

Ipsos MORI Thinks **Millennial Myths and Realities** —— Education, Work and Social Attitudes

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调查 Survey



观点 POV



新闻 News

Education

The Millennials are the brainiest, best-educated generation ever” The Economist Millennials are the most educated generation

MYTH and REALITY

This is the case in some countries, but not for all countries where the claim is made.

There are a number of articles that claim that Millennials are on track to be the best educated generation,⁴⁹ but what is not often picked up is that this is a global picture, driven mainly by the explosion of education in emerging markets. The picture in established economies is sometimes less clear cut.

In most emerging economies, increasing education levels go without saying, as access for those in older generations to secondary – let alone tertiary – education was frequently very limited, even in the relatively recent past. China is typical here; in 1999 6.4% of young people were studying at a tertiary level, yet this had risen to 21.6% in 2006.⁵⁰ In Egypt the proportion of the population who attended university in 1970 stood at 2.4%, yet by 2010 this figure had reached 11%, and it is projected to reach 31% by 2050.

Increased educational levels are also a reality in some established markets too. Britain is a good example; in 2014 when Millennials were aged 18-34, three in ten (29%) already held a degree-level qualification. When Generation X were at a comparable age (the year 2000), only 24% held a degree. Assuming Millennials follow a similar trajectory to Generation X (34% of whom held a degree by 2014), they will reach a point where around four in ten Millennials will hold a degree – making them the most highly educated generation we’ve seen.

Another country where this pattern is a reality is Germany: in 2014 one quarter of Millennials held a degree, six percentage points higher than Generation X at a comparable point.

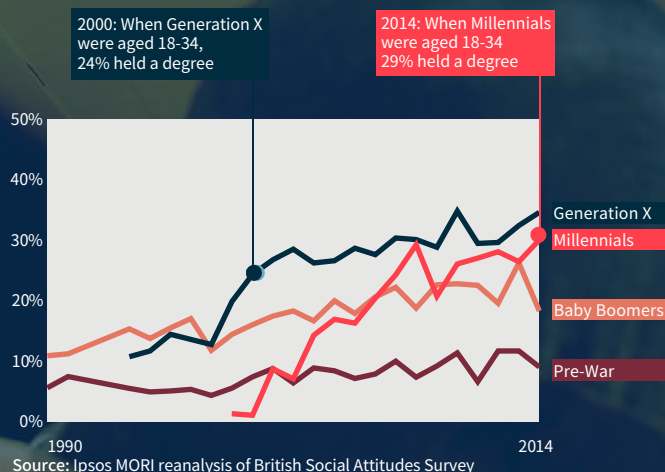
Yet generational trajectories in the US are much shallower. This is somewhat surprising from a country long considered a leader in terms of the proportion of the population with tertiary education – the proportion of Millennials with an undergraduate degree (or higher) has risen at the same rate as it did amongst Generation X. This level is now lower than the Britain or Germany (see charts opposite).

However, in 2014 some Millennials would have been in higher education but not yet finished their degrees. Pew Research Center predicts that although not currently ahead of Generation X and Baby Boomers, Millennials, particularly Millennial women, are on track to reach record educational attainment. Once the youngest Millennials have finished their degrees, we might expect to see US Millennials breaking the same records as their European counterparts.

The proportion on us millennials with an undergraduate degree (or higher) has risen at the same rate as it did amongst generation X

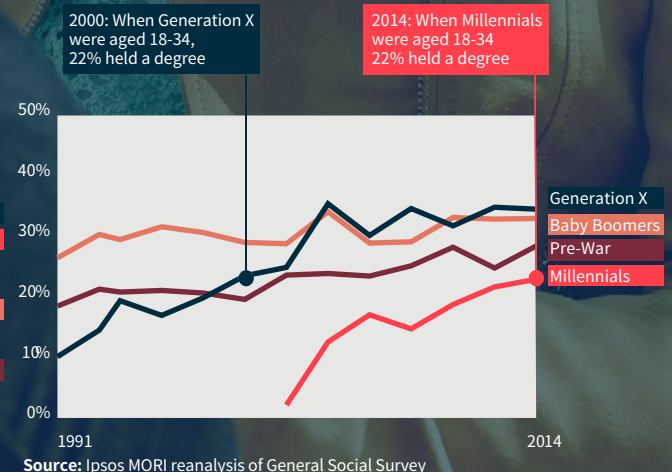
MILLENNIALS IN BRITAIN WILL BE THE BIGGEST GROUP OF DEGREE-HOLDERS

% who hold a degree



WHEREAS IN THE US THEY ARE FOLLOWING GENERATION X'S LEAD

% who hold a degree



Implications

The implications of this expansion of degree level educated people within a cohort are also very significant. Most clearly and importantly, it will impact on the cohort's employment prospects. Combined with the economic recession, Millennial talent and years of education are at risk of being wasted – the stalling of the job market has impacted those taking the first steps on the career ladder the most. Competition is fierce and younger people have lost out.

The cost of longer-term education can also become a burden. Education has become more expensive and Millennial students leave university with greater debts than generations before them. Analysis of US government data by the Pew Research Center shows that households with a young, college-educated adult with student debt will have a median net worth (\$8,700) seven times less than a young, college-educated adult with no student debt obligations (\$64,700). In fact, a young household with no college education and no student debt will have a typical net worth greater than a college-educated household with student debt.

