

Supplemental Materials

Table S1.

Compliance Questions and the Percentage of Subjects From Each Study who Failed Them.

Question	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Did you maximize the size of your web browser so that it covers your entire screen?	7.7	10.1	9.9
Did you complete the experiment in a single session, without stopping?	2.2	1.7	1.1
Did you pause or leave the experiment to engage in other tasks, even if they were other computer tasks?	3.3	4.7	3.3
Did you use your web browser's back or refresh buttons at any point during the experiment?	0.0	2.4	1.5
Did you complete the experiment in an environment that is free of noise and distraction?	9.9	8.4	8.4
Did you complete the experiment without anyone helping you?	5.5	4.7	6.2
Did you speak with anyone at any time during the experiment?	12.1	4.5	4.6
Please tell us whether you used a search engine at any point during the experiment to look anything up.	9.9	5.6	12.1
Subjects who failed at least one of the above	28.6	25.5	34.9

Note. The last row is not equivalent to the sum of each column because some subjects failed multiple questions.

Supplemental Materials for Study 1

Table S2.

Top 10 Most Frequently Reported Nationally Relevant Events that Happened During Subjects' Lifetime in Study 1

Age ≤ 30		Age >30	
Event	Percent	Event	Percent
Attacks on the WTC	93.9	Attacks on the WTC	94.8
Obama elected	84.9	Obama elected	50.0
Iraq War	42.4	Iraq War	29.3
Legalization of gay marriage	42.4	Vietnam War	27.6
Boston Marathon Bombing	24.2	Legalization of gay marriage	22.4
Hillary Clinton nominated for president	24.2	Hillary Clinton nominated for president	20.7
2008 Recession	21.2	Moon landing	20.7
Hurricane Katrina	21.2	Hurricane Katrina	17.2
Internet	21.2	Challenger disaster	15.5
Osama bin Laden killed	18.2	End of the Cold War	15.5

Note: Percentage of people from each age group who listed the event as one of their 10 nationally relevant events that occurred in their lifetime.

Table S3.

Top 25 Most Frequently Reported Nationally Relevant Events of All Time in Study 1

Rank order	Event	Percent		
		All subjects	Age ≤ 30	Age >30
1	American Civil War	69.2	60.6	74.1
2	Attacks on the WTC	69.2	78.8	63.8
3	WWII	52.8	42.4	58.6
4	Declaration of Independence	48.4	39.4	53.5
5	American Revolutionary War	34.1	39.4	31.0
6	JFK assassination	34.1	21.2	41.4
7	Vietnam War	30.8	27.3	32.8
8	WWI	30.8	24.2	34.5
9	Great Depression	29.7	27.3	31.0
10	Women's voting rights	27.5	18.2	32.8
11	Obama elected	26.4	30.3	24.1
12	Moon landing	25.3	30.3	22.4
13	Abolition of slavery	24.2	12.1	31.0
14	Civil Rights Movement	23.1	27.3	20.7
15	US Constitution	20.9	15.2	24.1
16	Pearl Harbor	18.7	24.2	15.5
17	American Revolution	16.5	15.2	17.2
18	The Louisiana Purchase	16.5	18.2	15.5
19	The Cold War	12.1	15.2	10.3
20	Lincoln assassination	12.1	6.1	15.5
21	Emancipation Proclamation	11.0	18.2	6.9
22	Legalization of gay marriage	11.0	21.2	5.2
23	Atomic bombings	7.7	12.1	5.2
24	The Industrial Revolution	7.7	12.1	5.2
25	War of 1812	6.6	6.1	6.9

Note. Events are ordered from the most common to the least common based on responses from all subjects.

Supplemental Materials for Study 2

Analyses by Political Affiliation in Study 2. We analyzed subjects' responses to the question "What year would you describe as America's greatest?" in Study 2 by their political affiliation. We first report descriptive statistics for subjects by political party.

A total of 100 Republicans participated in Study 2 ($M_{\text{age}} = 40.89$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.36$). Of those 100 Republicans, 21 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 24 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 30 were aged between 40 and 49; 17 were aged between 50 and 59; seven were aged between 60 and 69; one was aged between 70 and 79.

A total of 220 Democrats participated in Study 2 ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.85$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 13.47$). Of those 220 Democrats, 74 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 68 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 25 were aged between 40 and 49; 35 were aged between 50 and 59; 15 were aged between 60 and 69; three were aged between 70 and 79.

A total of 146 Independents participated in Study 2 ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.90$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 14.10$). Of those 146 Independents, 43 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 41 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 22 were aged between 40 and 49; 21 were aged between 50 and 59; 15 were aged between 60 and 69; three were aged between 70 and 79.

Nationally relevant events by political affiliation. We calculated the percentage of people affiliated with each political party who nominated a nationally relevant event as America’s greatest year. We defined nationally relevant event in Table S4a by the 10 most frequent events nominated in Study 1.

