THE POLITICAL YOUTH VOICE SPIRAL: AN APPLICATION OF THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE TO OPINION EXPRESSION AMONG YOUNG AMERICAN VOTERS

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the *Spiral of Silence* theory, this study investigates young Millennial and Generation Z voters' willingness to voice their political beliefs in divergent public opinion climates during elections in the digital media era. Young voters in every generation have typically been more cynical, more susceptible, and less informed than older age groups, and more easily influenced by unbalanced media consumptions and skewed social and political contexts. However, this pattern is changing through 'given' and 'chosen' media consumptions and generational political characteristics. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design of 2 (pro- vs. anti-voting message exposures) x 2 (self pro- vs. self anti-voting attitudes) x 2 (young Millennial voters (N=81, in 2004) vs. young Generation Z voters (N=102, in 2016)), the study found that young voters in the internet and social media eras were not silent any longer. This study observed the deviating patterns of the fading *Spiral of Silence*, the dual *Spiral of Voice*, and the reverse *Spiral of Silence* among the two youngest generations in the American political landscape, and the tendency was stronger for Generation Zs over Millennials. Generation Z young voters in the 2016 election year were much more expressive regardless of public opinion climates and even more expressive in incongruent opinion environments, and formed stronger counter views, compared to young Millennial voters in the 2004 election year.

Keywords: Spiral of Silence; Young Voter; Public Opinion; Millennials; Generation Z

INTRODUCTION

One of the most studied theories of public opinion, the *Spiral of Silence* theory, postulates that individuals' willingness to express their true beliefs in public depends on the congruency between personal beliefs and the public opinion climate (Noelle-Neuman, 1974, 1977, 1984). People who perceive their opinions as similar to those of the majority are more likely to express their views publicly, while individuals who believe the majority does not share their views are less willing to speak up (Noelle-Neuman, 1974). However, subsequent research has argued that the relationship between one's willingness to speak publicly and the public opinion climate is not as direct and straightforward as originally hypothesized. This relationship is mediated by many

other factors, such as the context of the communication (Ho & McLeod, 2008; McDevitt, Kiousis & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2003), a person's internal mood and attitude strength (McDonald, Glyn, Kim, & Ostman, 2001), group affiliation (Krassa, 1988), culture and ethnicity (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; Toale & McCroskey, 2001), media use, and demographics such as education (Moy, Domke, & Stamm, 2001). Not only the majority opinion, but also other various factors influence an individual's willingness to voice personal opinions in the public sphere.

Does the *Spiral of Silence* theory still apply to the latest, newest generations of American voters, the Millennials and the Generation Z? The youth of these two newest generations might have deviated away from the pattern of public opinion expression from the general public, and the youth voice has been shown to be mediated by generational political, social, and media culture. Previous research on the youngest voting groups, 18-to-24 years old, has shown that this population is poorly informed about politics (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2007), highly cynical (Elenbaas & De Vreese, 2008), highly apathetic (Bennett, 2000), highly vulnerable (Kaid et al., 2007), and less willing to engage in political behaviors than older voters (Delli Carpini, 2000; Lopez, Kirby, & Sagoff, 2003; Putnam, 2000). Partly responsible for the state of young voters are the news media as coverage has focused on the shortcomings of public figures and state institutions that hint at negative majority public opinion and the routine coverage patterns marginalizing the social minorities, thus signaling young voters' vulnerable and unimportant political status (Moy & Pfau, 2000). However, the political climate has changed, and new media technology has brought new venues and patterns for political dialogues for the youngest generations of our time (Kalogeropoulos, Suiter, Udris, & Eisenegger, 2019). Drawing upon these theoretical perspectives, this study explores political youth voices from the two youngest generations, young Millennial voters in 2004 and young Generation Z voters in 2016, who were born and grew up with digital media and rapidly changing political and social culture, and investigates changes in the willingness of the young voter cohorts to publicly express political beliefs over two decades spanning from the 2004 U.S. general election to the 2016 U.S. general election.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Political Communication Landscape from Young Millennials to Young Generation Zs

Young voters were considered more vulnerable to negativity and strategic framing than older voters because they have less real-world political experience and newer, developing, and less crystallized political attitudes (Jennings & Niemi, 1978, 1981). Before meeting Millennials in the political world, a great number of scholars concluded that the consistent lower voting turnout among young voters can be directly attributed to the political communication landscape, such as prevalent negative political rhetoric by a few dominant communication channels and sources (Lau & Erber, 1985). However, starting in the early 2000s, digital technologies such as the Internet and social media have changed political campaigning as well as media coverage, and caused different media consumption patterns among Millennials and Generation Zs compared to previous generations. Millennials, sometimes referred to as Generation Y, were born between 1977 and 1994, and are believed to be a more self-reliant and independent generational cohort (Williams & Page, 2011). Generation Zs were born between 1995 and 2010, and have been identified as a more self-confident generational cohort, having more diverse ideas from wider

backgrounds compared to previous generations (Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Williams & Page, 2011). When these youngest American voters met political momentums, they have made important changes in American political history (Lopez, Kirby, Sagoff, & Herbst, 2005; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

Researchers have observed the gradually decreasing youth voting turnout since 1972 – except for a brief spike in the non-traditional campaign election year of 1992 with the utilization of the Internet for the first time targeting non-majority voters (Owen, 2006). However, the sharp turning point of the 2004 U.S. presidential general election, having 10% increases in young voter turnouts, aged between 18 and 24, compared to prior presidential election in 2000, was a very noticeable phenomenon in the U.S. electoral process with young Millennial voters. The 2004 U.S. general election was the very first U.S. election when the earliest Millennials reached the voting age (Lopez et al., 2005).

In 2004, the increase in youth voter turnout is considered a direct aftermath of the 2000 presidential election between George Bush from the Republican Party and Al Gore from the Democratic Party, which was decided by only a few hundred votes. During the 2004 campaigns, not only mass media and political parties but also numerous independent organizations went to great lengths to target more permeable voter groups, such as young voters, with mobilizing messages (Lopez et al., 2005). For example, there were unprecedented amounts of speeches made by young surrogates, such as the Bush twins and the Kerry daughters, the famous "Vote or Die" T-shirt, viral PSAs with celebrity spokespersons, and intensive online and television campaigns during the 2004 campaigns. The six most prominent non-partisan youth advocacy groups, including Rock the Vote and The New Voters Project, spent close to $40 million on voter registration drives and awareness messages (Hampton, 2004).

In a majority opinion climate supportive of active participation targeting young voters, typical young voters who used to be cynical, apathetic, and uninformed would find themselves visible and meaningful in the political arena. Various polls and surveys conducted during the campaign months before the 2004 U.S. presidential general election seemed to indicate that the strong pro-voting public opinion climate had increased political interests and produced active voting intentions among young people (Lopez et al., 2005). The voting turnout for the young voters aged from 18 to 24 in the 2004 presidential election was 46.7%, sharply increased by 9.6 percent compared to that in the previous election of 2000 (U.S. Census, 2019). These figures were significantly higher among the college student population, a group that reached 66% of young voter turnout rate (Lopez et al., 2005). On college campuses, the prevailing public opinion was that voting does make a difference and that any eligible voter must show up at the polls on Election Day (Lopez et al., 2005).