Combined with the increased cost of housing, Millennials' finances are squeezed more than ever and this struggle contributes to the delayed adulthood seen throughout this report.

At the same time, with a greater investment in education the type of work sought will shift. Despite ever-increasing numbers of graduates – both home-grown and immigrant – there are still questions around the extent to which these countries will be able to support this increase with meaningful work. The talk is not of a simple 'shortage' so much as a 'mismatch' of skills, with each country's graduate profile not necessarily aligning with the needs of its economy. For instance, recent reports from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) show that with the sole exception of Finland, every EU Member State has a critical shortage of ICT-trained professionals, a pattern mirrored across a number of technical skills.

Given the very difficult economic context in many established economies, this increase in education level raises a very clear possibility of unmet expectations. As we'll see in the next section, some of the most misleading and lazy research on Millennials is on how entitled and different they are in the workplace (they're not). But still, a more general sense of frustration and betrayal is a real threat.

But there are other important impacts from this significant shift in higher education participation in a number of countries, particularly on broader social attitudes. Across a range of issues, from race to gender roles, to homosexuality and immigration, graduates tend to have more tolerant and open attitudes compared with non-graduates. This will be partly due to differences in who self-selects into higher education and partly an impact from the education itself. But it has also been shown that the action of (often) leaving home to mix with a more diverse set of people shifts views in important ways. This does not necessarily point to a more unified or tolerant future, as still only a minority of the global population will be graduates. Instead, it may mean a greater distinction and disconnect between two large sections of the population in many countries.

Work

"Millennials are spoilt, full of themselves, averse to hard work and expect 'success on a plate', so what does that mean for society?" Daily Mail

Work is perhaps the worst area for myths and lazy assumptions about Millennials. A whole industry has grown up around making a lot out of small differences in attitudes that can often be explained purely by Millennials being younger (life cycle effects) or by the changing nature of work for everyone (period effects), rather than any generational shift that means employers need to re-think how they approach being a good employer. The myths come from all angles – some fuelled by wider-generalisations about 'millennial' character traits (entitled, lazy and so on), some by their levels of education and some by their economic situation. It's a shame that so much is poorly defined and evidenced, as it obscures some important differences.

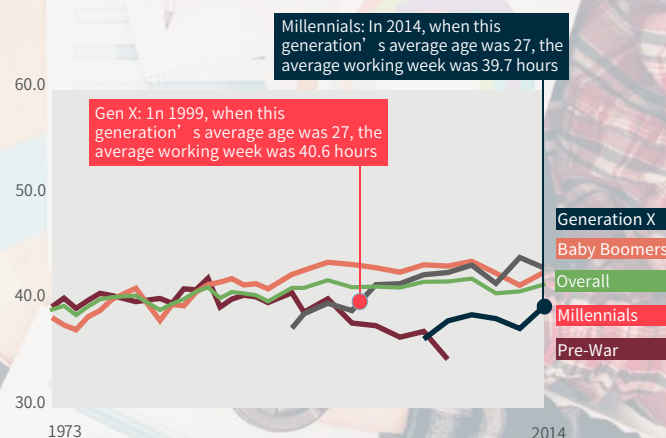
Millennials are lazy workers

MYTH

A common characterisation of the Millennial generation is one of indolence; work-shy 'clock punchers' 59 offering the bare minimum yet still expecting the maximum return.60 However, analysis of the average hours worked by different generations in Britain and US shows little difference.

US MILLENNIALS WORK SLIGHTLY FEWER HOURS PER WEEK THAN GENERATION X AT EQUIVALENT POINT

Mean hours worked in a week



In 2014, US Millennials' working week was slightly shorter than average (39.7 hours against an average of 41.8), whilst in Britain, it was actually slightly longer (39.3 versus 37.8 overall in Britain).

These patterns will be slightly tied up in the seniority of roles, so it's more useful to compare generations at similar stages in their working lives. Comparing Millennials with Generation X at the same average age, shows a slight reduction in overall hours worked; in 2014 Millennials in the US worked 54 minutes per week (around 10 minutes per day) less than Generation X did at a comparable age, and in Britain, Millennials' working week was 66 minutes shorter (or 13 minutes per day).

In Germany, there is virtually no difference in hours worked, between any of the generations.

This stereotype is one of the more damaging ones as it belies two key misconceptions about effort and working practices, ignoring period effects in how the world of work has changed for all generations:

REALITY

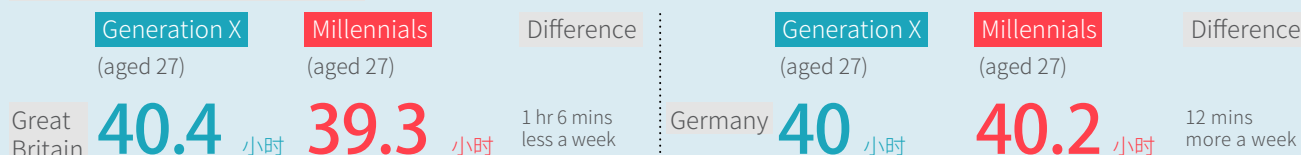
The number of hours worked per week has reduced drastically over time, reflecting differing types of employment and massive increases in productivity. In the early industrialising countries for which we have long-term figures, the average length of the working week has dropped hugely: for instance, the average working week in France in 1870 was 66.1 hours, but by 2000 this had fallen to 37.5 hours a week. So those Baby Boomers and Generation Xers decrying the Millennial work ethic would be just as harshly criticised by previous generations.