Table S4a.

The Percentage of People in Study 2 who Nominated an Event from Table 1 as America’s Greatest Year by Political Affiliation.

Table 1 Rank	Event	Percent		
		Republicans	Democrats	Independents
1	American Civil War	1.0	0.9	1.4
2	Attacks on the WTC	2.0	0.9	0.0
3	WWII	15.0	11.8	12.3
4	Declaration of Independence	25.0	19.5	17.8
5	American Revolutionary War	0.0	1.4	2.7
6	JFK assassination	0.0	0.0	0.0
7	Vietnam War	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	WWI	1.0	0.0	0.0
9	Great Depression	1.0	0.0	0.0
10	Women’s voting rights	0.0	0.9	0.0
Total		45.0	35.5	34.2

Note. Percentages are calculated based on the number of people who mentioned each specific event as the reason why the year they picked was America's greatest. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

We wondered to what extent nominating a nationally relevant event differed between people with different political party affiliations. There were no statistically significant differences (admittedly with ambiguous p-values) in the proportions of people nominating nationally relevant events for each political affiliation ($\chi^2 = 4.89, p = .087$).

We calculated the percentage of people affiliated with each political party who nominated a nationally relevant event as America's greatest year. But in Tables S4b, S4c, and S4d, we defined nationally relevant events as the most frequent events that people affiliated with each political party nominated. Events had to have more than one mention to be on the "most frequent specific events" tables, that's why all tables have fewer than 10 events.

Table S4b.

*Republicans' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 2.*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	25.0
3	WWII	15.0
12	Moon landing	4.0
0	Turn of the century (2000)	3.0
2	Attacks on the WTC	2.0
0	Bicentennial	2.0
Total		51.0

Note. A rank order of "0" in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the "Total" row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S4c.

*Democrats' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 2.*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	19.5
3	WWII	11.8
12	Moon landing	5.5
11	Obama elected	5.0
0	Turn of the century (2000)	4.1
0	Bicentennial	1.4
1	American Civil War	0.9
2	Attacks on WTC	0.9
Total		49.1

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S4d.

*Independents' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 2*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	17.8
3	WWII	12.3
12	Moon landing	4.8
0	Turn of the century (2000)	2.1
1	American Civil War	1.4
Total		38.4

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Bump data by political affiliation. We then removed the people who nominated a nationally relevant event (those people in Table S4a), and plotted the age of the remaining subjects when they thought America was its greatest by political affiliation in Figure S1.

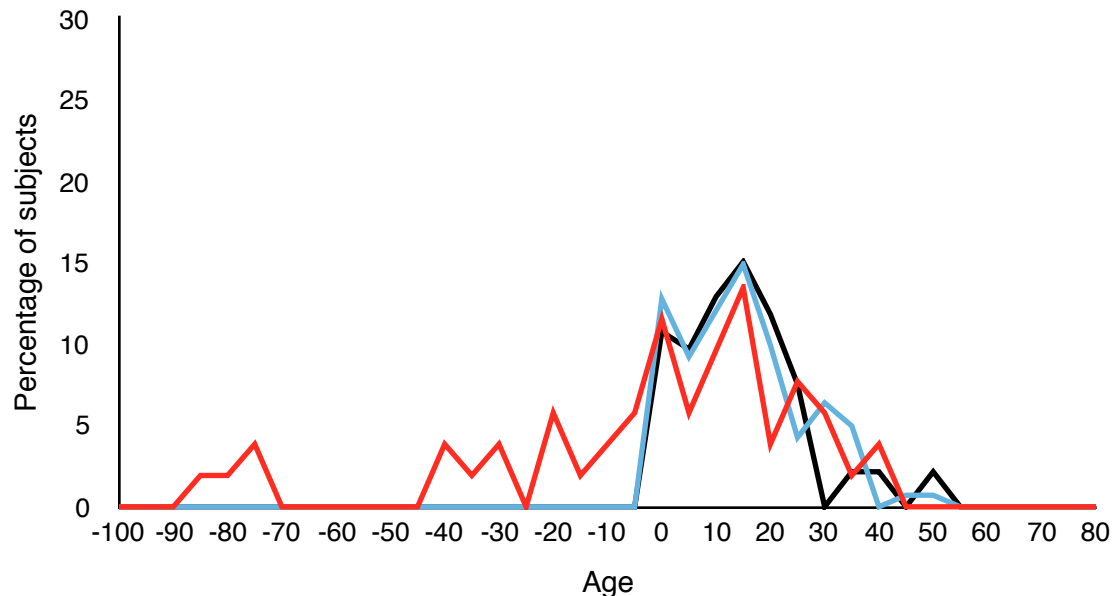


Figure S1. How old Americans were when they thought America was at its greatest by political affiliation in Study 2. The red line represents people who identified as Republicans. The blue line represents people who identified as Democrats. The black line represents people who identified as Independent. These distributions exclude people who nominated a top 10 nationally relevant memory from Study 1 and only show responses as far back as 100 years before subjects were born.

