Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

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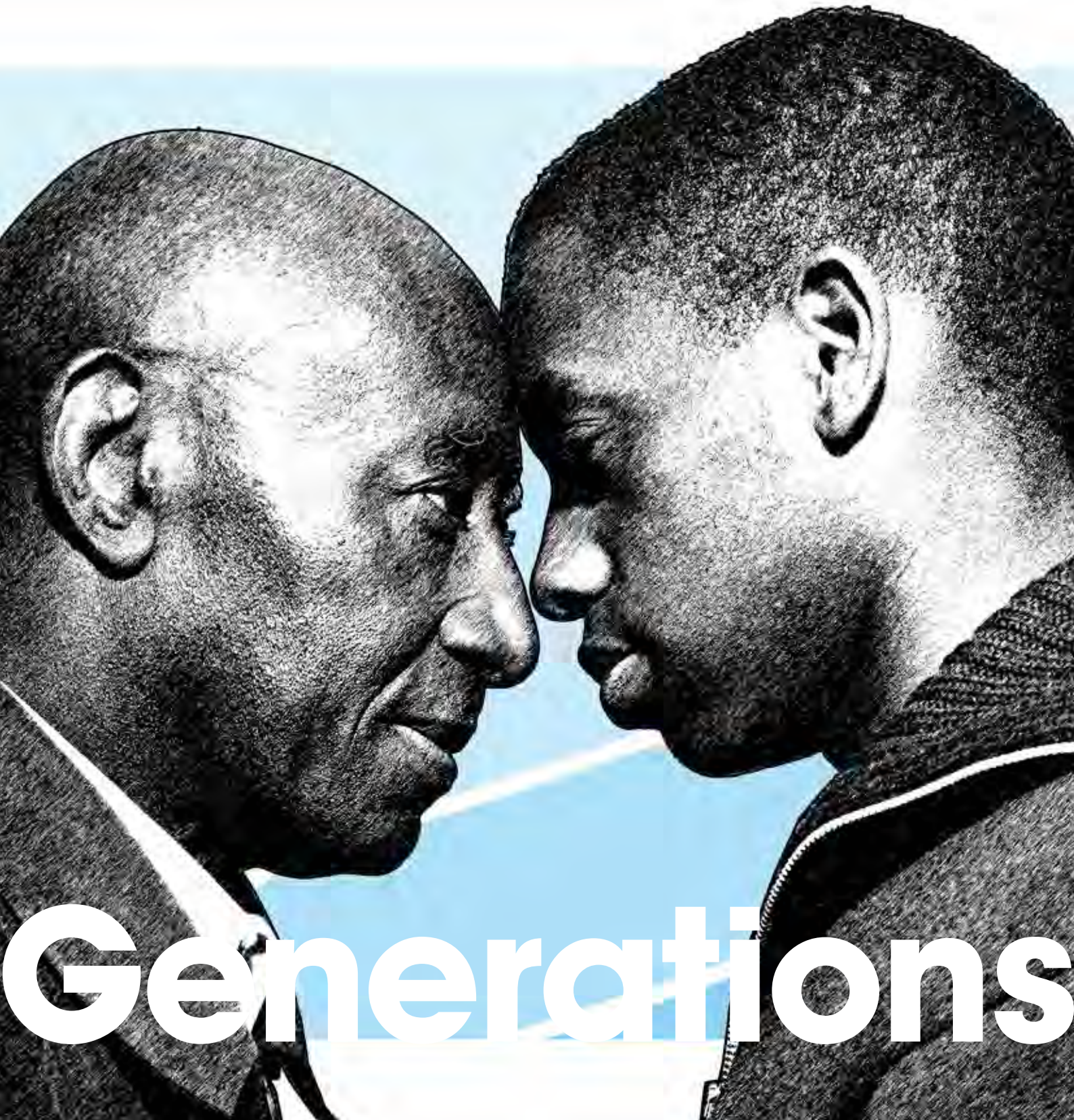

Generations

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Foreword

Welcome to the latest edition of the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute's *Understanding Society*, which explores the differing attitudes, values and expectations across generations, tracking how they change over time.

This brings together some of our research from a year-long programme of work that we've developed alongside partners such as Demos, and draws on the findings from particular studies we've conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.

We believe taking this generational perspective provides useful insights into how opinion varies and some clues to how it is likely to change. The reaction to our analysis has, overall, been very positive. Most see the value in it as providing a key perspective, particularly at a time when generational factors are at the fore – given our ageing population, a weakening in the assumption of an automatically better future for our youngest generations, the struggle to maintain a social contract across generations on key policy issues like welfare and the increasing difficulty political parties face in connecting with younger groups.

We are, however, acutely aware that a generational analysis is only one perspective, and other factors such as class and income will be as or more important in explaining differences in opinion. Nevertheless, this does not mean a generational perspective has no value. We also recognise that there is huge diversity within generations and where you draw your dividing lines is arbitrary. However, the same can be said for class or income: we need to judge the analysis on whether it tells us something useful rather than focus on the mechanics.

Nor do we accept the view that we should avoid generational analysis as it highlights differences and could stoke up intergenerational conflict. This is a strange argument, that you cannot imagine being applied to class or ethnic group differences. We need to understand these differences precisely to avoid being taken by surprise. And the reality is, as we show in this report, that we're very far from a "generational war".

In this context, we are delighted to have an interview with the Minister for Universities and Science, Rt Hon David Willetts MP, who wrote one of the most influential books on the interaction between Britain's generations. *The Pinch* inspired us to start looking at attitudes and values with a generational frame, so we are enormously grateful for his contribution to this publication.

We are equally thrilled to have in this edition an article from Shiv Malik and Ed Howker, authors of the *Jilted Generation*, another ground-breaking study of generational differences. Shiv and Ed argue that there is a real need to analyse societies through the frame of generations for wider policy and economic implications.

We are also extremely grateful to the outgoing Charity Director General of Age UK, Michelle Mitchell, who gives us her perspective on the challenges facing the baby boomers and pre-war generations, as well as her take on the debate around intergenerational fairness.

This generational focus has been a major piece of work for Ipsos MORI, and we have published all our analysis, more than can be included here, on a dedicated website (www.ipsos-mori-generations.com). At the end of this edition are snippets of that work to give you a flavour of their findings. Do look at the full website if you get a chance.

This edition also includes a new generational analysis of public attitudes to Scottish independence and national identity. Generation Y may not turn out to be the 'independence generation' at the referendum in 2014 but they could mark a significant turning point.

We also include a new analysis of one of Ipsos MORI's longest-standing surveys, the Issues Index. Here we disentangle the relationship between age, the point of life a person is at, the generation they are born into and the importance a person places on certain issues.

At the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, we remain committed to sharing the message from our research and, as always, if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised here, please do get in touch.

Bobby Duffy

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The generation frame

How much do we know about how different generations view key social issues?

 Bobby Duffy

 Daniel Cameron

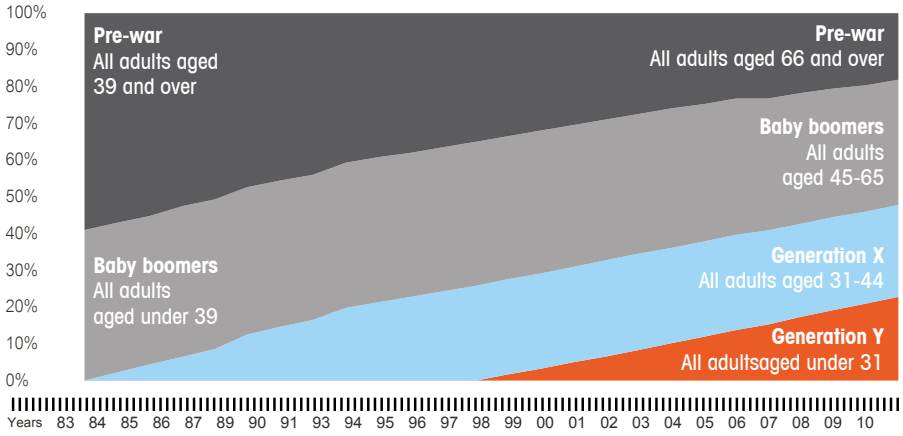
In everyday language, the concept of a generation makes sense: we see our lives as very different from those of our parents, and assume that children growing up now will have lives at least as different again. We take for granted that the experiences we have in common with our immediate peers give our generational cohort a distinct and shared identity. This includes everything from the TV we watched as children to the economic backdrop when we first entered the labour market. Instinctively these shared experiences feel like they matter, helping to shape a wide range of things from our personal goals to our wider social values.

But how much do we know about how different generations view key social issues? What values do we share and stick to as distinct generations (what sociologists call cohort effects)? To what extent do our perceptions simply change as we get older, following a similar pattern to those who came before us (lifecycle effects)? And how much of the shift in social attitudes we see is a reflection of events that have an impact across generations as a whole (period effects)?

David Willetts' book *The Pinch* kick-started much of the current debate around generations in Britain. In it, he points out that we are currently at a stage of "generational equipoise", where the median person is around 40 years old and can expect to live to 80. But, we also have a balance between generations, with four roughly equally sized and culturally quite distinct adult cohorts co-existing, as figure one shows.

Figure ONE.

Proportion of UK adult (18+) population from each generational grouping



Generational thinking.

The importance of understanding differences between generations is clearly not new. Karl Mannheim published his seminal work *'The Problem of Generations'* in 1928[1], outlining how formative experiences are vitally important in setting views, and describing how the strength of links between contemporaries will grow as ties between generations within families weaken. At the time, this thinking challenged the prevailing orthodoxy, but looking at modern societies, it seems incredibly prescient.

Others have used a generational frame to try to explain how societies have changed from a historical perspective. William Strauss and Neil Howe developed a history of America by describing a series of generations stretching back to 1584[2]. In their account, generations work on a four-stage cycle, with movements between stages driven by generational events (or turnings)[3] which happen every 20 years or so. According to their analysis, each generation is shaped by these turnings as they move through different phases of life.

