

The Effects of Generational Identification Accessibility and Normative Fit on Hostile Media Perception

JISU KIM

University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, USA

SUNG-YEON PARK

University of Nevada, Reno, USA

This study examined the effects of generational identification of young South Koreans on hostile media perception, with an emphasis on the accessibility of the social categorization and the fit between the political ideology of the generation group and that of individual members. A pretest established that generational identification was as strong among young South Koreans as their nationality or gender identification. It also confirmed that the generational identification was equally strong among liberals and conservatives, although the generation group's political norm is liberalism. In a subsequent experiment, young South Koreans perceived a political news article more biased against their position, when their generational categorization was made accessible. Also, the hostile media perception was more pronounced among liberals whose political predisposition was a good fit with the normative political predisposition of their generation group. A regression analysis revealed that the fit, but neither accessibility nor hostile media perception exerted a significant impact on their intention to engage in political talk with their generational group members.

Keywords: media bias, media effect, political participation, political psychology, public opinion

During the past decade, signs of the accelerating demarcation of generational groups and an increasing awareness of such social categorization have been widely observed (Pew Research Center, 2011). Often, the discontent and frustration of the young against the established order that brought about the global recession is at play in many countries, either in the form of mass protests (Friedman, 2011) or less spectacular, yet strongly charged, resentment expressed through various outlets (Thompson, 2011). Social analysts and news media further stress the deepening rift between the young and old by often comparing and contrasting the two (Leonhardt, 2012), or explicitly pointing a finger at the old—baby boomers in particular—for the woes of the young (e.g., Willetts, 2010). These observations are also

Jisu Kim: kimx4290@umn.edu

Sung-Yeon Park: syp@unr.edu

Date submitted: 2016-09-22

Copyright © 2017 (Jisu Kim and Sung-Yeon Park). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

consistent with social surveys that trend the emergence of generation as a social category (Pew Research Center, 2007).

To date, however, the generational identity of young people and its influence on the perceptions of media messages have received little scholarly attention. Still, one recent development in hostile media effect research can be relevant: Social categorization triggers the perception that the media are biased against one's social group (Hartmann & Tanis, 2013; Reid, 2012). If we apply the social categorization effect of hostile media perception to the increasing salience of generation identity among the young, we may observe that young people perceive neutral media messages biased against their generation because generation is a highly accessible social categorization to them. Also, we may observe a more pronounced bias perception among politically liberal young people than their politically conservative contemporaries because the social categorization, the young generation, is widely perceived to fit better with political liberalism than conservatism (for the political liberalism of the young generation, see Braungart & Braungart, 1986; Leonhardt, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2012, 2014; Thompson, 2016).

In previous studies, accessibility and fit, two factors governing the salience of social categorization (Hogg, 2005) have not been examined separately. Indeed, the fit may not matter, and accessibility is the only condition of social categorization effect if the social category does not have a widely known normative position on the issue at hand. When it comes to political issues, however, the fit may exacerbate or attenuate the hostile media perception caused by generation categorization because the social category, the young generation, is closely linked to political liberalism. Hence, liberal young people rather than conservative young people are more likely to use their generation identity to evaluate political news.

Therefore, the current study explores the salience of generational identification, its fit with different political predispositions, and their interaction effect on hostile media perceptions in the context of the generational conflict in South Korea. Using pretest data, we first assess the chronic accessibility of generation as a social categorization of South Korean college students. Subsequently, we conduct an experiment in which generational categorization is made more accessible through manipulation.

By asking participants to evaluate a political news article featuring interviews with both typical in-group and out-group members, we seek answers to the following questions: (1) Does heightened accessibility of generational categorization increase perceptions of bias in addition to hostile media perceptions caused by one's political predisposition, and if so, (2) is the effect of generational categorization universal or observed only among liberal youth—those whose political predisposition fits with the generational categorization—but not among conservative youth? Once we obtain answers regarding the perceptual biases, we will also examine the effects of generational categorization, fit between generational categorization and political predisposition, and hostile media perceptions on one's intention to engage in political discussion in venues populated by other members of their generational group.

Generational Differences in Political Predispositions

The term *generation* is widely used by scholars from various fields such as economics, biology, political science, and history. Still, it appears that researchers have not reached a general consensus on its definition and context of use. Sometimes, *age* and *cohort* have been confused with *generation*, although they are distinct from one another. Scholars who study the *age effects* often track cultural transitions that occur in families or communities from older to younger group members. Age as a research topic is also approached by examining the biological and social changes in one person while aging. In sum, the *age effect* states that opinions and mindsets are largely dependent on the characteristics that often accompany biological age (Glenn, 2003). In contrast, *cohort* is the term used to group people born within the same period of time. It is assumed that people in the same cohort go through similar significant life events (e.g., birth, first employment, marriage) at nearly the same time (Carlsson & Carlsson, 1970). Hence, *cohort effects* refer to chronic characteristics of a particular group of people (Vincent, 2005).

The original notion of generation proposed by Mannheim (1952) comprised not only chronological contemporaneity but also generational consciousness recognized and shared by the members of a generation group. In other words, *generation* was distinguished from *cohort* and *age* in terms of people's motivation to identify themselves as a specific generation. In subsequent studies, however, the consciousness component was often overlooked. For example, Klecka (1971) defined *generation* "as those persons who have been socialized in a similar fashion because of their exposure to the same prevailing events" (p. 358). Emphasizing the importance of early experiences in one's life, Rintala (1963) stated that generation effects are the political characteristics of a given group who had experienced a common historical event in their formative years. Most recently, social categorization researchers turned their attention to generation as a social category of increasing significance. In particular, they began to explore how people form their generational identity and how members of one generational group think and act differently from the members of other generational groups (Vincent, 2014).