Table S5.

Top 10 Most Frequent Specific Events Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest Year in Study 2

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent		
		All subjects	Age ≤ 30	Age >30
4	Declaration of Independence	20.8	17.3	22.6
3	WWII	12.9	13.0	12.8
12	Moon landing	5.4	2.5	6.9
11	Obama elected	4.3	6.2	3.3
0	Turn of the century (2000)	3.6	4.9	3.0
5	American Revolutionary War	1.7	1.2	2.0
1	American Civil War	1.1	0.0	1.6
0	Bicentennial	1.1	0.0	1.6
2	Attacks on WTC	0.9	1.2	0.7
8	WWI	0.6	0.0	1.0
Total		52.2	46.3	55.5

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

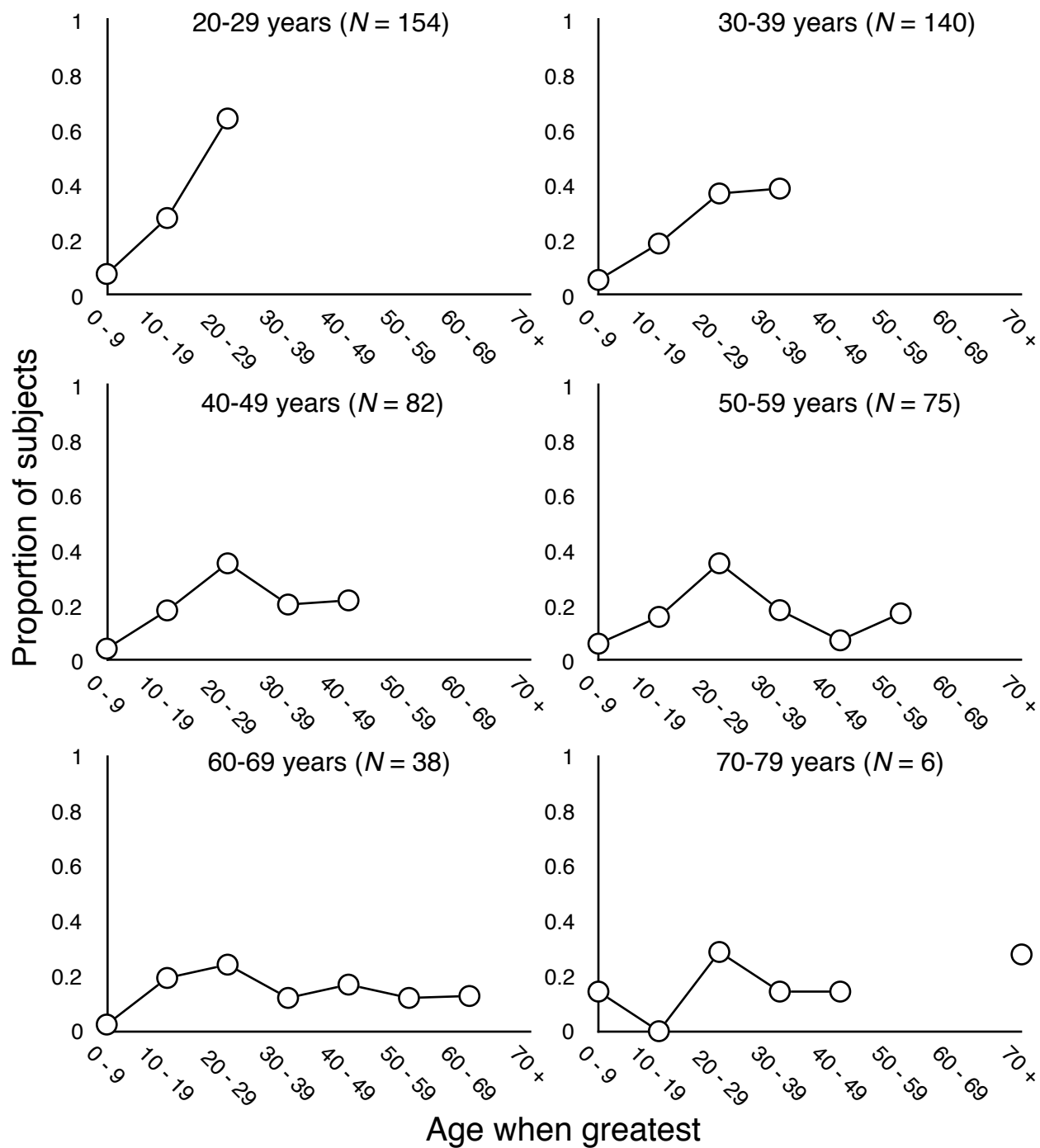


Figure S2. How old Americans were when they thought, they, personally were at their greatest, from Study 2. Each graph represents subjects' current age in 10-year bins. We corrected for the fact subjects had not lived through all of their current decade (for further explanation see Berntsen and Rubin, 2002, p.642–643).

