

Trans, Identity and Institutional Controversies

Research Report: PADS-002 | March 7, 2023

Research Question

A particularly salient culture-war issue in contemporary American society concerns the relationship between gender identity and biological sex. While some insist that peoples' subjective interpretation of their sex is paramount, others insist objective markers (like chromosomes) are practically more relevant. Most recently, this issue has been enflamed by two central institutional controversies: biological males identifying as women competing in women's sports leagues and sex/gender-oriented material being taught to young children in schools. Disagreement abounds, with liberals sometimes downplaying the severity of these controversies, and conservatives doing the opposite. In this report, we ask: what do Americans really think about these issues?

Methodology

Data Source

- Political Accuracy and Divisions Study ("PADS," collected August 2022 - October 2022)

Data Quality Control

- All participants in this dataset passed attention, response time, fraud, duplication, and bot checks.

Participants

- 3014 adults in the United States (51.2% Female)
- Average Age = 44.39 years (SD = 17.41 years)
- 46.4% White; 32.2% Hispanic; 21.2% Black

Measures

- Political Orientation:** Respondents were asked, "When thinking about [social/cultural issues], where would you place yourself on the political continuum?" Answer options were: "very liberal," "liberal," "moderate," "conservative," or "very conservative."
- Views on Trans and Gender Identity:** Respondents were asked their degree of agreement (or disagreement) with the following statements:
 - Transgender women are biological women.
 - I believe that biological males who identify as women should be allowed to compete in women's sports.
 - Teachers should teach their students about gender identity and sexual orientation in elementary school.

Summary of Findings

- Regardless of generation (Fig. 1) or of political orientation (Fig. 2), most people did not agree that transgender women are biological women.
 - However, over a quarter of GenZ, and over a third of those identifying as "Very Liberal," did agree that transgender women are biological women.
- About half of GenZ and Millennials (Fig. 3), as well as a majority of those identifying as "Very Liberal" (72.1%; Fig. 4) agree that teachers should be teaching about gender and sexuality in elementary school.
- Regardless of generation (Fig. 5) most people do not agree that biological males should compete in women's sports leagues.
 - However, more than half of those identifying as "Very Liberal" (Fig. 6) did tell us that biological males should be allowed to compete in women's sports leagues.

Take-Home Message

- Most Americans regardless of age or political orientation do not agree that trans women are biological women and that biological males should be allowed to compete in sports against biological females. However, a majority of those identifying as "Very Liberal" and half of those identifying as "Liberal" did agree that gender identity and sexual orientation should be taught to elementary school students.
- Have another interpretation? Share it here: research@skeptic.com