Generational differences between the young and old have long fascinated researchers, especially in terms of the differences in beliefs and attitudes (e.g., Crittenden, 1962; Cutler, 1969; Foner, 1974; Glenn & Hefner, 1972; Klecka, 1971; Knoke & Hout, 1974; Mishler & Rose, 2007). In particular, one persistent assumption has been that young people are more likely to be left of center in their political predisposition, whereas the opposite is the case for their older counterparts (Braungart & Braungart, 1986). Early studies of generational differences in political views and affiliations tested the age effect, only to find mixed supports to the notion that people become more politically conservative as they age (Crittenden, 1962; Glenn & Hefner, 1972; Knoke & Hout, 1974; Shively, 1979).

Recently, however, notable differences in political predisposition and voting patterns between the young and the old brought the old debates about the generation effect to the front. In American elections, young adults consistently prefer liberal candidates, whereas old adults are far more likely to support conservative candidates (Pew Research Center, 2012). Voters born between 1981 and 1993 preferred the Democratic candidate Barak Obama 25% more than the average, whereas those born between 1928 and 1945 supported the Republican candidate Mitt Romney 10% more than the average. An exit poll confirmed that youth support was a crucial factor for Obama's victory in 2012. Across the Pacific Ocean, a

similar generation gap appears to have emerged in South Korea. A national poll conducted a few months prior to the 2012 presidential election demonstrated that 68% of voters in their 20s preferred the liberal candidate, whereas 65% of voters in their fifties supported the candidate from the incumbent conservative party (Gallup Korea, 2012).

The "New Lost Generation" and Their Characteristics

In addition to their liberal political leaning in voter behaviors, the young generation is distinctive from their older contemporaries in several ways. First, they are disengaged with mainstream news media (Vidali, 2010). Rather than constantly updating themselves with news from mainstream media, the young generation actively avoids or limitedly consumes news from mainstream news sources. Although Vidali (2010) emphasized that the reasons for disengagement with mainstream media are multifaceted, the younger generations considered that all media sources were biased. They also exhibited less trust toward political news in general (Novak, 2016).

As the first group born during the advent of the Internet, the young generations show a strong relationship with digital technology (Novak, 2016). Millennials are equipped with digital devices such as smartphones and laptops and use social media more than the older generation (American Press Institute, 2015). Millennials access online and social media on a daily basis, and 82% of them get news from social media (American Press Institute, 2015). Through online and social media channels, young adults are connected with each other and sometimes engaged in politics and social issues (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014). Organizing a protest on Facebook (e.g., Black Lives Matter) or showing support toward a specific political candidate (#imwithher to support for Hillary Clinton) can be examples.

Thus far, there have been a widespread concern about the young generation's political apathy based on a decrease in voting turnout among young adults. However, scholars have pointed out the young generation is more socially engaged through nonelectoral forms of participation such as boycotting or *buycott* (Dalton, 2009; Loader et al., 2014). Also, young generation participation is more related to social issues like abortion rather than politics itself (Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli-Carpini, 2006).

Based on his research on generations in eight countries, Erickson (2011) suggested that familiarity with digital technology and struggling economy in their early adulthood years shaped the distinctive characteristics of the young generation. In many developed countries, young people started their education in classrooms connected to the Internet, which prompted educators and employers to reexamine their practices to better accommodate the technological habits and expectations of a new crop of students and employees (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; McGlynn, 2005). In most OECD countries, the global economic recession in the last decade also had more impact on the young generation than their more established counterparts (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011; Erickson, 2011). The younger generation hit the job markets soon after the global economic recession of 2007, and they are still struggling with a much higher unemployment rate than any other age group (Casselman & Walker, 2013). In reference to their diminished financial prospects and alienation accompanying the predicament, people in their 20s are even called the "New Lost Generation" (J. Kim, 2013; Rampell, 2015; Thompson, 2011; Wasik, 2017)

instead of "Generation Y" or the "Millennial Generation," their previous—and more neutral—labels. The economic challenge shaped the young generation's high reliance on self and low trust in institutions for their financial security (Erickson, 2011). Some social critics also argue that the economic divide between the younger and older generations strengthened the young adults' generation identity, resulting in the wide chasm between the young and the old in political predisposition (Thompson, 2016).

Young South Koreans befits the label of the new lost generation who possess the following generational characteristics: diverging political view from their older fellow South Koreans, strong affinity with communication technology, and an expectation of economic achievement lower than that of their parents' generation. As mentioned earlier, in recent South Korean elections, the young voted for liberal candidates far more than the old did. Young adults in South Korea are known as the most wired population around the world due to their embrace of smartphones and high-speed Internet (Choe, 2011; Hornyak, 2012). Recently, the unemployment rate among young South Koreans reached the highest in 15 years (C. Lee, 2015). Reflecting the current economic hardship of South Korean young adults and their bleak prospect for economic advancement in the future, a few terms like "hell-Chosun" and "dirt spoon" were coined and circulated with wide acceptance (J. Kim, 2016). The former refers to the difficult, "hellish" situation young people find themselves in just to make ends meet in *Chosun* (the name of the last Korean empire and still used colloquially to indicate Korea), an advanced economy where their older counterparts are reaping all the benefits. The latter refers to the lack of social mobility afforded to the majority young South Koreans, in contrast to the privileges enjoyed by a minority of young people who were born with a silver spoon in their mouths.

Accessibility and Fit of Generational Identity

The social identity approach has been developed to examine intergroup relations (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004). According to Tajfel (1972), social identity is "an individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (p. 292). When an individual assumes a social identity related to a specific group, the person perceives self as a member of the group rather than as a unique individual (Turner, 1999). By using this framework, we define generational identity as an individual's knowledge that she or he belongs to a specific generational group, together with some emotional and value significance to her or him related to the generational group membership.