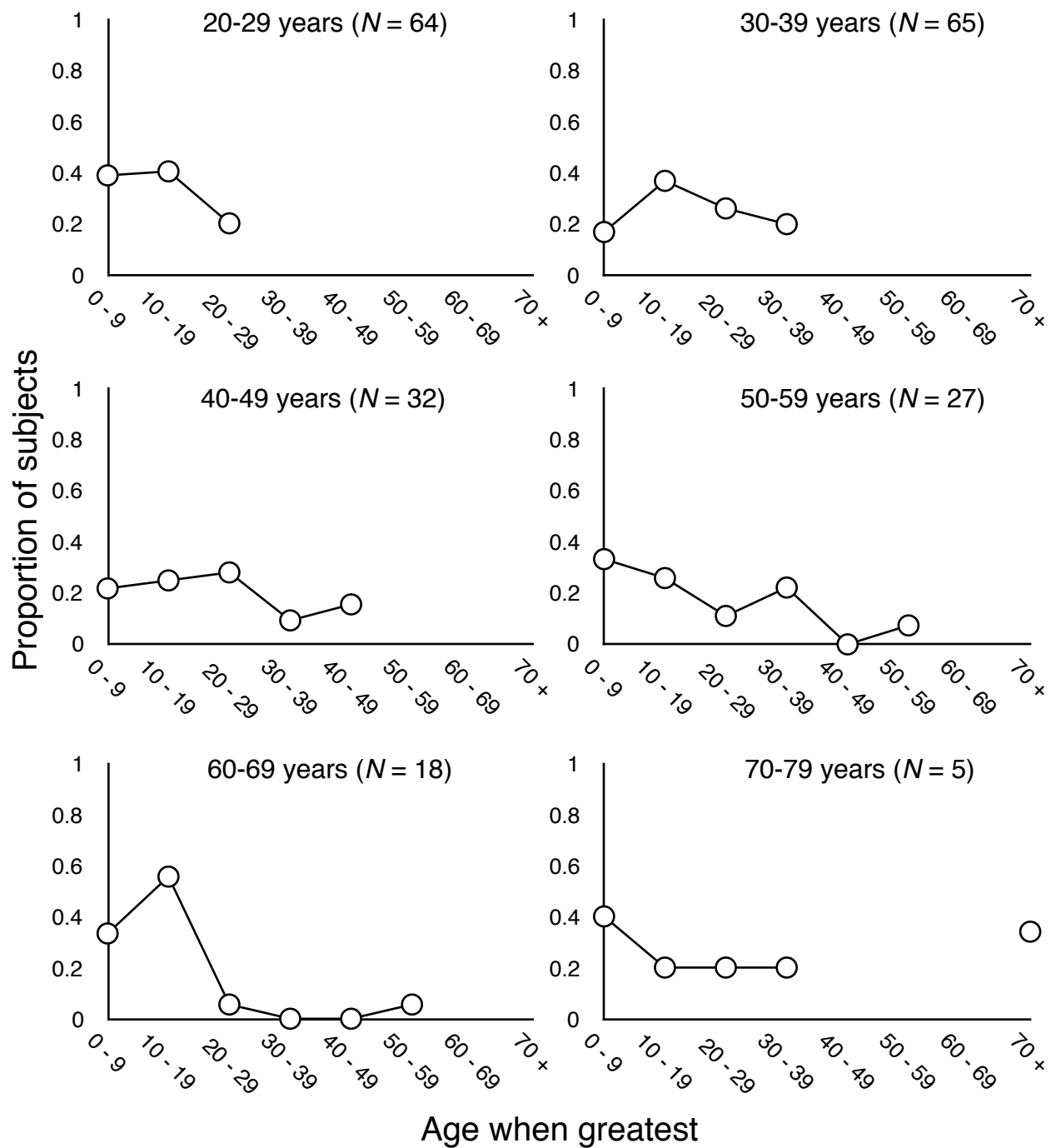


Figure S3. How old Americans were when they thought America was its greatest, from Study 2. Each graph represents subjects' current age in 10-year bins. We excluded people who nominated a top 10 nationally relevant event from Study 1

Supplemental Material for Study 3

Table S6a.

The Percentage of People Who Nominated an Event From Table 1 as America's Greatest Year in Study 3

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent		
		All subjects	Age \leq 30	Age $>$ 30
1	American Civil War	0.2	0.5	0.0
2	Attacks on the WTC	2.0	1.6	2.2
3	WWII	11.6	10.6	12.3
4	Declaration of Independence	21.9	23.4	20.8
5	American Revolutionary War	1.1	1.1	1.1
6	JFK assassination	0.0	0.0	0.0
7	Vietnam War	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	WWI	0.2	0.0	0.4
9	Great Depression	0.2	0.0	0.4
10	Women's voting rights	0.2	0.5	0.0
Total		37.5	37.7	37.2

Note. The above percentages are calculated based on the number of people who mentioned each specific event as the reason why the year they picked was America's greatest. The values in the "Total" row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S6b.

