Generational Politics

Each generation has a distinct historical experience that shapes its political perspective

• What are the differences among the political perspectives of older and younger generations?
• How are those differences shaped by the distinctive experiences of individual generations?
• How do the collective experiences of a generation shape how it envisions its future?
• How can we communicate those experiences across generations?
Cognitive research shows that memory works less like a VCR than a bedtime story, insofar as we create our memories from bits and pieces of remembered experiences combined with broader narratives about who we are, and were. The same areas of the brain that are involved with remembering the past are also involved in imagining the future. People with memory problems also have problems with predicting events.
Our memories are the stories we tell about our experiences.
Our memories are the **stories** we tell about our experiences.

Those stories are shaped by the **schema** we use to explain experience.
Our memories are the stories we tell about our experiences.

Those stories are shaped by the schema we use to explain experience.

Those schema shape our visions of the future.
Our memories are the **stories** we tell about our experiences. Those stories are shaped by the **schema** we use to explain experience.

Those schema also serve as **ideological presuppositions** and unconscious dispositions. Those schema shape our **visions** of the future.
What’s your ideology?

Remember . . . what an ideology is. [It] is a conceptual framework with the way people deal with reality. Everyone has one. You have to—to exist, you need an ideology.

Alan Greenspan in Congressional hearings in 2008 when asked about whether his free market ideology led him to emphasize deregulation in a way that led to the financial collapse of the time.
The Generations Defined

The Millennial Generation
Born: After 1980
Age of adults in 2014: 18 to 33*
Share of adult population: 27%
Share non-Hispanic white: 57%
Ind 50%; Dem 27%; Rep 17%

The Baby Boom Generation
Born: 1946 to 1964
Age in 2014: 50 to 68
Share of adult population: 32%
Share non-Hispanic white: 72%
Ind 37%; Dem 32%; Rep 25%

Generation X
Born: 1965 to 1980
Age in 2014: 34 to 49
Share of adult population: 27%
Share non-Hispanic white: 61%
Ind 39%; Dem 32%; Rep 21%

The Silent Generation
Born: 1928 to 1945
Age in 2014: 69 to 86
Share of adult population: 12%
Share non-Hispanic white: 79%
Dem 34%; Ind 32%; Rep 29%
Who is your president?
Which presidents shaped your coming of age?
With which presidents do you identify?
Which set your standard for president?
Presidential Legacies? How Generations Have Voted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you turned 18 under president ...</th>
<th>Your age in 2012</th>
<th>Your generation</th>
<th>Compared with the national average, your cohort was more likely to vote ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>94 96 98 00 02 04 06 08 10 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roosevelt</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>Greatest</td>
<td>D  D  D  D  D  D  D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truman</td>
<td>78-84</td>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>R  D  D  D  R  R  R  R  R  R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>70-77</td>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>R  D  R  R  R  R  R  R  R  R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy/Johnson</td>
<td>62-69</td>
<td>Boomer</td>
<td>D  D  R  R  R  R  R  R  R  R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixon</td>
<td>56-61</td>
<td>Boomer</td>
<td>R  D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford/Carter</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>Boomer</td>
<td>R  R  R  R  R  R  D  R  R  R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reagan/Bush</td>
<td>38-49</td>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>D  R  R  R  R  R  R  R  R  R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>30-37</td>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>D  R  D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush/Obama</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D  D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tan boxes represent years in which an age group’s vote was roughly equal to the national average. Data from some years not available for oldest and youngest generations due to small sample sizes. Based on likely voters in pre-election polls conducted in each election year. Your Generation shows where the majority of that age group is traditionally categorized (e.g., most people who turned 18 under Clinton are Gen X, though the very youngest are classified as Millennials).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
In 2012, Adults Who Turned 18 in Kennedy/Johnson Era Voted Less for Obama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you turned 18 under president ...</th>
<th>Your age in 2012</th>
<th>Romney</th>
<th>Obama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truman</td>
<td>78-84</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>70-77</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kennedy/Johnson</td>
<td>62-69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixon</td>
<td>56-61</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ford/Carter</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>30-37</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush/Obama</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the national average, your cohort was more likely to vote for...