The self-categorization process is influenced by both accessibility and fit of the given social category (Turner, 1999). Accessibility is the "readiness of a perceiver to use a particular self-category" and reflects "the active selectivity of the perceiver in being ready to use categories that are central, relevant, useful, or likely to be confirmed by the evidence of reality" (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994, p. 455). In contrast, fit encompasses both comparative and normative fit: The comparative fit refers to perceived intragroup similarity, as opposed to intergroup similarity, and the normative fit refers to the consistency between society's normative beliefs about the social group on the specific dimension on which it is compared against other groups (Turner et al., 1994). When the fit of an accessible categorization with the perceptual field is poor, people abandon the categorization and continue their search through other accessible categorizations until an optimal fit is found (Hogg, 2005).

Therefore, in crisscross categorizations, where individuals simultaneously own the characteristics of an in-group and out-group, fit has also been shown to either increase or diminish the salience of group categorization (Chattopadhyaya, George, & Lawrence, 2004; Crisp & Hewstone, 2000). When group salience is given, members who do not fit with the group norm are shown to be subject to the “black sheep effect,” an unfavorable evaluation of in-group members who hold dissonant opinions from the group norm (Pinto, Marques, Levine, & Abrams, 2010).

Social Categorization and Hostile Media Perceptions

Hostile media perceptions refer to the phenomenon that partisans perceive news coverage as biased against their side (Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Hence, partisanship—whether political, social, geographical, occupational, or something else—is a central component of the theory. There exist a few hostile media studies that are more directly related to the notion of social categorization than others. Earlier, a team of social identity researchers found that group identity as a supporter of either of the two most dominant political parties in Australia predicted hostile media perceptions (Duck, Terry, & Hogg, 1998). Although one study, set in the context of varsity athletic rivalry, did not explicitly adopt the social identity approach as its theoretical framework, it revealed that the self-identified fans of a university football team perceived the other team’s university newspaper as favoring the “rival team” over their “home team” (Arpan & Raney, 2003). Similarly, an investigation of a hostile media phenomenon in the context of a Christian–Muslim conflict in Indonesia illustrated that religious identity—whether Christian or Muslim—was a positive predictor of media bias perceptions (Ariyanto, Hornsey, & Gallois, 2006).

So far, a few studies have also investigated the mechanisms and conditions for social-identity-based hostile media perceptions. By using the concept of cognitive differentiation between in-groups and out-groups, Matheson and Dursun (2001) demonstrated that the influence of social identity on hostile media perception was mediated by the motivation to ascribe a positive and distinctive social identity to one’s in-group, as opposed to the out-group. Interaction between alternative identities has also affected hostile media perceptions. In a series of experiments, Reid (2012) revealed that American national identity—an upper level, more encompassing social identity—made salient through an experimental manipulation, alleviated hostile media perceptions created by either Democratic or Republican partisan identity—a lower level social identity. More recently, Hartmann and Tanis (2013) found that group membership was a predictor of hostile media perception, as long as the individual members had strong in-group identification. They also reported that only partisans who believed that their in-group had lower social status than the out-group exhibited hostile media perceptions.

Research Hypotheses and Questions

Despite the popular rhetoric of intergenerational war breaking out around the globe (e.g., Friedman, 2011; Leonhardt, 2012), a close examination of the phenomenon itself is relatively scarce. As a first step, the accessibility of generation as a social identity category among young South Koreans is assessed.

RQ1: How accessible is generation as a social identity group to young South Koreans, in comparison to other primary social categories?

In addition to accessibility, fit is an important factor to determine whether a social categorization is applied or not. A social group has its normative characteristics and the fit between individual group members' attribute/predisposition and the group norm can affect whether and how much the individuals embrace their social categorization. In terms of political ideology, the common view is that the normative political predisposition of the young generation in South Korea is more liberal than conservative (e.g., Ramstad & Park, 2008). The highly normative fit between the social category of the young generation and political liberalism, in turn, can instigate the black sheep effect, where politically conservative members of the young generation are negatively evaluated by their liberal cohorts (Pinto et al., 2010). Research to date, however, has not closely examined the effect of the chronic misfit between one's predisposition and the group norm on a person's group identification. Thus, a research question is posed here to compare the accessibility of generational identification among conservative and liberal youth in South Korea.

RQ2: Is there a difference in the chronic accessibility of generational identification between liberal and conservative young adults in South Korea?

Although young South Koreans widely depend on online and social media for news, they still consider mainstream news organizations such as national television broadcast networks and national newspapers as credible sources (Y. Choi, Axelrod, & Kim, 2015). At the same time, activation of the generational categorization process could either accentuate or attenuate their hostile media perception, as demonstrated in previous studies (Hartmann & Tanis, 2013; Matheson & Dursun, 2001; Reid, 2012). Because politics has served as a common context for public discussion of generation and generational conflicts in South Korea, the generational categorization triggered by an experimental manipulation may bolster young people's perception that the news article is biased against their position. Hence, H1 is posed to examine the effect of generational categorization on hostile media perceptions.

H1: Young South Koreans evaluate political news to be more biased against their political predisposition when their generational categorization is made accessible.

At the same time, the normative fit between political liberalism and the young generation may render generational categorization not universally applicable to young people. Conservative young adults are less likely to use generational categorization because they regard it as a poor fit, whereas liberal young adults may find generational categorization to be a good fit within a political context and apply it when accessible. Thus, H2 is proposed to examine the interaction effect between fit and generational categorization on hostile media perceptions.

H2: Politically liberal young South Koreans, in comparison to their conservative cohorts, evaluate political news as being more biased against their political predisposition when generational categorization is made accessible.

In recent years, the relationship between hostile media perceptions and the actions that partisans are willing to take to counteract the presumably negative influence of biased news on the general public has been confirmed in several studies (Barnidge & Rojas, 2014; J. Choi, Park, & Chang, 2011; Hwang, Pan, & Sun, 2008; Rojas, 2010). However, in these studies, the participants were all prototypical members of partisan groups in terms of their opinion on the issue at hand, and thus the fit between their issue position and group identity was good. In the current study, young people can be either prototypical or nonprototypical members of their group in terms of their political views, and thus the fit may affect their intention to engage in political talk in social settings predominantly occupied by other members of their generation. In light of these considerations, the following research question is posed.

