



AGING POLITICS: MILLENNIALS AND THE TRANSPARTISAN MOVEMENT

Matthew Cassidy



Millennials have an untapped superpower...

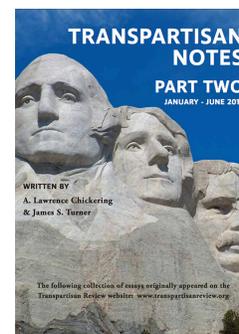
the power to decide the next leaders of the United States.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Transpartisan Review's Stand-alone Series

*A recurring feature of The Transpartisan Review (TTR)
beginning in January 2019, TTR's second anniversary.*

This series joins our weekly *Transpartisan Notes* series (now on note #111) begun July 4, 2016 and consists of important articles from the transpartisan community. The articles come from individuals such as *The Transpartisan Review's* advisors, colleagues, family, friends and commenters. We plan to publish such articles as they seem useful.



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The Transpartisan Review
Stand-alone Article #4

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

In 2018, we reached out to several friends and colleagues – proponents of *transpartisan* – to learn how they interpreted the word and the movement. Matthew Cassidy’s response was particularly exciting as it represents the newest voices in the transpartisan movement.

The following article was originally written for a compilation of articles exploring the meaning of *transpartisan* and grew from a series of conversations between the author and the series’ editors.

In this short piece, Matthew Cassidy explores the transpartisan nature of our youngest generation of voters, highlighting how Generation Y’s unique differences from previous age-defined voting blocs make them exceptional allies in the transpartisan movement.

Aging Politics: Millennials and the Transpartisan Movement

Matthew Cassidy

Millennials have an untapped superpower: the power to decide the next leaders of the United States. In almost logarithmic fashion, the Millennials have ascended to a role unseen since the baby boomers. They are a political force. Advertisers covet this demographic; establishment politicians fear them. Millennials represent the young generation that grew up at the dawn of the internet.

The date range for Millennials has been subject to debate, but the U.S. Census Bureau identifies 1982 to have ushered in the end of Generation X and the start of the Millennials. While on paper, 1982 may seem unremarkable, members of the Millennial generation are incredibly distinct from their predecessors. Millennials favor more nomadic or mobile lifestyles: they stay at jobs for shorter durations, they marry later in life, and have kids later too. They are incredibly tech-savvy and prefer change over stability; Millennials appear far more flexible than previous generations. They grew up with personal computers, internet, and mobile technology that mirrored their lifestyles. The 24-hour news cycle began with the Millennial generation. Moreover, this generation comes from all different backgrounds. 44.2% of Millennials identify as a minority race or ethnic group, a sizable chunk of the 83 million Millennials in the United States. Research surveys have indicated that Millennials hold more racially tolerant views and care less about work ethics compared to preceding generations. Most notably, in a seemingly divisive political environment, Pew research indicates Millennials get along with others the most, recording fewer tensions between older generations, immigrants, different races, and genders than their parents. Millennials' sheer size and uniqueness make them a driving force for change.

Millennials are disinterested in the current political debate in the United States. The issue with this country's current political debate does not stem from the topics; Millennials want to engage in challenging discussions and thoughtful disagreements. In

a study, conducted by Tuft University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), titled "*Millennials Talk Politics: A Study of College Student Political Engagement*," researchers noted that Millennials do not wish to be removed from politics. Instead, they seek authentic opportunities for discussing salient issues. Young voters dislike the spin and polarized debates that currently exists within the realm of politics. This generation feels that today's polarized debate leaves no options for compromise or nuance. Framing, not content, lies atop Millennials' biggest issue with the nation's current political debate.



The framing does not encompass the multiple facets of an issue; it focuses far too much attention on governments as the only entities for creating policy and casts aside the role citizens play. Contemporary policy debate also pits one side against another, creating a highly confrontational dynamic not attractive to many Millennials.

Millennials seek various avenues to create change, including entrepreneurship, which has reshaped the role individuals play in our society. Governments are no longer the sole proprietors of driving change. Communities and individuals can solve major issues independently or together with government. The transpartisan ideology believes topics such as poverty and policing can be addressed by policy reform and community action. Young Americans naturally follow this philosophy through social entrepreneurship and grassroots campaigning, which have surged with the millennial generation.

