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**Generational Effects and Support for the European Union in the UK:**  
**Political Socialisation During World War II**

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## Abstract

Much ink has been spilled over the fact that older people were more likely to vote Leave in the recent Brexit referendum. The categorisation of over-65s may be missing important differences within this group, however, which includes different generations of individuals. This study analyses generational differences regarding attitudes towards European integration in the UK, with a specific focus on political socialisation theory. This work poses that the generation who experienced their formative years during the Second World War are more likely to express positive attitudes towards the EU, given the institution's role in maintaining peace on the continent. This is tested by means of Age-Period-Cohort analysis on Eurobarometer data, and mediation analysis is employed using additional Eurobarometer questions to perform a tighter test of this theory. This exercise directs the research to a more specific focus of the characteristics of the generations socialised between 1950-1970, giving additional explanations for generational differences. This suggests that the effect of Britain's imperial decline and expectations of government may have influenced attitudes towards integration, along with the original theory offered.

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## Introduction

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. In the wake of the vote, commentators and political scientists alike have been keen to understand the factors that underpinned this result. In the ensuing commentary, much was made of the extent older people were more likely to vote Leave than their younger counterparts. However, the European project was founded with the intention of promoting peace within a continent that had been ravaged by two world wars, an ideal that would be expected to resonate with those who had experienced these horrors first-hand. This research seeks to determine whether socialisation during World War II has led to more positive attitudes towards the European Union, in light of the pacific benefits European institutions purportedly bring. It therefore seeks to understand whether marked generational differences can be found within the over 65s category, a group treated homogeneously by many demographic analyses.

To answer this question, preliminary interviews were conducted to formulate hypotheses, and understand how wartime experiences can be connected to current attitudes. Age-Period-Cohort analysis was subsequently performed using Eurobarometer data to ascertain whether generational differences exist between the war and post-war generations. To presage the findings, this analysis reveals that generational effects do exist in the expected direction: socialisation during wartime is linked with more positive attitudes towards European integration. Mediation analysis reveals further support for the proposed hypothesis, but suggests other mechanisms are also driving the observed generational effects. Consequently, a re-evaluation of the particularities of the post-war generations is made, and two other causal mechanisms are offered in explanation of the results: Britain's imperial decline, and the impact of the rise of the Welfare State.

The dissertation begins with a literature review, highlighting the extant research on attitudes towards European integration, and the theoretical underpinning of generational effects – political socialisation theory. The methodology of the research is then outlined, explaining the reasoning behind the research design, and how it builds upon existing studies. A following section generates hypotheses regarding the lived experience of the war on attitudes, and defines generational boundaries. The next section describes some initial quantitative results and examines potential confounding variables. Mediation analysis is subsequently conducted, and in light of this analysis, two additional causal mechanisms are examined that prove salient in describing generational effects. Finally, the dissertation concludes by restating the findings, considering the limitations of the work, and its possible extensions.

## Literature Review

This section reviews the current literature pertaining to the study at hand. Firstly, the existing research identifying the key factors that affect public opinion towards European integration<sup>1</sup> is reviewed. This enables the dissertation to be placed in context alongside this body of research, while this existing work also proves pertinent to the analysis performed later in the thesis. Secondly, the literature surrounding political socialisation theory is presented. As a key underpinning to generational theory, this section provides a backdrop to the specific focus of this study. Finally, the few studies that have specifically focused on generational differences in attitudes towards the EU are given consideration. The identified strengths and weaknesses of these studies are used to show how this work builds upon these studies, and thereby addresses a gap in the literature.

### Attitudes Towards European Integration

The identified factors in the literature affecting attitudes towards European integration can be broadly split into three parts; those concerning utilitarian evaluations of integration, those concerning psychological processes that relate to group membership and identity, and those that rely on cue-taking from political actors (Hobolt & de Vries, 2016).

Utilitarian evaluations have generally been easier to theorise and test and have therefore been well covered in previous research. This logic proposes that European integration results in trade liberalisation, which in turn engenders economic advantages and disadvantages across different groups. Those with higher levels of human capital, best placed to take advantage of opportunities arising from labour market liberalisation, are therefore expected to be more favourable to integration (Gabel, 1998a). This is supported by quantitative models affirming that those with high occupational skills and increased levels of education feel more positively about integration (Gabel, 1998b; McLaren, 2002; Tucker, et al., 2002). Moreover, this logic has been extended to suggest that those who are wealthier serve to benefit from the capital liberalisation resulting from integration. This group is therefore more positive towards the EU (Gabel, 1998c).

Also within the utilitarian approach comes consideration of the opportunities available to people of different age profiles. Younger people show more positive attitudes towards the EU (Curtice, 2017), and show greater support for freedom of movement (Losito et al., 2018), explained in part by younger people's ability to take advantage of work opportunities across Europe, given that they are less likely to be constrained by family responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this study, support for European integration and support for the EU/EEC are used interchangeably, although it is noted that these terms are not necessarily identical.

Together, the various strands of the utilitarian approach provide plausible explanations for why education levels, age, income levels, and occupation type may affect an individual's attitude toward European integration.

Identity based explanations of support for integration focus upon how individuals connect notions of national group membership with the pooling of European sovereignty. Studies show that respondents with exclusive attachments to their national identities are more hostile towards integration (Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Moreover, those with strong national identities, as Christin & Trechsel (2002) have shown with relation to Switzerland, are often more Eurosceptic. This, however, appears to be somewhat specific to national context; Haesly (2001) found no conflict between Scottish and Welsh identities, and a European identity, while alternatively, assertions of an English identity are associated with Euroscepticism (Hobolt, 2016). Nevertheless, Carey (2002) shows that a strong national identity combined with high levels of national pride are inimical to support for integration, a relationship that likely acts through a preference for the clearly circumscribed national communities that integration challenges, and the hostility towards immigration amongst those with high degrees of national pride (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). Indeed, anti-immigration attitudes are strongly linked with anti-EU sentiments, resulting from the perceived role EU membership plays in opening borders (Peston, 2017). This identity approach has been argued to be as, if not more, instructive as utilitarian explanations for informing public opinion on European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2006).

In light of the connection between national identity and Euroscepticism, unpicking the drivers of identity formation and change can therefore shed light on attitudes towards integration. In particular, younger generations have been found to exhibit declining levels of national pride in Britain (Tilley & Heath, 2007) and declining nationalistic sentiments in Western Europe more generally (Dogan, 1994). This has been ascribed to younger generations growing up in a globalised, interconnected world that challenges notions of singular identities. Likewise, wider social changes resulting from, *inter alia*, education, urbanisation and reduced religiosity promote post-materialist values that encourage empathy and cooperation (Inglehart, 1997), conducive to support for supranational organisations and a European identity (Duchesne & Frogner, 1995) (although see Janssen (1991) on this latter point suggesting the evidence is inconclusive). This also serves to highlight that factors can influence attitudes in several distinct ways – in this case, education levels have been linked with the identity approach, but as outlined above, they are also deemed important in utilitarian models of Euroscepticism.

The third corpus of research on this topic concerns cue-taking and benchmarking. This line of research suggests that individuals' knowledge of and interaction with the European Union is low, and therefore people forge their opinions towards the institution with respect to cues from domestic political actors. In low information environments, individuals may therefore take the position on Europe that their preferred domestic party holds, as a convenient form of heuristic reasoning (Anderson, 1998). By similar logic, some individuals have been shown to transfer their evaluations of domestic political institutions onto European institutions (Franklin et al., 1995). Alternatively, other studies show that negative views of domestic politics comport with more positive attitudes towards a transfer of sovereignty to European institutions, theorised as resulting from the EU being seen as a more attractive governance alternative in these scenarios (Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000; Kritzinger, 2006). These differing findings are likely the result of national context, and how political elites frame the relationship between national and supra-national institutions.