(percentage-point difference)

Based on the difference between each age cohort and the national average in four pre-election surveys (Obama +3 percentage points among likely voters).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Millennials: Unmoored from Institutions

Percent who consider themselves political independents

Percent of adults in each generation who are religiously unaffiliated

* Age ranges are for 2014

Source: Data points represent totals based on all Pew Research surveys of the general public conducted in that calendar year.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Millennials Less Trusting of Others

% saying that, generally speaking, most people can be trusted

Question wording: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”

Source: General Social Survey data, 1987-2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Trust in Government Declines Across Generations

- Millennial
- Gen X
- Boomer
- Silent

Years: 97 99 01 03 05 07 09 11
Percent "Angry" With Government

- Millennial
- Gen X
- Boomer
- Silent

97 99 01 03 05 07 09 11

William Strauss and Neil Howe’s *Turnings in History*


- Silent generation entering young adulthood
- Boomers entering childhood
The Consciousness Revolution (2nd Turning, 1964–1984) began with urban riots and campus fury, swelled alongside Vietnam war protests and a rebellious “counterculture.” It gave rise to feminist, environmental, and black power movements—and to a steep rise in violent crime and family breakup. After the fury peaked with Watergate (in 1974), passions turned inward toward New Age lifestyles and spiritual rebirth. The mood expired during Reagan’s upbeat reelection campaign, as onetime hippies reached their yuppie chrysalis.

- Silent entering midlife
- Boomers entering young adulthood
- Xers entering childhood
The Long Boom & Culture Wars (Third Turning, 1984–2008) opened with triumphant “Morning in America” individualism; drifted toward celebrity scandal and a stock market boom; experienced a brief moment of “war on terror” unity; and then ended with yet another equity bubble. People felt optimistic about their personal lives, but pessimistic about the country. They worried about rising violence and incivility, widening inequality, and the splitting of the national consensus into competing “values” camps.

- Silent entering elderhood
- Boomers entering midlife
- Xers entering young adulthood
- Millennials entering childhood
The Global Financial Crisis (4th Turning, 2008-2029?) was recently catalyzed by the 2008 global financial meltdown—leading to the most severe global economic downturn since the Great Depression—and by the historic Presidential election of that same year. With public trust continuing to ebb, the regeneracy phase of this crisis (in which civic purpose begins strengthening) still seems years away, and the crisis climax is well over a decade distant. Most likely, this Fourth Turning will come to an end in the late 2020s, just as the rising Homeland Generation begins to embark on careers.

- Boomers entering elderhood
- Xers entering midlife
- Millennials entering young adulthood
- Homelanders entering childhood
Four Generations of American Women: Great Progress, Persistent Challenges
By Judith Warner, Emily Baxter, and Milia Fisher

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2015/05/12/112971/4-generations-of-american-women-great-progress-persistent-challenges
Tail-end Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial women moved into adulthood at times of much greater economic difficulty, far more constricted job choices, considerably higher basic living expenses for families, and an ambient sense of anxiety about the future. Generation X was the first generation of college grads to earn less than its immediate predecessors. Many Millennials came of age during the Great Recession and launched their careers at a time of enormous job scarcity. Even more heavily burdened with student-loan debt than were members of Generation X at the same age, they also are on track to be less well off than their parents.
Silent Generation: Born between 1928 and 1945

Exemplars: Gloria Steinem, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Maya Angelou

The mothers of second-wave feminism were born into a world in which many women—married or unmarried—could not access contraception or serve on juries and often needed a husband’s permission to obtain a credit card.