> As each generation ages into the next phase – from youth to young adulthood to midlife to elderhood – its attitudes and behaviours mature, producing new currents in the public mood. In other words, people do not "belong" to their age brackets. A woman of 40 today has less in common with 40-year-old women across the ages than with the rest of her generation, which is united by memories, language, habits, beliefs, and life lessons.[4]
>
> William Strauss and Neil Howe, 2007

Describing the characteristics of different generations is only one element. The next natural question is how they relate to each other at any given time. The question of generational fairness in democratic societies was being debated as far back as the 1780s by American politicians Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson

> As we are not to live forever ourselves, and other generations are to follow us, we have neither the power nor the right to govern them, or to say how they shall govern themselves. It is the summit of human vanity, and shews a covetousness of power beyond the grave, to be dictating to the world to come.[5]

Thomas Paine

Why does this matter now?

Over recent years, the generational narrative has increasingly focused on a more specific issue, with a surge in interest and commentary about the burden placed on future generations by the good fortune of baby boomers.[6] Political leaders have noticed this too. Fairness between generations in Britain is a theme that UK Prime Minister David Cameron highlighted in the run up to the 2010 general election. He argued that reducing the national debt is a matter of generational fairness. Leader of the opposition Ed Miliband also sees it as a coming issue.

> I didn't enter politics to concentrate on the here and now – making sure we take what we get with no thought of the consequences. I entered politics to make sure future generations – our children – have a better life because that way we know our country – our great country - is moving forward.[7]

David Cameron, January 2009

> Intergenerational justice, intergenerational fairness and equality is going to be the issue of the next 10 or 15 years. Is this generation, my generation, going to do right by the younger generation?[8]

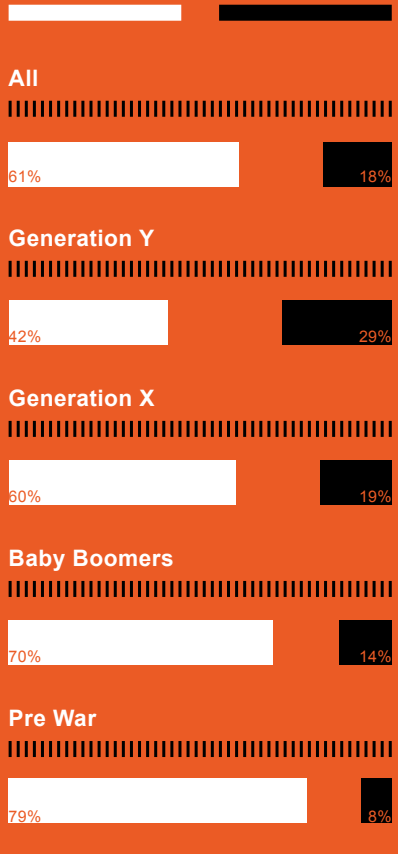
Ed Miliband, January 2012

But do the public share this generational perspective? Work we have carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust highlights two consistent themes[9].

Firstly, there was universal agreement that the youngest – generation Y and those who come after them – are expected to bear the brunt of the current economic problems and now cannot expect an automatically better future, as has perhaps been the case in the past. This is reflected in perceptions among younger people themselves: just two in five of generation Y expect that life will be better for them than their parents, while four in five of the pre-war generation think this will have been the case for them.

Figure TWO.

"To what extent, if at all, do you feel that your generation will have had a better or worse life than your parents' generation?"



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of the pre-war generation say they are proud of the creation of the welfare state, a figure that is virtually unchanged in the last 11 years.

The other shared concern was about care needs in old age. All generations were worried about the impact of ageing on social care provision and the quality of life for older people. Many across the baby boomer generation, generation X and Y said that they would not want to grow old in Britain.

"I don't want to be old in this country."

Focus group participant, generation X

This deep concern for our own and family's old age may explain why the real sympathy expressed across the generations for the plight of the young does not generally translate into middle and older groups wanting to give anything up; they worry deeply about being able to look after themselves and becoming a burden on their own children. But it also helps explain the lack of any strong sense of intergenerational conflict. In recently published work for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, our analysis shows that spending more on pensions is the second top welfare priority for generation Y, well above unemployment benefits.

Generation why?

That is not to say that all generations are consistent in their views of the welfare state and priorities – far from it.

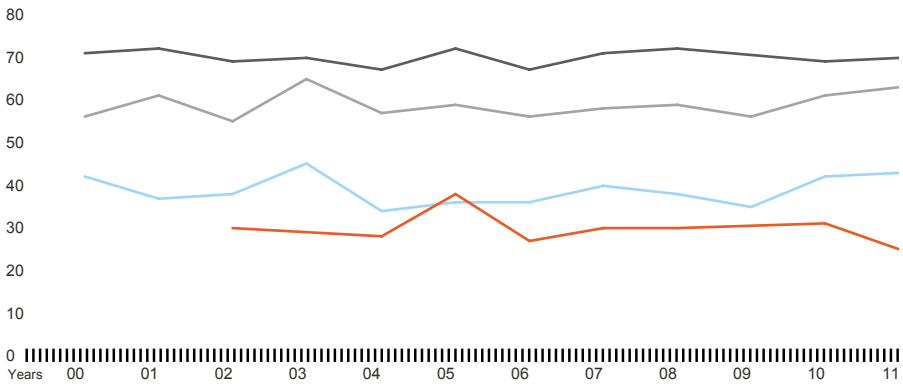
One of the most striking generational patterns we have seen is in the differences in pride in the welfare state between cohorts. This is shown in the chart below, where each generation is a separate line. So, for example, the "pre-war" line represents everyone aged 56+ in 2000, everyone 44+ in 1988 and so on until it represents just those aged 66+ in 2011. As the chart below shows, there are very large and consistent differences in attitudes between generations.

Seven in ten of the pre-war generation say they are proud of the creation of the welfare state, a figure that is virtually unchanged in the last 11 years. Baby boomers are not far behind, particularly in more recent years. Then there is large gap to generation X and an even larger gap to generation Y. In 2011, just 25% of our youngest generation said they are proud of the welfare state.

And generational differences seem equally important in questions on support for more welfare spending. Firstly, as figure four illustrates, there is a clear period effect. All generations have recently shown a downward trend in their support for more welfare

Figure THREE.

"The creation of the welfare state is one of Britain's proudest achievements." (% agree)

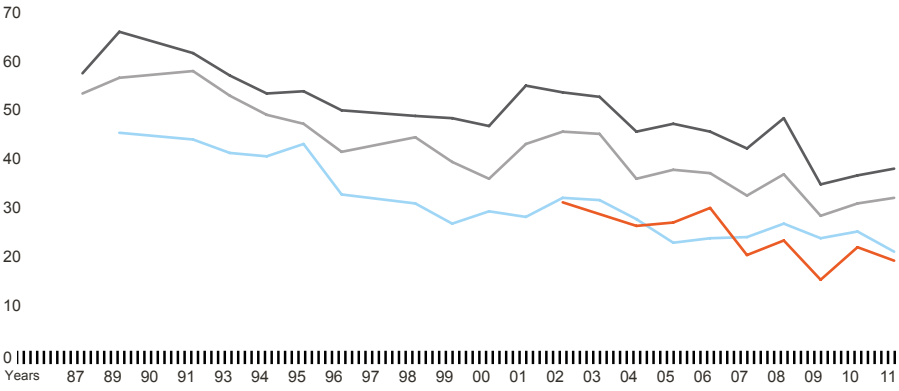


Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

Figure FOUR.

"The government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes." (% agree)



spending. But the chart also shows that generations mostly stay different from each other – there is hardly any crossing of the lines, and the gaps remain fairly consistent.

And there is the same clear, consistent generational rank order as with pride in the welfare state: the pre-war generation are the most supportive of further redistribution, followed by baby boomers, then generation X, then generation Y. This clearly raises important questions about future support for welfare as the demographic balance changes. The very practical point here for policy-makers is that the younger generation cannot be assumed to have the same understanding and connection with the welfare state as previous generations.

We should not be hugely surprised by this, as younger generations grew up further from the set-up of the welfare state, and the progressive weakening of understanding of its role will be important in influencing younger cohorts' views.

Nevertheless, the scale of the difference is more of a surprise, and does raise questions about the sustainability of support for the welfare system.

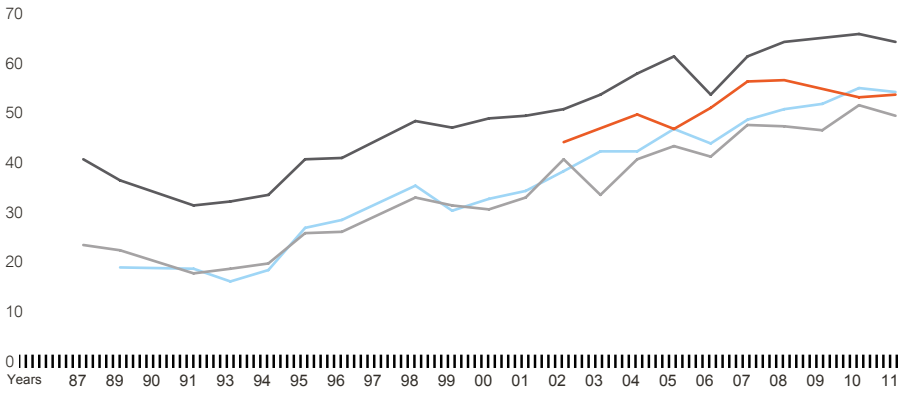
This is not the whole story. The British Social Attitudes Survey includes further questions on the extent to which people agree that if welfare benefits were not so generous, people would stand on their own two feet. Again the overall trend has been towards a tougher view, with around a quarter agreeing in the early 1990s, rising to half by 2011.

Nevertheless there are more generational differences here, and interestingly it is the pre-war generation who tend to be more likely to agree with this throughout the period covered. This is in contrast to their pride in the welfare state and greater calls for further redistribution. It is not contradictory but consistent with a view of the welfare system as a hard-won privilege that should only be there for people in times of severe need. You can agree with the principle but worry about its implementation.

It is also worth noting that in a number of years it has actually been generation Y that have been closest in views to the pre-war generation. This has shifted in the last couple of years, but does fit with the greater focus on individual responsibility among this

Figure FIVE.

"If welfare benefits weren't so generous, people would learn to stand on their own two feet" (% agree)



Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

cohort seen in other generational patterns and outlined in our study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The grey float?