The youngest Generation Zs became eligible as first-time voters in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, which was another unprecedented contest between a hyperbolic business man and a politically seasoned women, and was filled with conflicting scandals, gossips, and fake news, escalated identity clashes, social cleavage, and far extreme political polarizations (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Yun, 2021).

In 2016, the micro-targeting of young voters continued as campaign strategy. Celebrities' messages targeting young voters aspired young voters to be more engaged in and identified with political messages. Non-partisan initiatives for registration drives were also continuing campaign processes through both internet and traditional media beyond physical in-person table setting drive events (Panagopoulos, 2016). The micro-targeting approach by political and non-political public groups for more reliable base mobilization has been an increasing campaign trend than old-fashioned strategies that used to focus on persuading less 'reliable' voting populations, such as independents. This micro-targeting approach has gradually more intensified political polarizations for the last two decades in American politics (Panagopoulos, 2016). Along with such changes in the political and campaign processes, the historically divided presidential election in 2016 amplified negative, contradictory, and incongruent voices and conversations (Yun, 2021). Right after the 2008 presidential election by the Democratic Party candidate, Barack Obama's extensive voter mobilizations (Kenski, Hardy, & Jamieson, 2010), young voters have gradually dropped out and expressed their feelings of alienation in 2012 and even worse in 2016 (Southwell, 2016).

The political communication landscape reflected a lowering voting turnout to 43% among the young voters aged from 18 to 24 and showed lower participation for Generation Z young voters in 2016 compared to Millennial young voters in 2004 (U.S. Census, 2019). Moreover, although young white male voters increased, racially more diverse young voters were presented in 2016 than the youth electorate in 2004 (Circle, 2016). Like the conventional electoral norm has been, in the 2016 presidential election, college students were twice as likely to vote and engage in politics than non-college youth (Circle, 2016). These early Generation Z young voters seemed to disappear in the visible political sphere, but were more likely to be involved in political actions, discussions, and shares "when they see political content online" (Circle, 2017).

In addition to the changes in the political landscape, the media landscape has also changed from 2004 to 2016 and played important roles for early Millennial and Generation Z young voters' political voices and activities. There have been increasing amounts of political information, sources, and channels since the advent of online technologies in the early 2000s, expanding upon, and even replacing some traditional media, such as newspapers and television. Scholarly work has noted that diversified digital media messages have shown various effects in different directions and dimensions. For instance, social media not only have been cultivating positive, efficient, and interactive political information environments, but also have been feeding negative and inaccurate self-assuring political bias and misinformation (Bode, Vraga, Borah, & Shah, 2014). More specifically, these new types of political information by digital media are often more personalized information within circles of individual social networks and by individual preferences and interests (Bode, 2016).

In 2004, while TV and newspapers were still primary sources of political information, there was a noticeable increase in internet use (29%) for political information from the previous general election cycle in 2000 (18%) among American voters. The internet (18%) became one of the top three primary political news sources followed by TV (78%) and newspapers (39%). However, back in 2004, online political information that American voters were obtaining was provided mostly by websites of major news organizations and newspapers (54%), and other non-mainstream news sources such as professional political blogs and government or candidate

websites (24%). These rising new information channels like the internet, not only made political information consumers more selective, but also made the audiences encounter more diverse and contradicting information (Rainie, Cornfield, & Horrigan, 2005).

In 2016, there had been a more divided and diverse media environment. The general voter populations reported TV news (24%) and social media (14%) as their most helpful political information sources, while young voters identified social media (35%) and news website/app (18%) as their top political information sources. In the multi-media era, about half of American voters (45%) learned about politics from five or more sources (Gottfried, Barthel, Shearer, & Mitchell, 2016). With multiple emerging political information sources, there were unconfirmed and invalid political and social information circulating and spread through formal and informal conversations largely by social media. The 'average American adult' was exposed to these information sources around the general election time and tended to believe stories consistent with their views (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

While there is much debate over the cutoff between the two generations, both Millennials and Generation Zs have grown up in periods with similar debates over political issues such as abortion, diversity, climate change, and gun control, but they have each experienced different waves of technological innovation. Millennials remember a time before cell phones, social media and modern modes of expression. Generation Zs on the other hand have never known a world without access to instant information, entertainment and self-expression (Nuzulita & Subriadi, 2020). While Millennials use social media for maintaining relationships, staying connected on Facebook and business purposes, Generation Zs are drawn to platforms that allow for more self-expression and entertainment purposes. The social media platforms of Millennials are not the primary outlet for many younger members of Generation Z who prefer TikTok, SnapChat and Instagram over Facebook and Twitter. Generation Zs are at a point in their lives where they are striking out to define themselves and many do not like to be lumped in or compared to Millennials despite existing similarities (Noor, 2020).

Theoretical Evolutions in Political Youth Voice

There have been both distinctive similarities and disparities between early Millennial young voters and early Generation Z young voters. The young voters of the two generations have demonstrated deviating patterns of political voices along varying and evolving political, social, and media contexts in 2004 and 2016. This study scrutinizes the classic public opinion theory, the *Spiral of Silence*, in applying its theoretical framework to understanding the political youth voices of the latest voting age generations, Millennials and Generation Z. The political, social, psychological, and media landscapes have changed over time, and political values, norms, and voices are evolving along with the changes. The *Spiral of Silence* theory can be unfolded and expanded to multiple versions of perspectives in order to explain newly emerging patterns of public opinion by Millennials and Generation Zs in the digital media environment.

The classic *Spiral of Silence* in the traditional media era

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974) introduced a theory of public opinion called the *Spiral of Silence*. According to the classic theory, individuals observe their external opinion environment

and adhere to the opinion of the majority mainly from an internal motivation to avoid isolation from people around them. Individuals who perceive the majority opinion to be in agreement with their own beliefs are willing to talk in public, while individuals who perceive majority opinion to be in disagreement with their own opinions tend to keep silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1977, 1984). In other words, the minority viewpoints self-censor themselves into silence as a result of social pressures (i.e., fear of isolation, normative reasoning, group affiliation) or individual cognitive and perceptual factors, while the majority opinions gain more support and become legitimized through systems of information dissemination such as mass media (Glynn & McLeod, 1984; Salmon & Kline, 1985).