Silent Generation mothers spent fewer hours in paid work than today’s moms—eight hours per week, on average, in 1965 versus 21 hours in 2011. They also dedicated four fewer hours per week to taking care of their kids but spent 14 more hours per week on housework.

Only 11 percent of women in the labor force had a college degree.
Older women of this group came of age during the women’s liberation and Vietnam-era protests. They were professional pioneers and the first group to overtake men in college degrees.

In 1990, when Baby Boomer women were between ages 26 and 44:
- Women made up 45 percent of the labor force.
- Just more than one-quarter of working women had college degrees.
- Women were 17 percent of physicians and 22 percent of lawyers—up from less than 3 percent of lawyers in 1970.

The Baby Boomers were the first generation to care for their aging parents and children simultaneously. In 2013, 15 percent of people in their 40s and 50s were providing financial support to both an aging parent and a child.
Generation Xers: Born between 1965 and 1980

Exemplars: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Sheryl Sandberg, and Shonda Rhimes

• Generation Xers were raised to believe that girls could do anything and inherited a world shaped by profound post-1960s backlash. Older members of this cohort—like younger Baby Boomers—are more politically conservative than others in their generation.

• 46 percent grew up in households where both parents worked. The divorce rate in the United States peaked during their formative years.
• By the time the first Generation Xers finished college, women were earning more bachelor’s degrees than men. Women also began to earn more master’s degrees than men in the 1980s.

• Generation Xers are in their “peak family years,” and in a 2013 study, they reported higher levels of work-family interference than other age groups.

Exemplars: Lena Dunham, Beyoncé, and Emma Watson

• Trends toward intensive parenting and changes in technology mean young people entering adulthood are much closer with their parents: In 2013, 67% of mothers and 51% of fathers were in daily contact with their grown child—ages 18 to 29.

• The oldest Millennials are 34 years old and many are parents, though they are marrying and having children later than older generations. The mean age for first-time mothers was 26 in 2013, compared with 21.4 in 1970. In 2013, the median age at first marriage was 26.6 for women and 29 for men, up from 20.8 for women and 23.2 for men in 1970.

• Millennial women are more aggressive about asking for raises and promotions than women of other generations.
Constructive Memory and Generational Knowledge

• Insofar as remembering the past is vital to imagining the future, how can we transmit the lessons learned across generations?
• Is that even possible?
• What lessons have we learned from our generation’s experiences?
• How can we convey them?
How do these differences in experience shape the political perspectives of these four generations?

https://www.2tout2rien.fr/un-fils-fait-de-lart-avec-sa-mere-de-91-ans-pour-la-faire-sentir-a-nouveau-jeune
Are you experienced? Where were you in 1968? How was your experience shaped by your age, gender, ethnicity and place?
Was your consciousness raised?

"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern."

William Blake
How have such experiences shaped your sense of self, your historical consciousness and your politics?
Do you remember you?
How do you remember the sixties, or another decade in which you came of age? Do you remember sights, smells, the feel of places—and the power of the ideas with which you identified?
Can you place yourself in a scene such as this?
How do such memories anchor your sense of your past, and your perspective on the present?
In the sixties we understood the politics of our experience as integral to the politics of the time. How do we understand such continuities in other decades? Are we simply spectators of history?
Are we confined to a bifocal perspective on the politics of then and now?

How can we develop a progressive perspective that connects then and now, here and there, and the politics of our daily experience and the politics of our time?
How do we place others in our memories?
How do you classify yourself?
Do you know anyone in this picture?
Think of this ladder, to the right, as representing where people stand in your country. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off—those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off. Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

- Where did you start on the ladder?
- Have you climbed up?
- When and how?
What’s your class experience, and how has it shaped your class consciousness?