Additionally, the salience of arguments linked to the utilitarian or identity approaches may be enhanced by cues. For example, Sniderman et al. (2004) conducted an experiment to show that more negative attitudes towards immigration were exhibited when respondents were primed to think about their national identity. Likewise, Hooghe & Marks (2005) find an interaction effect between domestic political parties' guidance on European integration, and the extent to which this integration is judged in relation to community identities, rather than utilitarian considerations. Similarly, Vliegenthart et al. (2008) find evidence that the framing of European issues in the media can have a substantive effect on attitudes, albeit one more likely to strengthen attitudes rather than change them (Azrout et. al, 2012).

With specific reference to the Brexit referendum, Clarke et al. (2017) analysed pre-and post-referendum survey data to confirm aspects of the utilitarian model, but also to show that individual political actors – Cameron, Corbyn, Farage, and Johnson – can cue their own supporters, thereby affecting whether positive or negative aspects of EU membership, both identity and utilitarian based, were given prominence in these voters' minds. The political cues model has thus been shown to have a direct influence on the public's opinion of integration, through individuals being guided by their domestic political ties, but also indirectly, by mediating whether utilitarian or identity considerations become points of high valence in people's evaluations.

The three outlined strands of literature should not be viewed as mutually exclusive; the evidence suggests each are in operation in influencing attitudes, in both distinct and interacting ways. Additional causal pathways have also been identified in relation to attitude formation. For example, a cognitive mobilisation model has been posed as a fourth research strand (Inglehart, 1977). This

suggests that higher levels of education and improved technology have enabled people to make more informed opinions regarding Europe, reducing the perceived threat arising from confusion, aiding understanding of the costs and benefits of the EU, and reducing the reliance on domestic political party heuristic cues (Karp, et al., 2003). However, given that these aspects are largely salient by governing which of the three models is most influential in an individual's evaluation process, it has not been offered as a distinct model here. Further work has focused on additional variables in more focus; religious denomination, for example, has also been shown to be weakly instructive of attitudes on integration, with Protestants theorised as being reluctant to engage with a project viewed as driven by predominantly Catholic nations (Nelsen, et al., 2001).

In sum, the existing research presents an array of factors that have causal significance in determining individuals' attitudes towards European integration. Much of this research is reliant upon analysis of Eurobarometer survey data to substantiate the claims made. However, even the most comprehensive models rarely exhibit high levels of predictive power. The  $R^2$  values of many models are between 0.03-0.15 (e.g. Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Steenbergen & Jones, 2002; McLaren 2002), and only achieve higher figures when values are included that are arguably a consequence of opposition to integration, not a cause of it; support for Eurosceptic parties such as UKIP, for instance (Clarke et al., 2016). This illustrates that attitude formation is complex, and that it is challenging to reduce it to a set of neatly defined causal variables.

This study focuses upon one particular causal group, generational effects, in one particular nation, the UK. It is within the aforementioned wider body of research that analysis of these effects must be placed, and which subsequently can help inform a more comprehensive understanding of how the three outlined models operate in affecting attitudes. It is to the current research on generational effects that this review now turns.

### Political Socialisation & Generational Effects

Theories of political socialisation contend that political attitudes crystallise during adolescence and young adulthood (Sapiro, 2004). While attitudes can and do change throughout the life-cycle, a wealth of political psychology research has demonstrated that new information is often processed in a biased or selective manner (Kunda, 1990; Taber & Lodge, 2006; Baekgaard, et al., 2017), given pre-existing attitudes, suggesting that once attitudes are formed, they display a high degree of persistence (Jennings & Niemi, 1978; Sears & Funk, 1999). Consequently, influences on a person's initial attitude formation are likely to be particularly instructive of attitudes even well beyond early adulthood. Bartels & Jackman (2014) find evidence for just this effect in relation to party identification.

This logic has been used to underpin the theory of generational differences (Mannheim 1952), which argues that differences in the prevailing social and political conditions during people's formative years can be instructive in classifying generational groups. Hence, given that the formative period of each generation comprises of a unique social environment and set of events, these events can prove vital in determining attitudes that persist much later into life. Evidence for these generational differences have been found with relation to political participation (Grasso, 2014), inter-racial marriage (Neundorf & Niemi, 2014), and support for the left in post-communist countries (Dinas & Stoker, 2014).

With specific relation to attitudes towards European integration, only two full studies have been conducted that examine generational effects. Down & Wilson (2013) classify six generations and use Eurobarometer data to test for cross-national cohort effects. They hypothesise that younger generations, who have been socialised in periods when the EU and its signifiers have been in existence, will be more positive towards integration, given that the EU and its institutions will be viewed as the norm by these younger generations. They find support for their contention; the cohort that came of age between 1952-1971 are 5.9% less likely to be supportive of the EU than the most recent cohort, born after 1986, when controlling for several other variables. This generation effect is curvilinear, however, as they find some evidence that the war generation is more supportive of the EU than the post-war generation. The authors suggest this is due to "the deprivation of the Great Depression and the horrors of the Second World War" (p.443), but no further evidence is provided to support this claim. The same authors revisited their work (Down & Wilson, 2017) and re-ran the analysis with different measures of support for integration. They confirm their earlier findings, and additionally suggest that cohort effects are more instructive of attitudes than age effects.

Fox & Pearce (2018) built upon this previous study, seeking to define a comprehensive model of Euroscepticism in the UK by accounting for generational effects. They use British Election Study data to test support for British membership of the EU/ECC, enabling additional controls lacking in Down & Wilson's work. This study supports the earlier findings within the UK context, suggesting more recent generations are more positive towards the EU than older generations, with the exception of the war generation. However, within their full model these generational effects are not statistically significant from one another, albeit with coefficients in the expected direction. In fact, only one generation is found to differ with statistical significance relative to the immediate post-war generation: the war generation. This fact seems to be largely overlooked by the authors, as it is not the principal focus of their research.

These studies thus provide evidence that generational differences exist in attitudes towards Europe between the pre-and post-war cohorts. Neither study focuses upon this generational difference

however, and little theory is offered to explain or justify this finding. There thus exists a puzzle to be explained. Furthermore, if these findings can be confirmed, it is not clear what is driving the effect and through which of the three models previously outlined – utilitarian, identity, and cueing – that it is operating through. Hence, this study seeks to confirm and address this generational effect, thereby contributing substantially to the nascent literature on this specific area, and the broader literature aimed at understanding the drivers of Euroscepticism in the UK.

## World War II and Generational Divides

This work investigates generational effects with specific reference to differences between the pre-and post-war generations. This section details the logic behind why first-hand experiences of World War II can be expected to engender pro-integration attitudes, and consequently formulates a hypothesis.

### World War II and Attitudes Towards Integration

The origins of European integration fundamentally lie in the devastation that benighted Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The Schumann Declaration, which preceded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was explicit in its intention of creating a more unified Europe as a means to promote peace and avoid war. The declaration spoke of creating a supranational trade organisation that would pool the production of coal and steel, so as to “make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible” (European Union, 2017). The ECSC thus enabled tariff-free trading across France, Germany and other European states, solving the security dilemma inherent in one nation monopolising industrial resources, and beginning a greater integration of European economies.