Scholars have been fascinated by, and agree with, the assumptions of the *Spiral of Silence* theory regarding the dynamics between public and individual opinion. Glynn, Hayes, and Shanahan's (1997) meta-analysis of all major research on the *Spiral of Silence* theory from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s found that most studies confirmed the connection between individuals' willingness to express opinions and their perceived majority opinion climate. Taylor (1982) investigated voters' willingness to voice opinions in political discussions and to express their candidate preferences, and concluded that individuals who believe that the public mood supports their political preference are more likely to express their opinion than those who do not share the congruency of perception.

The main reason that minority opinion holders prefer to keep silent is their fear of social isolation. Noelle-Neumann (1984) argued that fear of social isolation more strongly determines one's public discourse than a person's true views. The proposition that fear of disapproval is inversely linked to one's willingness to speak in public has been a general agreement among scholars in public opinion studies (Glynn & Park, 1997; Kim, Han, Shanahan, & Berdayes, 2004; Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007; Willnat, Lee, & Detenber, 2002). An alternative to keeping silent is to voice opinions congruent with those of the majority, while hiding true personal attitudes in order to avoid social isolation (Glynn & McLeod, 1984). When minority opinion holders experience fear of isolation, they tend to adopt avoidance strategies such as lying or making neutral comments (Neuwirth et al., 2007), trying to change the subject or reflecting the question back without answering it (Hayes, 2007). In cognitive dissonance processes, minority opinion holders may even adopt the attitudes of majority groups in order to attain validating information and to satisfy a broad set of normative social goals and expectations (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Kelly, 1952; Kelman, 1958). As a consequence, for instance, people are more likely to publicly support a candidate if they perceive that the candidate is winning the election according to a mainstream news media poll (Glynn & McLeod, 1984).

The divergent *Spiral of Silence* in the digital media era

However, as the political and social atmosphere and the media environment have changed dramatically since the theoretical perspectives of the *Spiral of Silence* were introduced in 1974, the unfolded aspects of the theoretical parameters need further exploration to understand new, different, and various trends of contemporary public voices. Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1977) identified the instruments for understanding opinion climate in her earlier studies: social being, majority accordance, opinion adjustment, social-psychological mechanism-*Spiral of Silence*, individual observation of the social environment, readiness to stand up for own opinions, and

perception of polarization (Noelle-Neumann, 1977, pp.144-45). We may need to revisit the meanings of the instruments in order to correctly apply the measures in today's political climate and legitimately interpret them in political voices of current societies.

In American society and politics, these *preconditions* of social being and value of agreement over disagreement, *perceptions* of opinion status, social approval, individual judgement, and opinion diversification, and *socio-political behaviors* of opinion expression and adjustments, have been changed in the past several decades, and thus these components of political voices should be re-interpreted in the current political and social contexts. Noelle-Neumann foresaw a few deviating potentials of preconditions, perceptions, and behaviors and noted them in her earlier research (1974, 1977, 1979). Public opinion is "objects of awareness" and individuals' willingness to speak varies in different political circumstances, therefore the conversations with likely-minded members or in different degrees of mixed opinion can impair the sense of opinion status (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, p. 46). There are always exceptions like "the hard-core" in the different stages of opinion formations and these hard-core minorities were more willing to stand up than majorities, and the readiness to stand up for their own political voices differ across different demographic groups (i.e., young people are more speak out) (Noelle-Neumann, 1977, pp. 150-51, 157; Noelle-Neumann, 1979, p. 155). Noelle-Neumann's speculations for deviating conditions and factors have saved the values of the novel theory of the *Spiral of Silence* in studies from different times across different political and social contexts.

Scholars in the fields of public opinion, political communication, and new media have revisited the *Spiral of Silence* theory to reevaluate the value of the theory and validate the theoretical approaches in current political and social environments that differ greatly from 1970s and 1980s. Lasorsa (1991) discussed the deviating circumstances elaborating that a person's political outspokenness is linked not only to perception of majority opinion but also to demographics (gender, age, education), one's interest in politics, level of self-efficacy, the importance of an issue to that individual, media use and opinion strength, expanding on the main mechanism of spiral voices from a congruent opinion climate. Lin Cao, and Zhang (2017) revisited Lasorsa's argument in online contexts and confirmed the deviating outspokenness in online discussions among young college students. Ho and McLeod (2008) added that the social sense of disapproval and isolation is diluted where information sources are mixed and diverse, such as in online contexts. Schulz and Roessler (2012) argued that the new media technologies have created a diversified and indirect environment for individuals' perception of public pressures beyond the original assumption of the *Spiral of Silence* that the major source for assessing the majority public opinion is the mass media (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1977, 1984).

The adaptive applications of the *Spiral of Silence* to the political youth voices in the digital media era

Key political events and information may impact younger generations more profoundly because they are in a formative age (Jacobson, 2019). The political issues and battles the United States has faced and the diversifying information channels and sources over the last two decades have formed the political personalities and beliefs of Millennials and Generation Zs. Perhaps owing to increased social and ethnic diversity, multiple fragmented information sources, and increased social awareness among younger generations in the U.S. (Fry & Parker, 2018; US Census, 2019),

Millennials and Generation Z tend to be more likely to believe that racial diversity is good for society and express much more support for issues, such as biracial and same-sex marriages, compared to the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers and Generation X (Parker, Graf, & lgielnik, 2019).

Inspired by Noelle-Neumann's (1974, 1977) early speculation in deviating effects of the *Spiral of Silence* for young voters and varying effects in impaired opinion environments by mixed opinions, this study explores young voters' public voice along with evolving political and media landscape, unfolding the theoretical framework of the *Spiral of Silence*. This study proposes the three feasible patterns of unfolded *Spiral of Silence* about political youth voice in American society: the fading *Spiral of Silence*, the dual *Spiral of Voice*, and the reverse *Spiral of Silence*.

The fading silent spiral of youth voice. The *preconditions* of social being and value of agreement over disagreement are no longer sustainable conditions or statuses. In the evolving American society with more diverse people, less consensus, and higher communication technology, people are getting less vulnerable to out-group voices, and the status of agreement and disagreement gets more ambivalent. Some individuals and demographic groups, such as young voters, can be even much less likely restrained by predominant social norms and expectations, living in various degrees of political consensus upon their observations owing multiple channels and sources of information (Moy & Scheufele, 2000; Ho & McLeod, 2008).

Under the new preconditions where political information exposures have been increased and political participations have been encouraged and easier for young voters due to diversified socio-political contexts and communication technologies, political expressions are getting more natural, and socio-psychological barriers for joining public conversation gets lower (Keating & Melis, 2017). Apart from one's opinion status as the precondition of the original *Spiral of Silence* theory (1974, 1977), these new preconditions mediate the link between individuals' opinions and the willingness to express their opinions in the current American politics. Under the evolving preconditions, the less vulnerable young Millennial and Generation Z voters tend to be more expressive, erasing the used-to-be silent habits of youth political expression in American politics (Milkman, 2017; Seemiller & Grace, 2016).