Top 10 Most Frequent Specific Events Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest Year in Study 3.

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent		
		All subjects	Age ≤ 30	Age >30
4	Declaration of Independence	21.9	23.4	20.8
3	WWII	11.6	10.6	12.3
11	Obama elected	6.1	5.9	6.3
2	Attacks on WTC	2.0	1.6	2.2
0	Turn of the century (2000)	1.8	1.1	2.2
0	Bicentennial	1.3	0.5	1.9
12	Moon landing	1.3	2.1	0.7
13	Abolition of slavery	0.9	0.5	1.1
14	Civil Rights Movement	0.9	0.0	1.5
40	Civil Rights Act	0.7	0.0	1.1
Total		48.5	45.8	50.1

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Political Affiliation Analyses for Study 3. We then repeated the analyses we presented above for Study 3:

A total of 105 Republicans participated in Study 3 ($M_{\text{age}} = 40.26$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.98$). Of those 105 Republicans, 26 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 31 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 20 were aged between 40 and 49; 20 were aged between 50 and 59; eight were aged between 60 and 69.

A total of 206 Democrats participated in Study 3 ($M_{\text{age}} = 35.92$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.33$). Of those 206 Democrats, 77 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 72 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 24 were aged between 40 and 49; 17 were aged between 50 and 59; 15 were aged between 60 and 69; one was aged between 70 and 79.

A total of 142 Independents participated in Study 3 ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.01$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 11.14$). Of those 142 Independents, 36 were aged between 20 and 29 years; 57 were aged between 30 and 39 years; 26 were aged between 40 and 49; 17 were aged between 50 and 59; six were aged between 60 and 69.

Again, we wondered to what extent nominating a nationally relevant event differed between people with different political party affiliations. We found a statistically significant difference in the proportions of people nominating nationally relevant events for each political affiliation ($\chi^2 = 12.044, p = .002$). Democrats were 1.80 times more likely than Republicans to nominate something other than a nationally relevant event ($p = .019$) and Democrats were also 2.10 times more likely than Independents to nominate something other than a nationally relevant event ($p = .001$).

Table S7a.

The Percentage of People in Study 3 who Nominated an Event from Table 1 as America's Greatest Year by Political Affiliation.

Table 1 Rank	Event	Percent		
		Republicans	Democrats	Independent
1	American Civil War	1.0	0.0	0.0
2	Attacks on the WTC	2.9	0.5	1.4
3	WWII	9.5	0.5	12.7
4	Declaration of Independence	23.8	18.0	28.2
5	American Revolutionary War	1.9	0.5	2.8
6	JFK assassination	0.0	0.0	0.0
7	Vietnam War	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	WWI	0.0	0.5	0.0
9	Great Depression	0.0	0.0	0.7
10	Women's voting rights	0.0	0.5	0.0
Total		39.0	20.4	45.8

Note. Percentages are calculated based on the number of people who mentioned each specific event as the reason why the year they picked was America's greatest. The values in the "Total" row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S7b.

*Republicans' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 3*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	23.8
3	WWII	9.5
54	2016 election	3.8
2	Attacks on WTC	3.8
74	Reagan elected	2.9
0	Bicentennial	2.9
21	Emancipation proclamation	1.9
0	Turn of the century (2000)	1.9
Total		50.5

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S7c.

*Democrats' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 3*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	18.0
11	Obama elected	11.7
3	WWII	9.2
0	Turn of the century (2000)	5.3
54	2016 election	1.5
0	Bicentennial	1.5
22	Legalization gay marriage	1.0
0	Obama re-elected	1.0
Total		49.0

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

Table S7d.

*Independents' Most Frequent Specific Events
Mentioned in Explanations of America's Greatest
Year in Study 3*

Rank from Table 1	Event	Percent
4	Declaration of Independence	28.2
3	WWII	12.7
12	Moon landing	3.5
5	American Revolutionary War	2.8
0	Turn of the century (2000)	1.4
2	Attacks on WTC	1.4
11	Obama elected	1.4
Total		51.4

Note. A rank order of “0” in the left column means the event was not mentioned by subjects in Study 1. The values in the “Total” row are calculated by summing unrounded data, and therefore are slightly different from totals that would be obtained by summing the rounded entries in the table.