REALITY

Working longer hours is not related to improved productivity. In fact, the relationship is the reverse – the shorter the working week, the more productive our time at work is. Part of this relates to the type of work people do in different countries, but it is also reflective of the level of investment in technology and employees. Here Germany is a leader; the average annual hours worked per worker in 2016 was 1,376.41 hours, with a return of US\$65 (in output, using Purchasing Power Parity-adjusted dollars) per hour. In Greece by contrast, the average worker toils for 2,065 annual hours, generating a return of US\$44 in productivity per hour.

ALSO A SLIGHTLY SHORTER WORKING WEEK FOR MILLENNIALS IN BRITAIN – NO DIFFERENCE IN GERMANY

Mean hours worked in a week



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of British Social Attitudes Survey and ALLBUS

Millennials job-hop more

MYTH

Reporting on a LinkedIn study last year suggested that the average Millennial would change job four times by age 32, meaning an average job tenure of 2.5 years during a Millennial's first decade out of university. Around the same time, Gallup released a poll suggesting that Millennials were the most likely generation to switch jobs, with 60% "open to a new job opportunity".

Both reports have their limitations – the LinkedIn study used their own data, focusing on a very specific segment of the overall jobs market, while the Gallup poll does not look back to see if Generation X were similarly minded when they were younger.

But the idea that Millennials are chopping and changing jobs at an unprecedented rate isn't borne out by the evidence. Figures from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the median time American young people are employed at an individual employer has not changed notably between 1983 and 2014 – for instance, median job tenure amongst 25-34 year olds was 3.5 years in 1983, and is now 3.0.

While this is clearly slightly shorter, it only reflects a general change in the job market that is reflected in other generations. In fact, much greater differences can be observed among older generations: the median job tenure for 55-64 year olds was 3.2 years shorter in 2014 than in 1983.

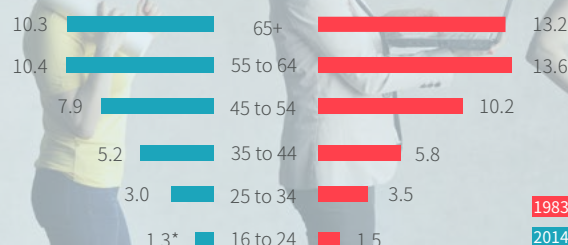
Indeed, in the UK we can see the exact opposite of the myth; Millennials are staying longer in jobs than older generations did

when they were that age, according to new analysis by the Resolution Foundation. At age 30, those born in the early 1980s (the oldest Millennials) are more likely to have stayed with one employer for five years or more than those born in the early 1970s. The difference (47% versus 43%) is small but notable – especially in a time in the UK where loyalty to one employer is not rewarded in salary increases as well as it was in the past.

The widespread talk of flighty Millennials and the growing 'gig economy' is misleading – it's dwarfed by the counter-trend that, in tough economic times, people try to hang on to the jobs they have.

IT'S THE OLDER GENERATIONS WHO ARE JOB-HOPPING MORE THAN PREVIOUSLY – US

Median years of tenure with current employer



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics

* Figure is for 20-24 age group

THE MEDIAN TIME AMERICAN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED AT AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYER HAS NOT CHANGED NOTABLY BETWEEN 1983 AND 2014

Millennials are not motivated to work

MYTH in stated attitudes at least.

There has been a widespread and growing narrative accusing the Millennial generation of having an ‘anti-work attitude’, working only their contracted hours and expecting their employers to bend over backwards to accommodate their outside interests in microbreweries, selvedge denim and terraria. But the suggestion that Millennials are less motivated at work also seems to be untrue.

The Edenred Ipsos Barometer of workplaces (a survey of employees of all ages in 15 countries) shows that those aged under 30 across a number of countries are more likely than older people to say their enthusiasm for their work is increasing.

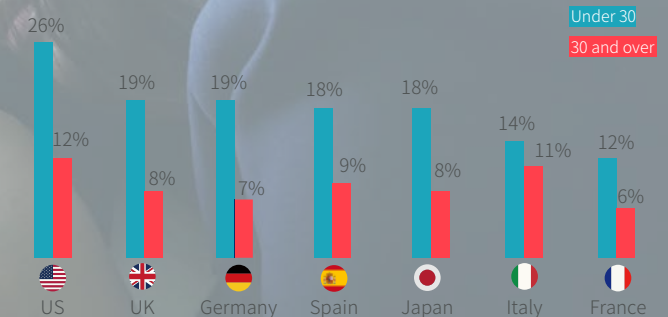
This is highly likely to be a life cycle effect: ten years ago, an earlier wave of the survey found exactly the same relationship, with the youngest age group having the highest levels of increasing enthusiasm and a similar gap between them and older age groups.

The current generation of young people seem just as enthusiastic as previous generations of young, and the presumption that this is different now is dangerous, as it lets employers off the hook by blaming the characteristics of the generation rather than the work provided.