The rising dual spiral of youth voice. The *perceptions* of social approval and fear of isolation are no longer an unswerving filter for political voices. In the divergent political and media climates, "quasi-statistical sense" referred by Noelle-Neumann, can be easily impaired and "fear of isolation" can be weakened by multiple information sources and interactive communications (Ho & McLeod, 2008). Therefore, less bounded individuals and groups, such as young voters, are not always restrained by predominant opinion pressures and afraid of being denied, and rather more freely express themselves publicly (Glynn et al., 1997; Moy & Scheufele, 2000).

Mutz and Martin (2001) found that the exchanges of mixed comments, such as in online forums, confuse the perceptions of validated views because people are more likely to encounter multiple views by less homogenous groups compared to face-to-face communications and interactions that are often among people with similar political, social, and cultural backgrounds. Young voters living in evolving political and media climates where diversified views come across, perceptions of opinion status are unclear, and consistent social approval is absent, tend to be less

afraid of being different from public views or consensus, and thus express their own opinions (Yun, 2020), creating a dual spiral of voice on a debatable and polarized political issue.

For instance, the youngest generations of Millennials and Generation Zs have raised more divergent and polarized political voices. As for the role of government in our lives, both younger generations are more likely to express a belief that government should increase its role in society and do more to address problems, while older generations tend to believe that government's role should be limited, emphasizing the role of individuals and business. These widened generational changes have been shown in other socio-political areas including environmental issues such as climate change and energy. Younger Republicans in the Generation Z and Millennial age ranges differ greatly from older Republicans, showing more support for renewable energy such as solar and wind, but less support for nuclear energy (Funk & Tyson, 2020). Moreover, Generation Zs are somewhat more progressive about new ideas and terms, such as gender-neutral pronouns (Parker et al., 2019), creating clearer dual signals on social and political issues.

Given these positions on many important political issues, Millennials and Generation Zs who are generally less afraid of disapproval and more expressive in divergent and selective opinion climates compared to the older counterpart, may show more opposing views, polarized voices, and dual opinions in various political issues (Fisher, 2020).

The reverse spiral of youth voice. The *socio-political behaviors* of opinion expressions and adjustments are no longer a unimodal in the contemporary American politics in the new media era. Sunstein and Hastie (2015) noted that people tend to be more outspoken when they are exposed to controversial issues with diversified opinions. Glynn and Park (1997) also argued that attitude strength mediates the fear of isolation-public expression relationship. The fear of social isolation mostly affects those whose opinions on a topic are moderate in intensity (Glynn & Park, 1997), but people holding intense beliefs are less likely to be silenced by pressure from an opposing or divergent public opinion, and rather more strongly express their political preferences (Krassa, 1988; McDonald et al., 2001).

When opinionated individuals face opposing views in the discordant opinion climate than where their views are supported, they are more likely to express themselves publicly to legitimize their views and to correct other views. In other words, people who have strong beliefs about, high interest in, and high involvement with an issue, referred as the hard-core by Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1977), tend not to let an opposing public climate silence them, but rather more likely to speak strongly in a mixed or incongruent opinion climate. The reverse pattern of the *Spiral of Silence* has been observed by various scholarly experimental and survey research (Davison, 1983; Eveland & Shah, 2003; Gunther, 2014). More importantly, the pattern is more prevalent among the Millennials and Generation Zs, and the trend is more consistent for educated young people, such as college students (Lin, Cao, & Zhang, 2017).

As newer generations join in society and politics, people are getting more polarized and opinionated (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008). Gunther (2014) argued that selective information processes in mixed opinion climates, where Millennials and Generation Zs live in, intensify counter attitudes and voices against different views and biases. Eveland and Shah (2003) elaborated more on that diversified conversations with 'similar others' increase bias against even

their own views. The tendency is getting stronger for the two youngest generations in the current political communication, and even more so for Generation Zs than Millennials (Parker et al., 2019).

The emerging political expression pattern of the newest generations is a coincided speculation about the louder speaker in mixed opinion environments that Noelle-Neumann (1977, 1979) and Davison (1983) anticipated about a half-century ago. Based on the inferences by the scholarly work on strong minority counter public voices, this study tests the reverse pattern of the *Spiral of Silence* among the two youngest generations in the American political sphere.

HYPOTHESES

Despite the similar traits of Millennials and Generation Zs, their political communication has evolved differently. The less vulnerable and more outspoken youngest generations in the political arena have deviated from the original propositions of the *Spiral of Silence* theory. The theory stipulates that people's perception of majority opinion, which can be gauged from projecting personal opinions upon the public, influences their willingness to speak publicly. Fear of isolation pushes individuals to avoid expression of their true feelings if these feelings do not match the majority public opinion. How does this relate to young voters in the past two decades in a diversified opinion environment? How do those opinionated hard-core individuals express themselves in divergent opinion environments? This study posits three different versions of the *Spiral of Silence* in political voices of young Millennial and Generation Z voters and propose the divergent models of the *Spiral of Silence.*

H1: ***Fading Spiral of Silence***:

1.1 Young voters are getting less likely to be vulnerable to public opinion climate and more willing to express their political voices regardless of opinion climates.

1.2 Young Generation Z voters are more likely to be politically expressive than young Millennial voters regardless of opinion climates.

H2: ***Dual Spiral of Voice***:

2.1 Young voters are getting less likely to be afraid of disapproval by public views and more willing to express their political voices both in congruent and incongruent opinion climates.