The logic that increased European trade liberalisation would not only be mutually beneficial economically, but also boost international security, underpinned much of the integration process. This integration would ultimately result in the ECSC foreshadowing the European Economic Community (EEC), the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), and finally, the European Union. A strict proof of this pacific influence of European integration cannot be undertaken – one cannot test the counterfactual of how the course of events would have occurred post-1951 without integration. What can be said, however, is that no major conflict has transpired between powers within the European organisations since World War II, a fact which helps to explain the EU’s receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

The pacific benefits of integration have entered the public debate. David Cameron espoused the irenic advantages of EU membership on the Brexit campaign trail, even going as far as to question whether a Britain outside of the EU would be assured of continued peace. Moreover, this type of argument appears amongst the public. Díez Medrano (2003) conducted 59 interviews with local political elites and members of the public in the UK on their attitudes towards Europe, finding that 32% of interviewees mentioned the pacific benefits of European integration. In an interview for preliminary research for this study, Tony (b.1925), who served in the Navy during the war, outlines his thinking thus: *“I am in favour of Europe being united in a fundamental way. I saw the basic time that French people were having in the aftermath of the war, everywhere was devastated, and we needed to unite to see off the threats to come”* (T. Severs, interview with author, 21.07.2018). Likewise, Derek (b.1930),

a teenager during the war, spoke of how the war *“had a profound effect”* on him and that consequently he wanted *“to protect his grandchildren from another European war”* by voting Remain in the Brexit referendum (D. Stone, interview with author, 28.07.2018). The EU’s role as an enabler of peace is therefore linked to positive assessments of Britain’s membership amongst these individuals.

On a broader scope, Gabel & Palmer (1995) finds evidence that the pacific argument for integration has had the most impact in those countries which suffered disproportionately from the war, by using cross-national data on war deaths per capita. Additionally, this analysis suggests that this relationship has attenuated over time; as the war is further removed from popular memory, its impact on attitudes recedes. These two studies are thus congruent with the notion that integration’s impact on bringing peace to Europe has influenced public opinion, and that this influence is related to historical experiences of the war.

Consequently, a hypothesis can be offered that those individuals who experienced their formative years during wartime – a group affected by the event more than any other – are those likely to be most amenable to the argument that integration has fostered peace in Europe. A positive assessment of this sort is therefore also likely to lead to a more positive assessment of EU membership. If this effect is strong enough, one would expect to see a more positive attitude towards the EU amongst the war generation than the immediate post-war generations.

## Methodology

This work relies upon a mixed methods approach in answering the research question. Firstly, as preliminary research, 10 semi-structured interviews with over 75-year olds, drawn from a convenience sample, were undertaken as a means to form hypotheses and to unpick how and why certain events may be linked with attitudes towards the EU. Secondly, a large-N quantitative analysis is undertaken using Eurobarometer survey data, testing whether generational differences are evident across descriptors of attitudes towards the EU. This analysis is complemented by historical research, specifying and justifying pertinent points of difference between generations. This qualitative research is therefore placed within a framework of Mill's method of difference. These methods thus serve to complement each other, with each addressing the limitations and weaknesses of the other.

Large-N analysis is well suited to the present research for a number of reasons. Notably, given that research on public opinion and attitudes takes the individual as the core unit of analysis, a relatively large number of cases is needed for samples to be representative of the population as a whole. Furthermore, large-N studies are equipped to analyse multivariate, probabilistic causality. As previously discussed, numerous factors have been identified as influencing individuals' attitudes towards the EU, and thus the use of a large dataset enables sufficient variation to identify the relative causal weight of these factors.

Additionally, data availability enables the usage of quantitative methods. The Eurobarometer surveys have asked large numbers of people their opinions on matters relating to Europe over a prolonged period of time. Thus, large-N analysis is not only a viable method of gaining insight into the research question, but it is made practically possible by this existing project.

Despite these outlined merits of a quantitative approach, several drawbacks in the method, and the particular task of understanding generational effects, render it inadequate as a means to answer the research question in its entirety.

This is largely attributable to the contestation around what findings of a cohort effect imply, as ultimately, findings of a cohort effect alone cannot specify the source of causality. Too often studies provide a plausible theory for why generational effects may exist, proceed to test for these differences, and therefore assert that their original hypothesis is supported if such effects are found. However, these studies do not always address alternative hypotheses which may explain the same results, nor do they always give explicit focus to the causal mechanisms linking their proposed theory and results. This shortcoming is echoed by Winship and Harding (2008), who note that "in order to achieve identification of Age-Period-Cohort models, it is necessary to specify the mechanisms through

which the processes of interest work” (p.365). This research therefore includes historical cross-generational research and mediation analysis using additional survey data, as a means to specify causal mechanisms.

### Data

The quantitative data used in this study originates with the Eurobarometer survey series conducted on behalf of the European Commission. These biannual surveys involve a face-to-face interview with approximately 1000 respondents from each EU member state, conducted by a researcher asking a set of standardised questions. They are heavily structured, with interviewers given “detailed and uniform instructions” (GESIS, 2018), ensuring cross-interviewer validity.

Eurobarometer surveys have changed throughout time, and thus while they have been conducted between 1970-2018, not all years can be included in each model analysed, as questions have been changed, dropped, and reintroduced across surveys. This is made explicit in the results, with details provided of the survey years included. In total, Eurobarometer surveys were merged to give a working longitudinal dataset that included data from 1970-2017.

### Age-Period-Cohort Analysis

The quantitative analysis conducted involves the trifurcation of age, period, and cohort effects. APC analysis seeks to use regression techniques to isolate the influence of life-cycle effects, historical context, and generational effects on attitudes. While these constitute distinct means through which attitudes are affected, separating them individually in quantitative models can prove challenging.

Life-cycle effects involve the influence of ageing and common life-events on attitudes. Thus, a relationship between age and a particular dependent variable driven by life-cycle effects may be reflective of psychological processes concerning ageing, and/or the impact of life events that are associated with certain age brackets, such as getting married or having children. Period effects concern contextual events and occurrences that have a short-term influence on all attitudes in the period in which they are expressed. For example, should a damning scandal break regarding a local politician on the eve of a poll, one would expect a period effect in the form of a depression in the positive opinions of all respondents during this time. Generation effects refer to the influence of environmental factors during each generations’ formative period, such as the prevailing social attitudes of the time or important political events that occur during this period, and that have a lasting impact on this generation’s worldview.

The challenge surrounding these elements is known as the APC identification problem, resultant from the fact that all three types of effect are related to each other via their relationship with time. This

means that when age, period, and cohort effects are measured by the same unit (years), they display perfect collinearity, as  $\text{Age} = \text{Period} - \text{Cohort}$ . Given this relationship, a model is unable to distinguish between the three effects. Several statistical techniques have emerged to solve this issue (e.g. Yang & Land, 2006), however, these techniques rely on underlying assumptions that may give misleading results (Bell & Jones, 2014). Consequently, this study takes a familiar approach of defining generational cohorts over several years, breaking the collinearity with age and period. This method relies upon adequately justifying the choice of generational divides, using 'side information' to formulate why generations should differ, and how this relates to the dependent variable (Glenn, 2005). This study therefore proceeds by defining generational divides.

### Defining Generations

In order to test the outlined hypothesis, generations need to be defined. Clearly, generational epochs do not have neat delineations; there is no agreed upon start date from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, defining a wartime generation can be done with a degree of confidence. This generation is defined as those who experienced the war during their formative years. As an event which dominated the entirety of social and political life over a 6-year period, it stands to reason that this qualifies as a time with a distinct social environment, that as per socialisation theory, would leave a lasting attitudinal imprint on those who experienced it during their formative years. Indeed, Jennings (1987) considers a generation one which came of age during significant epochal events, periods of notable stress, and times of fervent socio-economic change. The war period undoubtedly meets these criteria.

Precisely judging what constitutes an individual's formative years is a matter of some debate. However, studies have typically considered an individual's years between 15 and 25 as their formative period, this being the time when coherent political attitudes are first formulated. This study keeps with this tradition, and moreover, apes the categorisation employed by Fox & Pearce (2018). The following generations are therefore specified:

1. A war generation born between 1920-1925, who experienced a majority of their formative years during the war. This generation experienced severe threats to their physical and economic well-being, and largely engaged in politics through membership of mass organisations, such as political parties (Grasso, 2014). This generation had no experience of European integration during their formative years.
2. A post-war generation born between 1925-1946, experiencing the majority of their formative years between 1946-1966. This generation saw a post-war reconstruction that boosted the standard of living, while established and organised institutions – the church, unions, and

political parties – continued to dominate the political sphere (Audickas et al., 2016). This generation witnessed the first moves towards European integration, with the establishment of the ECSC and the EEC, although Britain remained outside of these bodies.

