

**Generational Divide:
Activating Generational Identities with a Survey Experimental Approach**

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Dissertation Chapter

ABSTRACT

While social identities are often studied in the field of political psychology, one area left largely ignored is the social category of age. Focusing on generation as a social category (e.g., Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z), I contend that generations have become social identities in recent years, which means that they can also have political consequences when activated in certain settings. I also investigate whether and when generational identities have measurable political effects. In this paper, I use two novel survey experiments to investigate whether people will increase in the strength of their generational identity when faced with a threatening cue against their generational group and see if that threat spurs changes to certain political attitudes. Study 1 illustrates that exposure to a threatening stimulus against one's generational group is associated with increased support for within-generation policies (i.e., Social Security, Student Loan Forgiveness). Study 2 connects the homelessness crisis in the United States with generational identities to show that exposure accentuating the impact of homelessness on one's generational cohort correlates with heightened support for policies aimed at addressing homelessness. These patterns are mediated by a sense of solidarity and similarity in the generational group and show stronger associations within the Baby Boomer generation as the discourse surrounding generations has crystallized for this group.

Keywords: generations and politics, social identity theory, American political attitudes, intergroup politics, survey experiment

Word Count: 11299 words

Social identities divide American society in multiple ways, whether that is by race (e.g., Omi and Winant 2015; Kinder and Kam 2010), ethnicity (e.g., Beltran 2010; Mora 2014), religion (e.g., Margolis 2018), gender and sexual orientation, political party identifications (e.g., Campbell, et al. 1960; Mason 2018), or geographic location (Hochschild 2016; Cramer 2016). The focus of the scholarship has been to understand social hierarchies, including their development, preservation, and consequences of their fixture (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Sidanius et al. 1997; Jost 2019). Despite the wide array of research on social identities and intergroup politics, one potential identity that has been largely overlooked by researchers is that of age cohorts or generations.

There are many possible reasons that age-based groups have been ignored by researchers. Other social categories like race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic levels are more salient in American society. In addition, detractors might argue that generations are merely social constructions without an inherent meaning for society, but researchers have been forthcoming that race, ethnicity, and other readily accepted social identities are also social constructions (e.g., Turner et al. 1987). Perhaps the blind spot in the research could be the fact that age has always been considered a descriptive category rather than a substantive category with which people can identify. In this vein, it is more difficult for age-based social categories to emerge because people are only temporarily “young” or “middle-aged.” Besides, singular birthyear cohorts are too small of groups and too vast in number to classify as a meaningful identity. However, recent discussions surrounding birthyear age cohorts defined by generational labels emerged and have possibly given more stock to generations as a social group. Is it possible that one’s generation has become more than a descriptive label and developed into a political identity proper? If they have evolved beyond the descriptive labels, under what conditions do generations express as a social identity with political consequences?

Prior research indicates that humans trend toward distinguishing themselves between in-groups and out-groups, even if these divisions are trivial or artificial (Sherif et al. 1988; Tajfel et al. 1971). These “minimal group” studies suggest humans distinguish between those who are like themselves and those who are outsiders through a series of cognitive processes that produce in-group favoritism, which often underpins intergroup conflict (Tajfel 1981). This simple act of distinguishing “us” versus “them” allows humans to develop social identities, which provide people with a sense of who they are based on their various group memberships within society (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Kinder and Kam 2010). If humans naturally sort themselves into distinguishable groups based on minimal distinctions, it is reasonable that age-based generations can also be meaningful divisions between groups. If the concept of “generations” has in fact become pervasive in the United States in recent years, what prevents generations from becoming psychologically pertinent enough to emerge as identities themselves?

Using literature on social identity theory and related work, age-based generations can be defined as psychological concepts themselves. According to this scholarship, humans differentiate themselves and others into similar and dissimilar groups, and this in-group favoritism and out-group derogation has psychological and sociological implications for humans. This perspective can help explain how age-based considerations become a distinct social category, but it is less clear about how this new identity becomes politically relevant (Huddy 2013). Researchers in recent decades have applied these intergroup psychological theories to political science due to the political entrepreneurship of politicians and the implications of public policy spaces on social groups. However, I have not found any indication that researchers have applied intergroup conflict theories with politics and *generations*.

This paper aims to isolate the political psychology of generational identities, focusing on

the circumstances under which they matter for politics. Specifically, I build upon the study of social identity theory and its offshoots by testing whether people increasingly identify with their generation membership in politically consequential ways when faced with a threat against their generational group in an experimental setting. Generational memberships may influence how people conceptualize themselves, members of their in-groups, and members of the out-group. Considering that people can form minimal groups based meaningless distinctions (Tajfel et al. 1971; Sherif, et al. 1988), it follows that a more salient group –generations– should also be observable. In this paper, I draw upon social identity theory and its offshoots to make my argument that generations have crystallized into social identities that are measurable in a survey experimental setting. Due to previous work illustrating that identity threat corresponds with greater feelings of group solidarity (e.g., Coser 1956; LeVine and Campbell 1972; Ethier and Deaux 1994), it behooves me to focus on measuring generations as identities when in the presence of group threat. I hypothesize that respondents receiving a threatening cue will show increased solidarity and feelings of similarity with their generation than at baseline. In addition, I hypothesize that members of the more salient generations (“Baby Boomers” and “Millennials”) will conceptualize themselves as members of their generation at higher rates than others. I argue that the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations will identify with their generation at higher rates than Generation X due to the salience of those two membership groups within the news cycle and general discourse.

In this paper, I use two novel survey experiments to demonstrate that individuals show greater group solidarity with their generational in-group in response to a threat against their generational group. These two studies allow me, in part, to isolate and evaluate the viability of processes and mechanisms related to generational identities’ political effects. By using a mediation

design, I test the viability of the pathway from treatment influencing public policy attitudes. In particular, Study 1 demonstrates that a threat to one's generational identity corresponds to an increase in an individual's feelings of in-group solidarity, all else equal. In-group solidarity then acts as a mediator for downstream effects in the experiments as in-group solidarity also correlates with increased support for public policies targeting specific generational groups. This demonstrates that generational identities can have consequences in relation to political attitudes. In addition, Study 2 moves beyond the generational prime and uses a threatening treatment against various generational groups to demonstrate that a threat against one's personal generational identity correlates both with in-group similarity and increased support for policies aiding in homelessness when the homelessness crisis is framed in terms of their personal generational identity. Paired with the results of both Study 1 and 2, I provide a sensitivity analysis to estimate the mediation models using a causal inference framework (Imai and Yamamoto 2013). The paper concludes with a discussion of the results and the significance for what this can mean in the future for generations as a social identity and the effects that political entrepreneurship can have on Americans.

What We Know (And Do Not Know) About Generations and Politics

The study of generations as a social category has largely been constrained to the field of sociology. The sociological literature centers on Karl Mannheim's seminal Theory of Generations, which argues that a generation emerges due to individuals being "similarly located" in their position of experiencing the same socio-political events at similar points in their life, whether that be youth, adulthood, or old age (Mannheim 1952[1928]). This offers a framework for scholars to follow regarding generations and identity formation, but it lacks a political lens that guides much

of society. For decades, sociologists argued that the concept of generations as proposed by Mannheim was weak or “marginal” within the sociology literature (Pilcher 1994). However, recent work (e.g., Aboim and Vasconcelos 2014; Brannen 2003; Purhonen 2016; Edmunds and Turner 2002) has emerged on the sociology of generations due to the popularity of generations within the public discourse (White 2013). If public discourse guided the scholarship in sociology to consider generations as a concept, it seems that political science might lag behind. Recent work suggests that generations could connect to social change due to the intergroup conflict between generations (Turner 2002). Social change is invariably tied to politics, so it is worthwhile to continue this endeavor into the field of political science. The study of generations in sociology also seemed to focus largely on generations as a *mechanism* of cultural, material, and social transmittance (Edmunds and Turner 2002; Brannen 2003) without delving into the *identity* that may form due to this transfer of socially ingrained habits and dispositions. I argue that the limitations of Mannheim’s Theory of Generations are a blind spot of scholars to transfer the theory into the realm of political science. Instead of focusing on generations entirely as a sociological construct, I aim to translate these insights to mass politics by connecting Mannheim’s ideas to those of psychology, group conflict, and social identity theory.