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Figure 1

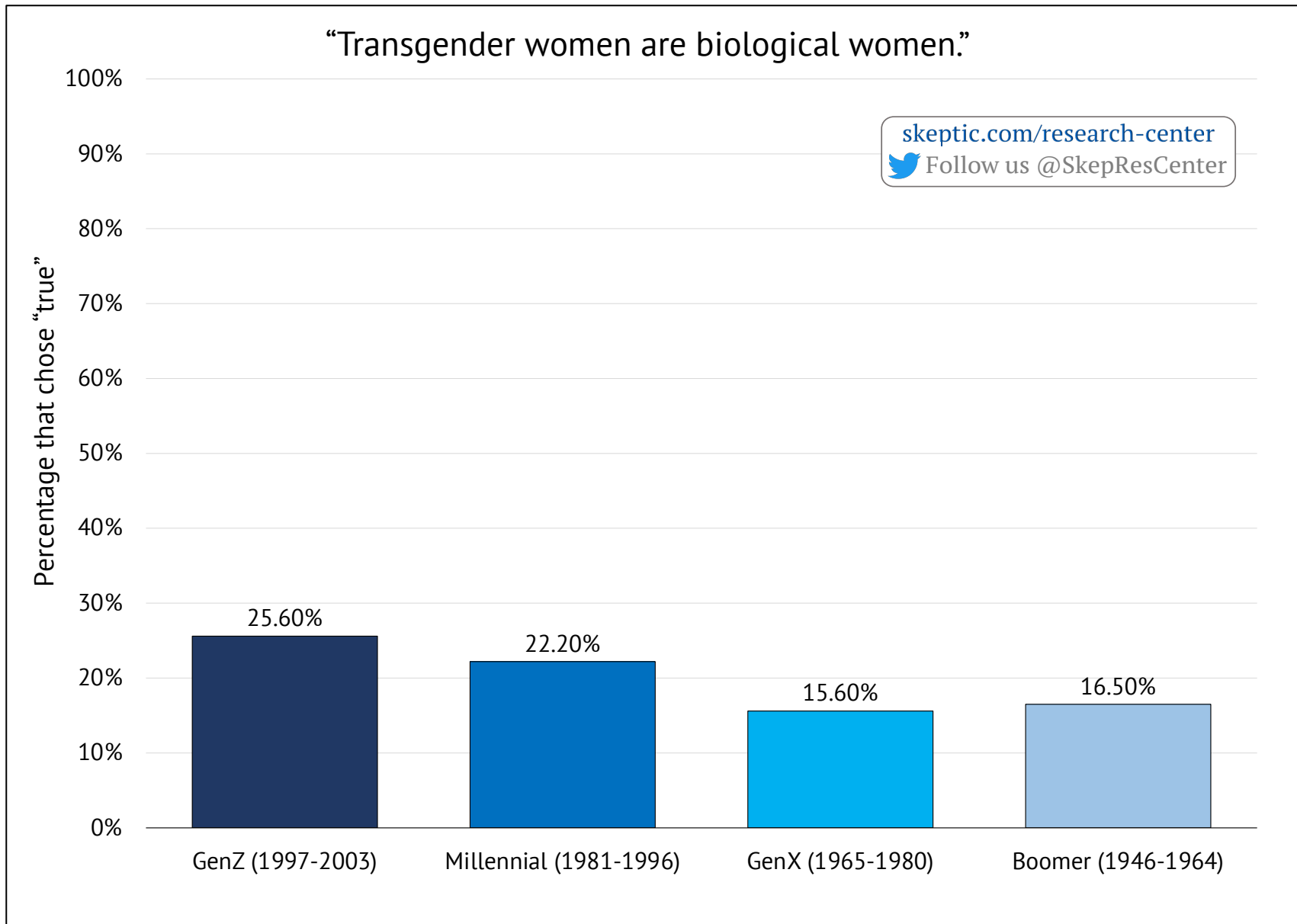


Figure 2

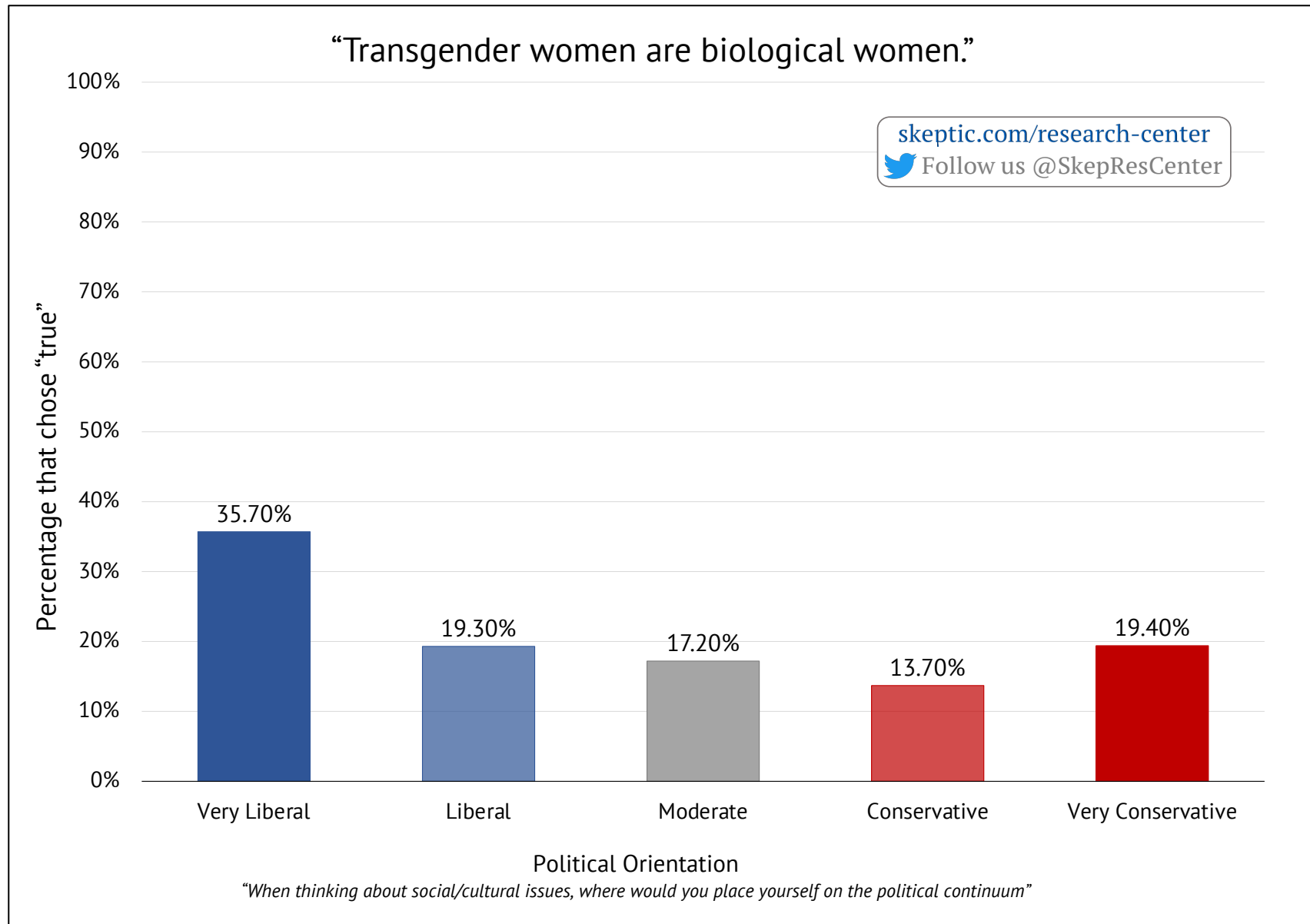