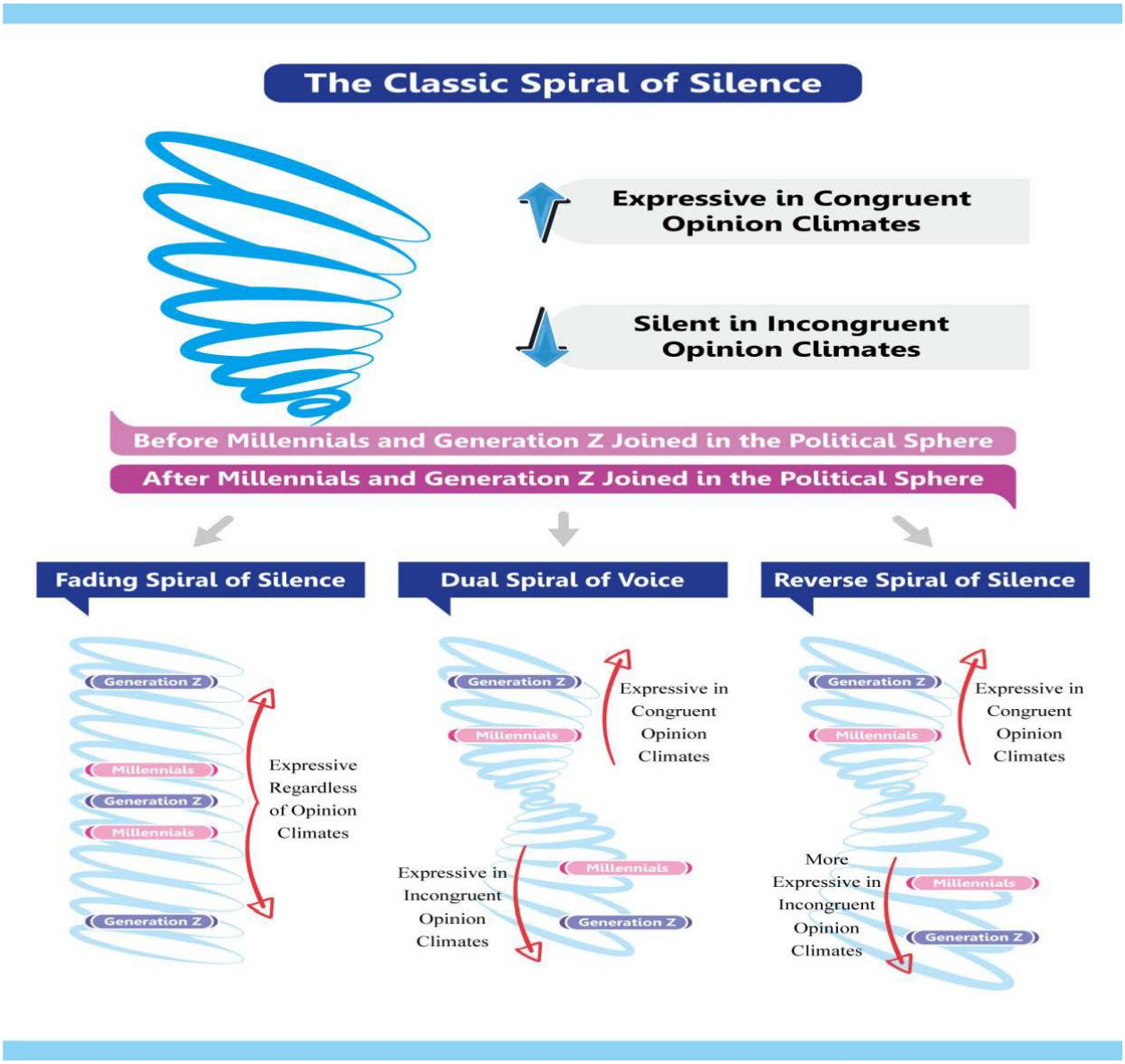
2.2 Young Generation Z voters are more likely to form a more distinctive dual spiral of voice than young Millennial voters across congruent and incongruent opinion climates.

H3: ***Reverse Spiral of Silence***:

3.1 Young voters are getting more expressive with their political voices against, and resistant to, incongruent public views.

3.2 Young Generation Z voters are more willing to express their political voices in a hostile opinion climate than young Millennial voters.

Figure 1 *The Divergent Models of the Spiral of Silence*



METHODS

Research Design

This longitudinal quasi-experimental research was designed by initiating experiments with young voters during the 2004 presidential election and repeating the same experiments with young voters during 2016 presidential election in order to observe the changes in young voters' political expression across the two generations, early Millennials and early Generation Zs. In both the 2004 and 2016 experiments, the participants (n = 81 in 2004; n = 114 in 2016) were

undergraduate college students at large Southern state universities. Participants who were outside the age ranges of Millennials in 2004 and Generation Z in 2016 were excluded from the study. The young voter participants in each generation in 2004 and 2016 were randomly assigned to one of two conditions and exposed to either pro-voting or anti-voting messages. Each set of stimuli, one with pro-voting messages and the other with anti-voting messages, was presented as representing majority opinion by telling participants that a public opinion poll conducted by Gallup found that a majority of voters shared the opinions presented in those messages. Each set of stimuli included three kinds of crafted messages: an article published by a university newspaper, an article published by *The New York Times*, and two opinion pieces/posts written by young voters (peers) via the internet. In the 2004 experiments with Millennial young voters, a pair of newspaper articles came from *The Concordian*, the official student newspaper of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. On October 1, 2004, this campus newspaper ran editorials expressing pro- and con-voting opinions in connection to the 2004 presidential election. One pro-voting and one anti-voting editorial were selected for this study. Participants in the pro-voting condition were exposed to the pro-voting editorial, and participants in the anti-voting condition were given the corresponding editorial. Another pair of similar pro- and con-voting messages was collected from less known media sources, such as blogs and local newspapers, but manipulated to look like they had been published on *The New York Times* Web site for source credibility in order to reduce bias and enhance the message impact on readers. This decision was made based on Pew surveys (2003) that identified the Internet as a favorite source of news for young people and *The New York Times* Web site as one of the most popular online news destinations. The last pair of stimuli were peer group opinions posted by young voters in the *You Tell Us* section of the *MTV Choose or Lose* website − by "Stacy, 23 years old" and "James, 25 years old," − and each made strong arguments for and against voting. Peer group messages were used in order to intensify the signal of surrounding public opinion based on evidence from research shown that young voters are susceptible to influence from family, friends and peers (Niemi & Hanmer, 2004). For a parallel comparison in the 2016 experiments with Generation Z young voters, the similar messages consisting of the same elements from the 2004 experiments were crafted and presented as dominant public views by Gallup polls for both pro-voting and anti-voting stimuli in the experiments. Likewise, these messages were labeled as articles by a university newspaper and the *New York Times* and as posts by young voters via *Rock the Vote Twitter* for the same reason of source credibility (Flanagin, 2014).

Participants were exposed to the assigned message stimuli after they were asked their political predispositions, such as political cynicism, interest, efficacy, and activities, and their personal attitudes toward voting, and before asking demographic characteristics and their willingness to express voting attitudes publicly. Participants were allowed to read the message stimuli at their own pace and then instructed to fill out the questionnaire. The experiments in 2004 were administered in a classroom setting in October before the general election, and the experiments in 2016 were also conducted in October before the general election, but via online survey utilizing Qualtrics, reflecting the trend and validity of experiment research. After excluding the participants who did not belong to the generational cohorts' age groups at the time of the experiments, the total valid sample sizes were 81 (n=40 in pro-voting message stimuli and n=41 in anti-voting message stimuli) for Millennial young voters from the 2004 experiments and 102 (n=59 in pro-voting message stimuli and n=43 in anti-voting message stimuli) for Generation Z young voters in the 2016 experiments.

The purpose of the experiment design was primarily meant to activate participants' attitudes about voting and politics in general and to create a public opinion climate for them to be aware of a majority opinion, by clearly indicating that each set of messages was the current majority public opinion about voting. Although the message exposures are unlikely to change people's attitudes and behaviors over a short period of time, the researchers expected the sets of messages to create a clear signal of opinion congruency or incongruence between public opinion climate and each participant's personal attitude and stimulate awareness of their willingness to express political views publicly. As scholars in the fields of memory, knowledge, and learning recommended (Tulving, 1985), the experiment design with three repeated stimuli of media sources was proven to be sufficient to signal public opinion pressure to participants. Ultimately, the study was designed to observe the deviating patterns of the *Spiral of Silence* in political expression over the last two decades, replicating the same experiments with young voters from two youngest generations, Millennials in 2004 and Generation Zs in 2016.