I believe that generations have significantly entered the public discourse in recent years, and as such, they have taken on group-based identity characteristics. In fact, recent research by Kevin Munger explores the political power of the Baby Boomer generation and how it relates to age-based political and cultural divides (Munger 2022). While this research focuses on generational divides and cultural divisions, including media and digital consumption patterns, I aim to study generations from the perspective of social identities. As the sociology literature has already indicated that generations have begun forming as groups, I intend to continue introducing

this idea to the political science and psychology canons and argue that generational cohorts can exist as an identity with political ramifications.

My contribution in this paper is to bridge the gap between the sociological literature on generations and the social identity literature of intergroup dynamics. While it is clear in sociology that generations form as distinct age cohorts that experienced similar socio-cultural events at similar points in their life, this has not been transferred to political science by way of social identity theory. Political scientists have put more emphasis on the importance of social groups in political processes and behaviors, but political scientists have not focused on the political implications of *generations* as a social group. I intend to bridge that gap and use social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel and Turner 1979; Kinder and Kam 2010) and self-categorization theory (Turner, et al. 1994; Brewer 2017) to fill in the gaps between these theoretical frameworks.

Toward a Theory of Generational Identities in Politics

As these generational labels become increasingly commonplace and members of each generation turn to different forms of media, news, and entertainment, should we see identity cleavages between members of different age groups? I argue that differences between generations are potentially much more pronounced than one thinks due to the increased salience of these labels in recent years, and as such, we should be able to detect differentiation between these groups through a combination of measures. The increased media coverage of these generational labels helped crystallize their presence within the American political order, and this group formation is sufficient for voters to distinguish an “us” versus “them.” Preliminary data from Google’s “Books Ngram Viewer” and “Google Trends” illustrates descriptively that generational labels have appeared in books and web searches at higher rates in recent years than mere decades ago (see

Figures 1 and 2). This illustrates that generational labels took root and are appearing more often now than in the past. If generational labels are being written about and searched on Google at higher rates now than in even 2016, it would follow that Americans are discussing their generational identities more often, which in turn makes the identity more salient.

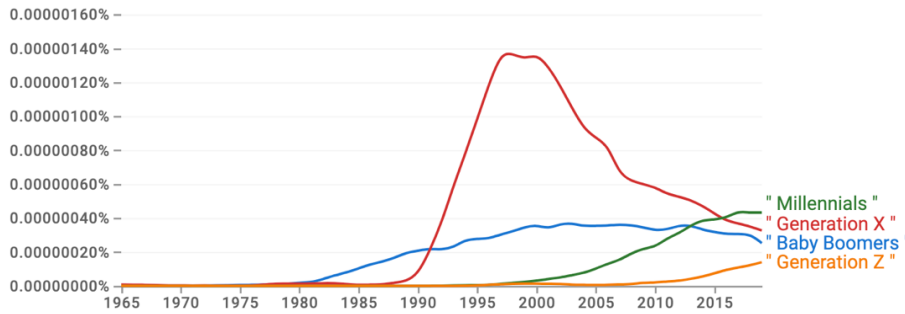


Figure 1: Google Books Ngram Viewer: Generational Labels in Books over Time

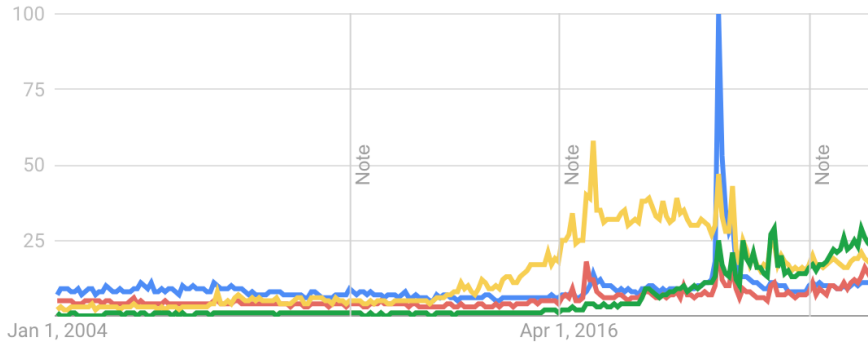


Figure 2: Google Trends: Web Search Results of Generational Labels

As an extension of the idea that generations are talked about more in contemporary dialogue, Figure 3 illustrates the proportion of Americans that correctly identified their generational group based on their birthyear. In a 2015 survey on generational identity, researchers from the Pew Research Center found that 79% of Baby Boomers, 58% of members of Generation X, and 40% of Millennials correctly identified the generation that corresponds with their birthyear

(Doherty, Kiley, Tyson, and Jameson 2015). These numbers jump across the board in a YouGov survey in 2020, which found that 81% of Baby Boomers, 64% of Generation X, and 63% of Millennials correctly identified with their generational group (Munger and Plutzer 2023). In Study 1 from my survey experiments collected by Dynata in May 2022, my observational data indicates that 89% of Baby Boomers, 74% of Generation X, and 59% of Millennials correctly identified with their group; Study 2 collected by CINT in February 2023 continued the increasing trend to show that 93% of Baby Boomers, 81% of Generation X, and 68% of Millennials identified with the correct generation. This descriptively illustrates that there is an upward trajectory of group identity among Americans with one exception being Millennials in Study 1 from 2022.

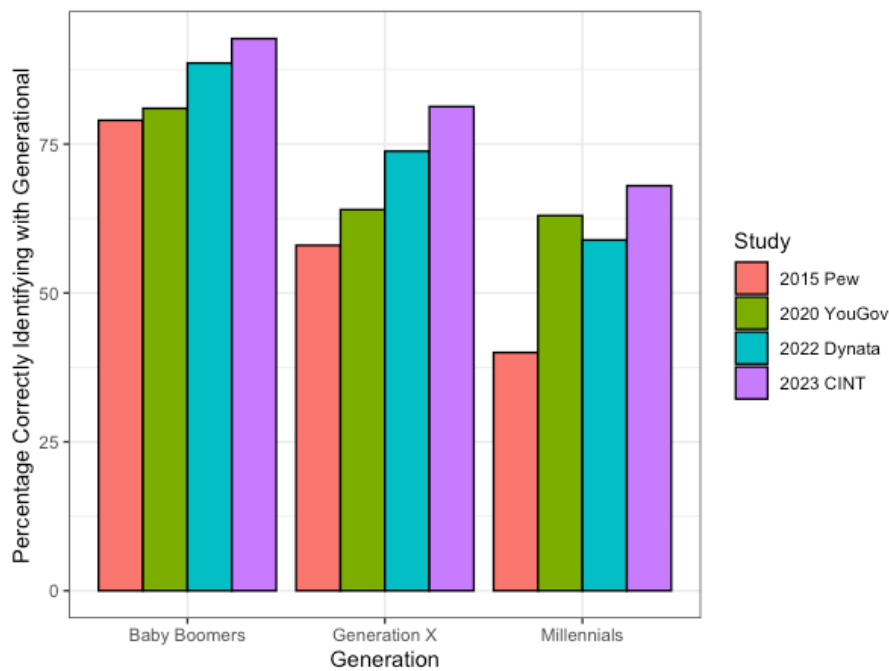


Figure 3: Self-Identification with Generations, Pew 2015, YouGov 2020, Dynata 2022, CINT 2023

My argument begs the question about how strongly people are willing to identify with their generational label with all other identities remaining equal. In developing the Theory of Generational Identities in Politics, I need to turn to the political psychology literature to explain

how social identity theory and self-categorization theory help us understand intergroup dynamics, identity categories, and how identities relate to politics.

The Political Psychology of Generational Identities

To understand generational identities, we need to first focus on how social identity theory and self-categorization theory create a framework that teaches us about group categorization, identity development, in-group favoritism, out-group derogation, and the social construction of identities. We should first mention briefly how the presence of groups leads to feelings of belonging due to group membership. Group membership is the belonging to a group regardless of an internalized sense of membership within the group (Huddy 2001). Group membership should be clear even if individuals do not *feel* like they belong to the group. In terms of this, all Americans would belong to one generational group whether or not they truly *identify* with that group.

This paves the way for another important aspect of social identity theory: categorization. Researchers have concluded that groups are created due to an intrinsic need by humans to categorize themselves and others (Tajfel et al. 1971). These categories allow humans to better understand themselves, their environment, and their place within the social ordering. Additionally, group belonging sends cues to individuals regarding how they should behave as a member of the group. The social identities of these groups come about due to the emotional connection that individuals derive from belonging to the group. Through this emotional connection as well as a positive sense of well-being, people use their group membership as core elements of their personal identity.