THE CURRENT GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE SEEM JUST AS ENTHUSIASTIC AS PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF YOUNG

YOUNGER WORKERS HAVE GREATER MOTIVATION

% say have increasing motivation at work



Source: Edenred Ipsos Barometer 2016

Millennials: A new generation of employees, a new set of expectations

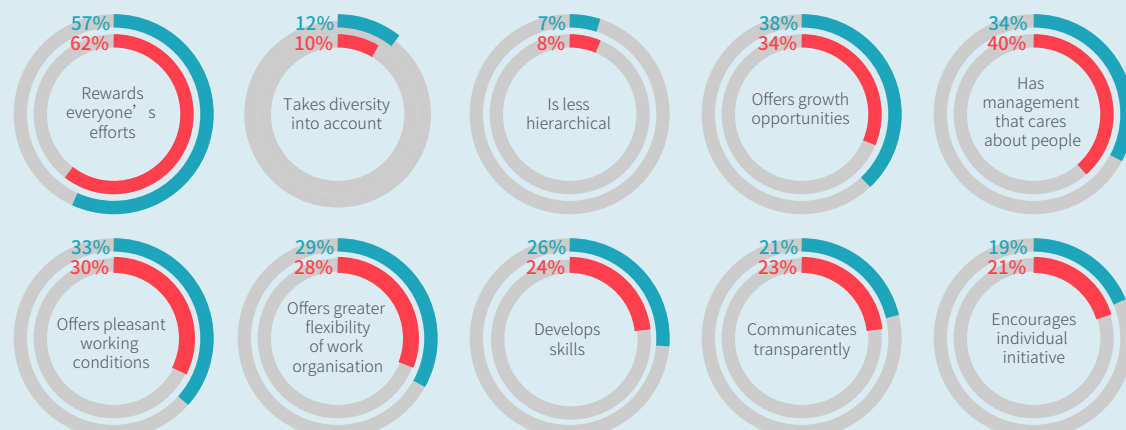
PROBABLY MYTH

There is no shortage of publications warning employers of the challenges the Millennial generation will supposedly bring to the workplace: for PWC, Millennials are “reshaping the workplace” by avoiding face-to-face contact; Deloitte have warned of the “loyalty challenge” posed by rootless Millennial employees; ‘CEO coach’ Steve Tappin avers that “if CEOs try and over-control in the old way then Millennials will walk”.

However, the truth is less exciting. While there may be some differences in emphasis, overall Millennials seem to want more or less the same sort of things from employers as older workers – a finding echoed in a wide range of more robust US studies. As importantly, the differences we do see are a reflection of their relative youth, and similar to previous generations of young people.

MILLENNIALS WANT THE SAME THINGS FROM THEIR EMPLOYER AS OLDER WORKERS

Main qualities of an ideal company



Source: Edenred Ipsos Barometer 2016

Implications

The assertion that Millennials are a new breed, presenting employers with new challenges – and usually the sole focus is on challenges – has spawned an industry whose lifeblood appears to be offering listicles of the best way to ‘manage Millennials’. However, any serious study in the area suggests that there are very limited differences in attitude, motivation and loyalty in the workplace between Millennials and the rest of us. The differences that do exist can be more clearly assigned to life stage – Millennials are young, and they behave like all young people in work did before them.

On the face of it, ‘Millennials aren’t so different after all’ may feel like a slightly disappointing finding (and may explain why we’re so keen to find differences in the first place), but it does present clear implications for employers of all shapes and sizes.

The key point is that Millennials don’t need to be treated differently to previous generations at the same stage in their careers. They are looking for the same things – reward for their efforts, the opportunity for personal growth, and management that cares about staff – and are just as motivated to work as Generation X were at the same point.

The implication for employers is that they shouldn’t use damaging ‘work-shy’ stereotypes to hide bad practice. If a firm is experiencing high churn in their junior paygrades (where, currently, Millennials are concentrated) it is much more likely to be due to broader issues. Employers should review their own practice, rather than looking to blame Millennials. At the end of the day, there’s no substitute for simply being a good employer.



Social Attitudes

“The Liberal Millennial Revolution: it’s here, it’s coherent and it’s doomed.” The Atlantic, 2016

Millennials are more socially liberal than other generations

MOSTLY MYTH

Millennials are not massively different from other cohorts on many established social causes, although there are some exceptions on some issues and in some countries.

Gender roles

There is a remarkable lack of questions enabling cross-country comparison on attitudes towards gender roles. The data that exists shows a clear period effect whereby all generations have become more liberal – and that the real generational divide on these topics is between those in the Pre-War Generation (born 1944 and earlier) and all three younger generations.