Measures & Variable Constructions

Media consumption. The media environments have changed over time and are given to and chosen by different generations. Millennials as young voters in 2004 had a different pattern of media consumption from Generation Z young voters in 2016. For instance, in 2004, social media were at the infant stage and started gradually to expand, but in 2016, they became the main channels for young voters' political information (Schill & Hendricks, 2017). Within a given media environment, media consumption patterns have been differently embedded into the two different generations of Millennials and Generation Z. Therefore, in this study, the media environments and consumption patterns were treated as part of generational components rather than being controlled for the analyses.

Political predispositions. A seven-item index of political cynicism with measures adopted from the American National Election Studies and from previous research done by Agger, Goldstein, and Pearl (1961) were created on a scale of 5 with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha value of .73 (see Appendix). A seven-item index of political efficacy adopted from previous researchers (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000) was measured on a scale of 5 with a moderate Cronbach's alpha value of .78 (see Appendix). One question item of political interest about how much the respondents were interested in the presidential campaign was sufficient to measure the level of political interest in the analyses of political attitudes about voting and adopted for this study (See Appendix). A seven-item index of political participation related to campaign activities from donation to persuasion adopted from previous researchers (Kaid et al., 2000) was created by counting the total number of campaign activities to measure the overall level of the respondents' political participation (See Appendix). These political predispositions are derived from both generational and individual traits, and thus were included as covariates and controlled in the analyses.

Self view. Self-attitudes about voting were accessed by asking the respondents how important voting is in the presidential election in each year on a scale of 5, from 1 'not important at all' to 5 'extremely important.' The respondents who chose between 1 and 3 were categorized as 'anti-voting' attitude holders and the respondents who answered 4 or 5 were categorized as 'pro-voting' opinion holders. The independent and interactive effects of the dichotomous variable of

self-voting attitudes with given majority opinion stimuli were included and evaluated in the analyses to determine the status and effect of opinion congruence and incongruence on political voices (see Appendix). Respondents whose voting attitudes aligned with the message stimuli were classified as majority opinion holders, while those with opposing attitudes were considered minority opinion holders. For instance, in the pro-voting message exposure group, participants with positive personal attitudes about voting were categorized as the majority opinion holders, and respondents who expressed negative attitudes toward voting as the minority opinion holders. In the anti-voting message exposure group, participants with negative personal attitudes about voting were categorized as the majority opinion holders, while respondents who expressed positive attitudes toward voting as the minority opinion holders.

Willingness to speak. Noelle-Neumann's original question of willingness to express opinions in public (1974) was adopted verbatim in this study. The current study asked participants' willingness to express their opinions about voting in online or in person publicly on a scale ranging from 1 (not willing) to 5 (very willing) and analyzed it as the dependent variable in the analyses (see Appendix).

Demographics. The demographic backgrounds of the Millennial young voters in 2004 and Generation Z young voters in 2016 in the study were consistent. The mean ages of the Millennial and Generation Z participants were 20.37 (SE=.20) and 19.64 (SE=.12) respectively. In both experiments, there were more female participants (64.2% in 2004 and 72% in 2016) than male participants (35.8% in 2004 and 28% in 2016). The party affiliations were also similarly divided among the participants in 2004 and 2016. There were 42% Democrats, 35.8% Republicans, and 22.2% Independents among the Millennial participants, and 31.2% Democrats, 36.6% Republicans, and 32.2% Independents among the Generation Z participants. These demographic backgrounds as young voters were similar among the participants of the two generations, and thus these demographics were considered as the common characteristics of the target population of this study, young voters, rather than being controlled for the analyses.

RESULTS

Political Predisposition and Media Consumption

Millennials and Generation Zs have different bags of mixtures with both 'given' and 'chosen' media consumptions and generational political characteristics. As the new media generation, Millennials started to use the internet (7.4%) as their main source of political information, but the traditional media, such as TV (61.7%) and newspapers (27.2%), were still dominant sources of political information for Millennial young voters in 2004. As the media landscape changed dramatically and rapidly, the majority of young Generation Z voters (59.6%) identified the internet and social media as their primary sources of political information, followed by other various sources such as news feed apps (19.3%) and TV (14.9%). The different patterns of political information consumption between Millennials and Generation Zs reflect the changes in media technology and the availability of social media (χ^2=107.879, p≤.001) (See Table 1). Accordingly, young Generation Z voters (40.4%) were more likely to use the internet for their political expressions and discussions than young Millennial voters (24.7%) (χ^2=5.186, p≤.023), while Millennials (17.3%) were more likely to express and share their views in public meetings

than Generation Zs (7.9%) (χ^2=4.013, p≤.045). Moreover, young Millennial voters were predominantly more likely to have political talk with people within their primary networks (93.8%), such as family, friends, and co-workers, compared to young Generation Z voters (81.6%) (χ^2=6.148, p≤.013). However, both generations were unlikely to express themselves politically via traditional media, such as TV, radio, and print (See Table 2).

Under the differently 'given' media environment and 'chosen' media consumption over time, young voters across the two generations showed both common and different political predispositions. Consistent with the youth in the previous generations (Kaid et al., 2007), both Millennial and Generation Z young voters (M=3.73, SE=.07 and M=3.69, SE=.05 respectively) showed somewhat cynical political attitudes (See Table 3 and Appendix). However, Millennials had much higher political interest (M=4.21, SE=.10) and political efficacy (M=3.49, SE=.08), and engaged in more political activities (M=2.78, SE=.18) than the young voters of the following Generation Z (M=3.15, SE=.11, t=7.162, p≤.001; M=3.10, SE=.06, t=3.826, p≤.001; and M=1.33, SE=.13, t=6.711, p≤.001 respectively) (See Table 3 and Appendix).

Political Voice of Un-Silent Generations

Fading Spiral of Silence. Unlike the argument in the original theory of the *Spiral of Silence* that people who share the views of the majority public are more likely to voice their opinions, while individuals with differing beliefs tend to remain silent, there was a fading *Spiral of Silence* effect among young Millennial and Generation Z voters. The results showed that the young voters of both generations tended to be less vulnerable to public opinion climates and still voiced their political views regardless of public opinion pressure, and that the Generation Z young voters were more likely to be politically expressive than the Millennial young voters in any opinion climate. As posited in Hypothesis 1, there were fading *Spiral of Silence* effects among young voters' political voices as newer generations join in the political sphere for the last two decades. The Generation Z young voters (M=3.29, SE=.10) were more willing to express their political views than were the Millennial young voters (M=3.09, SE=.15) regardless of opinion climates (F=10.259, p≤.002, See Tables 4 & 5).