Developing an approach to welfare that can bring together these diverse generational perspectives, and in particular makes sense to the generations coming through, is going to be one of the key challenges facing politicians in the coming years.

They also face a more direct generational challenge – how to maintain the connection between people and politics overall. As outlined in a short article later in this report, identification with political parties overall shows a very strong generational aspect, with younger cohorts much less likely to identify with a particular party, and this does not seem to be changing greatly as they grow older. The UK is not alone in seeing this gap in engagement between young and old, but we are the extreme example in Europe, from our analysis of the European Social Survey[10].

To help understand how this plays out for individual parties, we have analysed Ipsos MORI trend data on voting intention, going back to 1996, following through individual generations over a 17 year period. This is the first example of this type of analysis on our data, and is based on a total dataset including more than half a million interviews.

The first point that stands out is the very different generational pattern in support for the two main parties, as shown in the two charts on this page. Throughout much of the period covered here, there have been significant and consistent gaps between the generations in levels of support for the Conservative Party, but very little difference between the proportions of each generation supporting the Labour Party.

In the mid-2000s, the Conservatives were facing just about the worst generational pattern you could imagine for the long-term sustainability of the party. Their vote was being held up by the pre-war generation, and they were making no in-roads with the youngest generation.

However, we have seen a quite remarkable realignment of generational patterns for both parties in more recent years.

Figure SIX.

"How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?"
(% Conservative)

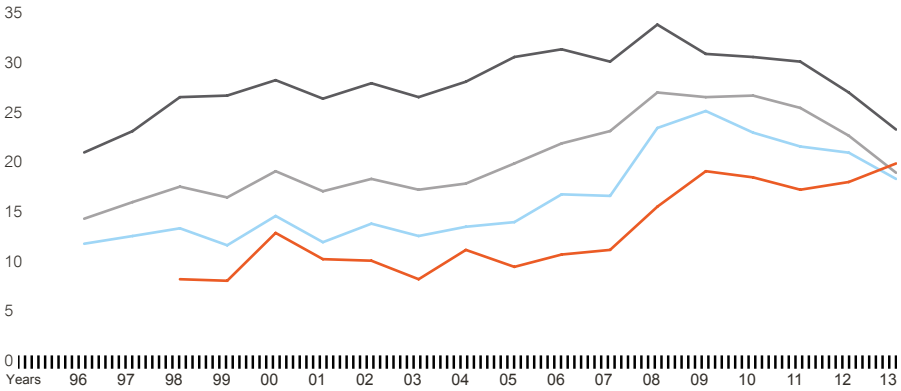
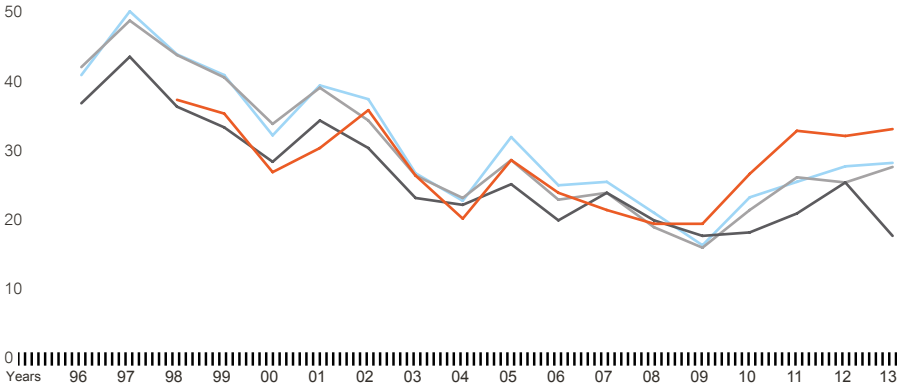


Figure SEVEN.

"How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?"
(% Labour)



We have seen a quite remarkable realignment of generational patterns for both parties in more recent years.

By the first quarter of 2013, there was only a 5-percentage point gap in Conservative support between the oldest and youngest cohorts, a stark contrast to 2005/6 when there was a 20-percentage point gap. Also there is now no difference at all between Conservative support among generation Y and the two cohorts that precede them.

This is a major shift but it has both pros and cons for the Conservatives. A positive reading is that the Conservatives have continued to maintain support in absolute terms among generation Y, even while overseeing an austerity government and an economic response where young people face particularly harsh conditions.

But the narrowing of the generational gap in the Conservative vote has been driven as much by falling support in traditionally strong generations as this increase in support among generation Y. The pre-war generation's support for the Conservatives peaked at around 33% in 2008, but by the first quarter of 2013, it was down to 24%. If you were designing a way to close a generational gap, this would not be it - not least, because 76% of that pre-war generation voted in 2010, compared with 49% of generation Y.

The generational pattern to Labour's vote could hardly be more different, as the chart shows. There is very little difference between the cohorts for much of the period, although generation X and baby boomers were consistently slightly more likely to be Labour supporters than other generations in the early Blair years. The overall pattern of declining support from an historic high in 1997 is not particularly encouraging – but the consistency of support across generations does at least show a wide-ranging appeal across age groups. Somewhat ironically, Labour's recent "One Nation" narrative reflected their consistent appeal across generations for much of the period but it seems less true now.

Indeed, there are signs of a significant generational dispersal of Labour support in the last two to three years, again with support among generation Y increasing and pre-war support decreasing, particularly in 2013.

While there are huge differences between the Conservatives and Labour in their generational patterns, they do share two consistent trends in recent years. Both have seen an increase in support among generation Y (although Labour remain well ahead with this group in absolute terms) and both have seen a decline in the proportions of the pre-war generation among their supporters.

This raises two questions: where have the generation Y supporters come from, and where have the pre-war voters gone?

On generation Y, there are two main explanations. Firstly, for the Liberal Democrats, support among this cohort has collapsed, halving since 2010. However, figure eight also shows that more of generation Y have just made up their minds in recent years. This is very consistent with political lifecycle theories, where people take

Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

some time (and important elections such as the one in 2010) to settle down into their party of choice[11].

The chart also provides some explanation for the second pattern of disappearing older voters, as it shows a spike in the pre-war generation who say they are now undecided on how to vote. This is only a six percentage point increase on 2011, but is unique across the generations and mirrors the decline in both the Conservative and Labour vote among this cohort.

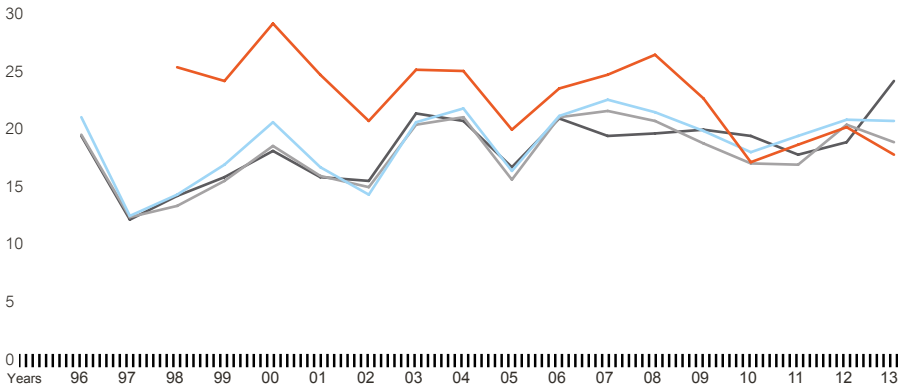
A further explanation of where pre-war voters have gone is provided by UKIP. The rapid rise of UKIP means we do not have sufficient data over a long enough period to accurately track the generational profile of their supporters, but in the first quarter of 2013, 11% of this generation now say they will vote for UKIP, in contrast with only 2% of generation Y.

11%

of the pre-war generation now say they will vote for UKIP, in contrast with only 2% of generation Y.

Figure EIGHT.

"How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?"
(% Undecided)



What next?

Our analysis and new research shows little, if any, sign that the public themselves see a coming generational war. The connections up and down the generations are too strong, sympathy between cohorts is too high and people just do not generally think in that way.

That should not detract from the real diversity between generations, and the challenges this presents for politicians and policy-makers.

The two key issues of welfare and political support looked at in this article are closely linked. This is not just because they reflect the increasing difficulty of maintaining support across such a diverse range of generational viewpoints. But they also reflect the tension between short-term political aims and the longer-term perspective needed to recast relationships between people and key structures like political parties and the welfare state.

In the short-term, the pre-war generation seem particularly likely to be a key battleground for the main two parties at the next election. A significant minority of what each could count on as core support from this generation seem disillusioned, believing that their concerns are not being addressed. As Age UK's Michelle Mitchell says later in this edition, politicians know the numbers, and manifestos are bound to reflect this group's concerns.

But the particular perspective of generation Y also still needs to be better understood. This generation may be less vital to the electoral outcome in 2015 but they will make up progressively more of the electorate, and currently, key structures like the welfare state and political parties make too little sense to too many of them.

Generational difference: politics and policy

An interview with Minister of State for Universities and Science, and author of *The Pinch: How the Baby Boomers Took Their Children's Future and Why They Should Give it Back*, the Rt Hon David Willetts MP.

Bobby Duffy

BD: Your book, *The Pinch: How the Baby Boomers Took Their Children's Future and Why They Should Give It Back*, laid out a compelling picture of the causes and implications of generational differences, inspiring Ipsos MORI's own subsequent analysis on the subject. What are the main points that the book is making?

DW: The conventional view amongst demographers was that being a big cohort was bad news because you would be in a sharp-elbowed world where you were competing with contemporaries for limited jobs and resources. The argument of *The Pinch* is that being a big cohort is a great advantage, rather than a disadvantage, and the most crucial cohort I identify is the baby boomers. My definition of the baby boomers is people born between 1945 and 1965, a 20-year segment neatly bounded with two peaks when the numbers of babies born in Britain went above a million.

My argument is that that cohort has ended up shaping Britain in their image. Their tastes changed society because they formed such a huge consumer group, and because there was space for so much creative diversity to emerge within that. They have shaped everything from trends in music - we still have the Rolling Stones on tour for example - through to the economy - their economic interests have proved very strong. For example, when they took out their mortgages they have had inflation at a conveniently high rate to erode the burden of their mortgages. Now, they have ended up sitting on a disproportionate amount of property wealth.