Figure 3

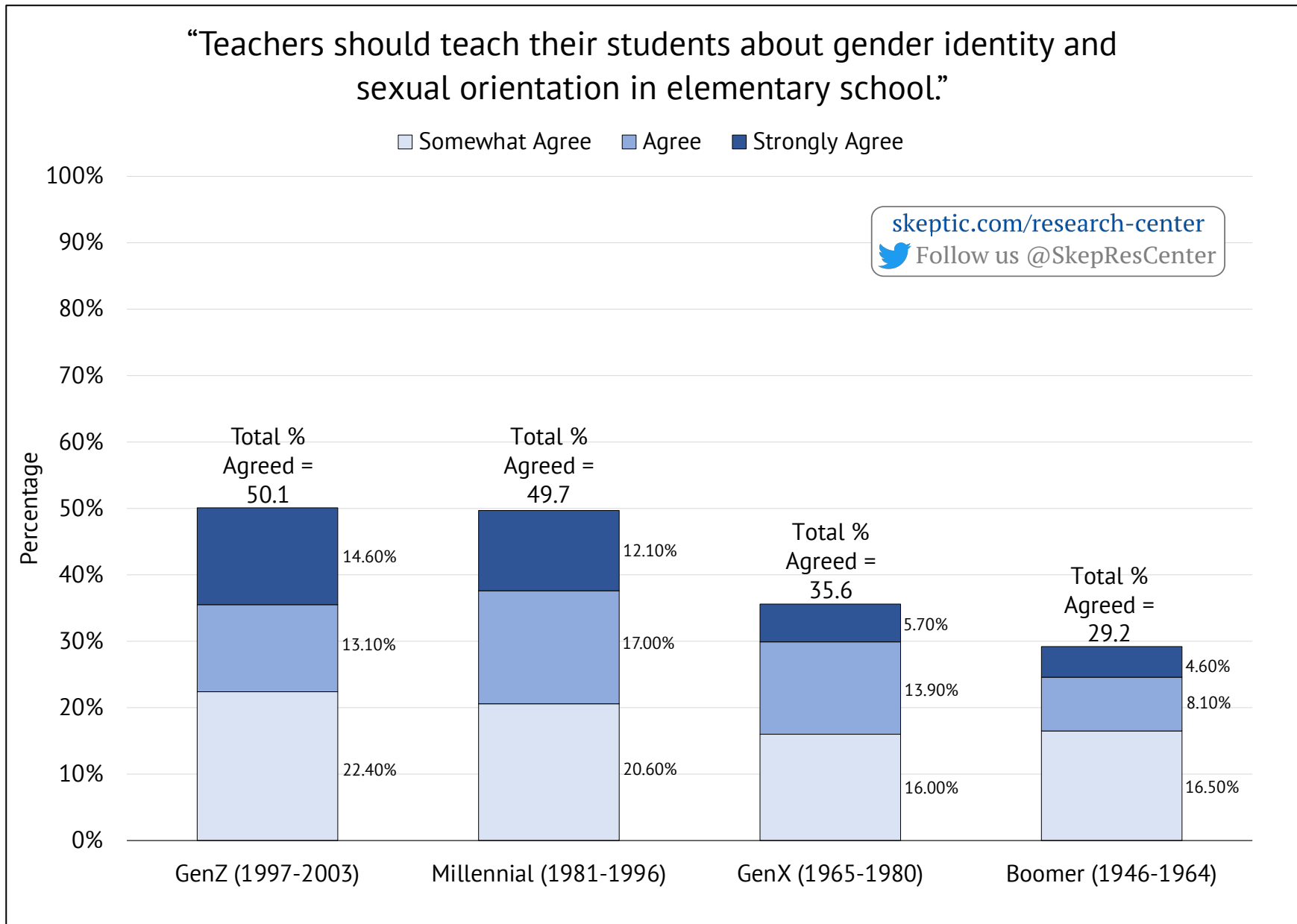


Figure 4

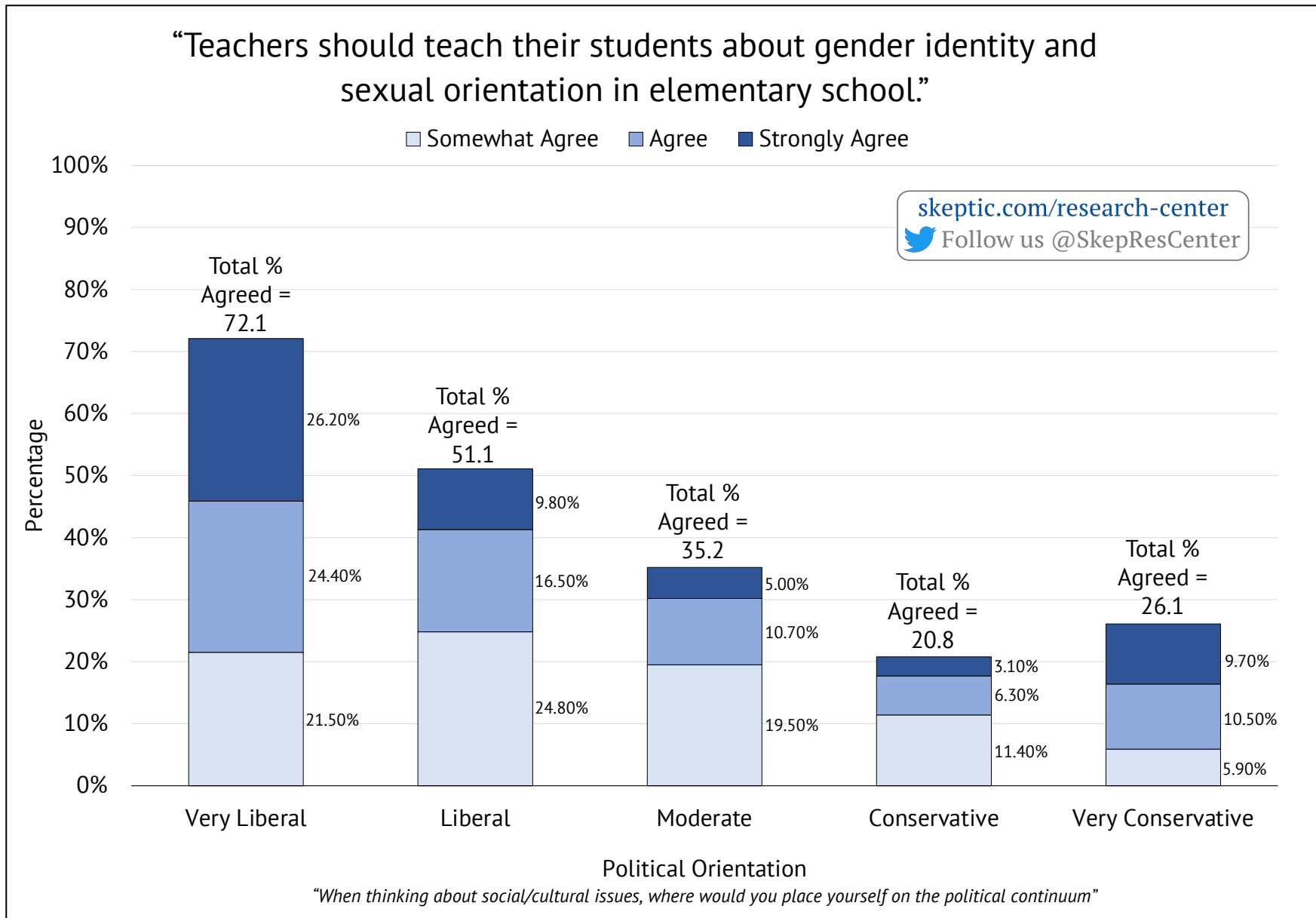