Some researchers have argued that a primary drive for humans is the need for inclusion while also maintaining differentiation (Brewer 1991). Thus, without social boundaries between

groups, it may be too easy to move between social groups. Individuals strive to both fit in with their groups but also differentiate themselves from others outside of the group. The requirement of inclusion of self and exclusion of outsiders creates yet another aspect of social identity theory: exclusive groups. Generational identities provide exclusivity explicitly because one can only be born in one year, so the demarcations between the generations make the identities exclusive to each other.

In self-categorization theory, we understand that humans strive for positive self-image and self-worth by joining various groups that they can assimilate into easily. Even though individuals derive positive affect from joining various social groups, there is a portion of individualism lost during the process. In particular, people hold positive feelings toward their individuation, so they do not want to be a member of a group without any kind of distinction. The balance between personal and social identities is key here (Turner et al. 1994).

One of the mechanisms in self-categorization theory is the concept that self-categorization varies enormously by the context. Depending on the frame of reference, some individuals are going to identify even more with their group identity, like when they are under threat, and other times they will associate more with their personal identity. Self-categorization requires active cognitive processing as the individuals assess themselves in situational contexts, which allows flexibility in personal identification but also categorizing others into their categories. Thus, one of the primary aspects of self-categorization theory as Turner and coauthors (1994) set out is that the categorization process is flexible and ongoing as the individual decides to place greater emphasis on personal identities or group identity, the “me” versus the “we.”

Another key aspect of social identity theory is the balance between in-group favoritism and out-group antagonism or derogation. Classically, social identity theory indicated that intergroup

conflict goes together with in-group favoritism. Recent work indicates though that many social groups put nearly all emphasis on in-group favoritism without hostility, antagonism, or derogation toward the out-group (Brewer 2017). Instead, any discrimination measured between an in-group and an out-group is because of in-group favoritism. Likely, generational groups follow this model of a heavier emphasis on in-group favoritism than out-group derogation. Since social identities are contextual and generations cut through many other types of identities, I expect that in-group favoritism is likely the mechanism guiding separation in group and policy attitudes, but I cannot rule out out-group derogation, as I lay them out in Hypotheses 2 and 3 (see Table 1).

Also needing discussion is the social construction of these social identities. In most—if not all—cases, identities are inherently meaningless without the social construction that guides humans’ thoughts and opinions about the groups. Social constructivism is the notion that social processes give meaning to concepts rather than the other way around (Huddy 2001). Since social identities and group categorization can be created among humans arbitrarily, it is theoretically possible that any identifying characteristic can become a relevant and salient identity. In fact, some researchers argue that it is difficult to understand the consequences of these groups until we better understand the individual group members’ personal subjective meanings of the identity (Billig 1995). As such, I argue that social identities can become socially constructed and develop over time as members of groups place stronger emphasis and more positive meaning on their group membership. This leads me to Hypothesis 1 (see Table 1).

Perhaps most important to ensuring group identity success is the question of the identity’s salience. It is clear that individuals shift between individual and social identities continuously due to the salience of their identity in varying situations (Turner et al. 1987). Whenever a situation provides “clarity” or “separateness” to distinguish one group from a different category, we would

say that the salience is heightened in that situation (ibid.). Thus, salience is situational, and it is strongest when the “clarity” or “separation” are at their highest. It is also important to note too that people have various identities, but the salience of each has limits. Surprisingly, research shows that members of ethnic and racial minorities identify primarily as American and secondarily as a member of their racial or ethnic group (Citrin, et al. 2001; Sears and Henry 1999). An example like this indicates that newly formed social identities will likely sit lower in importance in an individual’s day-to-day life. That said, any identity can become highly salient under the appropriate circumstances. Due to this research and anecdotal experiences, this leads to Hypothesis 4 that Millennials and Baby Boomers should show the highest amount of in-group solidarity and in-group favoritism due to the salience of these identities in public discourse.

TABLE 1: Hypotheses for Survey Experiments	
H1	Generational social identities have formed in measurable ways throughout the American public.
H2	Voters’ positive attitudes toward in-group generational policies will increase following a threat against their generational group.
H3	Voters’ positive attitudes toward <i>out-group</i> generational policies will <i>decrease</i> following a threat against their generational group.
H4	Baby Boomers and Millennials will show greater in-group solidarity and consequently more in-group favoritism than Generation X.

Methods

Before describing the experimental design, I should specify that these studies focus on the generational labels as defined by the Pew Research Center: Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945), Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2014). The generational cutoffs are listed in Table 2. Since generations are socially constructed

and not defined by specific genotypic or obviously phenotypic traits, I argue that it is necessary to use the generational framework that is most often used in popular discourse.

Generations	Start Year	End Year
Silent Generation	1928	1945
Baby Boomer Generation	1946	1964
Generation X	1965	1980
Millennial Generation	1981	1996
Generation Z	1997	2012

My two original survey experiments approach the research questions in distinct ways. In Study 1, I prime the respondents to their generational group by asking them to select the generational group with which they believe they identify. In addition, I vary the exposure to a news article that provides a threat that their generational in-group has lost a significant share of wealth in the United States since the COVID-19 pandemic. The purposes of this threat were to spur in-group favoritism and increase group solidarity among the generational groups. Subsequently, I asked questions to measure public policy positions to observe to what extent attitudes toward age-related policies changed in response to the generational threat.

Study 2, on the other hand, did not include the prime. Instead, respondents were placed into various treatment groups to read articles about the increasing homelessness crisis throughout the United States. Articles varied in identifying which major generational group was most impacted by the increase in homelessness. From there, the survey asked questions to gauge feelings of similarity with the homeless population, attitudes toward homelessness in general, and attitudes toward increasing public funding to eradicate homelessness. At the end of the survey, respondents

were asked to identify which generational group they belonged to. The purposes of excluding the prime were to observe how much the generational identity can emerge when simply reading about Americans who share that specific identity. When reading about someone who is homeless who shares one's generational identity, I aimed to answer the question whether it increases or decreases support for policies related to homelessness.

I report two novel survey experiments to test the hypotheses in Table 1. Study 1 uses an original survey experiment as collected by *Dynata*, and Study 2 employed *CINT* in the data collection process. Study 1 shows that American who feel that their generational group is threatened will show greater in-group solidarity and subsequently support generational-based public policies. Study 2 directly tests generational identity by measuring how a threat against one's generational group increases feelings of in-group similarity with the homeless population as well as increases support for homeless public policies. These patterns are independent of ideology and are generally stronger among those identifying as Millennials than Baby Boomers or Generation X. I discuss the implications of the results for further theory building and future research around generations as a dimension of identity.

Study 1: Generational Solidarity Increases Support for Intergenerational Policies

My argument uses a mediation process to test the proposed mechanism of generational identity. The mediation design allows me to test how the exposure to a threat against one's generational in-group influences generational group solidarity, which that group solidarity then influences how much a person supports age-related public policies in the United States. In my mediation analysis, a treatment variable (threat that generation's wealth has decreased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic) produces changes in the outcome (support of age-related polices)

through an intervening variable (intragroup solidarity).

According to the Theory of Generational Identities in Politics, I expect that as group solidarity increases that the support for in-group policies will also *increase* (as proposed in Hypothesis 2), and also as solidarity increases then support for out-group policies will *decrease* (as proposed in Hypothesis 3). There is some initial support for Hypothesis 2 through my mediation mechanism by studying White Americans in my first original survey experiment collected by the survey firm *Dynata* in May 2022 ($n = 1856$). The data collected allows me to demonstrate a strong relationship between the treatment and the mediator variable with less conclusive findings showing the relationship between the mediator variable and the outcomes of interest.

Study 1 (May 2022): Design and Measures

Through the survey firm *Dynata*, I collected a sample of 1856 White American adults to test my hypotheses. In my design, the treatment variable is a threat against one's generational group as the group has lost a significant share of the nation's wealth since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Appendix A). Respondents received either a treatment conveying that their generational group was directly under economic threat or a control condition that is unrelated to generations, age, or social groups. I conceptualize this threatening stimulus as a pathway to increase in-group solidarity, and that group solidarity acts as a mediator for support of generational public policies. I constructed a measure of solidarity with two post-treatment survey responses. The first response asked how much one agrees with the following statement "I feel solidarity with other people who are also [INSERT GENERATION IDENTITY]" on a scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 7 *strongly agree*. The second question inverted the scale by asking how much one

agrees with the statement “The problems of other [INSERT GENERATION IDENTITY] are too different from me to share an identity” on a scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 7 *strongly agree*. I recode the responses to the second inquiry so that higher values reflect greater similarity and solidarity between members of one’s in-group.

