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# Political Participation of Millennials in the United States and Western Europe

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# Political Participation of Millennials in the United States and Western Europe

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## Introduction to Research

- Millennials are a very large generation, the second largest in the US history. More than half of the millennials are already of voting age adults, have graduated from schools or college, and are into careers.
- Millennials are often described with more than a bit of a sneer, as the new "me" generation and have always participated in politics at a lower rate due to a various reasons such as the generation's size, demographics, and views on cultural, foreign policy, role of government, and economic issues which somehow, make them unique when compared to the older generation.
- This research will analyze data and test the hypothesis from *The Voice of the People End of the year 2012 Survey* which has presented that the outcome of young adults with a graduate degree, have lower voting rates of only 12% than adults of ages 55-65 who have higher voting rates of about 21%.
- This research will compare the millennials of the United States to Western Europe and determine whether millennials in Western Europe were just as unlikely to participate in politics or if they consider voting to be their civic duty
- Elections play a vital role in democracy because they ensure representation of the popular will and enhance the legitimacy of political systems. Although democratic theory expects the public to exercise their right to vote energetically, the reality of contemporary elections reveals a broad decline in turnout rates across the globe
- A solution to the challenges of comparability and to determine youth turnout is to use a universal base model that identifies relevant factors, places them on different levels, and allows for a systematic comparison level by level
- Systematic Level:**
  - historical and cultural traditions
  - Political and economic conditions
- Institutional Level:**
  - Holiday voting
  - salience of campaign
- Individual Level:**
  - Structural- education, gender, socioeconomic
  - Agency-church & union ties
  - Attitudinal-political interest & trust
  - Communication-watching/reading the news

## Hypotheses:

- H 1: Millennials living in the USA are more likely to participate in presidential elections
- H 2: Millennials living in Western Europe are less likely to participate in European elections
- H 3: Millennials in the U.S are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates than the older age groups of 65+

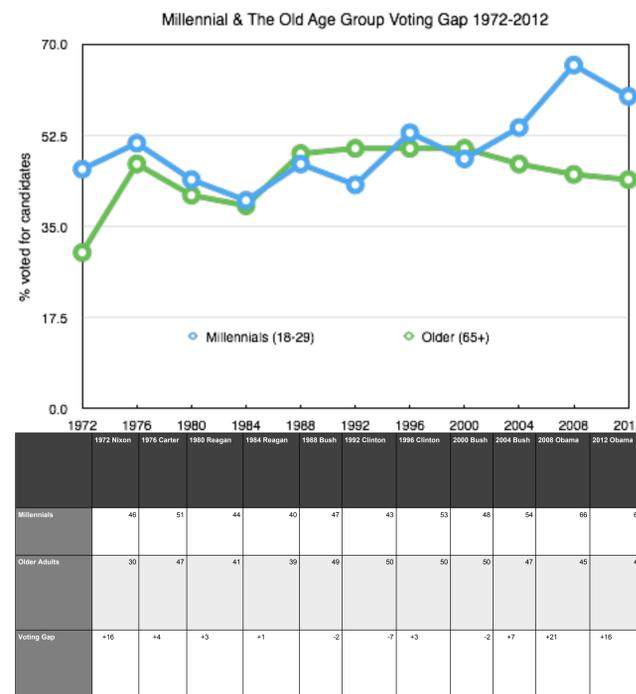
## Data

### H 1 & H2 Millennials in the United States and Europe

Voter Turnout Results:

- Voter turnout in 1984 elections
  - U.S: 53.3%
  - Europe: 59%
- Voter turnout in 1996 U.S. & 1999 European elections
  - U.S: 49%
  - Europe: 49.5%
- Voter turnout in 2004 elections
  - U.S: 51.8%
  - Europe: 45.5%
- Voter turnout in 2012 elections
  - U.S: 54.9%
  - Europe: 43%