Figure 5

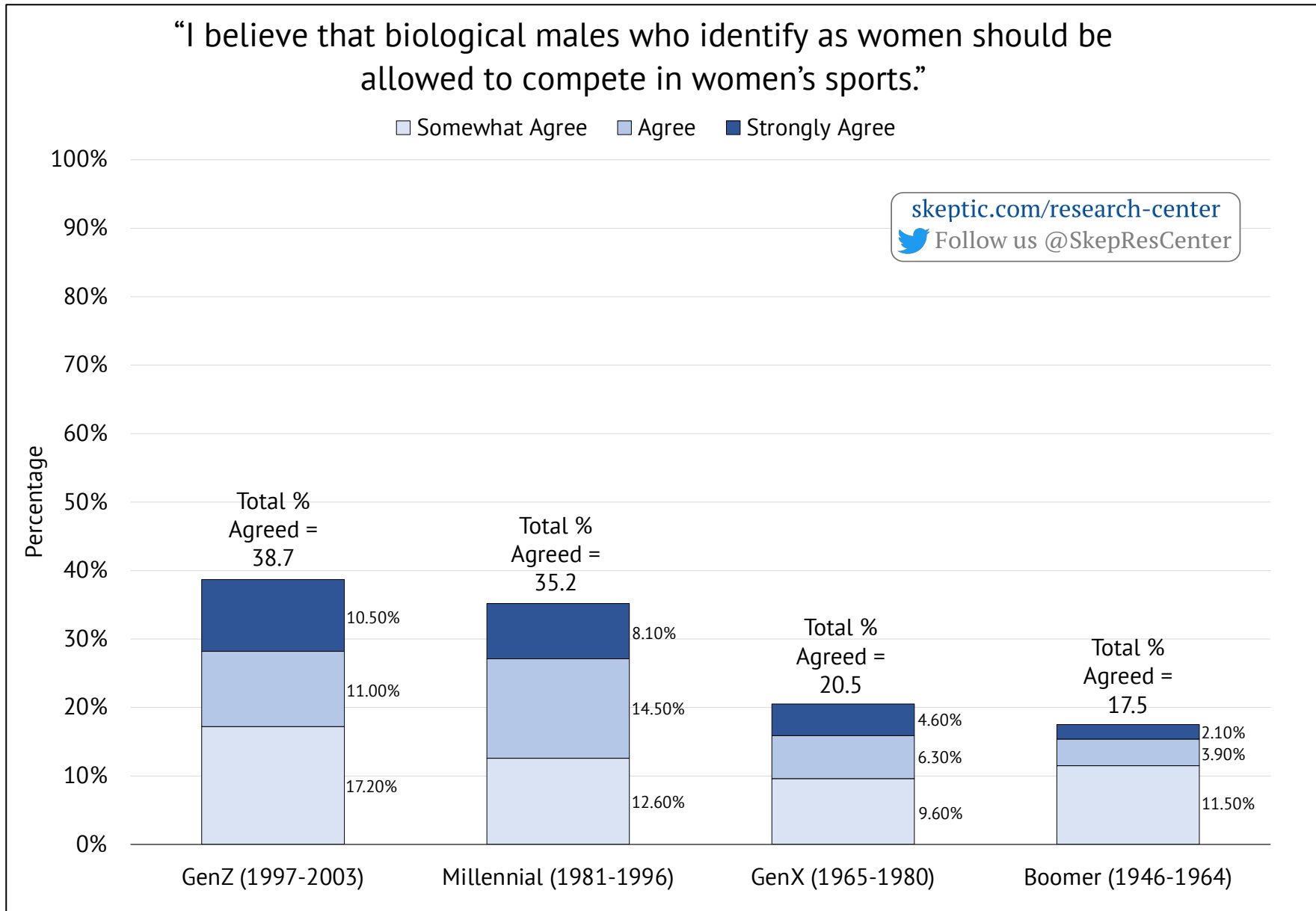


Figure 6