• Have you ever lived for at least a year in an American neighborhood in which most of your neighbors did not have college degrees?
• Did you grow up in a family in which the chief breadwinner was not in a managerial position or a high-prestige profession?
• Have you ever lived for at least a year in a community with fewer than 50,000 that is not part of a metropolitan area?
• Have you ever walked on a factory floor?
• Have you held a job that caused you to hurt at the end of the day?
• Have you ever had a close friend who was an evangelical Christian?
• Do you now have a close friend with whom you politically disagree?
• Do you know what military ranks are denoted by these five insignia?
How much of our lives, good and bad, should we credit to our personal decisions, and how much is just the inheritance of our culture, our families, and our parents who have failed their children? How much is Mom’s life her own fault? Where does blame stop and sympathy begin?

A barely suppressed contempt has characterized much of the commentary about white woe. Poor white Americans’ current crisis shouldn’t have caught the rest of the country as off guard as it has.

- Rates of out-of-wedlock births and male joblessness rising sharply.
- Surge in opiate addiction among white Americans
- Rising mortality rates (including by suicide) among middle-aged
For poor whites, the most painful comparison is not with supposedly ascendant minorities but with the fortunes of their own parents.

- The upper echelon has increasingly sought comfort in prosperous insularity, consolidating in oversaturated enclaves.
- The clustering is intensifying within regions, too.
- So why are white Americans in downwardly mobile areas feeling a despair that appears to be driving stark increases in substance abuse and suicide?
- Talk with those still sticking it out, the body-shop worker and the dollar-store clerk and the unemployed miner, and the fatalism is clear.
- The demoralizing effect of decay enveloping the place you live cannot be underestimated. And the bitterness—the “primal scorn”—that Donald Trump has tapped into among white Americans in struggling areas is aimed not just at those of foreign extraction. It is directed toward fellow countrymen who have become foreigners of a different sort, looking down on the natives, if they bother to look at all.
The country is becoming underclass-laden, illiterate, promiscuous, and just plain fat. A recent report by the Labor and Commerce departments showed constant-dollar median income declining from 1972 to 1990 by 23 percent for men with less than a high-school education, and by 5 percent for women from the same group. The well educated did much better. There is a spirited debate over who's responsible for the widening gap between the have and the have-nots, but the fact is that the number of have-nots is growing. "Trash gets all the working poor who fall out of the middle class—the middle-class boys gone bad," notes Dorothy Allison, author of the novel Bastard out of Carolina and the short-story collection Trash. "It's the difference between thinking your life is hopeless and knowing it is."
Elizabeth Eckford and Hazel Bryan: the story behind the photograph that shamed America

Little Rock Arkansas  September 4, 1957

Elizabeth and Hazel by David Margolick
So who is your president?
un fils fait de l’art avec sa mère de 91 ans pour la faire sentir à nouveau jeune

Tony Luciani
July 2016
Do you engage in cross-generational dialogues?
## Cross-Generational Communication

### Generational Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Traditionalists</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Values</strong></td>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Realism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conforming</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Skepticism</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
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<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Team orientation</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>Personal gratification</td>
<td>Fun and informality</td>
<td>Extreme fun</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Disintegrating</td>
<td>Latch-key kids</td>
<td>Merged families</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>A dream</td>
<td>A birthright</td>
<td>A way to get there</td>
<td>An incredible expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Media</strong></td>
<td>Rotary phones</td>
<td>Touch-tone phones</td>
<td>Cell phones</td>
<td>Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-on-one</td>
<td>Call me anytime</td>
<td>Call me only at work</td>
<td>Mobile devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write a memo</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Texting and email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-Generational Communication

Effective Cross-Generational Communication Strategies:

Understand the generational motives.

- Xers can discuss an issue without having to be right.
- Boomers tend to be the “my way or the highway” type.
- Traditionalists see things in black and white with ethics being first and foremost.
- Millennials look for the greater good, almost like “all for one and one for all.”

http://www.slideshare.net/JohnTGilioJr/communicating-across-differences-49141580
The political challenges we face are not unprecedented, and our collective experiences can help us better respond to them.
America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.

Abraham Lincoln