3. A 60s/70s generation born between 1946–1957. This cohort saw further increases in the standard of living, with relatively low unemployment and increased life expectancy (Hicks & Allen, 1999), and were amongst the greatest beneficiaries of the establishment of the welfare state. This generation came of age during a period when Britain entered the EEC in 1975.
4. An 80s generation born between 1958-1968. This group saw significant increases in education levels, and witnessed the internecine battles within the Conservative party surrounding membership of the EEC. Further European integration continued, with Britain's involvement.
5. A 90s generation born between 1969-1981. This generation saw further integration that culminated in the EU, which thus became a more salient domestic political issue itself (Down & Wilson, 2013). Access to higher education and living standards continued to improve.
6. A millennial generation born after 1982. This cohort saw greater access to education and made more use of technology in their daily lives than ever before (Dalton, 2013). This highly educated generation were amongst the first to be able to take advantage of the free movement of labour within the EU. Likewise, this group came of age when British integration in Europe was deeper than ever, with symbols and initiatives of the EU more prominent in the public sphere (Down & Wilson, 2013).

In utilising the same cohorts as Fox & Pearce (2018), this analysis not only draws on their theoretical arguments, but also allows a test of their findings on a different dataset.

## Results

A first test of the outlined hypothesis involves an APC analysis of Eurobarometer data, including a number of controls. The first model presented below has answers to the question “In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?” as the dependent variable. Answers are thus ranged on a 5-point scale. The second model has the dependent variable as the answer to the question “Generally speaking, do you think that Britain’s membership of the European Union is: 1. A good thing 2. Neither good nor bad 3. A bad thing?”. In years prior to the existence of the EU, this question referred to membership of the EEC. This dependent variable is therefore arranged on a 3-point scale. Controls for education, occupation, gender, community size, left-right political position, and marital status are included, in addition to age and period variables.

The above results show a generational effect between those born in the 1920-25 period, and those born in the following two generations. This effect is present in both models, meaning across two different measures, that include different years of Eurobarometer surveys, the evidence supports the contention that the generation that had their formative period during the war are more supportive of European institutions. Moving from this first generation to the second results in an increase of 0.14 in the 5-point image scale for how negatively people view the EU, and an increase of 0.07 in the 3-point scale for evaluation of EU membership. The respective values are 0.16 and 0.08 when comparing between the war generation and the third generation (60s/70s). Each of these results reach statistical significance.

To contextualise these figures, they can be compared to a well-known variable affecting Eurosceptic attitudes: education levels. The observed differences have an approximately equivalent effect as a two-point change in the ten-point education scale in the first model – leaving school at 16 rather than 18, for example.

Table 1: Generational Effects Models

	(1) EU image (2001-2017)	(2) Membership Good/Bad (1976-2010)	(3) EU image (2004-2017)	(4) EU image (2004-2017)
Gender	0.0204 (1.52)	0.0632*** (6.90)	0.0152 (1.25)	0.0334** (2.72)
Left-Right	0.0882*** (24.58)	0.0118*** (5.27)	0.0915*** (27.93)	0.0287*** (8.56)
Size of Community	-0.0363*** (-4.32)	-0.0106 (-1.92)	-0.0424*** (-5.56)	-0.00203 (-0.27)
Age	0.00127 (0.80)	0.00161 (1.60)	0.00127 (0.88)	0.000198 (0.14)
Marital Status	-0.00823 (-0.60)	0.000341 (0.03)	-0.0101 (-0.81)	-0.0226 (-1.81)
Education	-0.0806*** (-28.45)	-0.0642*** (-33.71)	-0.0808*** (-31.72)	-0.0509*** (-19.56)
Occupation				
Self-employed	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Managers	-0.0678* (-2.28)	-0.104*** (-5.66)	-0.0506 (1.90)	-0.0657* (-2.46)
Other White Collar	-0.0412 (-1.27)	-0.0486** (-2.80)	-0.0260 (-0.88)	-0.0442 (-1.49)
Manual Worker	0.0820** (2.87)	0.0676*** (3.83)	0.100** (3.86)	0.0463 (1.56)
House Workers	0.0117 (0.34)	0.0563** (3.10)	-0.0160 (-0.49)	-0.00699 (-0.21)
Unemployed	0.0589 (1.66)	0.112*** (5.32)	0.0671* (2.10)	0.0618 (1.93)
Retired	0.0706* (2.37)	0.0661*** (3.50)	0.0790** (2.93)	0.0432 (1.60)
Students	0.0409 (0.10)	-0.100* (-2.23)	0.0450 (0.14)	-0.296 (-0.90)
Generation				
War	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Post-war	0.137** (2.89)	0.0693** (3.24)	0.170*** (3.79)	0.0503 (1.12)
60s/70s	0.155* (2.53)	0.0787* (2.39)	0.210*** (3.70)	0.0534 (0.94)
80s	0.0689 (0.91)	0.0780 (1.82)	0.120 (1.71)	0.0201 (0.29)
90s	0.0176 (0.19)	0.0207 (0.39)	0.0524 (0.63)	-0.0258 (-0.31)
Millennial	-0.0812 (-0.74)	-0.109 (-1.60)	-0.0351 (-0.35)	-0.0697 (-0.69)
Period	†	‡	§	§
Pacific-international	-	-	-	-0.379*** (-36.48)
Identity-based	-	-	-	0.283*** (30.37)
Functional	-	-	-	0.423*** (47.12)
Prosperity-based	-	-	-	-0.369*** (-28.73)
Constant	2.858*** (20.39)	1.774*** (23.99)	2.876*** (21.95)	2.992*** (22.76)
<i>N</i>	26131	37278	21603	21603
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.101	0.097	0.102	0.376

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

† 25 period effects controlled, ‡ 60 period effects controlled, § 21 period effects controlled

As illustrated, the marginal effects across generations, when all other variables are held at their mean, match the results found by Down & Wilson (2013;2017) and Fox & Pearce (2018), displaying a curvilinear generational trend. The war generation is less Eurosceptic than the following three generations, but thereafter this difference is reduced. Hence, this further supports these authors' theories that being socialised in a time when the EU is seen as the norm engenders less Euroscepticism.