The sheer number of Millennials, coinciding with their energy and passion for change, display strength when mobilized. Pew data states Millennials represent 31% of the overall American electorate, and 69% of Millennials are eligible to vote. In 2016, the American people saw a preview of this voting bloc's power with the ascent of dark horse Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders, who nearly zipped to victory for the party's nomination against

the heavy favorite, Hillary Clinton. This generation has not taken full advantage of this momentum, however. In the 2012 election, Millennials made up a fifth of the electorate with less than half casting ballots. Turnout has not been good for this bloc. The Greatest/Silent generation, representing a sixth of the electorate punched well above their collective weight by turning out at 72%. Millennials have the lowest participation rates relative to the other three main generations: Greatest/Silent, Boomer, and Gen X. Fifty percent of voting eligible Millennials voted in the 2016 election, which was lower than every preceding U.S. generation by roughly 11%. Millennials also voted third-party more than any other generational demographic, with 8% voting for a candidate outside the two major parties compared to only 3% in 2012.



Senator Bernie Sanders, beneficiary of Millennial political influence.

Moreover, social media, a favorite tool of Millennials, revolutionizes the manner in which Americans engage with policymakers and each other. The 2016 election demonstrated the power of social media in shaping both the topic and framing of the debate. Millennials have turned to social media to influence the topics of America's debate; now they can turn to the *transpartisan movement* to redefine that debate.

The transpartisan movement operates outside the traditional language utilized in the classic left/right debate. Language frames communication, so unsurprisingly most of the today's political debate cannot be expressed with the traditional political language that exists outside the transpartisan movement. The muddled language of political discussions have hindered the framework of policy debate and confined it to the outdated philosophy of a two-dimensional, political spectrum. However, the 2016 presidential primaries demonstrated the fissures within both main political parties who represent left and right ideologies. Libertarians and progressive Democrats, blue dogs and evangelical liberals, showcase the issue Millennials have with traditional left/right labels. Ideological straitjackets have lost their fashion. The *Transpartisan Matrix* solves this ideological conundrum by operating on multiple axes. Individuals' views fall on different locations

in the matrix, both socially and economically. Transpartisan debate recognizes the ideal logical matrix, and creates a language and framework to debate policy without inaccurate, incomprehensible labels.

Millennials should look to transpartisanism as a framework to view politics through a multi-dimensional lens that cuts out the disdain and distrust. The Brookings Institution *recently analyzed data* from CIRCLE on the level of trust amongst Millennials. Less than 30% and 20% of Millennials trust the Democratic and Republican parties respectively, and less than 20% of Millennials trust the United States' major news media. The issue amongst younger voters does not revolve around lack of information but rather an abundance of news from sources they do not trust.

Millennials are the future. Their ever-changing lifestyles reflect the type of change they seek in society and from government. Transpartisanism packages diverse ideologies with dynamic ideas to advance society in a rapidly transforming world. It is about time the Millennials have a political framework that meets their demands like *transpartisanism*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Cassidy



A politically active millennial himself, Matthew Cassidy is an officer candidate in the U.S. Army and has worked on all levels of government ranging from the Delaware State Legislature to the U.S. Department of State. Hailing from Southern New Jersey, where he still manages operations for his family's business, Salem Oak Vineyards, Matthew has engaged with the nation's most competitive political races ranging from Florida Congressional District 7's Stephanie Murphy and Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer to Delaware's Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long and State Representative Paul Baumbach. For his post graduate work, Matthew spent several months in Morocco conducting research on *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in the contemporary Islamic world and its effect on political philosophical discourse in the Middle East and North Africa. His research led him to Washington, DC with the American Enterprise Institute's *Critical Threats Project* and eventually to the Department of the Navy and Department of State's Foreign Service Institute.

THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW

THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW is a digital journal of politics, society, and culture, exploring the apparent disintegration of the traditional political, social and cultural order from a transpartisan point of view. This stand-alone article, and the series it belongs to, shares this exploration of the transpartisan impulse.

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