safe to assume that most votes from this generation goes to Republican candidates, and, although this scenario is not always stable, Boomers are the largest share of voters overall, which means that Republican candidates might have an advantage among a large slice of the electorate.

GENERATION X

The idea of Generation X as a swing generation is deepened when analysing the regressions. This generation is as strongly correlated with Republicans (0.957) as it is with Democrats (0.9271).

This bolsters what was already previously observed for Generation X, as its preferences oscillate along with the political and economic scenario and does not present clear patterns for ideology and political preference. The possible conclusion to be drawn is one that Generation X will vote rationally according to the presented juncture and less for ideology or preference of one party over another. And since they present a quarter of the electorate, candidates should aim to conquer GenX.

MILLENNIALS

Millennials essentially behave the opposite of their parents (Boomers). They are correlated with Republicans at a rate of 0.6414, and 0.7040 with Democrats. They are not very strongly correlated with either party, but tend to vote more Democratic than Republican, and as it is for the Boomers, this scenario is volatile. Since Millennials represent around 20% of the voter turnout, Democrats should aim to expand their traction within the generation.

This conclusion along the analysis of the GSS is extremely relevant for it breaks the paradigm of Millennials as an extremely liberal generation that pushes forward the so called "Millennial Socialism" (THE

ECONOMIST, 2019), and as observed in Graph 5, the majority of the generation is, in fact, moderate. It is possible to infer that Millennials do lean democratic and tend to be more liberal, and the very relevant share of moderate electorate to be conquered might have a larger tendency to vote Democratic.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is possible to draw clear connections between a generation's ideology, party support and place in the workforce to predict possible election results based on generational electoral turnout.

Whilst Generation Z is the smallest share of the electorate and yet the most liberal and Democratic cohort, it is relevant to understand how the generation will behave in the future in terms of electoral turnout. As the only growing generation, meaning that every year more people of the GenZ turn 18 and are eligible to vote, politicians should be attentive to their behavior, for, in the mid-term, they might occupy an extremely relevant share of the electorate and keep the pendulum at a liberal position.

As the two youngest generations tend to have clear liberal preferences and support for the Democratic party, the two oldest ones are more conservative. Boomers are, in fact, the most conservative ones as Silents often demonstrate more abrupt shifts in the pendulum in the time of economic or political crises (2008 and 2018).

Generation X, on the other hand, is as liberal as it is conservative, mostly moderate and the largest share of the workforce. Therefore, as the other generations' preferences are easier to predict, Gen X's can be the trickiest. What the historical analysis shows is that in the time of crises, they tend to get more conservative and discredit politics when they are not as directly affected by it. There are also no clear patterns of

behavior for this generation, the oscillation of their preferences are brusque and levels of conservatism rose fastly in the 1980s and its peak is observed in the last year of the timely series as well. With 41% of the generation

considering themselves to be moderate, and 75% of employment levels, Generation X might be the one to watch more closely in order to predict electoral outcomes especially in the time of economic crises.

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ANNEXES

1. Regression: Boomers and Republican Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	11
Model	8.2183e+14	1	8.2183e+14	F(1, 9)	=	14.76
Residual	5.0121e+14	9	5.5690e+13	Prob > F	=	0.0040
				R-squared	=	0.6212
				Adj R-squared	=	0.5791
Total	1.3230e+15	10	1.3230e+14	Root MSE	=	7.5e+06

Republicans	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Boomer	3349.77	871.9915	3.84	0.004	1377.188 5322.352
_cons	-2.02e+07	1.81e+07	-1.12	0.293	-6.11e+07 2.07e+07

```
. corr Republicans Boomer
(obs=11)
```

	Republ~s	Boomer
Republicans	1.0000	
Boomer	0.7881	1.0000

2. Regression: Boomers and Democratic Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	11
Model	1.0166e+15	1	1.0166e+15	F(1, 9)	=	8.64
Residual	1.0584e+15	9	1.1760e+14	Prob > F	=	0.0165
				R-squared	=	0.4899
				Adj R-squared	=	0.4332
Total	2.0750e+15	10	2.0750e+14	Root MSE	=	1.1e+07

Democrats	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Boomer	3725.548	1267.151	2.94	0.016	859.0521 6592.043
_cons	-2.64e+07	2.63e+07	-1.00	0.342	-8.57e+07 3.30e+07

```
. corr Democrats Boomer
(obs=11)
```

	Democr~s	Boomer
Democrats	1.0000	
Boomer	0.6999	1.0000

3. Regression: Generation X and Republican Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	11
Model	1.2117e+15	1	1.2117e+15	F(1, 9)	=	97.92
Residual	1.1137e+14	9	1.2374e+13	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.9158
				Adj R-squared	=	0.9065
Total	1.3230e+15	10	1.3230e+14	Root MSE	=	3.5e+06

Republicans	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
GenX	3617.675	365.5942	9.90	0.000	2790.644 4444.707
_cons	6729749	4369223	1.54	0.158	-3154120 1.66e+07


```
. corr Republicans GenX
(obs=11)
```

	Republ~s	GenX
Republicans	1.0000	
GenX	0.9570	1.0000

4. Regression: Generation X and Democratic Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	11
Model	1.7833e+15	1	1.7833e+15	F(1, 9)	=	55.02
Residual	2.9169e+14	9	3.2410e+13	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.8594
				Adj R-squared	=	0.8438
Total	2.0750e+15	10	2.0750e+14	Root MSE	=	5.7e+06

Democrats	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
GenX	4388.808	591.6648	7.42	0.000	3050.369 5727.246
_cons	-656612.6	7070995	-0.09	0.928	-1.67e+07 1.53e+07


```
. corr Democrats GenX
(obs=11)
```

	Democr~s	GenX
Democrats	1.0000	
GenX	0.9271	1.0000

5. Regression: Millennials and Republican Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	10
Model	4.1828e+14	1	4.1828e+14	F(1, 8)	=	5.59
Residual	5.9842e+14	8	7.4803e+13	Prob > F	=	0.0456
Total	1.0167e+15	9	1.1297e+14	R-squared	=	0.4114
				Adj R-squared	=	0.3378
				Root MSE	=	8.6e+06

Republicans	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Millennial	1781.011	753.1661	2.36	0.046	44.20719 3517.815
_cons	3.99e+07	5193429	7.68	0.000	2.79e+07 5.19e+07


```
. corr Republicans Millennial
(obs=10)
```

	Republ~s	Millen~l
Republicans	1.0000	
Millennial	0.6414	1.0000

6. Millennials and Democratic Party.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	10
Model	8.3497e+14	1	8.3497e+14	F(1, 8)	=	7.86
Residual	8.4983e+14	8	1.0623e+14	Prob > F	=	0.0231
Total	1.6848e+15	9	1.8720e+14	R-squared	=	0.4956
				Adj R-squared	=	0.4325
				Root MSE	=	1.0e+07

Democrats	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Millennial	2516.321	897.5363	2.80	0.023	446.5989 4586.044
_cons	3.74e+07	6188928	6.04	0.000	2.31e+07 5.16e+07


```
. corr Democrats Millennial
(obs=10)
```

	Democr~s	Millen~l
Democrats	1.0000	
Millennial	0.7040	1.0000