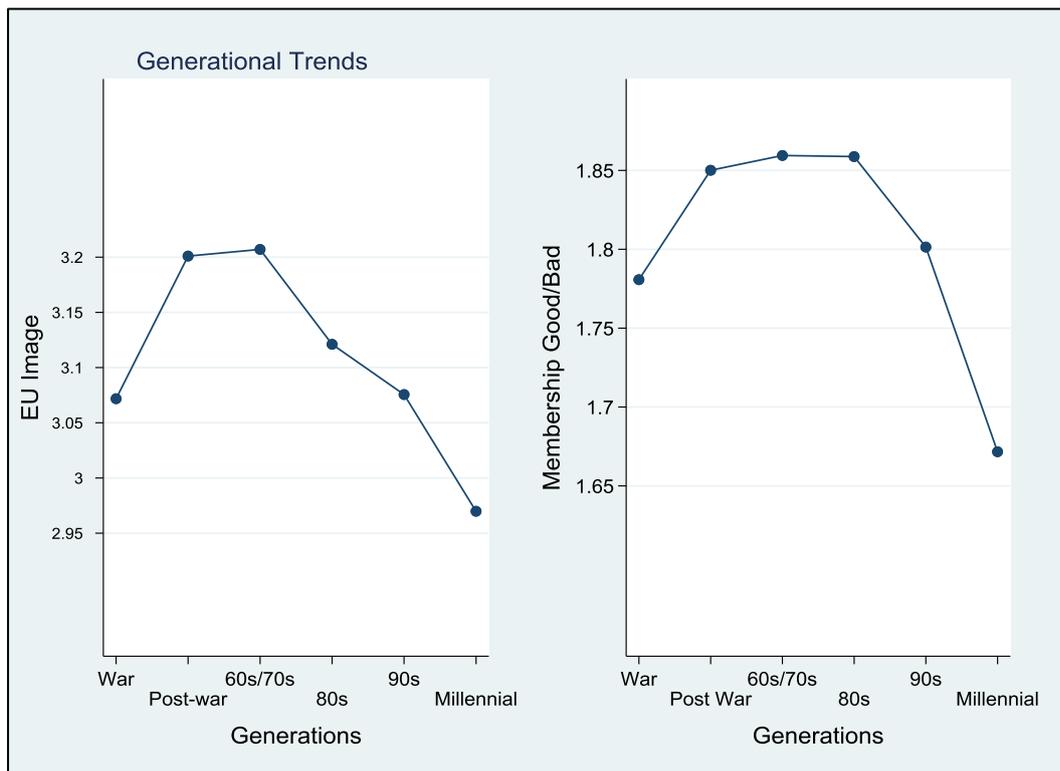


Figure 1: Generational Trends

Note: Higher values connote greater Euroscepticism

Across the control variables, the results are consistent with existing theory. Self-describing as left-wing is associated with greater positivity towards the EU/EEC, congruent with findings by Hooghe et al. (2002). Higher levels of education are associated with less Euroscepticism, as expected, and relative to the baseline group of self-employed workers, managers and other white-collar workers are more positive towards the EU, while manual workers, house workers, the retired, and the unemployed show less positivity. These categories are likely proxying for income levels between occupations, with the wealthier being less Eurosceptic. There is a small effect in one model for community size, with those living in larger towns and cities more positive of the EU than those from rural areas. Importantly, age is not a significant predictor in the above models, suggesting the controls are sufficiently capturing any life-cycle effects. Moreover, the two  $R^2$  values of approximately 0.10 are consistent with other quantitative models in the literature.

These results support the offered hypothesis. However, limitations in the data mean that not all potentially important variables can be included in the models, and therefore the results may be spurious. Political party affiliation data is not included in more recent Eurobarometer surveys, and while the left-right variable is almost certainly capturing some influence of party identification, much of this effect is likely being missed. Consequently, the presented models can offer very little insight into the cue-based approach regarding attitudes towards Europe. Likewise, data concerning religion, party membership, and income are either lacking, or asked in too few Eurobarometer surveys to be of use in APC analysis.

Therefore, to assess whether omitted variables are leading to a spurious generation effect, or whether even those included in the model could still be driving the observed differences, several factors are analysed in historical context. Changes in levels of religiosity, political party support, urbanisation rates and the greater availability of communication technologies, and media frames are consequently analysed below, drawing on the reviewed literature.

### Comparing Generations

Religious affiliation has been identified as a salient characteristic governing Eurosceptic attitudes. Catholics have been found to be more pro-integration, and protestants weakly anti-integration, hypothesised as being the result of Catholic internationalist doctrine, and protestants' views that integration is a 'Catholic project' by continental Europe (Nelsen et al, 2011). If religious affiliation is a significant predictor of attitudes, its lack of inclusion may be confounding the model, or the observed generational effects may be a result of cross-generational differences in levels of religiosity. For this to be the case, a reduction in the number of Catholics across generations, and an increase in the number of Protestants, would perhaps explain declining levels of support for integration.

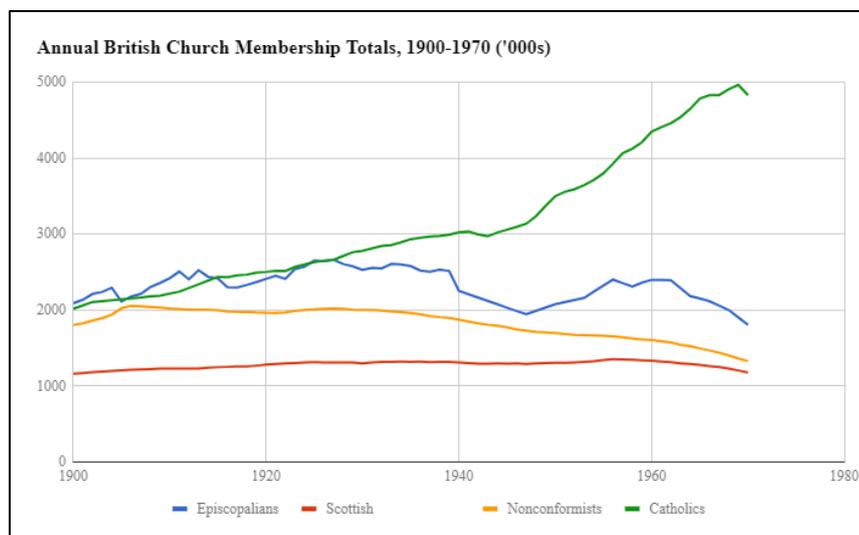


Figure 2: Religious Affiliation Over Time

The available evidence does not support this trend, however. As the graph illustrates, between 1938 and 1955 the number of Catholic churchgoers increased from 2.97 million to 3.8 million. Equally, the number of Episcopalians, comprising Protestants, decreased from 2.53 million to 2.32 million (Currie et al., 1977). This suggests that differing levels of religion, if they are not being captured by the age variable in the models, are not explaining the observed generational effects across the first three generations. If religious affiliation is having any effect in the presented models, it is likely suppressing the observed differences between cohorts.

Political party affiliation has also been shown to be a significant predictor of support for integration. In relation to the recent Brexit vote, being a Labour Party supporter has been shown to be associated with a greater likelihood of voting Remain, while being a Conservative supporter was associated with voting Leave (Hobolt, 2016). Consequently, generational effects that describe differences in party affiliation between the war generation, and those that came after, may be underlying the observed results.

APC analysis by Tilley & Evans (2014) reveals that the generation that came of age in the 1940s shows slightly more support for the Labour Party than those that immediately came after. This is consistent with the notion that the party in power engenders a lasting, albeit minor, attitudinal effect, in this case the 1945-1951 Labour government. Regarding the generations used in this study, the first generation, which came of age between 1935-1950, will have spent approximately one third of this time under Labour rule, and the remainder under Conservative stewardship. The following generation came of age between 1940-1970, encompassing the Atlee Labour government, several Conservative governments of the 1950s and 60s, and the Wilson led Labour government at the end of this period. In total, this period included 12 years of Labour rule, and 18 of Conservative. The similarities in these proportions mean that differences in the party in power across generations is unlikely to be driving the observed generational effects. Furthermore, both main parties support for integration has wavered over time, suggesting the correlations observed in the recent referendum between party and vote choice may not hold over the period this study considers. Thus, not only is there little evidence to suggest that the observed generational differences are due to greater generational support for the Labour party by the war generation, but even if this were the case, there is some doubt that this would be reflected in greater support for integration.