Not only did I aim to demonstrate that group solidarity could be measured in response to a threat, but I wanted to test if that threat could impact political attitudes toward age-related public policies. To test this hypothesis, I selected three possible public policies that favor one generational group over the others: Social Security immediately impacts Baby Boomers, Tax Breaks for College Savings immediately impacts Generation X, and Student Loan Forgiveness immediately impacts Millennials. I argue that group solidarity acts as a mediator for downstream political attitudes toward generational policies, which I measure with eight outcomes. The first three outcomes measure support for student loan forgiveness programs, three outcomes measure support for increasing Social Security payments and support for the program in general, and two outcomes measure support for a hypothetical government program to provide tax breaks for individuals who set up college savings accounts for their children (see Appendix B). The outcomes of interest were re-coded in a way to demonstrate that a higher value corresponded to greater support to expand or uphold the policy. By measuring each of these outcomes, I expect that Millennials should show greater support for Student Loan Forgiveness programs than members of any of generational group, Baby Boomers should support Social Security programs at higher rates than the other generations, and Generation X would support Tax Breaks for College Savings accounts more than the other generational groups. The intent is that these programs would have effects on their lives *currently*, which would theoretically increase or decrease support for the program. Since Social Security primarily affects Americans over the age of 65, it is more salient for Baby Boomers than

younger generations. Similarly, the recent debate over President Joe Biden’s Student Loan Forgiveness plan affects Millennials at much higher rates than older Americans.

Due to the partisan nature of the public policy outcomes of interest, my analyses control for ideology as a covariate. I report these complete results in Table 3. The path of interest for the purposes of this research design are (1) the relationship between a threat against one’s generational group and their feelings of group solidarity and (2) between group solidarity and my suite of outcomes.

TABLE 3: Generational Solidarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Support for Various Policies (May 2022)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Solidarity	Support Social Security policies	Support College Savings policies	Support Student Loan Forgiveness policies
Generational Threat	.301*** (.060)	.007 (.066)	.018 (.066)	-.049 (.087)
Liberal	—	.069*** (.016)	.119*** (.016)	.377*** (.021)
Generational Solidarity (Mediator)	—	.262*** (.025)	.186*** (.026)	.080** (.034)
ρ	—	0.2	0.2	0.1
<i>N</i>	1856	1856	1856	1856

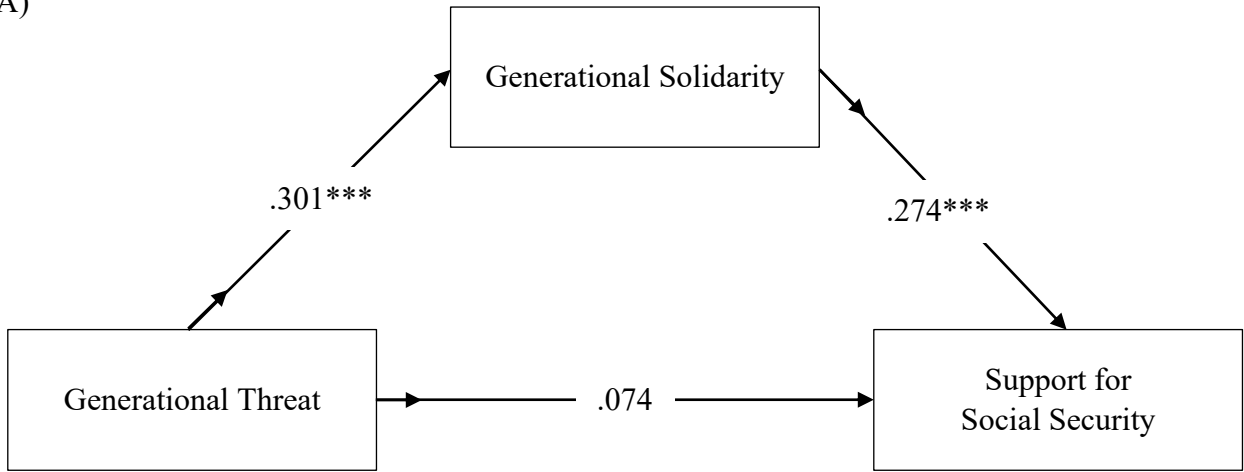
Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

Study 1’s Results

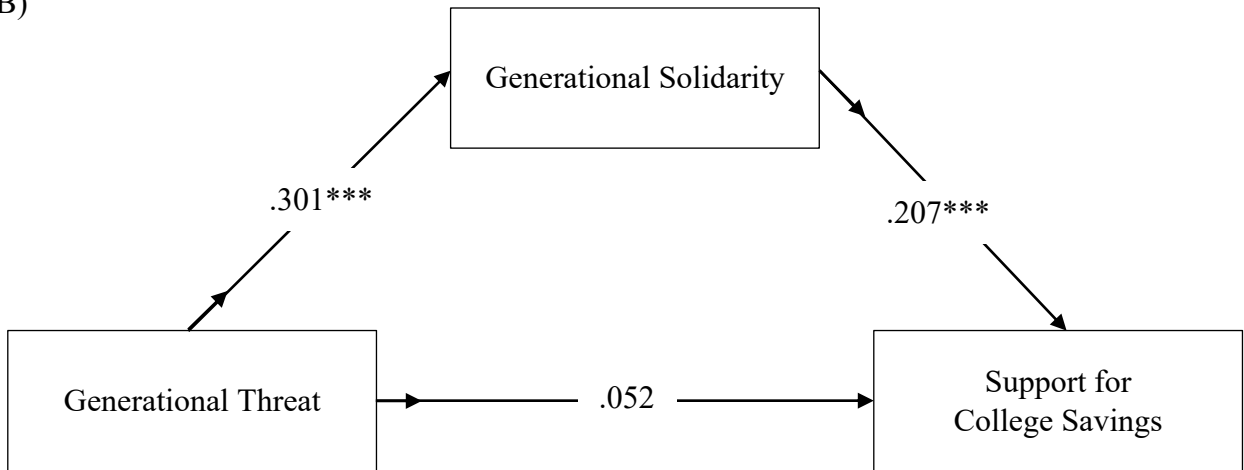
As an initial cut to testing for an observable generational identity, I ask whether a threat against the generational in-group increases feelings of generational solidarity. Table 3 provides support for Hypothesis 1 as it demonstrates a statistically significant increase in generational solidarity when respondents were exposed to the threat against their in-group. The coefficients indicate that exposure to the treatment reliably increases generational solidarity (.301, $p < .001$,

Figure 4: Intragroup Solidarity Motivates Support for Age-Related Policies Among People Receiving a Threat Against Their Generational In-Group (Study 1, 2022)

(A)



(B)



(C)

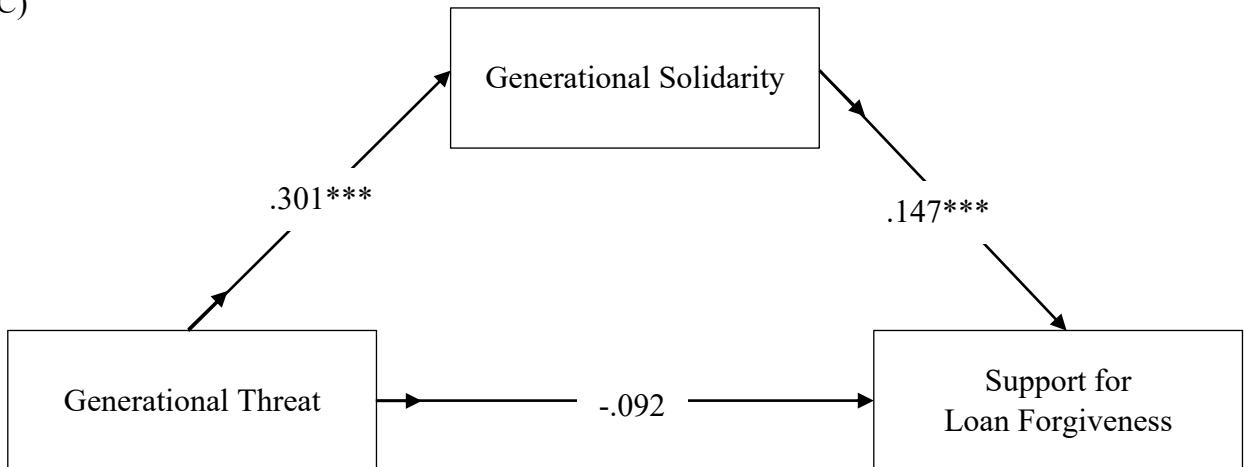


TABLE 4: Generational Solidarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Support for Various Policies among Americans Identifying as Baby Boomers (Study 1, 2022)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Solidarity	Support Social Security policies	Support College Savings policies	Support Student Loan Forgiveness policies
Generational Threat	.124 (.115)	.050 (.120)	-.046 (.135)	-.092 (.185)
Liberal	—	.069** (.023)	.123*** (.033)	.456*** (.044)
Generational Solidarity (Mediator)	—	.223*** (.047)	.322*** (.054)	.090 (.073)
ρ	—	0.2	0.3	0.1
<i>N</i>	484	484	484	484

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

two-tailed), an effect representing an increase of 30% in group solidarity. This provides some evidence that generational identities have emerged and can be observed under the right circumstances.