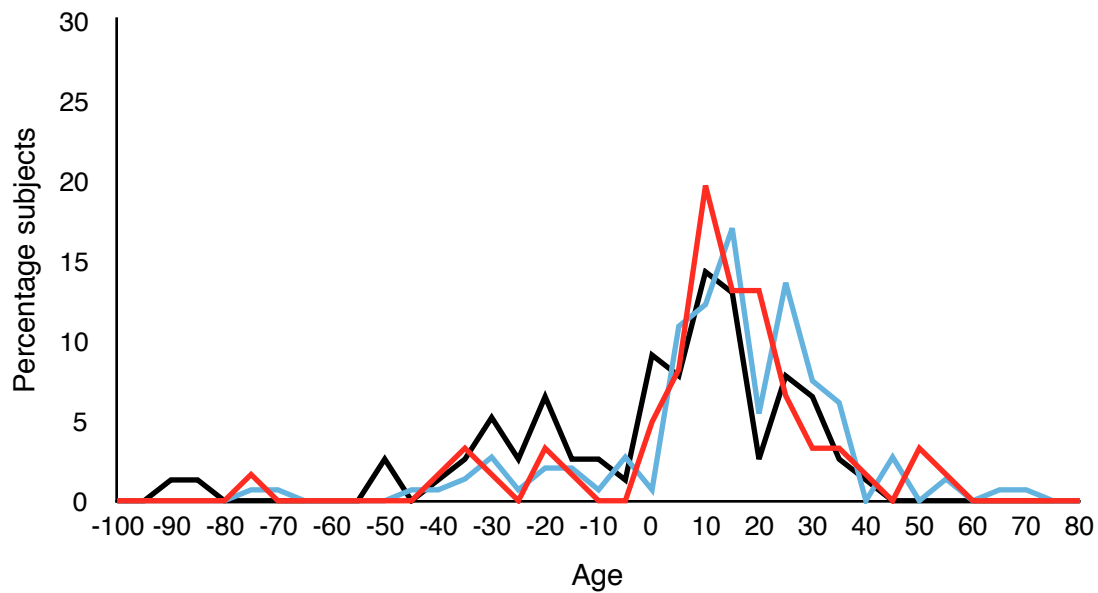


Figure S4. How old Americans were when they thought America was at its greatest by political affiliation in Study 3. The red line represents people who identified as Republicans. The blue line represents people who identified as Democrats. The black line represents people who identified as Independent. These distributions exclude people who nominated a top 10 nationally relevant memory from Study 1 and only show responses as far back as 100 years before subjects were born.