Two other elements of change across the generations in question, and which may influence the quantitative results, concern increased levels of urbanisation and additional means of mass communication. Urbanisation rates increased modestly, but steadily, in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the rural population falling from 23% to 11% (Hicks & Allen, 1999). Likewise, television ownership

soared in the 1950s and 60s, with television being “an essentially post-war phenomenon” (Bain, p.145, 1962), while access to telephones increased similarly. These changes are potentially important, as both urbanisation and increased access to mass communication have been theorised as increasing cognitive mobilisation. Inglehart (1970) views cognitive mobilisation as enhancing the capacity to receive and interpret messages relating to a distant political community, and sees this as a necessary condition for the development of support for a European community. Urbanisation and, in particular, mass communication technologies, are conducive to the spread of information and thereby enhances cognitive mobilisation. Hence, according to this theory, support for European integration is expected to increase as communication networks do likewise. This is supported by the above findings, which show a significant relationship between living in a larger town, and support for integration. Once again, these cross-generational changes do not explain the observed generation effects, with theory suggesting that later generations are more likely to be pro-integration due to these factors.

Relatedly, media coverage has been shown to influence attitudes towards the EU, with media frames potentially acting as cues to guide opinions (Azrout et al, 2012). In the 1940s European integration was only just emerging as a proposal, resulting in sparse media coverage on the issue. However, as the ECSC came into being, more press coverage followed accordingly. If this coverage was largely hostile to integration, this may explain the Eurosceptic attitudes of the post-war and 60s/70s generations, relative to the war generation. A detailed review by Wilkes & Wring (1998) find this not to be the case; the British press was predominantly pro-integration, with the Daily Express being the only significant newspaper expressing opposition to closer continental ties. Indeed, by the 1975 referendum on EEC membership, there was “a near-total dominance of editorial coverage for the pro-Community case” (Wilkes & Wring, 1998, p.195). This media framing would shift to a more Eurosceptic stance in the 1980s and beyond, but the historical framing of attitudes towards integration was not negative in the formative periods of the immediate post-war generations. Again, this can be ruled out as a cause of the observed generational effects.

The above considerations analyse changes in British society in the 1940-1970 period that could explain generational differences in attitudes. However, in each case existing theory does not suggest that changing religious affiliations, incumbent parties, urbanisation and communication technologies, or media frames are behind the observed generational effects, nor are they likely to be confounding the presented models. The models, therefore, appear to be reliable. However, to understand if wartime experiences are explaining these differences through the causal mechanism hypothesised, further analysis of Eurobarometer data can prove instructive.

## Mediation Analysis

Since 2004 the Eurobarometer surveys have asked respondents: “What does the EU Mean to you personally?”. This question has 16 possible response options, including the answer “peace”, recorded in Table 2. This data can be used to test if the observed generational effects are operating through the proposed causal mechanism.

A logistic regression was run that included each of the control variables in the previous models, and whether a respondent mentioned “peace” as an answer to the above question as the dependent variable. Table 3 gives the predicted probability of whether peace was given as a response by generation, holding all other variables at their mean (see appendix for full model). The results show that the war generation were the most likely to associate the EU with peace, with this likelihood steadily decreasing by generation. This provides support for the hypothesis that the impact of the war is influencing broader evaluations of the EU, although it should be noted that the differences between the war generation and the two following generations does not reach statistical significance in the logistic model. These results are informative, rather than conclusive.

*Table 2: Eurobarometer Question*

<b>What does the EU mean to you personally? (Multiple answers possible)</b>
Peace
Economic Prosperity
Democracy
Social Protection
Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU
Cultural Diversity
Stronger say in the world
Euro
Unemployment
Bureaucracy
Waste of money
Loss of our cultural identity
More crime
Not enough control at external borders
Other
Don't know

*Table 3: The EU and Associations of Peace by Generation*

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Peace (%)</b>
War	25.0
Post-war	22.8
60s/70s	19.8
80s	16.6
90s	12.9
Millennial	12.7
<i>N</i>	22,290

For a more direct test of whether the EU’s image as a force for peace is driving the observed generational effects, mediation analysis was conducted by adding answers to the question “What does the EU mean to you personally?” to the original regression model relating to people’s image of the EU. If the observed coefficients in the model are reduced when these answers are included, this indicates more precisely how generational differences are operating. Subsequently, answers to this question were classified into four categories: pacific-international, identity-based, functional, and prosperity-based. The pacific-international variable comprised an additive scale of whether people felt

the EU meant “peace” and having “a stronger say in the world”, tapping notions of the EU as a force for benign international relations. The identity-based variable included those who felt the EU meant “a lack of external border control” and “a loss of cultural identity”. This variable represents those who see integration as a threat to national identity, something closely associated with anti-immigrant sentiments (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). The functional variable included those who felt the EU meant “bureaucracy” and a “waste of money”. This relates to frustration with the functioning of the EU, concerning its efficiency and democratic credentials. The prosperity-based variable included those who felt the EU meant “prosperity” and “social protection”. This relates to the economic benefits of EU membership.

Models 3 and 4 in Table 1 reveal that including these variables boosts the  $R^2$  value of the model from 0.10 to 0.38, providing a much higher level of predictive power. In line with expectations, the four included variables reduce the observed generational effects between models 3 and 4, with no single difference between generations in Model 4 reaching statistical significance. The effects between the war and post-war generation are reduced by 70%, and between the war and 60s/70s generation by 75%.

Thus, examining the extent the generational effects reduce proportionally amongst each of the four categorised variables can give insight into how these effects are operating in influencing opinions. If socialisation during wartime is leading to a belief in the EU’s pacific benefits, and which is consequently driving all of the observed generational effects, the pacific-international variable would be expected to mediate the majority of these differences. Relatedly, given the economic devastation and hardship during the war, the war generation may also express a greater preference for the economic benefits of the EU. The prosperity-based variable may therefore also be expected to mediate some of the generational effects, while remaining consistent with the outlined hypothesis.

Using a technique for comparing nested regression and probability models developed by Karlson et al. (2012), the mediation effects of the four constructed variables are reported in Table 4. The functional variable accounts for 45% of the reduction in the coefficient between the war and post-war generations, and 47% of the reduction between the war and the 60s/70s generations. Alternatively, the pacific-international variable accounts for 19% and 23% of the reduction across these same comparisons. The identity-based variable mediates to a similar degree, 22 and 16%, and the prosperity-based variable only accounts for 13% and 10% of the reduction<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> This analysis could not be repeated for the Membership Good/Bad question, due to the few years in which both this and the EU personal meaning question were asked. Only generational effects between the war and post-war generations appear in this limited dataset. Nevertheless, mediation analysis on this difference reveals results similar to those reported here (see appendix).

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

Generation		EU image (2004-2017)	Coefficient Reduction	% Mediated Effect	% Total Effect
	War (base)	0			
Post-war	Reduced	0.170*** (3.79)			
	Full	0.0503 (1.12)	0.119 (1.11)	100	70.36
	Pacific-International		0.0229 (1.92)	19.19	13.50
	Identity Based		0.0265 (2.69)	22.17	15.60
	Functional		0.0535 (3.54)	44.74	31.48
	Prosperity		0.0166 (1.77)	13.90	9.78
60s/70s	Reduced	0.210*** (3.70)			
	Full	0.0534 (0.94)	0.157 (1.45)	100	74.63
	Pacific International		0.0355 (2.84)	22.64	16.90
	Identity Based		0.0361 (2.88)	23.01	17.17
	Functional		0.0730 (3.74)	46.54	34.73
	Prosperity		0.0122 (1.02)	7.81	5.83
<i>N</i>		21603			

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Hence, views of the EU as a bringer of peace, resultant from socialisation in war time, do appear to have an influence on the observed generational differences. However, the evidence suggests the proposed mechanism connecting the war, peace, and attitudes towards the EU only partially explains the observed generational differences. The next section examines generational differences that can explain why the identity-based and functional variables are mediating a plurality of the generational effects.