In my book, I said this is not because the baby boomer generation are somehow particularly selfish. It is just what happens when a big generation in a modern welfare state and in a democracy, almost unthinkingly, exercises power and influence. I also appeal in my book to people to think about the interests of different generations and how different generations have a mutual contract between them.

BD: Your book outlines a number of interesting connections between changes over the generations – for example, that technological advances like the microwave have increased global IQ, due to families spending less time spent on domestic chores and more time with their children. What facts did you find most interesting?

DW: Yes - I found remarkable things when researching the book – like the effect of people living longer, which is welcome in many ways, on the housing market. As people stay in their properties for longer, that effectively means taking more than 50,000 properties a year out of circulation. In the old days, properties would have become available sooner as, sadly, people died at a younger age.

BD: You talk about society being at an unusual point of generational equipoise in the UK, where the median age is 40 and average life expectancy is 80. But this balance is changing, particularly as the oldest cohort dies out. The pre-war generation has distinct values from the baby boomer generation – to caricature it, baby boomers tend to have higher expectations and are likely to be less "grateful". Do you recognise that breakdown of our society, that there are these four distinct generational - pre-war, baby boomers, generation X and Y - in the adult population currently?

DW: Yes I do. The relations between the baby boomers and their kids are a lot easier than between the baby boomers and their parents, the pre-war generation. Both the baby boomers and their kids turn up at Glastonbury, and many middle-aged parents will have on their iPods some music recommended by their kids.

So the cultural divide has narrowed but the economic divide is wider. For example, for the kids, getting started on the housing ladder, something seen as straightforward for the baby boomers, is a massive challenge for generation X and Y. The kids are culturally closer to their baby boomer parents, but are excluded economically from some of the benefit of society that the baby boomers just took for granted.

BD: In breaking down aggregate opinion into its generational constituent parts, there are often clear distinctions, with the older generation in particular standing out, as different. There are clear lifecycle and period effects too – but the strength of generational

distinction surprised us a little – what is your view?

DW: It is fascinating to disentangle the life cycle effect from the period effect from the cohort effect. For example, when you get married you tend to start taking a more positive view of marriage and a rather more critical view of, for example, adultery than when you're younger and not yet married. But attitudes to gay people have become more tolerant regardless of people's ages.

Most striking from your research is the generational hierarchy regarding pride in the welfare state and the fact that younger generations are most sceptical. One reason for that is that they do not feel they are getting much out of it. If you are young, you are probably going to be a net payer-in – unlike older generations who are mostly likely to be net-gainers - and that helps to explain the shift in attitudes that you have picked up.

BD: Generation Y, the youngest, seem to have a more "individualistic" outlook. Far from interpreting this as selfish or self-obsessed, there is an emphasis on taking individual responsibility and assessing issues individually rather than buying into a whole package idea. What do you see as the implications for public services and social policy?

DW: I do think that there is a period in your late teens, early 20's when people are most individualistic. This is when people become independent of their parents, are not yet parents themselves and when they may not yet own a place of their own. As a rootless atomistic individual it's not surprising that people at that stage of their lives have some particularly neo-liberal views. Because of economic pressures, that period of people's lives is getting longer and I wonder if that might be causing individualistic attitudes to become more deeply embedded. It certainly means they are going to be held by a bigger proportion of the population at any one moment in time. Nevertheless these views might change over time.

As people stay in their properties for longer, that effectively means taking more than 50,000 properties a year out of circulation.

This is my investigation of generations and it is not a party political project. But, my definition of a Conservative is a "free marketer with children!" For me personally, I remember initially being excited by all the economic liberalism as a student and then working in London in my early 20's, and that initially shaped my conservatism. However, once a person has kids, they do start taking a different view about how accessible drugs should be and things like that.

BD: One of the striking patterns in attitudinal data is that despite pretty widespread agreement that the youngest generation will have it tougher than other recent generations, there is still a strong sense across all generations that we need to protect help for our oldest groups. Is this simply driven by our micro view – i.e. our view of our own parents and own future - or is there something else here and we do still believe in a more fundamental generational contract?

DW: At a micro-level, there is a cat's cradle of obligations between generations where each one helps the other. A person cares for their parents in the expectation that their kids will then care for them in the same way. Their parents – the grandparents - in turn give

time to help with childcare of their grandchildren in the expectation that they will get help when they need it. For example, there is one statistic that grandparents' gifts to grandchildren are worth at least as much as the total value of child benefit.

My fear is that although those micro exchanges are excellent and part of what makes the world go round, at the collective level, we are doing it less well. At the level of public policy, we should be reflecting the same kind of values. So paradoxically, we have both grandparents giving money to their grandkids and at the same time governments are borrowing very large amounts on the national debt, which the grandkids are going to have to pay off. Public policy has fallen behind the reality of the intergenerational obligations expressed at the micro level.

BD: But a number of people have said there are dangers in that generational perspective – either that it highlight differences, which may in fact be less important than other factors such as income differences, ethnicity and class or that it may stoke up conflict. What is your view?

DW: First, to people who say the real differences in society are horizontal ones – class for example - and you should not focus on generations, I would say there have been hundreds if not thousands of books written about post-war Britain from the perspective of class differentials and other differentials. But there have been hardly any books on generational differentials. That means we are missing an important part of the analysis. That is why I am so encouraged by the work that Ipsos MORI is doing. I want to see more research in this area. Second, one of the ways to understand the horizontal differences is the vertical transfer between generations.

My definition of a Conservative is a "free marketer with children"!

Third, that this generational analysis is trying to create generational warfare is quite wrong. It is the opposite; it is actually trying to remind people of the obligations that we have to different generations. No one generation should break the contract and the biggest single problem is not that there has been some deliberate plot by one group of baby boomers to do everyone else down. It is just they have not thought about the interests of other generations explicitly and what it means to be a big group working their way through the economy.

Let's look at an analogy. Imagine baby boomers are the trustees of a patch of woodland and they must decide what to do with the woodland and whether to cut the woodland down and sell the trees. One argument is, trees are rising in value, so if we delay cutting down the trees they will be worth even more in the future, which is a kind of appeal to economic rationality, and that has some modest influence on us here. Another argument is that the wider community enjoys the trees and so less advantaged people will lose out if they cut down the trees. We should not cut them down where it has or could have some impact on others.

The third argument is the only reason we have this woodland, is previous generations left it for us and therefore, we have an obligation to pass this woodland on to future generations. Now, that argument when given to people as part of a psychological experiment, scores much more powerfully than the other two. Nevertheless, much political debate in

Britain is constructed around the first two types of argument and not enough around this third one, which has a real emotional appeal.

BD: The diversity of views between generations presents challenges for political parties seeking to appeal across the whole spectrum. Ipsos MORI research shows that Britain has the biggest gap between old and young in Europe when it comes to feeling attached to a political party. How do we overcome this challenge?

DW: Do we? That's fascinating. The trouble is that we are into a self-perpetuating vicious circle in which young people think that the public policy environment is hostile to them. If they look at things like getting started on the housing ladder. Instead of getting more political to fight for their fair share, their reaction is to become turned off by the political process altogether, saying it has nothing for us. Actually, it is a great reason why they should engage and be voting and participating. The challenge for us as politicians is to directly speak to them as a group and directly address their interests.

BD: **Why do you think that young people have not spoken out as a group about issues that affect them?**

DW: I have been struck by the absence of a structured group saying "we represent the younger generation, we want to organise and ask for X, or, Y, or Z." There could be any number of reasons behind this: new, liberal attitudes; they are more individualistic; they do not see these issues as about generations as a whole. There are some countries where the whole movement for generational fairness is getting a higher profile in politics than here. I think that moment will come here in Britain.

That this generational analysis is trying to create generational warfare is quite wrong. It is the opposite; it is actually trying to remind people of the obligations that we have to different generations.

BD: It has been a few years since you published your book. Do you think generational analysis will continue to remain relevant in the years ahead?

DW: I do. The book came out three years ago and it is still being referred to. I think the arguments about the importance of looking at policy through a generational frame have now entered the political debate. I know within my party we are aware of the anxiety that many people have around how much tougher it is for the younger generations than it was for us as baby boomers.

If you ask people, are you confident that your kids are going to enjoy the same amount of social mobility, the same quality of housing as you have had, they're not at all sure about that – indeed they are anxious. What I most dislike however is the demonising of the younger generation. I do not believe that our current situation is anyone's fault and I think that generational analysis will continue to be incredibly politically and emotionally powerful and will be more and more significant in politics.

BD: Has the thinking in *The Pinch* formed your approach to the policy while you have been in government? And vice-versa, given your time in government and what you now know, are there points in *The Pinch*, which you would modify or moderate?

DW: Good question. The author of *The Pinch* does not like the way that we increasingly think of people from different age groups as a threat to each other and the age segregation of

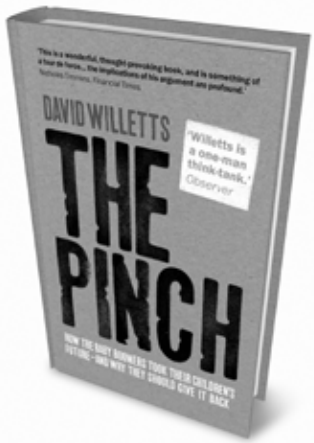
society, which starts very young. Even, for example, keeping two year olds separate from four year olds in nurseries. It is very hard to get people to be a bit more relaxed about intergenerational communication and engage in contact. When you look at some of the problems we have in Britain especially for teenagers, the concentration on their peers and their limited contact with people outside their own age group is an appalling social problem. We need better intergenerational links. At far too young an age British teenagers become dependent on and find greater connection with their peers and have less contact with adults than appears to be the case in some other European countries. Britain is near the bottom of the international league table for teenage girls who find it easy to talk to their mother.

Doing something about it is quite hard because the moment something terrible happens and there is some instance of abuse, anything that makes it easier for generations to mix is denounced. It is a very hard policy in practice.

BD: Yes indeed. Are there any specific areas of policy that have been altered by your thinking in *The Pinch*?