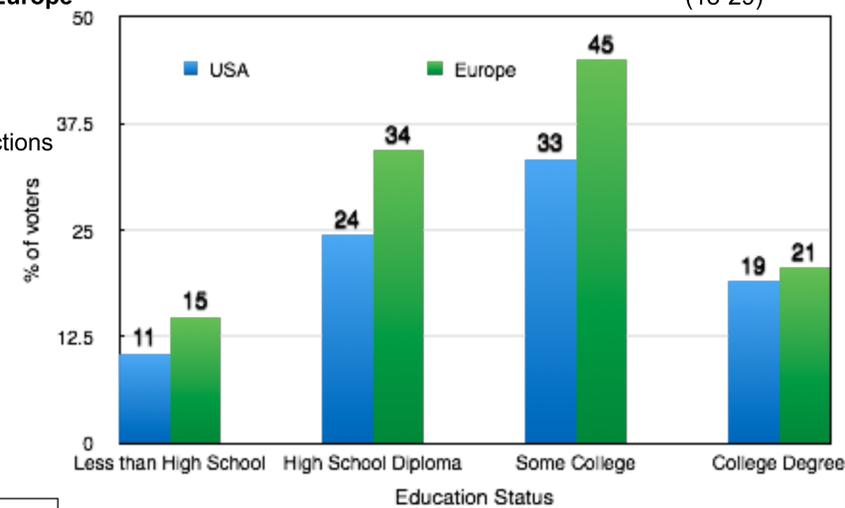
### H 3: Presidential Elections from 1972-2012



### Table Interpretation

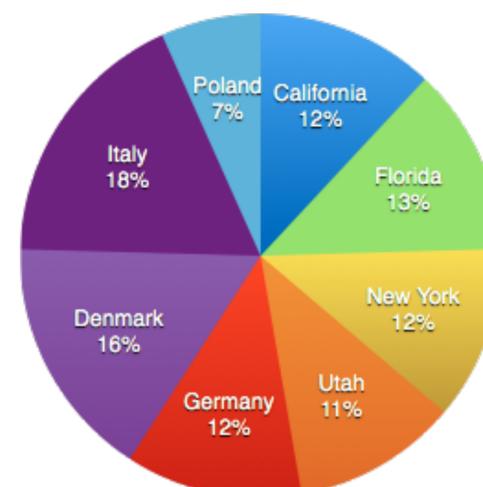
- 60% of millennials voted for Obama in 2012 and only 44% of the older generation were in support of Obama
- 2008 has the greatest voting generation gap of +21
- 1992 to 2000 have been very stable in millennial support of

### Voting Rates by Educational Attainment (18-29)



- Unweighted Frequency of 5, 864 valid cases:
  - Less than high school graduates of 622
  - High school diploma of 1442
  - Some college of 1972
  - College graduate of 1120

### Voting Rate of Millennials by State



- The pie chart displays each state's young adult voting rate of ages 18-29 in the United States and Europe.
- Voting turnout is the highest in Italy and Denmark
- Poland has the highest proportions of non voters

## Findings

H 1: Millennials in the U.S and Europe  
While the results showed that voter turnout in the United States was lower than Europe in 1984 and 1999, there is a sudden increase of voter turnout in the 2004 and 2012 elections. Turnout in the European elections decreased by almost 19% over 30 years, from 61% in 1979 to 43% in 2009.

H 2: Western Europe has a higher rate of education. Europeans with a high school diploma and some college have a higher voting turnout than of the U.S. Both the U.S and Europe have low percentages of people who have voted after attaining a college degree.

H 3: Presidential Elections 1972-2004  
The 2004 elections between George W. Bush and John Kerry was the first election in which the 18-29 year old age group was composed entirely of millennials and in which the 18-29 year old group was dominated by Millennials. The 2008 and 2012 elections were also dominated by millennials by 37%.

## Conclusions

- While Europe has had a higher voter turnout rate in the 1984 elections, millennials living in the United States have gradually increased their participation in politics.
- The level of education attained by millennials does not seem to have a considerable impact on the voting rates, since the highest amount of voters who have participated in general elections are have only attained a high school diploma and some college or an associate's degree.
- We may assume that people with the highest level of education or college degree are more likely to participate in politics, but the research concludes that these young adults have the lowest rate of voting and interest in politics.

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