## Generational Divides Re-examined

This study hypothesised that events unique to the war generation can help explain generational differences in support for European integration. In light of the findings, it is clear that generational disparities are operating through several distinct mechanisms. This warrants a revised focus on ways in which the observed generations differ. As discussed, several factors identified from the broader cross-national literature on public opinion and European integration have been rejected as causes of the observed generational effects. A more specific focus on the changes in British society in the period 1945-1970 can provide causal insight, however. Britain's changing place on the international stage in the wake of the fall of the British Empire, and the increased provision of public services, are investigated as being additional likely drivers of generational differences.

### Decline, Identity, and Sovereignty

Despite victory in the Second World War, Britain's role on the international stage saw a marked decline in the decades following the conflict. The end of the British Empire came swiftly in the 1950s and 1960s, and America and the Soviet Union assumed international hegemony. The post-war generations socialised in this period thus witnessed a declining Britain, shorn of great-power status. This imperial wane has been theorised as being responsible for a reduction in British national pride (McCrone, 1997). According to this view, 'Britishness' was defined in opposition to the 'other' of the subjects of the Empire, and thus as colonies gained independence and ceased being imperial subjects, so conceptions of British identity were forced to change likewise. This, in part, explains the declining cross-generational levels of British national pride observed by Tilley & Heath (2007).

Given the link between national pride and national identity, and that between a strong national identity and Euroscepticism, this narrative would not appear to offer explanatory insight into the observed generational differences. However, declining national pride does not necessarily connote weakened national identities. As Mercer notes, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (1990, p.43). Thus, the decline of the Empire did not necessarily reduce the strength of national identities. Indeed, the myth of Empire has become associated with a nostalgia for times of 'former glory' when Britain reigned supreme, in turn fuelling Eurosceptics' desire for sovereignty free from Brussels' control (Tharoor, 2017). Moreover, where once national identity could be defined in relation to imperial subjects, Britain's decline prompted a crisis of identity that required a new 'other' for the nation to be regenerated against. As the European integration project progressed throughout the 50s and 60s, European unity offered a new group against which British exceptionalism could be reified (Gifford, 2006).

This is consistent with Díez Medrano's (2003) work, who found that numerous interviewees connected British exceptionalism stemming from its imperial past to desires for the protection of British sovereignty against Brussels. Moreover, almost one third of those interviewed who spoke of a fear of losing their cultural identity gave reason, unprompted, in relation to Britain's decline; Britain's diminished status made it ever more vital that cultural identities were protected in the face of prosperous European counterparts. In fact, this author views the collective memories of Empire as the key component in describing Britain's unique Euroscepticism in comparison to other European countries. These thoughts are echoed by Ian (b.1941), interviewed in the preliminary phase of this research, when he notes that he voted Leave to *"protect sovereignty for Britain, because that's what we've been used to. I don't want to be bossed about, and I suppose that's because this has how it's been, even though I don't really remember it, when we were enjoying the Empire. That's how I would like it to be, it's how my instincts are"* (I. Smith, interview with the author, 8.07.2018).

This type of thinking suggests it is not necessarily a British identity stemming from experiences of the Empire that is inimical to European integration, but it is a specific form of the insular 'Little England' phenomenon that is (Kumar, 2000), stemming from the way imperial glories are reproduced in the national psyche.

The effect of threatened identities is further seen in the anti-immigrant sentiment that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, directed at the influx of non-white Commonwealth citizens who came to Britain in the post-war period. This immigration totalled more than 130,00 per year by 1962 (Butler, 2002), prompting a backlash in the country that would lead to the Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 & 1968, and that culminated in Enoch Powell's racist anti-immigrant 'rivers of blood' speech in 1968. Hence, the fall of Empire and its consequences for immigration made very real the fact that former imperial subjects were coming to Britain as nominally equal citizens, and in the minds of many, threatening indigenous culture. The form of anti-immigrant English nationalism that Powellism embodied was, somewhat paradoxically, ultimately predicated on threats and uncertainties surrounding identity, only serving to renew its popular appeal (Samuel, 1989).

The war generation were thus the last generation to be socialised in a period when Britain still had claims to global supremacy, while the post-war generations were socialised at a time when Britain had to come to terms with its reduced place in the world, a process exacerbated by post-imperial immigration. Given that "the fascination with the English condition has, of course, only increased as Empire recedes into the past" (Gorra, p.165, 1997), it stands to reason that implorations to a nostalgic past of British exceptionalism would find greater purchase with a generation yearning for unexperienced glories, and fall foul with a war generation who had witnessed the harshest

consequences of nationalist fervour. Likewise, anti-immigrant cues – an undoubted element of Eurosceptic appeals – would be expected to resonate more strongly with a generation who experienced perceived threats to their identity, arising from immigration, during their formative period. Put simply, when it comes to generational views of integration, the myth of Empire may be having a stronger effect than the lived realities of Empire. This, therefore, describes one reason why the generations socialised in the 50s and 60s would hold more Eurosceptic attitudes than the war generation, as evidenced by the mediation effects of the identity-based variable.

### The Welfare State and Government Expectations

A second change in the political environment of the post-war period can also help inform the results of the mediation analysis. The post-war generations appear particularly unsatisfied with the functioning of European governance, being more likely to deem it a “bureaucracy” and a “waste of money”. One explanation for this concerns the rising expectations of citizens in the wake of the establishment of the welfare state.

In the post-war reconstruction period, perhaps the greatest shift in the public policy sphere was the establishment of the welfare state. In the wake of Labour’s landslide victory of 1945, elected on a socialist platform, the NHS was founded, and the National Insurance Act was passed, thereby providing unemployment and pension payments. The welfare state would “flower in full bloom” (Fraser, 1984, p.233) during the 50s and 60s, resulting in the government having a more active role in citizens’ lives than ever before.

This growth in government intervention has been linked with changing citizens’ expectations of government provision. Crozier et al. (1975) went so far as to say that a “crisis of democracy” came about as a result of the electorate’s exponentially increasing demands on government, despite the limited resources of the state. The literature on government performance also acknowledges the role of expectations, with more ‘objective’ measures of public provisions not always tracking the public’s evaluations (James, 2009). This has led some commentators to critically describe post-war generations as “entitled”, who believe that excessive government provisions should be the norm, and that attitudes are shaped in response to these misguided ambitions (Samuelson, 1997). Regardless of these normative claims, what is clear is that unhappiness with government is not merely about pure efficiency in delivering public services, but also how this delivery is perceived in relation to expectations.

It is therefore possible that the post-war generations’ negative views of the functioning of the EU, which appears to be explaining a plurality of the generational effects observed, is a result of higher expectations of government amongst these groups. Labels of ‘undemocratic’ or ‘overly bureaucratic’

can only be made in relation to what an individual deems as acceptable standards of democracy and bureaucracy. It is this increase in the demand for government services, but more importantly, a demand for fairer procedures of government, that lies behind Norris' (1999) codification of "critical citizens", distrustful of government, and who first made their voices heard in the protest movements of the 1960s. The rise of these citizens is certainly not solely, or predominantly, ascribed to the emergence of welfare states – increased prevalence of communication technologies and rising education levels are key elements informing people's standards of governance. However, the notion that the EU is an undemocratic bureaucracy, delivering little tangible benefits to the UK, is likely to gain traction with a generation with more "critical" and "entitled" citizens, emerging with and alongside the expansion of the welfare state. In comparison, a war generation that was socialised in a time when domestic government was unable to provide social protection, and remained democratically opaque, is less likely to hold the EU to such high standards of governance.

An additional element that may be driving the generational differences concerning the functioning of European governance may also rely on the arguments surrounding national identity. Díez Medrano (2003) noted the prevalence of British interviewees criticising the EU for its technocratic style of governance. However, his analysis connects these complaints with a desire for British sovereignty; European Union 'bureaucracy' was often being used as an implicit term for a decision-making process in which Britain's voice was only one amongst many, and thus complaints of this manner were not fundamentally about a lack of performance of European governance, but about the diminished degree of British sovereignty inherent in these procedures.