Dual Spiral of Voice. These newly arising youth voices have gradually invaded even the silent sphere of political discordance. Unlike the general public's stronger tendency of expressing opinions in supportive public environments rather than in hostile opinion moods, young voters were not afraid of raising their voice against the majority public opinion. As a result, there were dual *Spiral of Voice* effects among young voters of the two newest generations, and they were more willing to express their political voices both in congruent and incongruent opinion climates. As expected in Hypothesis 2, both Millennial and Generation Z young voters tended to voice their opinions regardless of the surrounding public views, and they did not shy away in the incongruent opinion climate, creating another spiral of un-silent minority voice. Moreover, young Generation Zs were more likely to speak up towards both ends of the opinions (M=3.05, SE=.15 for anti-voting attitude and M=3.36, SE=.12 for pro-voting attitude), thus creating stronger dual spirals of counter views than young Millennials (M=2.25, SE=.41 for anti-voting attitude and M=3.18, SE=.16 for pro-voting attitude) (F=4.431, p≤.037, See Tables 4 & 5).

Reverse Spiral of Silence. As expected in Hypothesis 3, the ANCOVA results showed the increasing reverse *Spiral of Silence* effect in young Millennial and Generation Z voters' political expressions and detected even more deviating reverse *Spiral of Silence* effects between the two newest generations who were equipped with different 'given' and 'chosen' media and political characteristics. Young Millennial voters in 2004 were more likely to be expressive in the congruent public climate (M=3.30, SE=.23 for pro-voting attitude holders in pro-voting message exposures and M=2.60, SE=.51 for anti-voting attitude holders in anti-voting message exposures) than in the incongruent opinion climate (M=3.06, SE=.21 for pro-voting attitude holders in anti-voting message exposures and M=1.67, SE=.67 for anti-voting attitude holders in pro-voting message exposures). Regardless of public opinion pressure, however, young Millennial voters were more willing to express their pro-voting attitudes (M=3.30, SE=.23 in pro-voting message exposures and M=3.06, SE=.21 in anti-voting message exposures) rather than anti-voting attitudes (M=1.67, SE=.67 in pro-voting message exposures and M=2.60, SE=.51 in anti-voting message exposures) in both congruent and incongruent public opinion climates. The higher willingness of young Millennial voters to express their pro-voting attitudes in the discordant opinion environment clearly showed the reverse *Spiral of Silence* effect. Furthermore, young Generation Z voters were more resistant to external opinion climates and willing to express their attitudes against the apparent public opinions in the incongruent opinion climate than in the congruent opinion climate. Among young Generation Zs, anti-voting opinion holders in pro-voting message exposures (M=3.30, SE=.19) and pro-voting attitude holders in anti-voting message exposures (M=3.61, SE=.17) were more willing to express their opposing views against the majority public opinion than pro-voting opinion holders in pro-voting message exposures (M=3.18, SE=.17) and anti-voting attitude holders in anti-voting message exposures (M=2.82, SE=.22). This tendency of reverse *Spiral of Silence* was more consistent and stronger among young Generation Zs than in young Millennials ($F=4.431$, $p\leq.037$). In other words, the Generation Z young voters were more willing to express their political views in the discordant opinion environment where their views were opposed rather than in the supportive opinion climate, and this reverse *Spiral of Silence* effect appeared more consistently in Generation Z young voters than in Millennial young voters, confirming increasing the reverse *Spiral of Silence* effect (See Tables 4 & 5).

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore how the *Spiral of Silence* applies to the willingness of young Millennial voters in 2004 and young Generation Z voters in 2016 to voice political opinions. Millennials and Generation Z are not only the youngest generations of voting age in the U.S., but also the largest and most racially diverse current living generations (U.S. Census, 2022). The media environment, which is one of the critical factors in the *Spiral of Silence* theory, with media acting as the public's source of assessing the opinion climate, has also changed dramatically during the lifespan of these two generations.

Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, this study found that youth Millennials and Generation Zs under the awareness of public opinion are willing to express their political voices in both agreement and discordance. In 2004, about 52.4% of the majority opinion voters claimed they were willing to voice their opinions, but also 59% of the minority opinion holders. In 2016, 43.2% of the majority opinion holders as well as 57% of the minority opinion holders said they

were willing to speak publicly. These percentages as well as the other statistics presented in the results section show that both Millennial and Generation Z young voters are less likely to comply with the propositions of the classic *Spiral of Silence* theory. Instead, the patterns of the dual *Spiral of Silence* (with people willing to express their opinions in both congruent and opposite environments) and the reverse *Spiral of Silence* (with people more willing to express an opinion in incongruent environments rather than similar ones) apply better. These findings also contradict the prevalent assumptions by previous research into young voters that this category of the electorate is politically cynical, uninformed, and emotionally vulnerable, and shy away from the public sphere.

Young Millennials and Generation Zs' willingness to speak out regardless of their similarity to the perceived dominant public opinion environment can be explained by changes in these generations' political views and attitudes. Both generational cohorts expressed strong opinions which might be mediating the fear of isolation and other deterrents to public speaking. Prior research into the *Spiral of Silence* theory discovered that so-called "hard-core individuals" (individuals with strong personal opinions) are less likely to be influenced by the majority opinion climate, and in fact such individuals might completely escape public pressure to remain silent (Matthes, Morrison, & Schemer, 2010). For example, a three-survey study found that the public opinion has no silencing effect on individuals with high attitude certainty (Matthes et al., 2010).

Along with, Millennial young voters as the internet generation and Generation Z young voters as the social media generation share many similarities in the political arena, especially when compared to previous generations (Parker et al., 2019). However, there are also important differences and changes in political information consumption habits and political attitudes and behaviors between the two youngest American voting generations. Through our findings, we propose that the young voters from later generations are less vulnerable to public views and others' disapprovals, and thus show more divergent and opinionated political views. Moreover, they are more outspoken when their views are opposed in an opposing opinion climate than in a congruent climate. This could be due, in part, to the diversified media environment Generation Zs grew up with. It is also possible that these voters who grew up online and on social media platforms feel empowered to express their opinions in real life just as they would do so online under the perceived safety of an online profile, as other studies have documented (Malaspina, 2014; Mutz, 1998). We suggest that future studies need to further investigate what factors could be decreasing Generation Z voters' fear of speaking out in diverging public opinion climates.