DW: What does the author of *The Pinch* think of the policies of the Minister for Universities? *The Pinch* did inform my thinking around higher education reform. First, on entering government what I did not want to see was a reduction in the resources going to educate people at university, even though public spending was so tight. Those at university are entitled to have a high quality university education, and I did not want a reduction in the numbers

Those at university are entitled to have a high quality university education, and I did not want a reduction in the numbers of people who are able to take up higher education.



of people who are able to take up higher education. So, I believed then and still believe now that the best way of saving public expenditure without reducing the resource or the numbers was to expect graduates to pay back more - not students but graduates - through PAYE.

Looking at how the old system worked the repayments were front-end loaded so that graduates were paying back in their 20s or early 30s. After that, they were then unlikely to be repaying. That imposed an extra cost on graduates at a time of their life when they were already under major pressure. So it was a deliberate feature of our reforms that we raised the payment threshold for going to university to reduce the monthly amount graduates have to pay back. Obviously, that means that graduates are paying back for longer.

I know that critics say some people will be paying back for 30 years. Nevertheless, it was a deliberate feature of our reforms to stretch it out over the life cycle rather front-end early on in their 20's and early 30's. That was, for example, aimed at helping young people get a mortgage because building societies and banks look at monthly outgoings.

Repayments are determined by the amount you earn, not the amount you borrowed. Under our new system, monthly repayments are calculated by working out 9% of your income over £21,000, and dividing that figure by 12. If you are earning £25,000, you pay back 9% of earnings over £21,000 - about £4,000 - and that is £360 a year or £30 a month. However, under the old system, if you were earning £25,000 you would be paying back 9% of earnings over £15,000 - and you would be paying back £900 a year or £75 a month. We

The Pinch did inform my thinking around higher education reform.

have actually lowered monthly outgoings for graduates.

I know the reforms were controversial when they came out but I think it is now accepted. I do think that *The Pinch* did inform the university finance changes that we brought in and I think people have come to recognise that the university reforms were not as bad as some of them feared.

BD: And finally, is there anything you would have changed about *The Pinch*, knowing what you know now from the realities of your time in office?

DW: It is just worth saying that some people have commented on my analysis in the book of young people and the fact that there are these moments of turmoil. When society has a surge in the number of young people, there is then a moment of particular turbulence and I drew attention to this pattern. We had a birth rate boom in 1947 and 20 years on, there were the Garden House Riots[12]. You have the second peak in 1964 and 20 years on there were the Council Tax Riots[13]. It has been pointed out that the third highest peak in the birth rate, was in 1992 and 20 years on we had the riots of the summer of 2012. That was a pattern that I drew attention to, which does seem to be maintained. I think actually, I could have risked a bolder forecast!

BD: Thank you very much for your time.

Biography

The Rt Hon David Willetts MP was appointed Minister for Universities and Science in May 2010. He is the Conservative MP for Havant in Hampshire. Mr Willetts began his career in Parliament as the MP for Havant in 1992. He served as Paymaster General and then in the Shadow Cabinet in a range of roles, including Shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Shadow Secretary for Education and Skills, and Shadow Secretary for Innovation, Universities and Skills. He has also worked at HM Treasury and in the Number 10 Policy Unit. Mr Willetts was a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, is a governor of the Ditchley Foundation and a member of the Council of the Institute for Fiscal Studies. He has written widely on economic and social policy. In 2011, he published a book, *The Pinch: How the Baby Boomers Took Their Children's Future and Why They Should Give it Back.*

Why bother with generational analysis?

What are the benefits of analysing societies by the generations within them?

 Ed Howker

 Shiv Malik

Is there any benefit to analysing societies by the generations within them? There are certainly those who doubt it and they emerge from the strangest places. Both our book *Jilted Generation* and *The Pinch* by conservative thinker (and higher education minister) Rt Hon David Willetts MP, sought to highlight the wretched position of generation Y - Britain's youngest adult cohort - but strong objections have been raised.

SAGA, the National Pensioners Convention, and Age UK have all raised the same kind of objections: that generational analysis is "divisive", "unhelpful" or even "dangerous" and stokes social unrest, even while these same bodies seek to represent the interests of a single generation - retirees - in their own work with apparent equanimity.

There is a second criticism - made by no less redoubtable figure than Melanie Phillips - that generational analysis is too general to be useful and "does scant justice to the complexities of reality".

Finally, as both Dot Gibson of the NPC and Owen Jones of *The Independent* have repeatedly said "the real division in our society is between rich and poor". We are an unhelpful distraction.

To all these learned objections, we politely say "phooey".

In recent times, long strides have been made in the application of generational analysis. Contrary to the claims of pensioner campaigners, this work has not talked up a "civil war" between young and old; far from hiding complexity, the work has revealed it - which may be why Britain's die-hard class warriors object to it so passionately.

In truth, this kind of research is not new. In fact, the authors' sneaking suspicion is that generational insights often lie behind great leaps forward in social research. Mark Abrahms, Labour's innovative pollster and the father of social research, made his first profound discovery in *The Teenage Consumer* (1959). In 1960s America, Daniel Yankelovich attempted to answer the question: "Why won't baby-boomers buy life insurance?" and, in so doing, discovered that this new generation had a different value system to the one which proceeded it. By deducing the importance that this new generation placed on self-expression, Yankelovich helped reshape consumer society completely.

But what insights have been gleaned from the new wave of generational analysis? For one thing, it tells us something interesting about inequality. Take the Left's shibboleth about the division between "rich and poor". Generational analysis adds another layer. In July 2013, the Office of National Statistics reported findings that between 2010 and 2012:

After all taxes and benefits are taken into account, the ratio between the average incomes of the top and the bottom fifth of households (£57,300 per year and £15,800 respectively) is reduced to four-to-one.

As often happens during a period of slow growth, inequality has actually fallen recently. One reason why it might not feel that way in the UK is offered, however, by generational analysis. When you examine wage differentials between the cohorts over a similar period, you find, not a decline, but a dramatic rise.

Between 2008 and 2012, for example, the median income for those in their 20s fell by 12 per cent while it rose for pensioners. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies said:

Individuals aged 60 or above are the only age group not to see real falls in median income since the recession.

Crudely put, it is not the rich who are getting richer so much as the old who are getting richer while the young are getting poorer. If nothing else, this tells policy-makers in which directions they should focus their attention.

Generational analysis also offers a new way of examining the effects of policies. By looking at cohorts as they age, and by examining longevity, we're able to take a long view.

Too rarely are policies analysed for their effect on generations over time. The former Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, calls it the paradox of policy because almost any policy measure that is desirable now appears diametrically opposite to the direction in which we need to go in the long term.

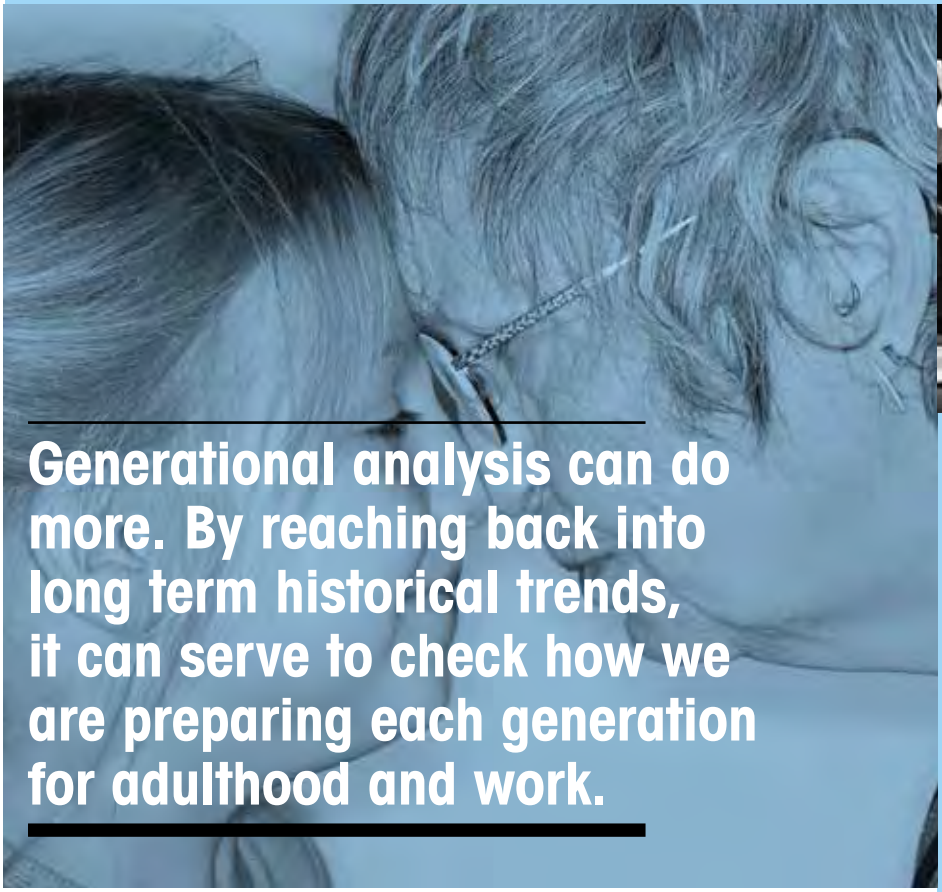
Too rarely are policies analysed for their effect on generations over time. The former Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, calls it the paradox of policy because almost any policy measure that is desirable now appears diametrically opposite to the direction in which we need to go in the long term.

But when examining their effects through generations, it is impossible to miss the paradox.

For example, much of 21st century state activity on the issue of inequality has manifested in the form of transfer payments; benefits and tax credits which, under Chancellor Brown, were embedded high up the income scale and produced rapid short-term improvements in standards of living. But if the same problems were analysed through a generational lens, would this activity seem so attractive?

Take housing policy. Today, Britain pays out 40 per cent of the housing benefit bill - £35bn - to private landlords who represent a costly deal for taxpayers, who become part-renters and not the owners of social housing assets. But the generational lens shows that this poor deal is worse than it looks since the elderly tend to be clustered in social housing and are living longer than ever while the young are clustered in private rented accommodation, some waiting decades on council housing lists.

Housing benefits, as currently configured, certainly house low-income groups effectively but because they address only low-incomes and not the differing effects of low incomes for different generations, they produce a negative effect. In this case, creating a dead weight cost for the exchequer which will only grow heavier as both the



Biographies

Ed Howker produces *Channel 4 Dispatches* investigations and contributes regularly to *The Guardian* and a clutch of other national publications.