RQ3: Will generational categorization, fit, and hostile media perceptions affect young South Koreans' intention to engage in political talk in social settings dominated by the members of their generational group?

Method

Research Design

The research design included two factors, generational categorization and normative fit with the political ideology of young South Koreans. The first factor was manipulated through an experimental treatment. In the experimental group, generational categorization of the participants was made accessible by exposing them to a news article focusing on an intergenerational conflict in a European country. The other factor, normative fit, was determined by recoding the participants' political predisposition. Because the normative political predisposition of the young generation is liberalism, participants with a liberal predisposition were deemed to be a good fit; those with a conservative predisposition were considered to be a poor fit. The generational categorization factor was a dichotomous variable; normative fit was a ratio variable.

Participants

Undergraduate students at a comprehensive university in Seoul, South Korea, were recruited from various courses in several disciplines. Initially, 193 students participated in this study, and they were randomly assigned to the two conditions created by the accessibility manipulation. After the data collection was completed, responses from two participants were eliminated from the data set because of outlier status in terms of their age. After a manipulation check, the number was further dropped to 175. Among them, 83 were women and 92 were men. The numbers of participants in the experimental condition ($n = 90$) and control condition ($n = 85$) were comparable.

Procedure

The data were obtained in classrooms using the pencil-and-paper method. First, consent forms were distributed. On the bottom and the back of the consent form, a few questions about political predisposition, identification with various social categories, and demographic attributes were posed.

Once the participants filled out the consent form and attached pretest, they exchanged the completed form with a questionnaire packet. The questionnaire was presented to the participants under the guise of "Evaluation of Newspaper Articles." To implement the experimental manipulation, two versions of the questionnaire packet were prepared. In every packet, two news articles were included, along with the questions related to each of them. The first of the two articles served as the manipulation for generational categorization. The evaluation of the second article served as the major dependent variable, hostile media perception.

Stimulus

The first story in the experimental condition was an actual news article regarding a conflict between the young and old over the mandatory retirement age in France. The first story in the control condition, in contrast, was an actual news article concerning a conflict between two opposing groups split over a bioenergy issue in Germany.

The second article was identical for both conditions. Titled "What Did President Park Lose From Her Press Secretary's Scandal During the Visit to Washington?" the article discussed the outcomes of South Korean President Park Geun-Hye's official U.S. visit, with an emphasis placed on the sexual misconduct of her press secretary against a young female U.S. government intern. Park had just been elected in December 2012 to the presidency on a conservative platform strongly backed by older voters who were nostalgic about the military rule run by her late father, General Park Jung-hee. The press secretary had been appointed by President Park against strong opposition from her liberal opponents, and thus this diplomatic embarrassment presented an opportunity for the opponents to launch an attack against not just the press secretary but also the president's overall judgment. The article was created based on actual media reports but also incorporated interviews with four people, two each from two distinct generational groups: Two people identified as being in their 20s expressed negative views on the president's performance; the other two in their 50s pointed out some positives from the visit and dismissed the scandal as the press secretary's personal problem.

Measures

Identification with generational group. This variable was measured by asking, "Members of this society belong to various social groups. How much are the following groups important to you to define who you are?" The groups included gender ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.65$), generation ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.54$), geographic origin ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.53$), and nationality ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.66$). The answer was captured on a 7-point scale for each of the groups, ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*very important*).

Generational categorization. This variable was experimentally manipulated. Values of 1 and 2 were assigned to the participants in the experimental and control conditions, respectively.

Normative fit. Unlike many Western countries, South Korea has a political system that is too dynamic for the traditional terms of *liberal* and *conservative* to capture. The history of the Korean War and the continued presence of the North Korean threat have also allowed some politicians to conflate being

liberal with being a communist for their political gain (Ryu, 2013). Thus, the current study gauged the political ideology of participants by asking about their attitude toward a newspaper, the *Chosun Daily*, instead of asking respondents to identify themselves on a continuum of being liberal and conservative. This is a historical newspaper, with the second largest circulation in the country, and has been firmly established as the conservative voice of the society (K.-H. Kim & Noh, 2011; G. Lee & Koh, 2009). The respondents with the most positive attitude toward the newspaper were deemed to fit the least with the normative political predisposition of the young generation, and thus were assigned a value of -3; those with the most negative attitude were assigned a value of 3; neutral respondents were assigned a value of 0. This question was embedded in a questionnaire measuring attitudes toward the five largest news media so as not to evoke speculations regarding the purpose of the study. After recoding the variable, the average score is 0.43 ($SD = 1.21$).

Hostile media perceptions. Modeled after previous hostile media studies (e.g., Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia, 2001), this variable was measured by two items: "Was the news article about the evaluation of President Park strictly neutral, or was it biased one way or the other?" and "Do you think the journalist responsible for the article was strictly neutral, or was the person biased one way or another?" The answers were obtained on an 11-point scale ranging from -5 (*strongly biased against President Park*) to 5 (*strongly biased in favor of President Park*), with 0 (*strictly neutral*) as the midpoint. The two scores were averaged (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$), and then we reverse-coded the conservative participants' answers so that a higher number indicated the perception of stronger bias against their side, regardless of their political predisposition ($M = -0.05$, $SD = 2.00$).

Intention to engage in political talk with other in-group members. Three statements were presented to participants to check the number that best reflected their view: "I am willing to express my opinion about President Park in a study group or academic seminar/in a class discussion/by writing an opinion column for the campus newspaper." The responses were captured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 7 (*absolutely agree*). These three items were averaged to create a composite scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). The average score is 3.24 ($SD = 1.30$). To prevent suspicion, willingness to speak out on another issue (retirement age extension or the bioenergy controversy) was measured as well.