Generational solidarity appears to be influential on political attitudes generally as well. Figure 4 also reports that as generational solidarity increases so does support for all three sets of age-related public policies. These outcomes are all statistically significant ($p < .001$, two-tailed), but my hypotheses predict that the effects should change depending on the specific generational group. With this in mind, I turn to Table 4 to identify the effects within the Baby Boomer generation specifically. The first troubling change is that the effect of the treatment on generational solidarity dissipates when analyzing only Baby Boomers. This is likely due to the experiment being underpowered, but I cannot rule out the possibility that priming the subjects by asking for their generational identity before administering the treatment may have attenuated the effect of the treatment on the mediator variable. At this point, I do not have evidence supporting Hypothesis 4

that Baby Boomers and Millennials will have the strongest effect size. However, I rectify this in Study 2 by focusing on identity's impact on political attitudes more directly. Table 4, however, does show that the mediator variable has a statistically significant positive effect on support for Baby Boomer-centric policies, but it also finds that there are larger positive effects for policies directed at Generation X. The mediator effects on support for Student Loan Forgiveness are the smallest positive effect and are not statistically significant, so it leaves me with inconclusive findings with regard to Hypothesis 3.

Tables 5 and 6 focus on the outcomes of interest but subsetting the data for only Generation X and Millennials, respectively. Results from Table 5 show statistically significant positive relationships between the treatment and generational solidarity ($p < .05$, two-tailed) while also demonstrating positive relationships with all public policy outcomes. Similar to the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X shows support for Hypothesis 2 by having a positive relationship with in-group solidarity and public policies impacting their group; however, the relationship is smaller than the other two public policy spheres. Again, it seems that Hypothesis 3 does not have much support given the data. In addition, the strongly positive relationship between the treat and generational solidarity among Millennials indicates some initial support for Hypothesis 4.

Table 6 extends the analysis to Millennials, and we again find support Hypothesis 1 as there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the threat treatment and in-group solidarity ($p < .05$); in fact, Millennials demonstrate the largest effect on solidarity by the treatment. The mediating variable again shows a positive relationship with all three outcomes of interest, which indicates mild support for Hypothesis 2 without supporting Hypothesis 3.

TABLE 5: Generational Solidarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Support for Various Policies among Americans Identifying as Generation X (Study 1, 2022)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Solidarity	Support Social Security policies	Support College Savings policies	Support Student Loan Forgiveness policies
Generational Threat	.322** (.123)	.040 (.127)	-.113 (.129)	-.350** (.162)
Liberal	—	.084** (.032)	.111*** (.033)	.346*** (.041)
Generational Solidarity (Mediator)	—	.257*** (.046)	.147** (.047)	.162** (.059)
ρ	—	0.2	0.1	0.1
<i>N</i>	502	502	502	502

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

TABLE 6: Generational Solidarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Support for Various Policies among Americans Identifying as Millennials (Study 1, 2022)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Solidarity	Support Social Security policies	Support College Savings policies	Support Student Loan Forgiveness policies
Generational Threat	.422** (.141)	-.101 (.148)	.133 (.147)	.080 (.170)
Liberal	—	.132*** (.038)	.096** (.038)	.190*** (.044)
Generational Solidarity (Mediator)	—	.300*** (.062)	.210*** (.061)	.297*** (.071)
ρ	—	0.3	0.2	0.2
<i>N</i>	301	301	301	301

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

Study 1's Sensitivity Analyses

While a mediation analysis is vital to understanding the possible mechanism in a survey experiment, it does come with pitfalls. In particular, it is difficult to parse a causal effect of the mediator on the outcomes when the mediator is measured rather than manipulated, as I did with

generational solidarity in this study. By measuring the mediator rather than manipulating it, my findings are vulnerable to confounding variables. By conducting a sensitivity analysis, I hope to demonstrate robustness in my results. I use the sensitivity analysis as promoted by Imai and Yamamoto (2013) to estimate the error correlation (ρ , rho) between my mediator and an unobserved confounder. As reported in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6, the sensitivity analysis indicates ρ values ranging from 0.1 to 0.3. In particular, it seems that my results for attitudes on Social Security are most robust across each generational group. On the other hand, the smallest error correlation in my sensitivity analysis across each generational group was regarding attitudes toward Student Loan Forgiveness. Despite controlling for ideology, it is unclear what lowers the error correlation in these cases, and I advise future research in this arena.

Study 1: Summary and Implications

According to the findings of my first novel survey experiment, I find correlational evidence that supports my hypothesis that a threat against the generational in-group will have a positive effect on in-group solidarity. This points in the direction that generational identities may actually be present in American society. There is one exception to this trend, however, and that is with the Baby Boomer generation specifically. However, there may be some pitfalls with the experimental design, such as having an underpowered sample or using a prime before the treatment exposure. In Study 2, I aimed to rectify both of those issues with my initial survey experiment.

In general, it seems that generational in-group solidarity has a statistically significant positive relationship with support for Social Security, tax breaks for college savings, and student loan forgiveness. Despite demonstrating positive relationships across generations and public policies, I failed to demonstrate that the generational groups engaged in within-group favoritism

over the out-group generations. Instead of showing greater support for public policies aimed at their generational group, an increase in group solidarity by and large increased support for all age-related public policies, irrespective of which generation the policy favors. Study 1 also failed to measure identity directly because the treatment always matched one's generation in-group. In Study 2, I allow all respondents to have the opportunity to be placed in any treatment group. This allows me to compare if the treatment *matched* the generation in-group versus if the treatment was a *mismatch*.

Study 2: Generational Identity and Support for Homelessness Policies

Following completion of Study 1, it was clear that I needed to run a follow up survey experiment to remove the presence of the prime and instead test for generational identity more directly. Instead of showing that in-group solidarity was wholly possible in the presence of a prime, this design would allow respondents to receive *any* treatment, even those that did not match their generational identity. The design would still use a mediation mechanism but measure in-group *similarity*, a related concept to solidarity. The mechanism would then follow that a treatment that matches one's generation to a threat against their generation in-group would correlate with in-group similarity, and that similarity would have downstream effects to increase support for homelessness policies because a treatment match means that people of the same generational group are suffering unduly to homelessness.

Much like my hypotheses for Study 1, I expect that as feelings of group similarity increases that support for homelessness policies will also increase (Hypothesis 2). Study 2 demonstrated similar results to Study 1 as it showed a strong relationship between the treatment condition and in-group similarity, but that similarity showed more mixed results in its relationship with

homelessness policies. Thus, it seems that Hypothesis 1 likely has support and Hypothesis 2 points in the right direction. By measuring in-group solidarity in Study 1 and similarity in Study 2, I hope to make a compelling argument that a generational identity has emerged and that it has political implications when tapped in the right way. The evidence was collected by the survey firm *CINT* in January 2023 ($n = 2273$) and shows some support for my first two hypotheses.

Study 2 (February 2023): Design and Measures

For Study 2, I used the survey firm, CINT, to collect a sample of 2273 White American adults to run a follow up study. Instead of using a threat that the generational group at large lost a share of the wealth in the United States, Study 2's treatment indicated that the rise in homelessness throughout the country has been due to one generational group becoming houseless at greater numbers than other groups (see Appendix C). Unlike Study 1 where subjects could only receive the treatment matching their generational identity, Study 2 allowed any subject to receive any treatment. In this way, it allows me to test if group similarity increases when they received the treatment that matches their generational identity as opposed to a treatment that threatens a *different* generational group.