Shiv Malik is a reporter for The Guardian who started his career at the *New Statesman* and has written for *The Sunday Times* and *Prospect* magazine.

In 2010, Ed and Shiv wrote the bestselling book *Jilted Generation: How Britain has bankrupted its youth* and they co-founded the think tank, the Intergenerational Foundation. They regularly lecture and broadcast about generational issues and have appeared at the Sydney Opera House and the London School of Economics. In 2013, they prepared a new edition of *Jilted Generation,* which includes an assessment of the coalition government's approach to Britain's youngest adults. Published on 5 September, it was *The Times*' 'paperback of the week'.

Generational analysis can do more. By reaching back into long term historical trends, it can serve to check how we are preparing each generation for adulthood and work.

proportion and total amount of housing benefits paid to private landlords rises.

And what applies to housing benefits, applies across the board. Do high house prices, driven up by chronic undersupply, have a generational aspect? Surely they do, since home-owning older generations enjoy the asset growth while younger generations are priced-out with inevitable effects on couple-formation. What about employment policies? Some unemployed cohorts are likely to threaten GDP growth more than others. Unemployment becomes more costly the younger you are since the effects on income and skill growth are more long-lasting. Perhaps they should be more effectively targeted?

Generational analysis can do more. By reaching back into long term historical trends, it can serve to check how we are preparing each generation for adulthood and work. That living standards have fallen, for the first time in modern history, for generation Y is a grave problem, for example, and not one that elementary income analysis reveals.

But the value of generational analysis is not confined to economics. The ground-breaking work of Bobby Duffy and colleagues at Ipsos MORI reveals, not just that social attitudes shift over time, but that they are consistently distinct for each new generation.

Recently, this work has begun to offer concrete attitudinal insights which help explain the burgeoning and unexpected support for Conservative positions on welfare by the younger generation and, in the months to come, promises many more.

Work of this kind is already in full swing in the US. Democrats, for example, could be confident in supporting gay marriage amendments because so many of the younger generation were in favour. The congressmen were on the right side of voter's attitudinal trends. Put another way, they were on the side of history. And, in short, that is the prize that generational analysis offers us all.

Ageing: Opportunities and challenges

An interview with Michelle Mitchell, outgoing Charity Director General for Age UK

Bobby Duffy

BD: This edition of *Understanding Society* is focused on our analysis of the generations that make up our society – pre-war, baby boomers, generation X and generation Y. Do you recognise the picture our analysis paints, particularly of the older generations?

MM: Much of what is presented reaffirms what I thought I knew. First, there is declining support for major aspects of welfare as you go down the generations. Second, when you were born really is significant in shaping your attitudes. The pre-war generation has a strong collectivist attitude, which is to be expected given the experiences people had before and during the War and with the NHS establishment.

Third, this research raises questions as to whether the contributory-based welfare system is understood by everyone. For many older people, there is a strongly held belief that there is a social contract, they have paid into the welfare system and it is only right that they are able to draw out. That sense of contribution seems not to be the case with younger people – an obvious difference.

BD: One interesting pattern is that there continues to be widespread support for help for older people from people across all the generations. This somewhat goes against the idea of there being intergenerational conflict. What is your view?

MM: I would fundamentally challenge whether there is a raging debate about intergenerational conflict. I think there are several debates, one of which is fuelled by the media looking for a news story. There are serious and fundamental issues about the opportunities that younger people have now and the need for us to address them as a society and as an economy. That absolutely should be a political priority for all of the parties. However, we should not automatically conclude that the issue is between young and old.

This is partly to do with the macro presentation of an ageing society. Older people are presented as a burden on society and a draw on our resources. Much of the media commentary is framed in that way. The headlines are about the extent to which it is unfair for older generations to take up so much resource and the impact this has on younger people.

Thinking about the micro, when people think about ageing and older people they think about their parents and their grandparents and tend not to see the unfairness written about in the media. Our own polling shows that people across all age groups now see the treatment of older people in society as an issue. They want collective action to address that. As I know you have seen in other policy areas, people seem to hold two different, conflicting views at the same time.

BD: We recently completed a study for Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust[14] on intergenerational justice. One of the findings that work showed was that all generations thought it was going to be toughest for the generation coming through now, generation Y. But at the same time, there was a clear fear of growing old in this country. That may explain why, while people have a lot of sympathy for the young, they do not particularly want to give much up themselves. Do you agree?

MM: Yes. One of the big differences between age and many other equality issues is we are all hopefully going to get older! But people do not necessarily want to self-identify in terms of age. There will be many other things, husband, wife, grandmother and football supporter but not age.

There is also a quite high degree of empathy with what is a very difficult life for many older people. There are substantial inequalities amongst the older population. 1.6 million pensioners (14%) live below the poverty line while 1.1 million older people live on incomes just above[15]. If you look at the 51 to 55 age group, it has the highest levels of median net income but with the greatest inequality. The median wealth is highest for the age group 55 to 64 – but the top 10% within this age group have £1.3 million on average, the bottom 10% have £28,000 or less[16]. There are massive, massive differences, which do not come through in much of the media commentary but are much more in line with people's experiences.

BD:The House of Lords report *Ready for Ageing* published earlier this year says it does not seem fair to expect

today's younger taxpayers - especially those not born to better-off parents - to pay more for the increased costs of an older society while asset-rich older people (and their children) are protected.[17] Do you think it is getting more difficult over time to maintain that idea that we are all in this together across generations?

MM: Well, yes I do – but there can be problems with this type of analysis, and in particular its assumption that nothing else changes. For example, a recent report from the Office for Budget Responsibility looking at the fiscal challenges of an ageing population assumed that nothing changes in policy for the next 50 years[18]. One thing that we can be certain of in public policy terms is things are going to change!

Over the last 10 to 15 years, we have made a number of steps to better equip ourselves for an ageing society, one of which is working longer; the state pension age is already being increased to 67 for men and women by 2028, and to 68 by 2046. This is one way to change policy to even out some of the costs of an ageing population.

But there are still big question marks - the biggest being our healthcare system. We know the NHS is held very dearly in people's hearts across the generations and particularly the notion of an NHS free at the point of need.[19] Nevertheless, we have to look at ways of delivering higher quality care at a significantly lower cost.

There has to be a massive shift from the provision of acute care, largely in hospitals, to community care in people's homes and communities to bring down the costs. Currently we are not thinking strategically enough as an economy, as a society and as individuals about how to approach this.

One thing that we can be certain of in public policy terms is things are going to change!

BD: Are there any other major policy developments, which you see as changing that context?

MM: Governments in recent years have made two other important policy changes. First, pension auto-enrolment. By changing the default positions and employing a behavioural change technique, we ensure those people who want to and do not opt out have a second pension, which begins to address saving for retirement, particularly for people in low-modest incomes. The second of course is looking at social care and trying to develop an insurance-based product to deal with the funding gap.

BD: Our analysis highlights some big political differences between the generations, in particular attachment to political parties and propensity to vote. Commentators have argued that this leads to policy-makers and politicians maintaining some expensive policies such as protecting free bus passes, the 'triple lock' on pensions. Do you think politicians make that calculation?

MM: Older people are a growing proportion of the population. They disproportionately turn up to vote. They are also more likely, historically, to stay with the party once they have voted for them and undoubtedly, have a significant electoral weight. However, people do not choose which party to vote for based on their age. As with other parts of the population, there are a number of different ties including class, background, policies and leadership.

Politicians are aware of the numbers though; they would not be politicians if they were not.

It is also important to see that no matter who has the greater propensity to vote, there has been an overwhelming case for reform of policy on issues affecting older people. For example, in 1997, two million pensioners were in poverty and all the parties agreed that something drastic needed to happen. Secondly, there were several years where we saw the social care system really begin to crumble due to lack of resource.

BD: True, but we saw such a reaction around the changes in age-related personal allowances – the granny tax - in the 2012 Budget and how careful politicians were to steer away from that.

MM: There is a lively debate across the parties about what people see as symbolic policies and bus passes have come to symbolise the discussion. One of the important factors at play here is the principle of support for universal benefit. Should services be means tested and if so, is that operationally possible and at what cost?

Amongst older people themselves, there are significant differences of views about whether there should be universal benefits. My starting question is, is this a debate about what size of slice different groups or generations should get from an ever-shrinking cake? Or is it a debate about how to grow the economy and address some of the fundamental issues to give people opportunities to lead the lives that they want?

There is a lively debate across the parties about what people see as symbolic policies and bus passes have come to symbolise the discussion.

BD: The pre-war generation is drifting away from the traditional main parties, partly to UKIP, but also to becoming undecided[20]. No other generation is doing that to quite the same extent – why do you think that is? Given the parties seem to be doing all they can not to offend older people it seems odd. Perhaps, none of the parties is convincing older people?

MM: What will be interesting is to see is whether the shift towards UKIP is a lasting trend or is it a blip prior to the general election and just a sign of the current political times. The pre-war generation are beginning to develop the same types of criticism and cynicism with politics as younger generations have - including criticisms about leadership, policies and whether the parties are listening to them, and also the extent to which their vote is being taken for granted or not. Any political party would be incredibly unwise to assume the 65+ vote at the next election.

The issues most important to those who are 65 years old and over are the economy and race and immigration, and then health and unemployment[21]. So not just issues important to their generation, but also the opportunities their children and their grandchildren will have.

BD: Why do you think the pre-war generation might be becoming more undecided in their voting intention?

MM: I would not underestimate the degree to which older people feel that the country is not what it was. If I can generalise for a whole group, they want to see strong leadership and despite the rhetoric about older people never having it so good, their lives often do not seem to reflect that. For example, it is one of the worst times in many years to buy an annuity. So for some their income is not as strong as perhaps it could have been. People across all classes are very worried about health and the quality of essential care for when you are an older person. Perhaps it is this combination of factors coming together. Perhaps they are being a bit more assertive about needing to know that senior people in political parties understand their lives.

BD: Does an ageing population bring opportunities as well as challenges?

MM: Well the alternative is we all die at a younger age! The things that historically would have killed us off - the heart disease, the heart attacks, cancer - people are living through, and that has to be a good thing.