Manipulation check. At the end of the questionnaire, two questions were posed to confirm that the experimental manipulation was successful. The opening question stated, "What type of conflict do you think the two newspaper articles you just read were focusing on? Please circle one among the choices provided in the parentheses." Subsequently, the participants were presented with two statements, one for each newspaper article: "The news article about the extension of retirement age/biofuel controversy was focusing on a conflict between two groups different in (gender, generation, region, environmentalism, political partisanship, race/ethnicity, nationality)" and "The news article about President Park's U.S. visit was focusing on a conflict between two groups different in (gender, generation, region, environmentalism, political partisanship, race/ethnicity, nationality)."

Results

Preliminary Analysis

On average, the participants were 21.1 years old ($SD = 2.01$). Based on their attitude toward the conservative newspaper, we classified the participants into three groups of liberals (those who do not prefer the conservative newspaper), conservatives (those who prefer the conservative newspaper), and moderates (those who do not show any preference or dislike toward the conservative newspaper), regardless of the extent of preference. In sum, there were 71 liberals, 28 conservatives, and 76 moderates.

The manipulation check confirmed that more than 90% of participants in the experimental condition thought that the first article was about a generational conflict, first and foremost. In the control condition, more than 93% of participants responded that the article was about a conflict between two groups with opposing stances on environmentalism. Those who gave different answers were eliminated from the dataset. Based on their answers to the second, the target newspaper article, a few participants were additionally dropped.

Generational Identification and Political Predisposition

RQ1 was posed to assess the strength of young South Korean's generational identification. It was 4.7 ($SD = 1.54$), which was highly comparable to their identification with other traditionally important social identity categories such as nationality ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.66$) and gender ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.65$). Their generational identification was much stronger than the one based on their geographical origin ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.53$). A general linear model (GLM) analysis with within-subjects repeated measures confirmed a statistically significant difference across the four identification scores, $F(3, 169) = 95.24$, $p < .001$. Subsequent pairwise comparisons with the Bonferroni correction pinpointed geographical origin as the source of the difference.

RQ2 inquired whether politically conservative young South Koreans would exhibit lower identification with their generation than politically liberal young South Koreans. A t -test analysis revealed no such difference. The strength of identification with their generational group was comparable between conservatives ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.69$) and liberals ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.62$), $t = -0.8$, p value was not significant.

Generational Categorization, Normative Fit, and Political Talk With Other In-Group Members

H1 predicted that generational categorization would trigger hostile media perceptions. Furthermore, H2 predicted that the effect of generational categorization on hostile media perceptions would be more pronounced among those who fit with the normative political predisposition of the generational group than those who do not. According to an ANOVA, generational categorization was a significant predictor of hostile media perceptions, $F(1, 162) = 4.25$, $p = .041$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$. After controlling

for generational categorization, the relationship between normative fit and hostile media perceptions was still statistically significant, $F(6, 162) = 3.62, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .118$. The interaction between generational categorization and normative fit was marginally significant, $F(5, 162) = 2.14, p = .064, \eta_p^2 = .062$.

A set of regression analyses provided further support. Participants in the experimental condition exhibited a statistically significant quadratic trend in the relationship between normative fit and hostile media perceptions, $R^2 = .11, F = 5.61, p = .005$; no such trend was found among participants in the control group, $R^2 = .04, F = 1.59, p = .21$. The hostile media perceptions of the experimental group increased sharply at the end of the right side of the U-curve, where their normative fit was the highest; the slope changes in the control group was not as clear-cut (see Figure 1).

RQ3 was concerned with the effects of generational categorization, fit, and hostile media perceptions on young South Koreans' intention to engage in political talk with other college students. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to answer this question. The final model that regressed intention to engage in political talk on gender, age, fit, generational categorization, hostile media perceptions, and interaction effect of fit and hostile media perception was statistically significant, $R^2 = .15, F(6, 168) = 4.94, p < .001$.

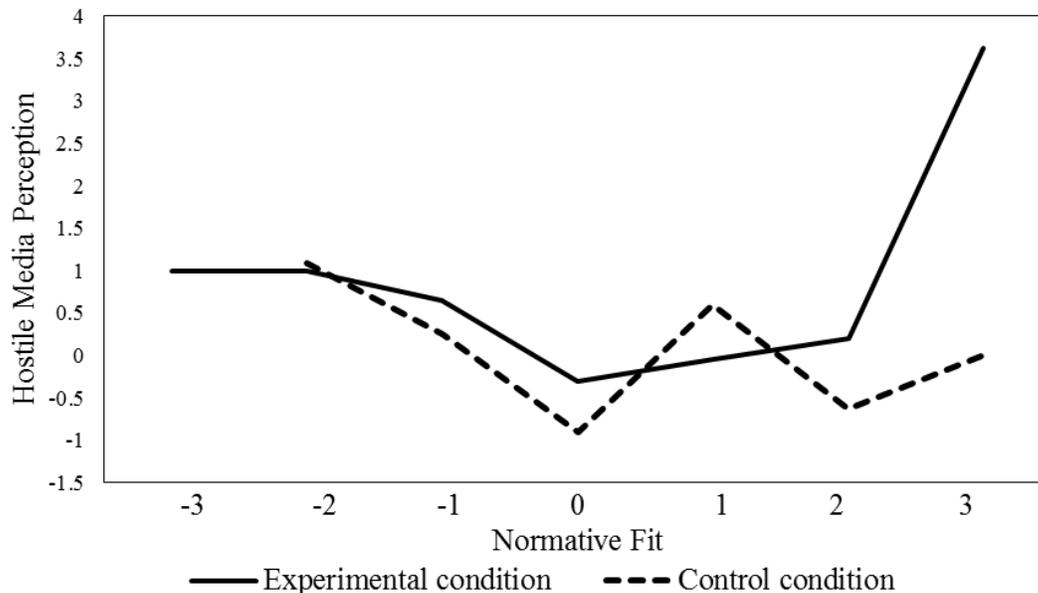


Figure 1. The effect of generational categorization on hostile media perceptions at different levels of normative fit.

