

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Crime Attitudes of the Millennial Generation

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Increased interest in the voting behaviors of Millennials has led to research that confirms that they are typically and becoming more Liberal in their politics as well as less traditionally religious. By extension, this study attempted to determine whether or not these trends toward liberality were also reflected in attitudes of punitiveness through the examination of a burglary scenario and death penalty attitudes. This study also sought to answer whether punitive attitudes were racially motivated by utilizing racially distinct burglars in two different scenarios. Survey data from 829 students at a Midwestern university confirms self-reporting as highly Democratic in their voting preferences but still largely Conservative-leaning. Millennials did not demonstrate highly punitive statements towards the burglary suspect or indicate that their judgments were based upon the suspect's racial identity. Comparison with GSS data regarding death penalty attitudes also showed that these Millennials were less punitive than their same-age peers throughout recent years and that opposition towards the death penalty appears to be on the rise.