Like the design from Study 1, I use a mediation analysis that argues that exposure to the treatment that matches their identity will increase feelings of in-group similarity. I construct a measure of generational similarity using three outcome responses post-treatment. All three outcomes ask the subject to indicate to what degree they agree with each statement on a scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 7 *strongly agree*. The first statement states that "I have something in common with someone who is homeless," the second states "A homeless person is just like you or me, but they have fallen on hard times," and the final statement says "Homeless people are

different in many ways from me.” The third statement’s scale is inverted when analyzing the code, so that at higher values in each measure corresponds with increases in feelings of similarity.

I am also extending from Study 1 that the in-group similarity should also have an effect on attitudes toward public policies. In particular, the outcome of interest in Study 2 are attitudes toward policies to aid or fix the homelessness crisis. After gauging feelings of similarity toward homeless populations, I follow up by asking seven outcome responses with regards to the issue of homelessness. The first three questions ask subjects to provide how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about the homelessness issue, on a scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 7 *strongly agree*. The first prompt states, “Homelessness is one of the most important problems facing the United States,” the second says “The homeless crisis makes American cities and communities less safe,” and thirdly “Homelessness is a problem that can be fixed.” I re-code the responses to the second prompt to indicate that higher levels of agreement mean that they do not feel unsafe due to homelessness. In addition, the next three outcomes ask how much the individual would want to increase funding to homeless on a scale of 1 *decrease funding a lot* to 5 *increase funding a lot*. The three dimensions to change funding are (1) providing housing, (2) providing mental health services, and (3) providing drug abuse services. Lastly, the survey asks respondents to indicate how important homelessness is to them on a scale from 1 being the least important to 10 being the most important. Since homelessness does not inherently connect to any one generational group except through the experimental manipulation, I do not predict that any one generational group should exhibit markedly higher or lower levels of support when treatment is held constant.

Much like the public policies from Study 1, however, the issue of homelessness is a partisan issue that likely has different opinions on fixing it. As such, my analyses control for ideology as a covariate as reported in Tables 7 and 8. This research design follows the analytical path that there

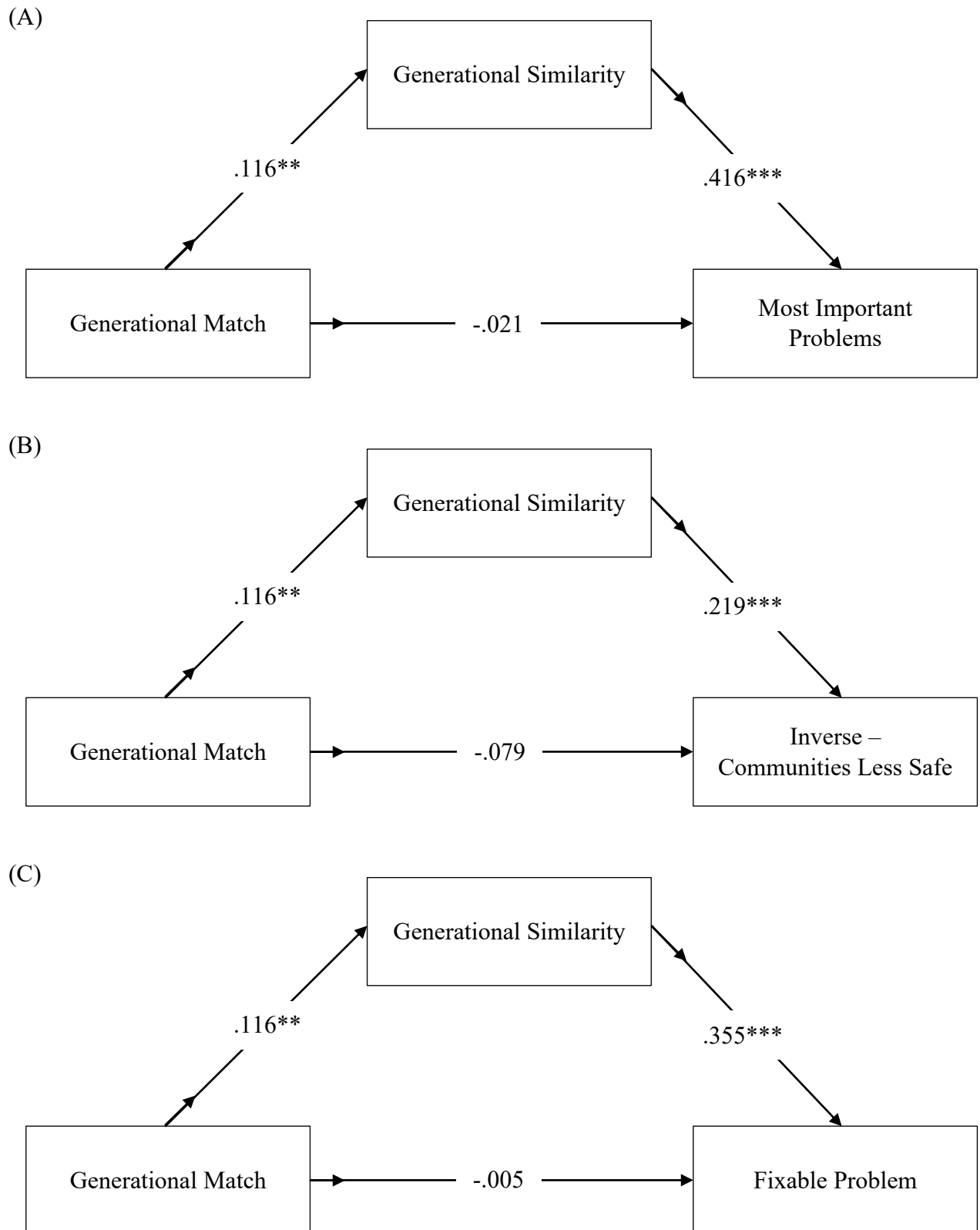
should be a (1) relationship between a threat against one's generational group and their feelings of group similarity and (2) between group solidarity and the public policy outcomes. To focus my interpretation of the results, I focus on my primary variables of interest in Figure 5 and Tables 7 and 8.

Study 2's Results

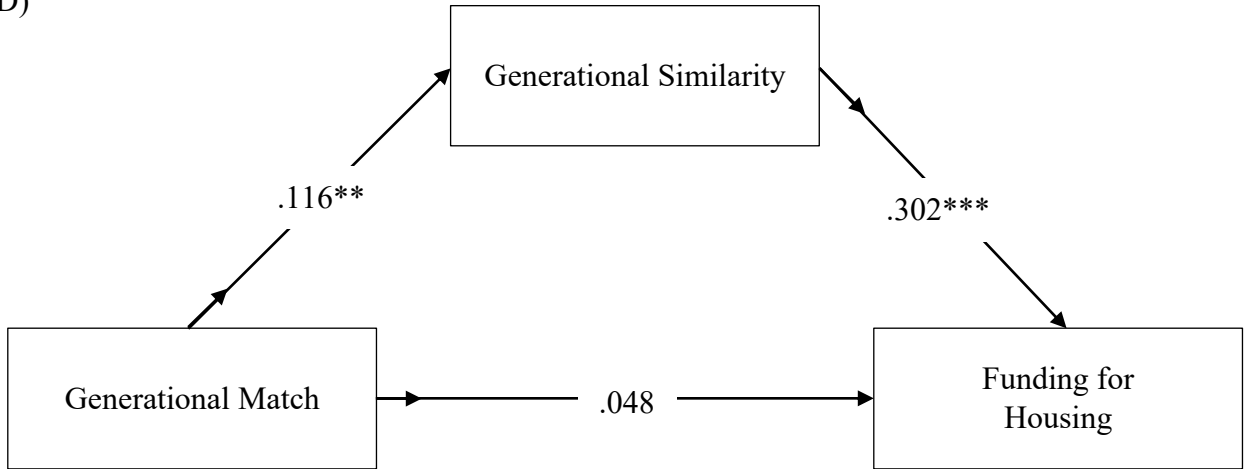
To provide further results for an observable generational identity, I test whether a threat against the generational in-group increases feelings of generational solidarity. Figure 5 provides support that generational similarity has a strong statistically significant relationship with exposure to a threat against subjects' generational in-group. The coefficients indicate that exposure to the treatment reliably increases generational similarity (.116, $p < .05$, two-tailed), an effect representing an increase of 11% in group similarity after threatened. This provides further evidence in support of Hypothesis 1.