When the individual explanatory variables were examined, women, as opposed to men, were more likely to engage in political talk, $b = -.68$, $SE = .19$, $t = -3.51$, $p = .001$, and relatively older participants were more likely to do so than their younger cohorts, $b = .16$, $SE = .05$, $t = 3.33$, $p = .001$. Among the three major variables, fit was the only significant predictor. Those who fit with their generational group's normative political predisposition were more likely to engage in political talk, $b = .23$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.93$, $p = .004$. The regression coefficients of generational categorization, $b = -.14$, $SE = .19$, $t = -0.74$, $p = .461$, hostile media perceptions, $b = -.03$, $SE = .05$, $t = -0.71$, $p = .479$, and the interaction between fit and hostile media perception, $b = -.02$, $SE = .04$, $t = -0.55$, $p = .583$, were not statistically significant. See Table 1 for detailed statistics.

Table 1. Predictors of Intention to Engage in Political Talk With Peers.

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Block 1			
Gender (0 = women; 1 = men)	-.678	.193	-.261**
Age	.162	.049	.250**
$F(2, 172) = 9.34***, R^2 = .098$			
Block 2			
Normative Fit	.230	.078	.214**
Generational categorization	-.139	.188	-.053
Hostile media perception (HMP)	-.033	.047	-.051
$F_{\text{change}}(3, 169) = 3.34*, R^2_{\text{change}} = .05$			
Block 3			
Fit \times HMP	-.020	.036	-.041
$F_{\text{change}}(1, 168) = 0.30**, R^2_{\text{change}} = .002$			
Model statistics			
<i>N</i>		174	
<i>F</i>		4.943***	
<i>R</i> ²		.150	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study examined the generational identification of young South Koreans in a political context. Being a member of their generation was as important to the identity of the young people as being a South Korean citizen or being a woman or man. As widely assumed, they were more likely to be politically liberal than conservative. At the same time, there were as many moderates as liberals. Liberals and conservatives identified themselves as members of their generation to a comparable extent.

The substantial overlap between political liberalism and young generational identification produced hostile media perceptions of political news based on not only political predisposition but also

generational categorization. Furthermore, hostile media perceptions were particularly pronounced among young people whose political predisposition was a good fit with the normative political predisposition of the young generation in South Korea. The fit between generational identification and political predisposition, in turn, exerted a significant impact on their intention to engage in political talk with their generational group members, whereas hostile media perceptions and generational categorization did not.

These findings expand our knowledge regarding the role of social categorization in the hostile media perception process. Increased accessibility of one social category—generational categorization—also accrued increased accessibility of another closely related social category—political partisanship—and the effects on hostile media perceptions were the most pronounced when the fit between the two was good. When the fit was poor, increased accessibility of generational categorization produced little difference in political partisanship-based hostile media perceptions. The ability of young conservative South Koreans to maintain a high level of young generational identification is particularly interesting in light of their low willingness to engage in political talk with peers. They may be highly aware of their discordance with the rest of their generational group in terms of political predisposition, and thus adopt proper behavioral strategies so as not to get themselves into trouble. Yet they were firmly connected to their generational group as their liberal counterparts, thereby reaffirming the importance of research focusing on crisscross categories of social identity (Brown & Turner, 1979).

The lack of a relationship between hostile media perceptions and the intention to engage in political talk with other members of one's own generation observed in this study should be interpreted with caution. Rather than contradicting a few previous studies that have reported a significant relationship between hostile media perceptions and behavioral intentions to engage in various political participatory actions to counteract negative media influence, the current finding might be better understood as a symptom of social identity management. Due to the nature of the participants, young people who were generally disaffected by the establishment, it might have been much more important for them to take necessary actions to maintain their generational identification and stay in harmony with the rest of their generation group than to speak out for politicians, the vast majority of whom are part of the older generation.

The current study can be interesting to generational researchers, as well. It sheds light on the state of the young generation's identification in South Korea and their political alignment. Also notable is the level of generational identity among the young, as high as the level of nationality and gender identity. Their strong group cohesiveness can also serve as a unifying force among the young, which can be channeled through social participation and activism, which is not clearly labeled with a particular political ideology.

Besides the effect of age, the generational perspective helps understand reasons behind young people's perceptions and behaviors by tracing critical social events that happened in their lives and investigating how they identify themselves as a particular generation group and interact with the same group's members. Although this study did not examine the role of social media in the formation of generation identity among young South Koreans, it is plausible that social media provide them with the shared place to network with their peers, thus strengthening their generational group identity. Given the

popularity of online and social media communication among young people and some shared characteristics of the young generation in various countries (Erickson, 2011), the importance of generational approach will only increase as a method to understand young adults' thoughts and behaviors.

In doing so, researchers will benefit from taking a cross-cultural perspective. Due to the fast pace of technology diffusion, information exchange, and interdependence of national economies at least among developed countries, young people in different parts of the industrialized world seem to share many characteristics as a generation group. At the same time, it will be prudent to consider cultural, historical, and socioeconomic factors unique to individual societies and explore how the generation identity is similar and different across the boundaries.

In spite of these contributions, this study also has several limitations. First, the number of young conservatives was relatively small in comparison to young moderates and liberals. This uneven distribution of political predisposition reflects their actual percentages in the study population. Nevertheless, future research could benefit from a more even distribution of political predisposition of participants, especially from a statistical point of view. Also, the data collection was conducted in one sitting, which increased the potential influence of responding to the predisposition and demographic questions on subsequent dependent measures. Furthermore, this experiment was conducted in a university, so the sample may not faithfully reflect Korean young adults in general. Last but not least, applying the current research design to study hostile media perception of the older generation can be another fruitful direction researchers can take. To date, public discussions of generation identity have focused on young adults, when the social categorization could be affecting beliefs and behaviors of other generation groups. It will be of interest for both hostile media researchers and generation researchers to find out whether older counterparts of the young generation also hold strong generational identity and hostile media perception.