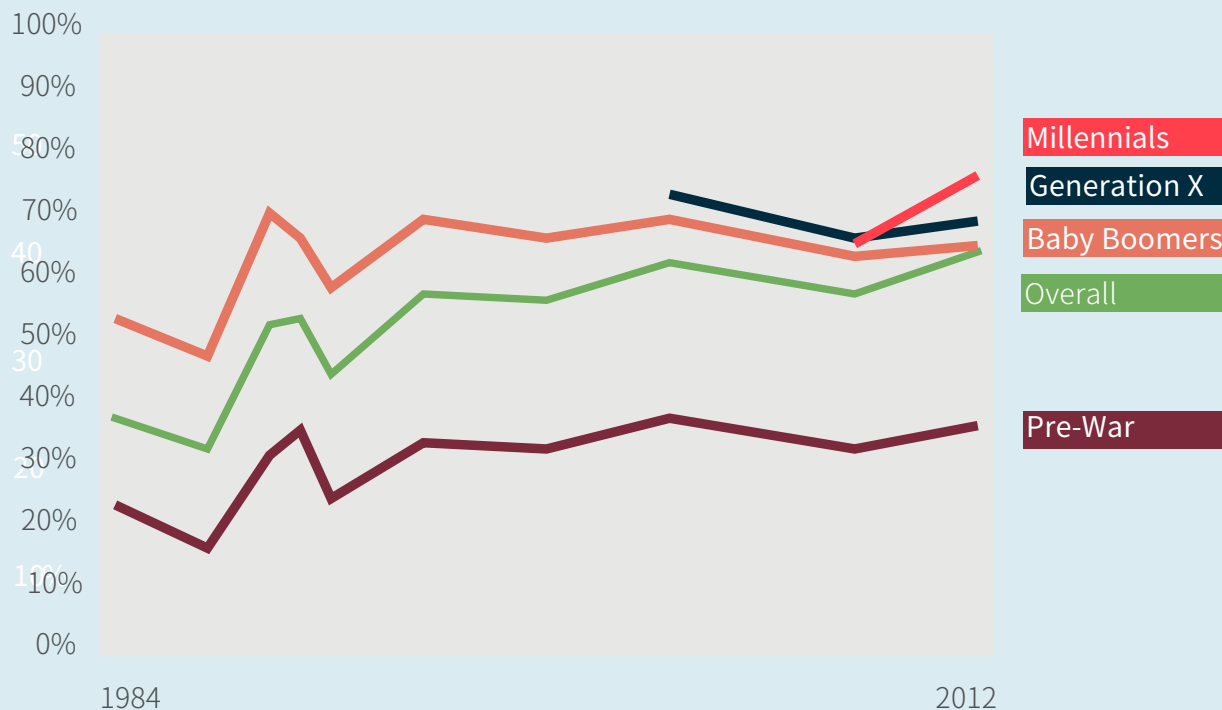
In Britain, the British Social Attitudes Survey asked whether participants agreed with traditional gender roles, such as whether or not it is a husband’s job to earn money, while the wife stays at home to look after the family. Since the early noughties, the generations have become much closer in sentiment, with the notable exception of the Pre-War generation. Currently Millennials are the group most likely to disagree that it is the husband’s job to earn money while the wife stays at home (77%), but they are not very far from the sentiment of Generation X and Baby Boomers (see chart overleaf).



THE REAL GENERATIONAL DIVIDE ON GENDER ROLES IS BETWEEN PRE-WAR AND THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS – GB

% disagree a husband's job is to earn money;

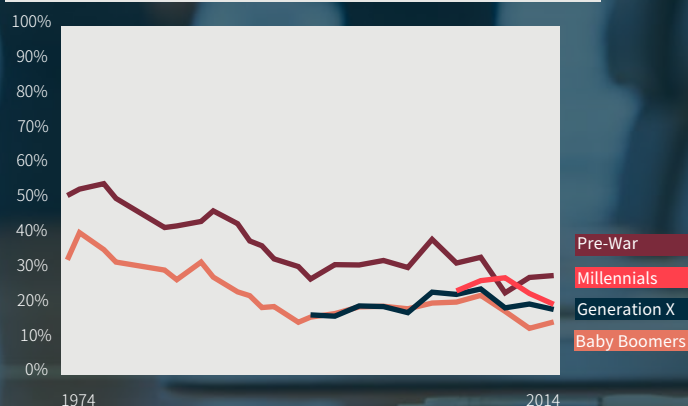
a wife's job is to look after the home and family



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of British Social Attitudes Survey

MILLENNIALS ARE NOT THE MOST EGALITARIAN ABOUT WOMEN IN POLITICS IN THE US

% agree most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women



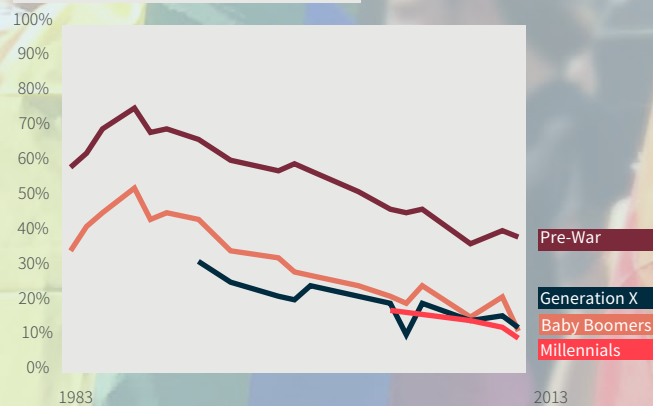
In America, the General Social Survey has asked participants whether or not they believe that “most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women” since the early seventies. Although a slightly odd question, and one perhaps reflecting views on politics as much as gender roles, over this period we have seen a steady decrease in agreement with the statement. However, since the nineties this has halted, with a surprisingly substantial minority in agreement with this statement even now. The latest data, from 2014, shows that 20% of Millennials believe this, along with 15% of Baby Boomers, 19% of Generation Xers, and 29% of those born pre-1945. On this measure Millennials do not appear to be more equality-focused than any other generation; indeed it appears that on this measure it is the Baby Boomers (Hillary Clinton's generation) who are most egalitarian. Yet, as with Britain, the real generational divide is between the Pre-War generation and everyone else (see chart opposite).