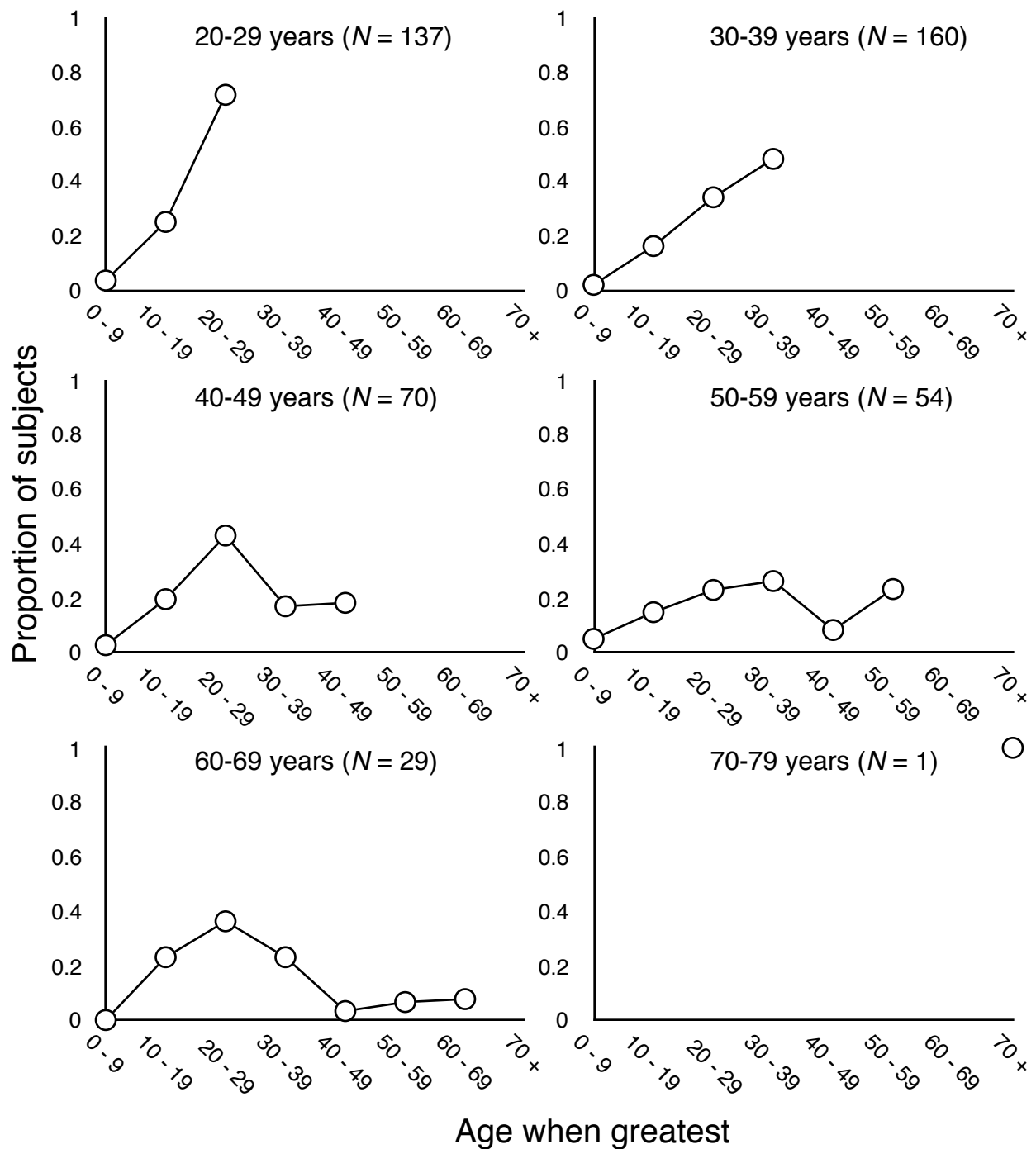


Figure S5. How old Americans were when they thought, they, personally were at their greatest, from Study 3. Each graph represents subjects' current age in 10-year bins. We corrected for the fact subjects had not lived through all of their current decade (for further explanation see Berntsen and Rubin, 2002, p.642–643).