References

- American Press Institute. (2015). *How millennials get news: Inside the habits of America's first digital generation*. Retrieved from <http://www.mediainsight.org/PDFs/Millennials/Millennials%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>
- Ariyanto, A., Hornsey, M. J., & Gallois, C. (2006). Group-directed criticism in Indonesia: Role of message source and audience. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 9*(2), 96–102. doi:10.1111/j.1467-839X.2006.00186.x
- Arpan, L. M., & Raney, A. A. (2003). An experimental investigation of news source and the hostile media effect. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 80*(2), 265–281. doi:10.1177/107769900308000203
- Bakker, T. P., & de Vreese, C. H. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, internet use, and political participation. *Communication Research, 38*(4), 451–470. doi:10.1177/0093650210381738

- Barnidge, M., & Rojas, H. (2014). Hostile media perceptions, presumed media influence, and political talk: Expanding the corrective action hypothesis. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26(2), 135–156. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edt032
- Bell, D. N. F., & Blanchflower, D. G. (2011). Underemployment in the UK in the Great Recession. *National Institute Economic Review*, 215(1), 23–33. doi:10.1177/0027950111401141
- Braungart, R. G., & Braungart, M. M. (1986). Life-course and generational politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 205–231.
- Brown, R. J., & Turner, C. J. (1979). The criss-cross categorization effect in intergroup discrimination. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 18(4), 371–383. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8260.1979.tb00907.x
- Carlsson, G., & Karlsson, K. (1970). Age, cohorts and the generation of generations. *American Sociological Review*, 35(4), 710–718.
- Casselman, B., & Walker, M. (2013, September 14). Wanted: Jobs for the new “lost” generation. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323893004579057063223739696>
- Chattopadhyaya, P., George, E., Lawrence, S. A. (2004). Why does dissimilarity matter? Exploring self-categorization, self-enhancement, and uncertainty reduction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(5), 892–900. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.892
- Choe, S.-H. (2011, September 29). No rest for the wired. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/30/business/global/no-rest-for-the-wired.html?pagewanted=C2%BCall&_r%C2%BC0
- Choi, J., Park, H. S., & Chang, J. (2011). Hostile media perception, involvement types, and advocacy behaviors. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 88(1), 23–39. doi:10.1177/107769901108800102s
- Choi, Y., Axelrod, D., & Kim, J. (2015). Trust me, I am your news channel: Media credibility across news platforms in the United States and South Korea. *Electronic News*, 9(1), 17–35. doi:10.1177/1931243115572823
- Crisp, R. J., & Hewstone, M. (2000). Multiple categorization and social identity. In D. Capozza & R. Brown (Eds.), *Social identity processes: Trends in theory and research* (pp. 149–166). London, UK: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781446218617.n10
- Crittenden, J. (1962). Aging and party affiliation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 26(4), 648–657. doi:10.1086/267134

- Cutler, N. E. (1969). Generation, maturation, and party affiliation: A cohort analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33(4), 583–588. doi:10.1086/267747
- Dalton, R. J. (2009). *The good citizen: How a younger generation is reshaping American politics* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Duck, J. M., Terry, D. J., & Hogg, M. A. (1998). Perceptions of a media campaign: The role of social identity and the changing intergroup context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(1), 3–16. doi:10.1177/0146167298241001
- Erickson, T. (2011, April 4). Generations around the globe. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2011/04/generations-around-the-globe-1>
- Foner, A. (1974). Age stratification and age conflict in political life. *American Sociological Review*, 39(2), 187–196.
- Friedman, T. L. (2011, July 16). The clash of generations. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/opinion/sunday/17friedman.html>
- Gallup Korea. (2012). 제 18 대 대통령 선거 예측과 선거 기간 내 예상 득표율 추이 [Forecast of the 2012 presidential election]. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/reportContent.asp?seqNo=373>
- Glenn, N. D. (2003). Distinguishing age, period, and cohort effects. In J. T. Mortimer & M. J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 465–476). New York, NY: Springer.
- Glenn, N. D., & Hefner, T. (1972). Further evidence on aging and party identification. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(1), 31–47. doi:10.1086/267973
- Gunther, A. C., Christen, C. T., Liebhart, J. L., & Chia, S. C.-Y. (2001). Congenial public, contrary press, and biased estimates of the climate of opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 65(3), 295–320. doi:10.1086/322846
- Hartmann, T., & Tanis, M. (2013). Examining the hostile media effect as an intergroup phenomenon: The role of ingroup identification and status. *Journal of Communication*, 63(3), 535–555. doi:10.1111/jcom.12031
- Hershatter, A., & Epstein, M. (2010). Millennials and the world of work: An organization and management perspective. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 211–223. doi:10.1007/s10869-010-9160-y
- Hogg, M. A. (2005). The social identity perspective. In S. A. Wheelan (Ed.), *The handbook of group research and practice* (pp. 133–157). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Hogg, M. A., Abrams, D., Otten, S., & Hinkle, S. (2004). The social identity perspective: Intergroup relations, self-conception, and small groups. *Small Group Research, 35*(3), 246–276. doi:10.1177/1046496404263424
- Hornyak, T. (2012). Getting online in super-wired South Korea. *CNET*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnet.com/news/getting-online-in-super-wired-south-korea/>
- Hwang, H., Pan, Z., & Sun, Y. (2008). Influence of hostile media perception on willingness to engage in discursive activities: An examination of mediating role of media indignation. *Media Psychology, 11*(1), 76–97. doi:10.1080/15213260701813454
- Kim, J. (2013, January 29). South Korea's "lost generation" of youth? 6 socio-economic challenges. *Asia-Pacific Global Research Group*. Retrieved from <http://asiapacificglobal.com/2013/01/south-koreas-lost-generation-of-youth-6-socio-economic-challenges/>
- Kim, J. (2016). South Korean youth in crisis: Implications for political leadership. *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs, 3*(1), 39–44.
- Kim, K.-H., & Noh, G.-Y. (2011). 한국 신문사의 이념과 북한 보도방식에 대한 연구 [A comparative study of news reporting about North Korea on newspapers in South Korea]. *Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies, 55*(1), 361–387.
- Klecka, W. R. (1971). Applying political generations to the study of political behavior: A cohort analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 35*(3), 358–373. doi:10.1086/267921
- Knoke, D., & Hout, M. (1974). Social and demographic factors in American political party affiliations, 1952–72. *American Sociological Review, 39*(5), 700–713.
- Lee, C. (2015, July 26). Youth unemployment rate in Korea reaches highest in 15 years. *The Korea Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150726000328>
- Lee, G., & Koh, H. (2009). 취재원 활용을 통해 살펴본 한국 신문의 보도시각 고찰: 미국 쇠고기 수입 관련 기사에 나타나 취재원 신뢰도와 유인가 분석을 중심으로 [Korean newspaper's political orientation featuring in U.S. beef imports articles: Analysis of source information valence in five newspapers]. *Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies, 53*(3), 348–369.
- Leonhardt, D. (2012, June 22). Old vs. young. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/opinion/sunday/the-generation-gap-is-back.html?_r=0
- Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., & Xenos, M. A. (2014). The networked young citizen: Social media, political participation and civic engagement. *Information, Communication, & Society, 17*(2), 143–150. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2013.871571