Attitudes to homosexuality

Across three countries (the US, Great Britain and Germany), there remain differing levels of acceptance of homosexual relations. In the US, where there are lower levels of tolerance generally,

ALL GENERATIONS AFTER PRE-WAR ARE SIMILARLY ACCEPTING OF HOMOSEXUALITY – GB

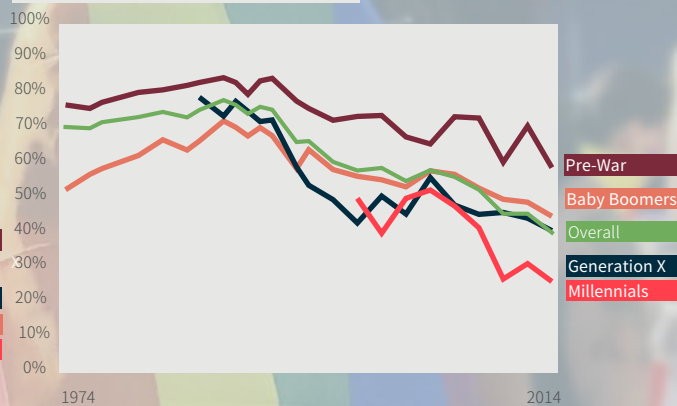
% thinking sexual relations between two adults of the same sex always wrong



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of British Social Attitudes Survey

BUT IN THE US, MILLENNIALS NOTABLY MORE TOLERANT OF HOMOSEXUALITY THAN OTHER GENERATIONS

% thinking sexual relations between two adults of the same sex always wrong



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of General Social Survey

Millennials stand out as more progressive, but in Britain and Germany, Millennial views on homosexuality are close to both the Baby Boomer cohort and Generation X.

In Britain, there has been a clear cultural shift towards greater acceptance of sexual relationships between two adults of the same sex across all generations. The Pre-War generation again stand out, with 39% considering homosexual relations as “always wrong” in 2013, whereas only about one in ten of the younger generations have the same view. We can see how influential period effects are on these views in Britain, with all cohorts’ views becoming less accepting during the late eighties, when AIDS was commonly linked with homosexuality in the media, but then becoming steadily more accepting since.

However, as with gender roles, the overall level of acceptance of homosexuality, and the generational pattern, is very different in the US. The same general trend of greater acceptance since the late eighties can be observed, but still 40% of Americans think same-sex relations are always wrong. In the US Millennials do stand out as being more liberal: a quarter (26%) considered homosexual relations between two adults of the same sex to be “always wrong” in 2014.

LEVELS OF ACCEPTANCE OF HOMOSEXUALITY VARY WIDELY WORLDWIDE

% agree gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own lives as they wish

Millennials - % agree their own lives as they wish	Overall score	Millennial difference
Spain 93%	90%	+3 ▲
GB 91%	87%	+4 ▲
Mexico 89%	84%	+5 ▲
Canada 87%	87%	0 ●
Germany 85%	88%	-3 ▼
Belgium 85%	87%	-2 ▼
Argentina 85%	83%	+2 ▲
Sweden 84%	88%	-4 ▼
US 84%	82%	+2 ▲
France 80%	82%	-2 ▼
Australia 80%	81%	-1 ▼
Italy 80%	81%	-1 ▼
S Africa 78%	79%	-1 ▼
India 78%	74%	+4 ▲
Brazil 75%	77%	-2 ▼
S Korea 71%	64%	+7 ▲
Poland 63%	68%	-5 ▼
Japan 62%	61%	+1 ▲
Peru 59%	60%	-1 ▼
Turkey 56%	58%	-2 ▼
Russia 39%	37%	+2 ▲
Indonesia 30%	24%	+6 ▲

Source: Ipsos Global Trends survey 2017

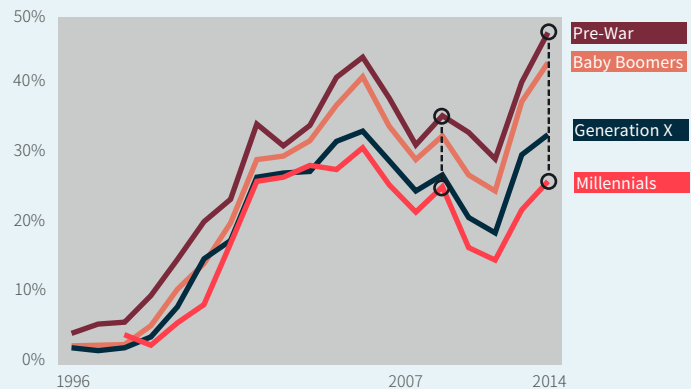
Base: 17,180 adults aged 16-64 in 22 countries ept-Oct 2016

But there is even greater variation in views if we compare levels of acceptance worldwide. The importance of national context can be seen in the latest wave of the Ipsos Global Trends survey. In this study, participants were asked whether or not they agreed that “gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish”. Across established economies – Germany, Britain and the US, as well as Spain, Sweden and Canada – views are strongly in favour of this sentiment.

In some emerging economies views are very different, especially Turkey, Russia and Indonesia. Millennials in these countries are often more liberal – 30% of Indonesian Millennials agree with this statement, compared with 15% of Baby Boomers – but compared to Germany, Britain or the US this is a much less accepting Millennial generation.