Generational similarity also appears to act as a mediator to political attitudes as well. Figure 5 reports that as generational similarity increases so do attitudes that homelessness is important, homelessness is not necessarily unsafe, and that it is a fixable problem. Additionally, in-group similarity also shows a strong relationship with supporting increases to funding for homelessness public policies. These outcomes are all statistically significant ($p < .001$, two-tailed) and indicate further support for Hypothesis 2 that exposure to a threatening stimulus will correspond with increases in support for policies that will benefit one's generational group. Tables 7 and 8 provide the specific coefficients for the regression analyses run in the mediation process. Across the board, we observe that increases in in-group similarity has a positive effect on beliefs that homelessness is an important problem, that homelessness is fixable, that homelessness is not necessarily unsafe,

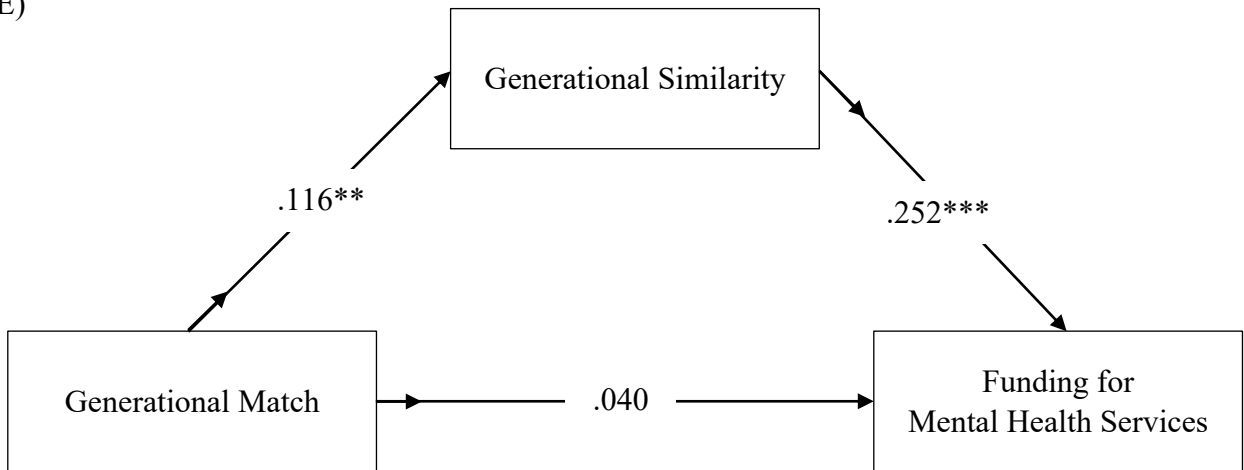
Figure 5: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Homelessness (Study 2, January 2023)



(D)



(E)



(F)

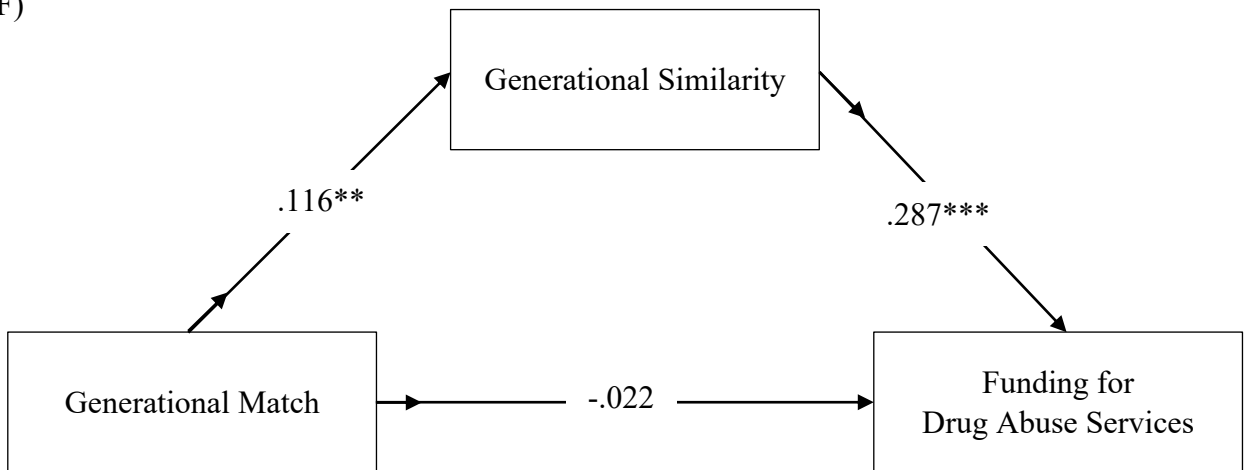


TABLE 7: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Homelessness with Ideology as a Control (Study 2, January 2023)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Similarity	Important Problem	Inverse – Less Safe	Fixable
Generational Match	.116** (.050)	-.069 (.053)	-.010 (.060)	-.047 (.051)
Liberal	—	.077*** (.016)	.123*** (.018)	.033** (.016)
Generational Similarity (Mediator)	—	.416*** (.022)	.219*** (.025)	.355*** (.021)
ρ	—	0.3	0.1	0.3
<i>N</i>	2273	2273	2273	2273

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

TABLE 8: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Increasing Funding for Homelessness with Ideology as a Control (Study 2, January 2023)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Similarity	Housing	Mental Health Services	Drug Abuse Services
Generational Match	.116** (.050)	.013 (.031)	.011 (.032)	-.056 (.034)
Liberal	—	.100*** (.009)	.095*** (.009)	.103*** (.010)
Generational Similarity (Mediator)	—	.302*** (.013)	.252*** (.013)	.287*** (.014)
ρ	—	0.4	0.3	0.4
<i>N</i>	2273	2273	2273	2273

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .001$ or better, ** $p < .05$ or better, * $p < .10$ or better, two-tailed.

and support additional funding for housing the homeless, providing mental health services, and services for drug abusers. This is important because the threatening treatment told individuals that the homelessness crisis was being driven by their generational in-group. It stands to reason that

the effect we are observing is driven by a desire to favor the in-group.

Unlike Study 1, I did not take a particular interest in studying if certain generational groups support homelessness at higher rates than other generational groups. Since homelessness does not inherently tie to one generational group over the others –in fact, the treatment conditions manipulated which generational group was most impacted by homelessness– it stands to reason that there should not be as large of an effect on political attitudes based on generational belonging. I provide the analysis of support for homelessness funding as broken down by generational group in Appendix D. Appendix D indicates support for the idea that the Baby Boomer generation is perhaps the most salient and crystallized since it had the largest effect size between treatment and in-group similarity as well as being statistically significant ($p < .05$, two-tailed). The Millennial generation also seems to have crystallized to some extent with a smaller effect size than for Baby Boomers and nearly statistically significant to the $p < .05$ threshold ($p = .0532$). Both Baby Boomers and Millennials showed a mediated effect between in-group similarity and support for increasing funding to the homeless. Generation X, however, boasted the smallest effect size between treatment and in-group similarity in Table 10 in Appendix D. This indicates that Generation X is perhaps the least salient and crystallized of the generational groups, which conforms with my priors about discourse surrounding generations. Further work should be committed to understand the nuances of which generation is most salient and carries the most psychological bandwidth to guide political attitudes and behaviors.

Study 2's Sensitivity Analyses

Similar to the logic behind Study 1, I decided to implement a sensitivity analysis for Study 2 to estimate the error correlation for each of my outcomes of interest. As reported in Tables 7 and

8, my error correlation (ρ) ranges between 0.1 and 0.4. In fact, only the attitude that homelessness makes communities less safe has a smaller error correlation than 0.3. It seems that these results for Study 2 are much more robust than the results from Study 1. It follows that they are more robust since the survey experiment from Study 1 was more underpowered than Study 2. These results indicate sufficient robustness and provide support that generational similarity is causally related to homelessness attitudes when generational identities are threatened. Further work should be taken to provide additional evidence to these findings.

Study 2: Summary and Implications

Study 2 tested my first two hypotheses to see if I could find further evidence of the emergence of a generational identity as well as testing if that generational identity has political implications. According to the findings, I find correlational evidence that illustrates that a threat against the generational in-group will have a positive effect on in-group similarity. This provides further confirmatory evidence that generational identities exist in American society. In addition, generational in-group similarity also consistently and positively correlates with homelessness positive at a statistically significant level. This demonstrates further support for Hypothesis 2. Without testing out-group discrimination, there was not a focus on providing evidence in support or against my third hypothesis. However, Study 2 also indicates that generational identity impacts Baby Boomers and Millennials more since the evidence demonstrates that these two groups are more responsive to the threatening stimulus than members of Generation X. In the next section, I discuss the results of my two novel survey experiments and explain the implications that my project has on future research into the field of intergroup conflict, generations, and politics.