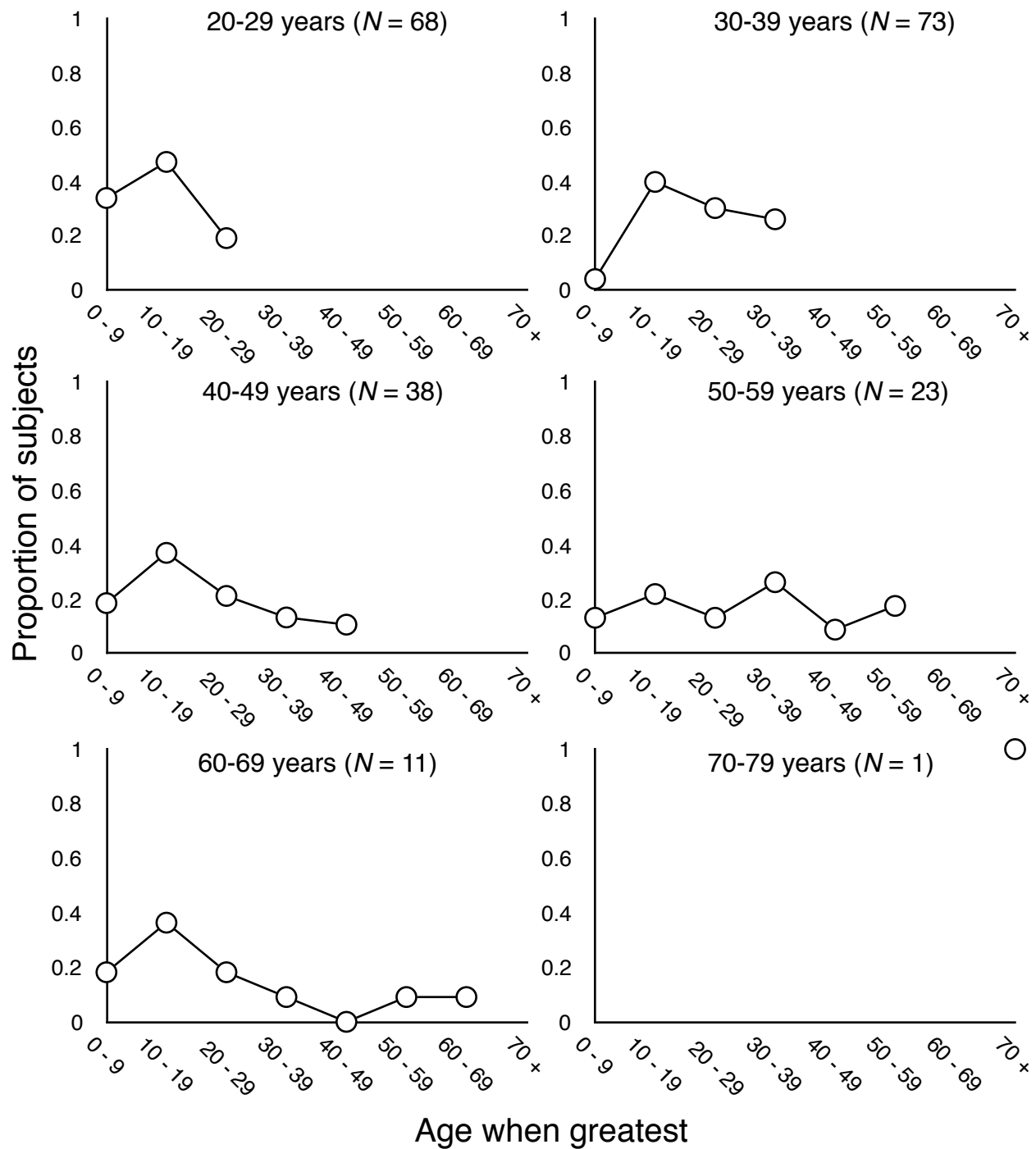


Figure S6. How old Americans were when they thought America was its greatest, for those people in Study 3 who initially nominated a year in their lifetime. Each graph represents subjects' current age in 10-year bins. We excluded people who nominated a top 10 nationally relevant event from Study 1

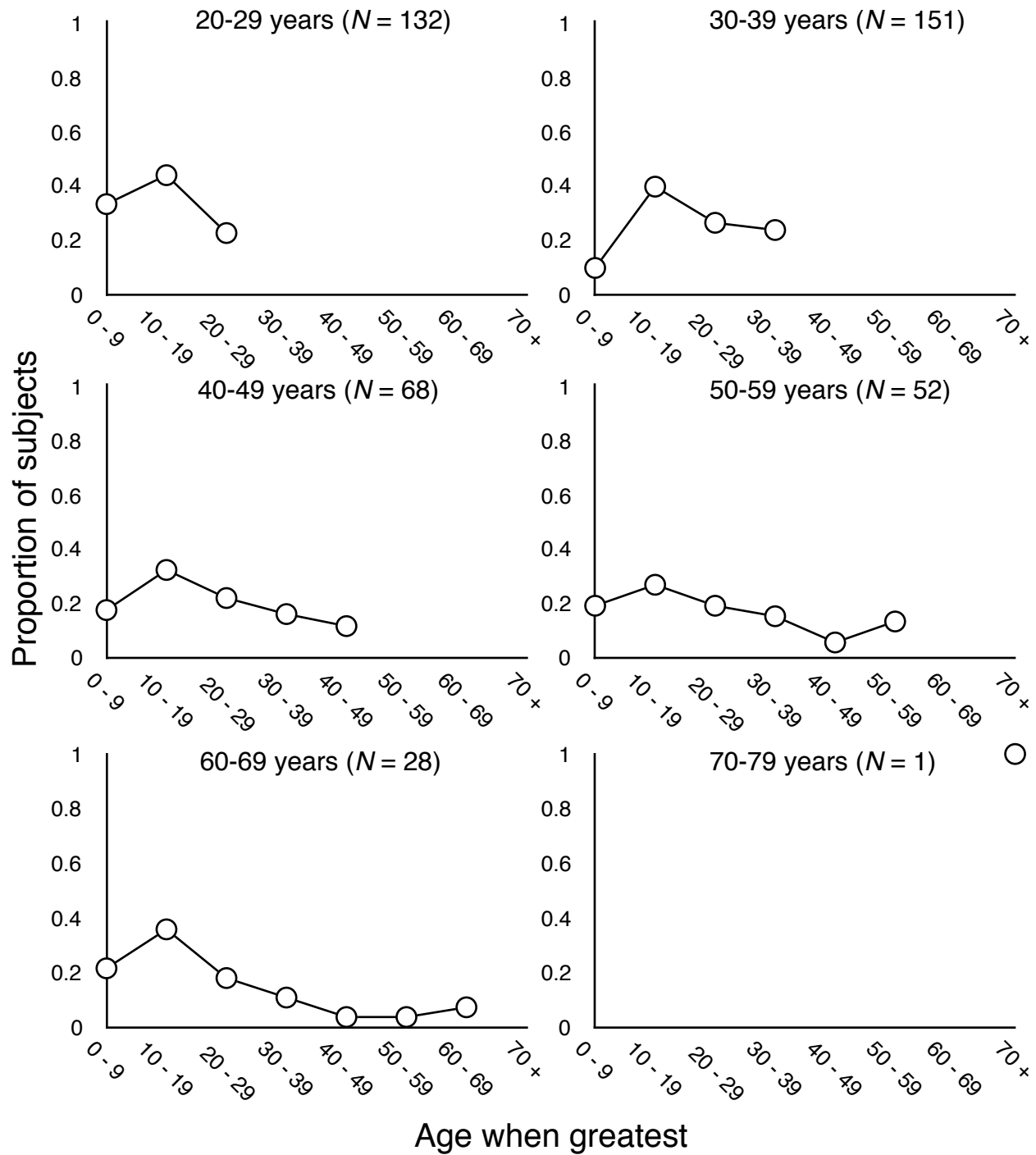


Figure S7. How old Americans were when they thought America was its greatest during their lifetime, for all subjects in Study 3. Each graph represents subjects' current age in 10-year bins. We excluded people who nominated a top 10 nationally relevant event from Study 1