The Changing Face of Patriotism

Americans are a patriotic bunch. Compared with people in most other countries, Americans express more pride in their nationality, and most say that being an American is an important part of their identity. Even so, patriotism in America is on the decline.

But the decline seems to have more to do with reactions to the symbols of American democracy than its values. Older Americans remain remarkably high in their devotion to symbols like the flag, while young citizens are cooler toward Old Glory but express higher support for classic American ideals like equality and opportunity.

The patterns suggest the shifts are generational and not driven by stages in the life cycle. Past generations have declined only marginally in their nationalism over time – they start out high and mainly remain so. But today’s youngest generation begins adulthood with much lower levels of fondness for the symbols of America, and if the past is a guide, there is no reason to expect increases as they age.

Measures of American patriotism over the last several decades are found in the American National Election Study (A.N.E.S.), the nation’s longest-running data collection on political attitudes and behavior. Started in 1948, the A.N.E.S. is funded by the National Science Foundation, and the interviews are done in person every four years, in the homes of nearly 2,000 randomly selected Americans.

There are small differences in levels of patriotism across political parties, between men and women, and among racial groups, but these patterns pale in comparison to the differences across generations, with overt patriotism shifting down with age. Here’s a striking example: 81 percent of the Silent Generation (those who are 69 to 86 years old in 2014) love America while only 58 percent of millennials (18 to 33 years old) feel the same. Born between 1928 and 1945, the Silent Generation fought both the wars in Korea and Vietnam. Thirty-one percent of them report that they personally served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. Only 4 percent of millennials have done so.

78 percent of the older generation consider their American identity to be extremely important. That drops to 70 percent for baby boomers (50 to 68 years), 60 percent of Generation X’ers (34 to 49 years), and only 45 percent of young adults define themselves this way. And… continued on page 3…
This month’s Resident Spotlight is on our sweet and quiet but very funny Resident Helen Yeager. Helen was born in Wheeling, West Virginia. She is one of four siblings who were all college educated and went on to successful careers. Helen met her husband Fred while they were both in high school. They attended different schools but met through mutual friends. Helen attended the Wheeling Hospital School of Nursing and became an RN. Fred went on to get his degree in teaching and business. Fred accepted a job at St. Louis University where he was a Professor of Finance and Business for over 40 years. When they came to St. Louis, Helen started working as an RN for St. Louis University. She also worked for Blue Cross & Blue Shield while she was a wife and homemaker for her husband and four children; two girls and twin boys. Giving birth to twin boys really changed her life in a wonderful way. Fred and Helen managed to put all four of her children through college. All of which are SLU graduates.

Family has always been important to Helen. She is very proud that all her children have become successful like others in her family. Their family bond is very strong and her children carry on the traditions her and Fred established long ago. Their family has now increased with 13 grandkids; 7 boys and 6 girls. I’m sure Fred would be happy to know that the Yeager family legacy will be living on for generations to come.

Helen's father was Irish and she and Fred (who was German) stayed with the Irish Catholic traditions. Church is very important to Helen. Because they worked for the University, they took advantage of their holiday and summer vacations off school and traveled a lot. They would visit England, Spain, many of the states in the US, as well as her home state of West Virginia. Her favorite trip was to Ireland. Since her father was from Ireland, Helen’s whole family went to visit the country. While they were there, they visited their cousins from her Dad’s side. A few months after their visit, all those cousins came to the US to visit them here in St. Louis. There were a lot of good times had by all.

Helen has kept very busy in her retirement years. She is still an active RN alumni for the University as well as helps out with the scholarship that was set up for students when Fred passed away. She volunteers at St. John’s Mercy Hospital and loves to help the needy. Serving her fellow man is very rewarding for her.

Whenever Helen gets some quiet time, she loves reading Mary Higgins Clark books. She loves attending all the different events here at The Rockwood. She knows her limits and what she is good or not good at. But, she will always try something new once to see if she is good at it. I always kid with her that she can’t be good at everything. Helen really loves it here at The Rockwood and says “Its’ a wonderful place to live and to be surrounded by so many friendly people.”


Happy Birthday to our Friends:
Rosemary and
Mary B.!!

“You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism.” ~Erma Bombeck
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...while 94 percent of the Silent Generation say that seeing the U.S. flag flying makes them feel extremely or very good, only 67 percent of millennials muster the same affection.

Millennials, it seems, are a different breed. According to a recent report by the Pew Research Center, millennials are “detached from institutions ... linked by social media, burdened by debt, distrustful of people, in no rush to marry – and optimistic about the future.” They are, the report concludes, “different from older adults back when they were the age millennials are now.”

Patriotism seems to span the life cycle, not change with it, which might give us pause given the low starting levels of the millennial generation. But it shouldn’t. Just as the Pew data found young people to be optimistic despite being saddled with debt, the A.N.E.S. data show millennials to be extremely supportive of the ideals and values of democracy, if not the symbols of America. In particular, equality stands out.

The difference between millennials and the Silent Generation on the question of equality in life’s opportunities is large. While 42 percent of the older generation thinks unequal chances in life are not a big problem, only 20 percent of millennials do. As for the reverse, only 37 percent of the Silent Generation think unequal chances are a big problem compared to 57 percent of young people.

In general, millennials have more appetite for egalitarian principles (believing in the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities) than older people. They may look less patriotic than the rest of America at first glance, but coming of age in the era of globalization and being a more racially diverse generation may simply mean that traditional symbols of American democracy hold less meaning for this cohort. Millennials may be less devoted to the symbols of America, but they are no less devoted to democratic ideals.

A new patriotism in American may be rising.

~Excerpted from NYTimes.org

The Star Spangled Banner (The Full Lyrics) written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 during the War of 1812

Oh, say can you see by the dawn’s early light, what so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight, o’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that Star - Spangled Banner yet wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep, Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep, As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
’Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore, that the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more! Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave, from the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! Thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand, between their loved home and the war’s desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land, Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”
And the Star - Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
While he was visiting, my father asked for the password to our Wi-Fi.

"It's taped under the modem," I told him.

After three failed attempts to log on, he asked, "Am I spelling this right? T-A-P-E-D-U-N-D-E-R-T-H-E-E-M-O-D-E-M?"

### A Fun Summer Time Checklist to Do This Season

- See a Drive-in Movie
- Walk the Century Home Neighborhood
- Blow Bubbles
- Play Miniature Golf
- Catch Fireflies in a Jar
- Win a prize at a Fair
- Pick berries and peaches at a farm
- Eat a whole lobster with your hands
- Buy and eat a Bomb Pop from the man at the ice cream truck
- Make s’mores on a campfire
- Make homemade lemonade
- Buy fresh produce from the farmer’s market
- Eat corn on the cob
- Eat a slice of watermelon
- Make and drink a pitcher of sangria
- Have a picnic in a local park
- Stargaze while lying in the grass
- Dangle your feet off of a dock over water
- Bring a blanket and watch an outdoor concert
- Pick wild flowers
- Go camping
- Go fishing
- Go for a hike in the woods
- Throw a Frisbee
- Take a spontaneous road trip
- See a summer blockbuster
- Read a trashy novel
- Walk barefoot in the grass
- Get caught walking in a rainstorm
- Sleep with the windows open
- Feel the sun on your back
- Roll your pants legs up and wade in some water
- Go see a baseball game