Discussion and Conclusions

While plenty of research has been conducted examining intergroup conflict and how it relates to politics, scholars consistently overlooked divisions based on age cohorts and generations. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that humans divide themselves into in-groups and out-groups for various reasons and along arbitrary dimensions, yet age has not received the same analysis as other sociocultural groups. In this paper, I developed a theoretic argument explaining how we can observe generational identities within the American public. Accordingly, I illustrated that exposure to a situational threat against the generational in-group corresponds with increases in feelings of group solidarity and similarity with other members of the generation.

Through two separate studies, I found evidence in support of my hypothesis that generational identities can be observed. Through the theoretical concepts of solidarity and similarity, White Americans report belonging to a generational group with feelings that they share traits in common with the group and those feelings shift their political attitudes to support programs that will benefit other members of their generational in-group. If this is the case, it is theoretically possible for a political entrepreneur to use generational divisions as a political tool for electoral gains through group division or animosity.

I also found evidence not merely of the existence of generational identities but also that it carries more bandwidth among members of generations that are more salient on a consistent basis: Baby Boomers and Millennials. The major news and popular culture hubs have discussed the views and traits of Baby Boomers and Millennials alike for the past decade, if not longer. Since these groups receive airwaves, it follows that members of the groups would feel greater attachment and subsequently have higher levels of in-group solidarity than members of Generation X or even the Silent Generation (Americans more between 1928 and 1945). Following this trend, it seems to me

that younger Americans of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) may exhibit even *higher* levels of in-group solidarity through the proliferation of generational stereotypes in recent years via social media and other popular platforms. As Generation Z age up into adulthood and the group carries more weight in the political world, I think it necessary to collect surveys of Generation Z to analyze whether members of Gen Z conceptualize themselves as a consolidated and homogenous group –perhaps more homogenous than other generations view their own group. This could be one arena for further inquiry in the coming years.

This project is of course not without shortcomings. Intergroup conflict is often studied and met with observations of both in-group favoritism *and* out-group derogation or discrimination. In Study 1, I was only able to observe in-group favoritism, and even that was a mixed result. Exposure to the treatment did increase feelings of in-group solidarity but increases in in-group solidarity increased support for all public policies invariably. It is unclear to me why the mediator had a positive relationship with all public policies, so I recommend a future study focused in this realm as well.

This project set out to study generations in American society as a possible social identity that could be manipulated and affect political attitudes. Overall, I believe the project successfully carried out that goal. However, the field should not stop here. It seems that generations have become increasingly salient in recent years. More discussions surround age as a qualifier for political officeholding in Congress with many critics of American democracy referring to government as a gerontocracy. People also have talked at length about how age influences political attitudes and behaviors in a variety of ways, but I push the field to move beyond age as a descriptive category and into an identity that people feel they belong to. More sophisticated experiments should be carried out to test generational identity in any number of ways with the new measures

that come about with that. I also argue that generations should be the subject of more nationally representative surveys. Even though many critics of generations as an identity would argue that they are socially constructed in nature and do not matter substantively, I argue that those critics should take the mantle and provide explicit evidence that Americans do not think about generations, do not conceptualize themselves and others in their generational group, and do not shift their political attitudes when their generation is top of mind. Only with further evidence will we be able to acknowledge or refute generations as a budding identity in American society.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX A

[Treatment for Study 1, May 2022]

News Brief: [Baby Boomers'/Generation X's/Millennials'] Share of Wealth Shrinks in a Post-COVID World

The COVID-19 global pandemic witnessed record unemployment as the United States and the rest of the world shut down to go into quarantine. When in-person activities resumed, however, employee's wages did not rebound to their pre-pandemic levels. Wages stagnated while inflation, interest rates, and the housing market increased at rates far exceeding wages following the onset of the coronavirus. The group that this overwhelmingly impacted was [older/middle-aged/younger] people, or **[Baby Boomers/members of Generation X/Millennials]**.

[Baby Boomers/ Generation X/Millennials] saw their share of wealth in the United States shrink by 5 percent after the pandemic as compared to before. In addition, **[Baby Boomers/Generation X/Millennials]** attempted to enter the immensely competitive housing market, but many found that renting was the only option. A recent study by RentCafe determined high-earning **[Baby Boomers/Gen X'ers/Millennials]** (with an annual income of more than \$50,000) submitted 39 percent of all rental apartment applications in 2021, their largest share in five years. **[Baby Boomers'/Generation X's/Millennials']** share of rental applicants grew by 10 percent over a year. Without the guarantee of increasing wealth through the real estate market, **[Baby Boomers/Generation X/Millennials]** face an uncertain future with less wealth than other members of their family.

APPENDIX B

vi. You will now be asked to report your opinions about various policy proposals. Please use the response options provided to indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.

Student Loan Forgiveness

6. The federal government should increase student loan forgiveness programs for individuals who were defrauded by their universities, their universities closed, or became governmental workers/civil servants.
7. Student loan forgiveness should be extended to all individuals with student loan debt outstanding.
8. Student loans provided by the federal government should have a mandated interest rate of 0%.

Social Security

9. Monthly payments of Social Security for retired individuals should be increased.
10. With a dwindling size of workforce and increased retiree population, Social Security should be curtailed and eventually replaced, or eliminated.
11. Individuals should only receive the amount of Social Security payments based on the amount that they personally contributed throughout their life.

College Saving Funds

12. The federal government should develop a system of tax breaks for parents who set up college saving funds for their children.
13. The government should pass laws capping tuition increases at four-year universities to attempt to make college more affordable for future generations.

APPENDIX C

[Treatment for Study 2, January 2023]

News Brief: Homeless in America—A Growing Problem Seriously Affecting [Baby Boomers/Generation X/Millennials]

The homeless crisis is worsening. Shelters across the United States are reporting a surge in people looking for help, with wait lists doubling or tripling in recent months. Some of them live in encampments, which have popped up in parks and other public spaces in major cities from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Experts say that many factors have caused the increase in homelessness in urban cities and rural communities across the nation. Skyrocketing rents and mortgages have priced people out of living in apartments or purchasing a home. After decades of defunding mental health and drug abuse services, people living with disabilities and addiction also have fewer options besides living on the streets. Some experts observe that the surge in homelessness is seriously affecting one population: **[Generational Group]**. In the past three years, it is estimated that over 100,000 **[Baby Boomers/Gen X'ers/Millennials]** across the United States have become homeless due to a variety reasons. Lawmakers are currently considering options to provide aid to these people and curb the crisis as soon as possible. Without immediate aid, many argue that the homelessness crisis will continue to worsen.

APPENDIX D

TABLE 9: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Increasing Funding for Homelessness for Baby Boomers (Study 2, January 2023)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Similarity	Housing	Mental Health Services	Drug Abuse Services
Generational Threat	.193** (.083)	.006 (.048)	.020 (.049)	-.056 (.053)
Liberal	—	.116*** (.014)	.118*** (.015)	.111*** (.016)
Generational Similarity (Mediator)	—	.271*** (.021)	.198*** (.021)	.222*** (.023)
<i>N</i>	805	805	805	805

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ****p* < .001 or better, ***p* < .05 or better, **p* < .10 or better, two-tailed.

TABLE 10: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Increasing Funding for Homelessness for Generation X (Study 2, January 2023)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Similarity	Housing	Mental Health Services	Drug Abuse Services
Generational Threat	.061 (.088)	.015 (.053)	.002 (.052)	-.058 (.059)
Liberal	—	.097*** (.016)	.084*** (.016)	.103*** (.018)
Generational Similarity (Mediator)	—	.284*** (.023)	.218*** (.022)	.265*** (.025)
<i>N</i>	749	749	749	749

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ****p* < .001 or better, ***p* < .05 or better, **p* < .10 or better, two-tailed.

TABLE 11: Generational Similarity Mediates the Effect of Group Threat on Attitudes toward Increasing Funding for Homelessness for Millennials (Study 2, January 2023)

	Effect on mediator	Effect on outcomes		
	Generational Similarity	Housing	Mental Health Services	Drug Abuse Services
Generational Threat	.167* (.086)	.014 (.059)	.019 (.062)	-.038 (.064)
Liberal	—	.092*** (.018)	.086*** (.019)	.098*** (.020)
Generational Similarity (Mediator)	—	.260*** (.026)	.247*** (.027)	.275*** (.028)
<i>N</i>	719	719	719	719

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ****p* < .001 or better, ***p* < .05 or better, **p* < .10 or better, two-tailed.

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