Limited to the purpose and parameter of the study, the current study did not explore why people might choose to remain silent or outspoken across congruent and discordant opinion climates. The *Spiral of Silence* theory lists the factors impeding someone's willingness to speak in public, including fear of isolation, group affiliation, individual emotional and cognitive factors, and several other variables (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1979). A future study needs to assess the potential factors that both hinder and foster people's willingness or unwillingness to express political opinions. In addition, a part of pro-voting attributes in the study might attribute to the issue we chose for this experiment. Since the 2000 election was decided by a mere 537 vote-difference, voting has been touted as one of the most patriotic civic duties of American citizens. People might shy away from expressing voting apathy opinions in public due to fear of public

shaming (Kropf, 2016). Other research also found that perceived issue importance is another factor that strengthens someone's willingness to speak out regardless of the public opinion environment (Moy et al., 2001). Given that our study questions participants on their willingness to speak about voting, an issue engrained in every U.S. citizen as the foundation of American democracy, it is possible that our findings were mediated by this issue effect. We encourage future experiment studies to measure the effect of the *Spiral of Silence* on various political and social issues for a better reliability.

Despite the limitations of the study, the experimental methodology- in which subjects were made aware of the majority opinion climate through manipulated media content, and the questionnaire were specifically developed to measure attitudes toward voting, replicating Noelle-Neumann's original study (1974) - well justifies the reliable replication of the classic *Spiral of Silence* theory a half-century later and contributes to the field of public opinion research in the new media era in new American society. Various fine research designs and multiple replications of the *Spiral of Silence* theory need to be continuously explored to understand the evolving communication of new political actors and voices, given that young voters are still the most fluctuating and permeable age groups who can reshape the political climate of our time.

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APPENDIX

1. *Cynicism Index* (Each measured on a 5-point scale, 1 Strongly Disagree – 5 Strongly Agree)
   - One never knows what politicians think.
   - One can be confident that politicians always do the right thing. (reverse coding)
   - Politicians quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over.
   - Politicians are more interested in power than in what people think
   - One can always trust what politicians say. (reverse coding)
   - The government is run for the benefit of all. (reverse coding)
   - People are frequently manipulated by politicians.

   * Cronbach's alpha = .73

2. *Political Efficacy Index* (Each measured on a 5-point scale, 1 Strongly Disagree – 5 Strongly Agree)
   - People can influence what the government does.
   - I don't think people in the government care much about what people like my family think. (reverse coding)
   - Citizens don't have a chance to say what they think about running the government. (reverse coding)
   - What happens in the government will happen no matter what people do. (reverse coding)
   - Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians think. (reverse coding)
   - People like me don't have any say about what the government does. (reverse coding)
   - Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on. (reverse coding)

   * Cronbach's alpha = .78

3. *Political Interest* (Measured on a 5-point scale, 1 Not Interested At All – 5 Very Interested)
   - How interested would you say you are in the presidential campaign?

4. *Political Participation* (Sum of the total political activities on a 7-point scale, 0 No – 1 Yes)
   - I visited my candidate's web site.
   - I wore a button or put a sticker on my car.
   - I gave money to help a candidate.
   - I worked for my candidate campaign.
   - I attended a political meeting/rally.
   - I defended my candidate in front of people who criticized him.
   - I tried to influence others to vote for my candidate.

5. *Self-Attitude about Voting* (Measured on a 5-point scale, 1 Not Important At All – 5 Extremely Important)
   - How important is voting in the 2004 (or 2016) presidential election?
     * Anti-voting opinion holders (1-3) vs. Pro-voting opinion holders (4-5)

6. *Spiral of Silence Question* (Measured on a 5-point scale, 1 Not Willing – 5 Very Willing)

- How willing are you to engage in public (online or in-person) discussions to express your thoughts on voting?

Table 1. Priority Sources of Political Information

	Political Information Sources				
Generation	**TV**	**Radio**	**Newspaper**	**Internet & Social media**	**Others**
Millennials	61.7%	3.7%	27.2%	7.4%	0.0%
Generation Zs	14.9%	5.3%	0.9%	59.6%	19.3%

χ^2=107.879, p≤.001

Table 2. Channels for Political Expression

	Political Expression Channels			
Generation	**Family/Friends/Co-workers**	**TV/Radio/Print**	**Internet**	**Public Meeting**
Millennials	93.8%	2.5%	24.7%	17.3%
Generation Zs	81.6%	0.9%	40.4%	7.9%
	χ^2=6.148, p≤.013	χ^2=0.571, p≤.374	χ^2=5.186, p≤.023	χ^2=4.013, p≤.045

Table 3. Political Predispositions

	Political Predispositions			
Generation	**Political Efficacy Mean (Std. Error)**	**Political Cynicism Mean (Std. Error)**	**Political Interest Mean (Std. Error)**	**Political Participation Mean (Std. Error)**
Millennials	3.49 (.08)	3.73 (.07)	4.21 (.10)	2.78 (.18)
Generation Zs	3.10 (.06)	3.69 (.05)	3.15 (.11)	1.33 (.13)
	t=3.826, p≤.001	t=0.489, p≤.626	t=7.162, p≤.001	t=6.711, p≤.001
	min.=1, max.=5	min.=1, max.=5	min.=1, max.=5	min.=1, max.=7

Table 4. ANCOVA Test on Willingness for Political Expression

Indicators	**F**	**p**
Intercept	11.004	0.001
Political Participation	10.086	0.002
Political Interest	2.029	0.156
Political Efficacy	1.112	0.293
Political Cynicism	0.563	0.454
Generation (Millennials vs. Generation Zs)	10.259	0.002
Self Pro- vs. Anti-Voting Attitude	3.159	0.077
Exposure to Pro- vs. Anti-Voting Public Opinion	0.135	0.714
Generation * Self View	1.484	0.225
Generation * Exposure	0.585	0.446

Self View * Exposure	0.043	0.837
Generation * Self View * Exposure	4.431	0.037
Error	208.578	
Total	2084.750	

R Squared=.178 (Adjusted R Squared=.124)

Table 5. Means of Willingness for Political Expression

Generation	Self View	Public Opinion Exposure	Mean (Std. Error)
Millennials	Anti-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	1.67 (.67)
		Anti-Voting Messages	2.60 (.51)
		Total	2.25 (.41)
	Pro-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	3.30 (.23)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.06 (.21)
		Total	3.18 (.16)
	Total	Pro-Voting Messages	3.18 (.23)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.00 (.20)
		Total	3.09 (.15)
Generation Zs	Anti-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	3.30 (.19)
		Anti-Voting Messages	2.82 (.22)
		Total	3.05 (.15)
	Pro-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	3.18 (.17)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.61 (.17)
		Total	3.36 (.12)
	Total	Pro-Voting Messages	3.21 (.14)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.40 (.14)
		Total	3.29 (.10)
Total	Anti-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	2.92 (.25)
		Anti-Voting Messages	2.75 (.21)
		Total	2.83 (.16)
	Pro-Voting Attitudes	Pro-Voting Messages	3.23 (.14)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.31 (.14)
		Total	3.27 (.10)
	Total	Pro-Voting Messages	3.19 (.12)
		Anti-Voting Messages	3.20 (.12)
		Total	3.20 (.09)

min.=1, max.=5

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