Peter (b.1938), interviewed as part of this research, echoed these sentiments. He voted Leave so as to protect British sovereignty from EU decision processes made by "*unelected individuals*" and connected this opinion to studying at school and "*learning of the history of sovereignty of this country, and how it has been there through to modern times. I was brought up to believe that parliament had a say over everything; it was natural to believe that in 1956 when I left school*" (Peter Strong, interview with author, 19.06.2018). Thus, not only do these thoughts highlight the link between sovereignty and EU governance processes, but it likewise evidences that understandings of British history influenced these opinions, as made in the argument concerning Imperial decline.

This calls into question the grouping of mediation pathways into distinct 'functional' and 'identity-based' variables. Consequently, arguments pertaining to why people should place such weight on British sovereignty, notably issues surrounding identity and British exceptionalism, can therefore be at play in describing why people see the EU as a "waste of money" and a "bureaucracy".

This study cannot specify the precise way in which the two arguments above are operating. Whether the decline of the Empire or the rise of the welfare state is driving the observed 'functional' effects cannot be disentangled. Nevertheless, where other changes in society have been found inadequate as explanations, these two key changes in the political environment of post-war Britain provide theoretically grounded reasons for why generations socialised in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s would hold more Eurosceptic views than the war generation, in addition to the aforementioned pacific hypothesis. Moreover, these descriptions are congruent with more recent generations' pro-integration attitudes, which were socialised in periods when Britain was no longer in decline. More broadly, the findings of the mediation analysis support existing claims that identity-based factors have a greater role to play in determining attitudes towards the EU than utilitarian based factors, such as the pacific benefits of European institutions (Hooghe & Marks, 2004).

## Conclusion

This study has investigated generational effects with respect to attitudes towards Europe within the UK. The initial hypothesis, that lived experiences of the war would correlate with more positive attitudes towards European integration, due to the pacific role of European institutions, has been supported by the analysis conducted. As theorised, the generation that came of age during the war expressed more positive attitudes towards European integration, when controlling for a range of salient variables, in comparison to the two following generations. Mediation analysis revealed some further support for this theory. However, this analysis revealed that additional causal pathways explain much of the observed results. Namely, the war generation is less protective of cultural identities, and less critical of the functioning of the European Union. The relationship between the decline of Empire and national identity, and the emergence of the welfare state influencing expectations of government, have been offered in explanation of these results.

The contribution of this work is threefold. Firstly, it serves to validate the work of Down & Wilson (2013; 2017) and Fox & Pearce (2018), confirming the generational effects found in these studies by using an updated dataset. It therefore supports their contention that the most recent generations are the least Eurosceptic due being socialised in a period when Britain's membership of the EU was routinised. Secondly, it has undermined claims that the war generation's relative positivity towards the EU is solely due to the role European institutions played in bringing peace to the continent. This has led to a refocus on the particularities of the two generations socialised after the war. Thirdly, this work makes a methodological contribution to Age-Period-Cohort analysis. A number of APC studies pose theoretical justifications for generational effects, and therefore use the findings of such effects as validation of the posed theories. This work has shown that these effects may be operating through

several distinct mechanisms, against theoretical expectations. Striving for tighter tests of theories in APC analysis is thus a necessity, and the use of mediation analysis where data allows provides one valuable method.

The findings presented here may generalise to other European contexts, but the causal weight of the offered arguments will undoubtedly differ. The effect of the war on attitudes is likely to be greater in countries such as Germany and France that bore the worst of its destruction. The role of the fall of the British Empire is evidently unique to the UK context, but the rise of Welfare States, and the impact of post-war immigration will likely apply to several national scenarios. Further work would seek to test how these generational effects are operating in these contexts, building upon Down and Wilson's (2013) cross-national study.

Several limitations pertain to this research. This study should not be viewed as a comprehensive descriptor of how the war has affected Eurosceptic attitudes in the UK. Collective memories of the war mean that its effect on the national psyche has spanned generations, and therefore a holistic analysis of this event would focus upon how it is re-created and reimagined throughout time. Additionally, the explanations pertaining to imperial decline and the rising expectations of citizens should be viewed as evidenced hypotheses due to the post-hoc theorising involved, and thus research giving explicit focus to these aspects alone is needed to confirm these causal narratives. Indeed, additional tests using different dependent variables can seek to confirm the proportional effects of the mediation analysis, while innovative means to perform confirmatory factor analysis on the constructed mediation variables would prove useful. This has not been reported here due to factor analysis largely serving to reveal two broad pro-and anti-integration groups, unhelpful to provide causal insight. Finally, as with much APC analysis, the generational delineations made can be disputed. This study drew on the theories of other similar studies when making classifications, and in the case of the war, this event serves as a relatively clear moment of demarcation. Nevertheless, the use of Generalised Additive Models has emerged as one way to validate generational cuts, and further work could seek to use this method to support the decisions made.

The choice for Britain to leave the European Union has shaken the political establishment and has invoked a flurry of comment and scholarly research. This study has suggested the over-65s demographic comprises different groups; those who draw an association between the EU and peace, and those who view it as a threat to conceptions of British identity. These effects are small, but present nevertheless. What is undoubted is that almost 75 years on from the end of the war, the EU must offer more than simply being a vehicle for peace if it is to flourish. At the same time, this greater ambition, with its impingement of sovereignty, may just be the cause of the British reversion from the institution.

Herein lies the challenge of European governance, and perhaps the difficulty that underlies the Brexit vote.

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## Appendix

Table 1: Logit Model: Answered EU means 'Peace'

EU Means Peace	
Education	0.127*** (17.56)
Age	-0.00196 (-0.46)
Gender	-0.306*** (-8.41)
Left-Right	-0.108*** (-10.94)
Community Size	0.0459 <sup>†</sup> (2.02)
Marital Status	-0.0324 (-0.87)
Self-employed	0 (.)
Managers	-0.0605 (-0.80)
Other White Collar	-0.209 <sup>†</sup> (-2.39)
Manual Worker	-0.289*** (-3.75)
House Workers	-0.126 (-1.29)
Unemployed	-0.133 (-1.40)
Retired	-0.0686 (-0.89)
Students	0 (.)
Generation	
War	0 (.)
Post-war	-0.120 (-0.94)
60s/70s	-0.298 (-1.81)
80s	-0.517 <sup>†</sup> (-2.52)
90s	-0.810** (-3.29)
Millennial	-0.828** (-2.80)
Period	†
Constant	-0.456 (-1.18)
<i>N</i>	22290

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

† 21 period effects controlled

## Details of Control Variables in Regression Models

Table 2: Control Variables

Variable	Coding
Gender	0 = Male, 1 = Female
Left-Right	1 = Left-wing, 10 = Right-wing
Size of Community	1 = Rural area or village, 2 = small or middle size town, 3 = Big Town
Age	Exact age of respondent
Marital Status	0 = Single, 1 = Currently Married
Education	1 = No Full-time education, 2 = Up to 14 years, 3 = 15 years, 4 = 16 years, 5 = 17 years, 6 = 18 years, 7 = 19 years, 8 = 20 years, 9 = 21 years, 10 = 22 years or older

## Further Mediation Analysis

Table 3: Mediation Analysis of Membership Good/Bad Question

	Membership Good/Bad (2004-2010)	Coefficient Reduction	% Mediated Effect	% Total Effect
Generation				
War (base)	0			
Post-war				
Reduced	0.836* (2.06)			
Full	0.0187 (0.46)	0.649 (0.60)	100	77.66
Pacific-International		0.0174 (1.55)	26.75	20.77
Identity Based		0.0114 (1.10)	17.54	13.62
Functional		0.0254 (2.25)	39.14	30.40
Prosperity		0.0108 (1.30)	16.57	12.87
<i>N</i>	21603			