GENERATIONS HAVE DIVERGED IN THEIR VIEWS ON THE SALIENCE OF IMMIGRATION SINCE THE 2010 ELECTION – GB

% race relations/immigration the most important issue/
important issues facing Britain today



Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

Immigration

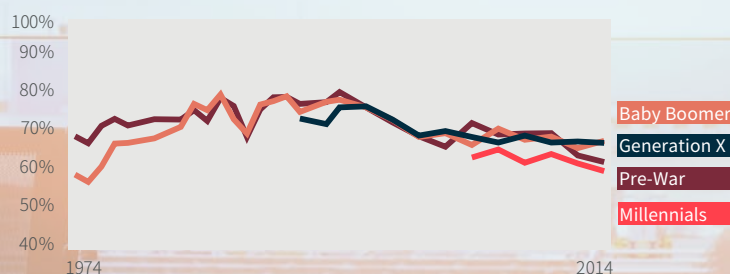
Attitudes towards immigration are one of the most researched areas of public policy. Over the last 20 years the issue has increased in saliency as net migration has increased sharply across Europe in particular. For example, in Britain, there was a surge in concern about immigration as a national issue in the early 2000s, from less than 5% considering it the most important issue to up to a third in 2014.

But there is also a growing generational divide in attitudes, with older generations much more concerned about immigration. A quarter (26%) of Millennials place immigration as an important issue compared to a third of Generation X (33%), 43% of Baby Boomers and nearly half (48%) of the Pre-War generation. This divide has become much sharper – in 2010, the difference between Millennial and Pre-War concern about immigration was ten percentage points, but by 2014, it had doubled to over 20 points.

This Millennial tolerance towards immigration will in part be connected to their greater levels of connectedness – through technology, but also through higher proportions mixing with immigrants in their daily lives, given their greater urban concentration and the increase in tertiary education.

MILLENNIALS SLIGHTLY LESS LIKELY TO SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE US

% favour the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of General Social Survey

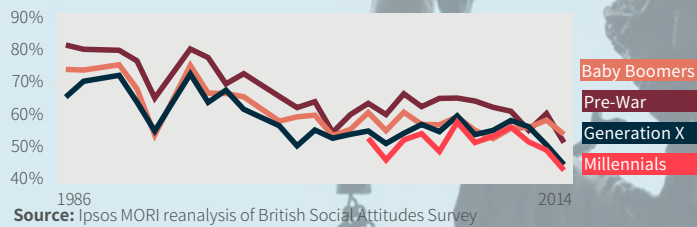
Death penalty

Views on the death penalty are often taken as a touchstone for liberal values, and have been strongly linked to other political outcomes, for example, levels of support for Britain leaving the EU.¹⁴⁵ Few long-running survey series ask a question directly on capital punishment, and the terminology used also differs, but in Britain and the US we are able to see how attitudes have shifted over time, which shows the pre-eminence of period effects over generational views.

In the US, a clear majority of all generations favour the death penalty for “persons convicted of murder”. Millennials have always been slightly less likely to think this, with 60% in 2014 backing this statement, although their views are not so different to the Pre-War generation (62%), nor Generation X or Baby Boomers (both 67%). The strongest trend at work here is a gentle decline in support amongst all generations, from a high in the early nineties, when 77% of Generation X – then the least supportive cohort – backed capital punishment (see chart).

THE DECLINE IN SUPPORT FOR THE DEATH PENALTY IN BRITAIN HAS BEEN SIMILAR ACROSS GENERATIONS

% agree for some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence



The British context tells a different story: there has been a marked decline in support for the death penalty since 1986, and 2014 marked the first year where the death penalty no longer commanded majority support (but only just, at 48%). The data also shows a mild generational effect: a majority of Baby Boomer and Pre-War participants (53% and 51%) are supportive, whilst support amongst Generation X and Millennials has fallen below the symbolic 50% mark (45% and 43% respectively). This divide has only existed since 2012; prior to this point support amongst all generations was following a very similar trajectory.

A snapshot from Ipsos' Global Trends survey reinforces the findings above for both the US and Great Britain. In the other countries, there is a real mix of opinions, although typically Millennials are closely aligned with overall national opinion. Belgium stands out, where Millennials are eleven percentage points less supportive of the death penalty than the wider public.

MILLENNIALS ARE MOSTLY ALIGNED TO THE NATIONAL SENTIMENT ON THE DEATH PENALTY

% supporting the death penalty for the most serious crimes

Millennials - % agree		Overall score	Millennial difference
Indonesia	88%	86%	+2 ▲
India	81%	81%	0 ●
Mexico	79%	65%	+14 ▲
S Africa	74%	76%	-2 ▼
Peru	72%	77%	-5 ▼
US	71%	74%	-3 ▼
S Korea	71%	69%	+2 ▲
Brazil	69%	68%	+1 ▲
Turkey	67%	62%	+5 ▲
Russia	66%	70%	-4 ▼
Poland	65%	66%	-1 ▼
Japan	63%	67%	-4 ▼
Argentina	62%	56%	+6 ▲
France	61%	62%	-1 ▼
Australia	57%	58%	-1 ▼
Canada	52%	55%	-3 ▼
Belgium	46%	57%	-11 ▼
GB	45%	47%	-2 ▼
Italy	44%	45%	-1 ▼
Spain	41%	38%	+3 ▲
Germany	40%	38%	+2 ▲
Sweden	38%	34%	+4 ▲

Source: Ipsos Global Trends survey 2017
Base: 17,180 adults aged 16-64 in 22 countries Sept-Oct 2016