Older people are at the heart of family life, volunteering, working, contributing. We did a survey recently with Grandparents Plus, which showed that the childcare provided by grandparents is now worth up to £7.3 billion a year.[22] There is also a massive benefit around the value of older workers in driving economic growth. It is not a one-in-one-out economy. There are the skills, experience and knowledge older people bring as well as the economic contribution older people can make and many want to make.

When you look at intergenerational projects, the biggest thing that makes a difference to how a person views older people is whether they are in regular contact with an older person. Age UK has run many projects to bring generations together up and down the country. We run a big project with Youth Net on combating social exclusion for older people.

Nevertheless, we are already seeing young adults staying at home a lot longer and maybe we will see in greater numbers the emergence of larger families again. What all the social scientists tell you, and I would absolutely endorse this, is that we are going through a major social change. The policy-makers are 20 years behind in terms of the innovations in public policy that we require.

We have to begin to rethink fundamentally, not only how families work and how they cope with four generations or five generations together, but also the types of investments needed at critical points to enable people to stay fit, active and healthy longer.

When you look at inter-generational projects, the biggest thing that makes a difference to how a person views older people is whether they are in regular contact with an older person.

BD: Use of collective voice has been very effective for older groups. What is the mechanism to bring generation Y together when there are perhaps cultural reasons for their greater individualisation and they have less group memory of collectivism?

MM: The thing that surprised me is that, as a cohort, generation Y do not appear to be organising themselves, presenting a strong voice for the issues that affect them and putting political pressure on the parties to respond with a policy programme to improve their lives. They could potentially learn from the power of a collective voice.

The seeds for that activism and agitation are there; it is not to say younger people are not political, they are. They actively participate in interest groups, they organise extremely effectively through digital networks and communications. Perhaps the critical question is how can older people work with younger people to ensure they are getting support and the type of response that they believe younger people should be getting.

I speak to many older people every day; I have never heard any of them saying younger people are getting too much from society. There is a great sense of empathy and concern with the situation that many younger people are facing.

BD: With increasing life expectancy, we are likely to see big shifts in older people's engagement with the labour market. You have talked about how difficult it is for older people who are fit and able to find work and make the right contribution to society. What do we need to put in place to get the most from older people?

MM: Employers have a major job to train and develop age-diverse workforces. Legislation is quite helpful in changing cultural practice and giving legal rights. An age-diverse workforce is

critical but I do think there is an overwhelming issue about age discrimination, which still exists despite the legislation. Moreover, once an older person has lost their job it is harder for them than someone in any other age group to get back into work. Mystery shopping shows that older people find it hard to get their foot through the door.

There is a strong business case to bring in older employees. Age UK works with organisations who understand the benefits of an older worker to devise effective age diverse policies. We also need to see quite a shift in attitudes. It can be that those attitudes that discriminate against a potential older person are often subconscious; people do not really know why they do it or that they really hold those beliefs.

BD: One of the most intractable problems we have researched is the future of social care. From the options you have seen, is there anything you think we absolutely need to do – or need not to do?

MM: First, the great fear is that the Dilnot recommendations will be so complex they will be difficult to implement effectively. They have to be able to stand up to the test of being understandable and clear.

Second, there is the important issue of where the extra money to fund the care system is coming from and the funding proposed for social care even with the extra money is nowhere near keeping up with demand. We have to fund the system at a level that delivers the policy objectives, and now it is unclear whether we will achieve that.

Third, the insurance markets need certainty about future policy. I think the insurers are highly sceptical about whether insurance products will come into play.

So good progress made - but we have to see what some of the outcomes are and whether they really stand up to the tests we have set ourselves.

BD: So you are about to leave Age UK. Is there anything that you have done during your time there that you are particularly proud of?

MM: I am really proud about the introduction of state pension 'triple lock' guarantee and prior to that pension credit which saw 1.8 million pensioners lifted out of poverty. Age UK played a critical role in that. The introduction of age discrimination legislation and the fact that the default retirement age in the UK has been fully abolished. Some of these changes were the tipping point for broader changes in attitudes and values towards older people. More recently I am proud of the work we've done to highlight the issues around essential care, dignity and compassionate care in the health service which we've seen as a growing problem for the last nine years. In the last two to three years, people have taken us seriously there.

BD: Anything you wish you had done and you are perhaps hoping your successor will tackle?

MM: I would have liked to shift the debate particularly in the media from being about ageing, deficit and older people to one about ageing, opportunity and older people - from the negative to the positive.

BD: A nice challenge for your successor to get their teeth into! Thank you

Biography

At the time of interview Michelle Mitchell was Charity Director General for Age UK. Michelle had overall responsibility for Age UK's domestic charitable work, including external affairs, research and Age UK's charitable service delivery and development.

Michelle was previously Communications Director for Age Concern England and Chair of the Fawcett Society (2005-2008). Michelle has a BA in Economics, MA in Politics and Administration, an International Executive Diploma from INSEAD and has completed the Innovations in Government Programme at Harvard University JFK School. She is currently a trustee of Platform 51, a charity that supports girls and women and promotes equality. Michelle has now started in a new role as Chief Executive of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Generation Y: The independence generation?

Polling shows that young people in Scotland are consistently more supportive of independence. Why is this and does it signify an 'independence generation'?

Christopher McLean

One of the consistent themes emerging from our polling of public attitudes to independence in Scotland is that younger people say they are more likely to vote 'Yes' in next year's referendum than those in older age groups.

The views of younger people can be difficult to pin down, as they are still forming their opinions and are more likely than their elders to say they may change their mind. We therefore tend to see greater fluctuations in how they say they will vote. However, combining the five most recent waves of our Scottish Public Opinion Monitor gives us a sample of over 5,000 Scottish adults who have taken part in our polls over the last year – providing a larger and more stable base for analysis across the generations.

From this we can see that those in generation Y are more likely than older generations to say they will vote 'Yes' in the referendum (42%). Voters in generation X and baby boomers are very similar to each other in their attitudes towards independence, with 35% and 36% respectively intending to vote 'Yes'. Support for independence is lowest among the pre-war generation, with only 24% intending to vote 'Yes'.

And our analysis suggests that differences in feelings of national identity between the generations could be key explaining these varying attitudes to independence.

Using the Moreno national identity scale[23], our polls suggest that there is a weakening of British identity and strengthening of Scottish identity as we pass through the generations. Those in the pre-war generation are the most likely to consider themselves as being at least equally British as Scottish (51%). As we move through the baby boomers and generation X, we find that they are

Figure NINE.

"Should Scotland be an independent country?" (%)

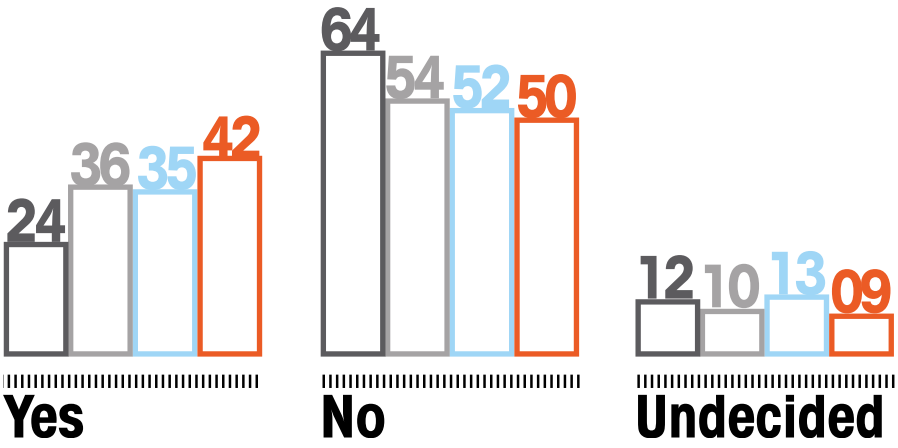
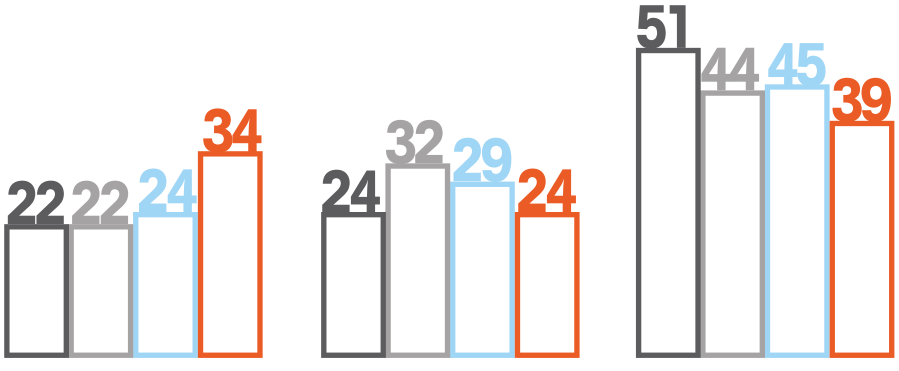


Figure TEN.

"Which of the following best describes your national identity?" (%)



Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

more likely than other generations to describe themselves as more Scottish than British (29% and 32% respectively). When we get to generation Y, we see a further shift in feelings of national identity, with one in three having a purely Scottish identity (34% describe themselves as Scottish not British).

But is this evidence of a generational shift towards a stronger Scottish identity or is attachment to a dual identity something that increases with age? That is, will this youngest generation grow to look more like cohorts that have come before them? Longer-term analysis of data from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey suggests there may well be something different about this current youngest generation, figure eleven shows.

The three oldest generations have shown consistent declines in feeling "Scottish, not British" and are now pretty much in line with each other. In contrast, generation Y have broken away in the last couple of surveys, and now stand quite distinct from older generations. Of course, this is a short timeframe to see true generational shifts, and we need to be cautious about definitively saying this generation are different: back in the late 1990s, generation X were also most likely to feel "Scottish, not British" but have since come into line with older generations. However, the scale of the difference is greater for generation Y and is working against the general change in attitudes seen in other generations.

There are also good reasons to think the current youngest cohort could be different. In particular, unlike previous generations, generation Y have grown up voting in both Holyrood and Westminster elections where nationalist politics have been a significant part of the political agenda.