- Mannheim, K. (1952). The problem of generations. In P. Kecskemeti (Ed.), *Essays on the sociology of knowledge* (pp. 276–320). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Matheson, K., & Dursun, S. (2001). Social identity precursors to the hostile media phenomenon: Partisanship perception of coverage of the Bosnian conflict. *Group Processes Intergroup Relations*, 4(2), 116–125. doi:10.1177/1368430201004002003
- McGlynn, A. P. (2005). Teaching millennials, our newest cultural cohort. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 71(4), 12–16.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2007). Generation, age and time: The dynamics of political learning during Russia's transformation. *Journal of Political Science*, 51(4), 822–834. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00283.x
- Novak, A. L. (2016). *Media, millennials, and politics: The coming of age of the next political generation*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Pew Research Center. (2007). *How young people view their lives, futures, and politics: A portrait of "generation next."* Retrieved from <http://pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/300.pdf>
- Pew Research Center. (2011). *The generation gap and the 2012 election*. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2011/11/03/the-generation-gap-and-the-2012-election-3/>
- Pew Research Center. (2012). *Young voters supported Obama less, but may have mattered more*. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2012/11/26/young-voters-supported-obama-less-but-may-have-mattered-more/>
- Pew Research Center. (2014). *Millennials in adulthood: Detached from institutions, networked with friends*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/>
- Pinto, I. R., Marques, J. M., Levine, J. M., & Abrams, D. (2010). Membership status and subjective group dynamics: Who triggers the black sheep effect? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(1), 107–119. doi:10.1037/a0018187
- Rampell, C. (2015, February 2). The great recession's lost generation? Older millennials. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/catherine-rampell-older-millennials-are-paying-the-price-for-bad-timing/2015/02/02/4ef644c8-ab1c-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html?utm_term=.23d67365c26e
- Ramstad, E., & Park, S. (2008, July 3). South Korean protests show depth of anger, challenge president. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB121498890147922583>

- Reid, S. A. (2012). A self-categorization explanation for the hostile media effect. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 381–399. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01647.x
- Rintala, M. (1963). A generation in politics: A definition. *The Review of Politics*, 25(4), 509–522. doi:10.1017/S0034670500006446
- Rojas, H. (2010). "Corrective" actions in the public sphere: How perceptions of media and media effects shape political behaviors. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 22(3), 343–363. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edq018
- Ryu, J. (2013). 정치이념의 방향, 강도 및 층위 [Direction, strength, and level of political ideology]. *Journal of Korean Association of Party Studies*, 12(1), 61–86.
- Shively, W. P. (1979). The relationship between age and party identification: A cohort analysis. *Political Methodology*, 6(4), 437–446.
- Tajfel, H. (1972). La catégorization sociale [Social categorization]. In S. Moscovici (Ed.), *Introduction à la psychologie sociale* [Introduction to social psychology] (Vol. 1, pp. 272–302). Paris, France: Larousse.
- Thompson, D. (2011, September 22). Are today's youth really a lost generation? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/09/are-todays-youth-really-a-lost-generation/245524/>
- Thompson, D. (2016, February 29). The liberal millennial revolution. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/02/the-liberal-millennial-revolution/470826/>
- Turner, J. C. (1999). Some current issues in research on social identity and self-categorization theories. In N. Ellemers, R. Spears, & B. Doosje (Eds.), *Social identity* (pp. 6–34). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Turner, J. C., Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S. A., & McGarty, C. (1994). Self and collective: Cognition and social context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(5), 454–463. doi:10.1177/0146167294205002
- Vallone, R. P., Ross, L., & Lepper, R. M. (1985). The hostile media phenomenon: Biased perception and perception of bias in coverage of the Beirut massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(3), 577–585. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.49.3.577
- Vidali, D. S. (2010). Millennial encounters with mainstream television news: Excess, void, and points of engagement. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20(2), 372–388. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1395.2010.01075.x

- Vincent, J. A. (2014). Age, ageism and social identity in later years. In S. Vertovec (Ed.), *Routledge international handbook of diversity studies* (pp. 33–42). London, UK: Routledge.
- Vincent, J. A. (2005). Understanding generations: Political economy and cultural in an ageing society. *British Journal of Sociology*, 56(4), 525–694. doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00084.x
- Wasik, J. F. (2017, January 11). For young entrepreneurs, college debts can snuff out start-up hopes. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/11/business/smallbusiness/for-young-entrepreneurs-college-debts-can-snuff-out-start-up-hopes.html?_r=0
- Willets, D. (2010). *The pinch: How the baby boomers took their children's future—and why they should give it back*. London, UK: Atlantic Books.
- Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., & Delli-Carpini, M. X. (2006). *A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.