American Millennials will end the gun control debate

MYTH

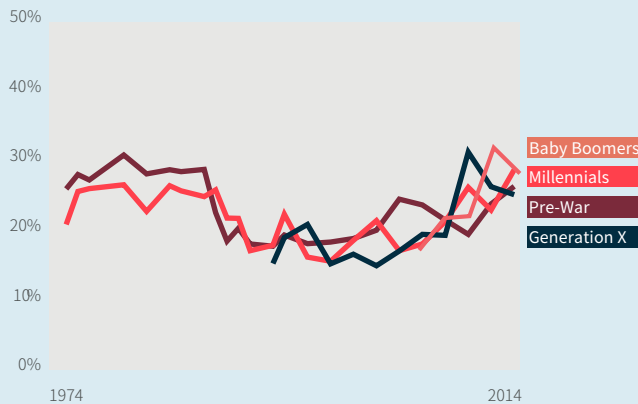
MYTHA huge number of column inches have been committed to defining Millennials as either 'pro' 146 or 'anti-gun' 147 in America. Where the attitudes of this large group of relatively young people fall is important to both sides of the gun control debate, as it could offer a sense of where this perennial battleground might go in the future. But the reality is that the attitudes and behaviour of US Millennials do not seem to herald a change in the status quo.

As can be seen in the graph opposite, Millennials are just as likely to support gun rights as other generations. Currently, 28% of Millennials say they would oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before they could buy a gun. The same level of opposition can be seen in the other generations. The fact that this question shows a large majority of all generations in favour of background checks for gun purchases means that it has been criticised from some corners of the debate on gun control in America – but the core take-out for our purpose of looking at what is truly different between generations seems clear: Millennials' views on gun control are similar to the views of older cohorts.

A slightly different pattern is seen in actual gun ownership however. In 2014 only a quarter (26%) of Millennials own a gun, which is about the same as the proportion of Generation Xers (28%). The real divide here is between these younger generations on the one hand, and Baby Boomers and the Pre-War Generation on the other, who remain much more likely to own a gun, and appear to have been that way since the seventies.

MILLENNIALS JUST AS LIKELY TO SUPPORT GUN RIGHTS AS OTHER GENERATIONS IN THE US

% oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he/she could buy a gun

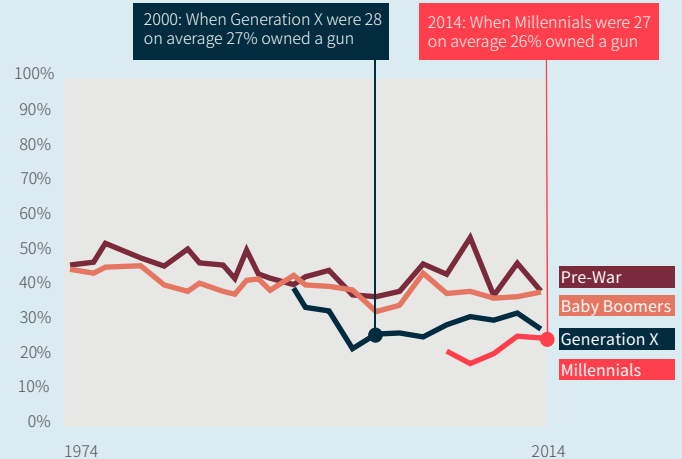


Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of General Social Survey

The pattern of gun ownership is also flat amongst these younger generations – with no sign that Millennials or Generation X are choosing to give up (or take up) their guns as they grow older. Almost the same proportion of Generation X (27%) said they had a firearm in their home when they were about the same age as Millennials now (26%).

NO REAL GENERATIONAL DECLINE IN GUN OWNERSHIP – US

% have a gun or revolver in home/garage



Source: Ipsos MORI reanalysis of General Social Survey

Looking to the future, this suggests a pretty slow evolution of the relationship between America and guns. Attitudes towards the control of firearms appear to be fairly constant and although ownership of guns has declined since the Baby Boomer generation, there has not been a significant reduction in ownership rates since Generation X.

Implications

A great deal has been written about the liberal outlook of the Millennial generation. But the reality is that, as a generation, they are often not that different from preceding cohorts on a number of the commonly cited liberal causes.

Instead, two different patterns stand out. First, that changes in attitudes on these issues are often strongly driven by period effects, where attitudes across all generations shift to some extent (often less so among the oldest).

Second, that cross-cultural differences often dwarf distinctions between generations within countries. This is very clearly the case comparing Western, established economies with emerging markets. But the distance between (often) the US and other established economies on some of these issues is also worth remembering.

So Millennials are more a progression of a trend that has been underway for some time – although this may partly reflect that the issues examined here are somewhat older battles, and the real shift on these issues occurred between the Pre-War generation and the Baby Boomers and/or Generation X. Often Millennials stand out as being more liberal where an issue is contentious within a particular national context – for example, the higher levels of acceptance towards homosexuality in the US and towards immigration in the Britain.

This is not to say that Millennials are not more liberal on more emergent issues such as transgender rights, gender fluidity or polyamory. There is a lack of long-term or even short-term data on newer social causes, as the shape of some of these debates has shifted significantly in the last few years, but there is evidence that younger adults are notably more tolerant on some of these more controversial issues than older generations. For example, 56% of 18-24 year olds think that gender can be a range of identities, compared to 44% of 35-44 year olds¹⁴⁸ – and 54% of 18-29 year olds support the rights of transgender people to use public restrooms designated for a different gender than the one assigned at birth, compared to 31% of 45-64 year olds.