What does this mean for the referendum and the independence movement more generally? The stronger attachment to a British identity among older generations, alongside their electoral significance given their higher turnout, increases the likelihood of a 'No' vote in next year's referendum. However, if those in generation Y do maintain a stronger or exclusively Scottish identity, we may see a greater desire for independence in the future.

Generation Y may not turn out to be the 'independence generation' in 2014, but they could mark a significant turning point.

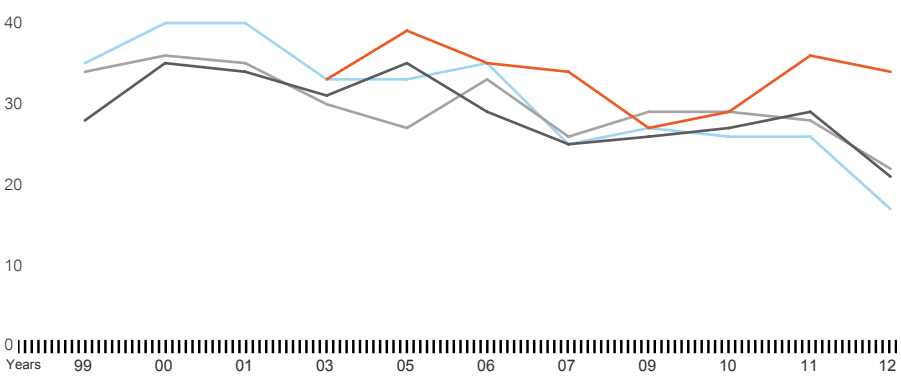
Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

Generation Y may not turn out to be the 'independence generation' in 2014, but they could mark a significant turning point.

Figure ELEVEN.

"Scottish, not British" by generation (agree %)



Age or generation?

What can the Ipsos MORI Issues Index tell us about the way political views are formed and changed?

Professor Roger Mortimore

Among the questions that have formed the backbone of our monthly polling since the earliest days, perhaps the most intriguing and most versatile are the two questions that ask our respondents to say what they think is the most important issue facing the country, and what other issues are important. These days this survey is known as the Ipsos MORI Issues Index.

These questions are particularly well suited to generational analysis. They tap into attitudes and instincts, which we might expect to be far more stable than purely political questions such as voting intention, which are naturally much affected by short-term factors. In addition, because we are measuring priorities rather than one-off attitudes, the patterns may have much to tell us about the way political views are formed and changed.

Aggregating our Issues Index data since 1996 gives a data set containing more than half a million interviews, all conducted face-to-face in British residents' homes. The form of the questions and the way they are asked have remained unchanged throughout that period (and, indeed, since we first started asking the Issues questions in the 1970s). All the answers are unprompted – in other words, we do not show respondents a list of possible issues that might risk biasing their answers or fitting them to our pre-conceived ideas. Only the interviewers see the list, which they use to categorise the answers into one of a number of categories (and if the answer does not fit any of the existing categories, as tends to be true of between 5% and 10%, it is recorded verbatim so we can analyse it later and if necessary add new categories in future surveys).

We currently track the frequency with which almost forty issues are cited, so we have a huge body of data to analyse in the coming months. However, to offer a taste of what the data can show, we will compare age differences with generational differences for two important issues.

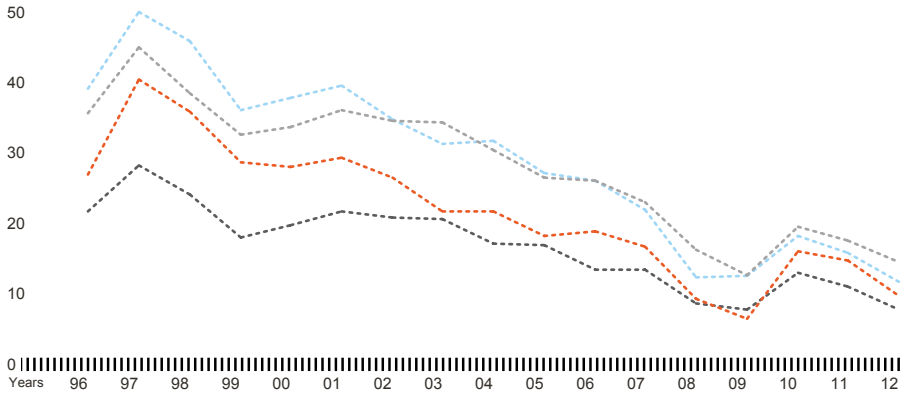
In the charts shown here, we have combined two sets of lines. The solid lines look at the changing answers of each generation to the Issues Index questions in each year since 1996. These lines therefore represents exactly the same group of people except for those who have died, a few who have come to or left the country and (in the youngest generation) the successive inclusion of each new cohort of 18-year olds.

However, on the same graphs, we also look at the opinions of four age groups (the dotted lines). We have defined these so that at the halfway point in the timescale, 2004, each age group coincides with one of the generations. For example, the second age band is aged 25 to 38, which is the ages between which members of generation X fell in 2004. This analysis will allow us to distinguish between the influence of age and generation, if there is any distinction to be made, and to see which of our policy concerns is a reflection of our life stage and which is a reflection of the generation into which we are born.

Let us look first at those naming "education/schools" as one of the most important issues facing the country. This trend turns out to offer a

Figure TWELVE.

"What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?" (Education/schools %)



textbook example of the distinction we wish to draw.

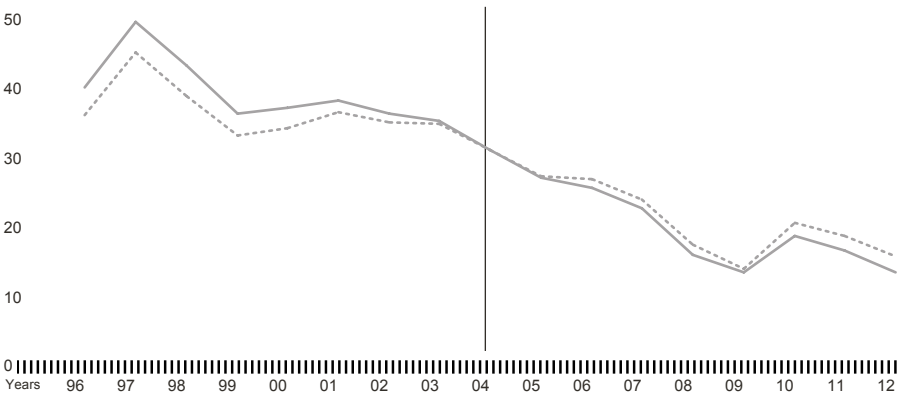
As nobody will be surprised to hear, education is an issue whose perceived importance is strongly tied to age – since parents of school-age children are both more aware of the details of the issue and have more to gain or lose from how well it is handled, they tend to be more concerned about it than either the old or the young. This has been consistently true since 1996, those aged 25-59 always placing a higher priority on the issue than those who are either older or younger. The overall salience of the issue has been in steady decline since 1997 (when Tony Blair made "education, education, education" the focus of his first successful election campaign), so from 2010 onwards the age gap has been much narrower than previously, but the pattern remains.

Now let's compare age with generation. To make it easier to see what is going on, figure thirteen looks at just one of the age groups, the 39-to-59 year olds, and the corresponding generation, the baby boomers: the solid line shows the opinions of the generation, the dotted line the opinions of the age group. In 2004, these two groups are the same people; before 2004, the baby boomers are younger, some not yet having reached their 39th birthday, after 2004 they are all at least 40 and some have moved into their sixties. The generation line starts well above the age line, but the gap gradually narrows; after they converge briefly at the point where the two lines represent exactly the same people, the generation line falls below and remains below the age line for the rest of the period. In other words, when the baby boomers as a whole were younger than 39-59, they were more concerned about education than 39-59 year olds; as they became older than 39-59, and their children increasingly left education, it was less of a priority to them.

This on its own might be ambiguous. However, while the baby boomers start by being more concerned about education than the age group and end by being less concerned, exactly the opposite is true of the next cohort in line, generation X. In 1996, generation X were still in their teens and twenties, and much less concerned about education than the 25-38 year old age group, which included a much higher proportion of parents with school-age children concentrated towards the upper end of the age range.

Figure THIRTEEN.

"What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?" (Education/schools %)



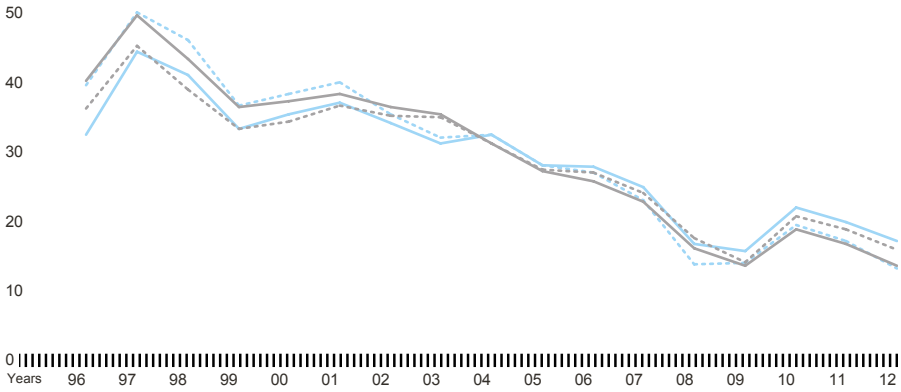
Education is an issue whose perceived importance is strongly tied to age – since parents of school-age children are both more aware of the details of the issue and have more to gain or lose from how well it is handled, they tend to be more concerned about it than either the old or the young.

Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)
- Age 60+
- Age 39 - 59
- Age 25 - 38
- Age 18 - 24

Figure FOURTEEN.

"What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?" (Education/schools %)



As they got older, generation X moved into and past that age band, so that by 2012 they are all aged 33-and-upwards, and their concern about education grew too, ending higher than that of the age group. In fact, as figure fourteen shows, the two generations' lines also cross: baby boomers were more concerned up to 2004-5, since then it is generation X who are more concerned. Very clearly, the driving factor here is age: the proportion of a generation concerned about education rises (compared with the overall trend) as they reach the late 30s and falls away again from their late 40s.

With this cleared out of the way, however, we can note another finding of interest. Up to 2005, it was the 25-38 year olds whose concern about education was highest; for the past few years, however, it has been the 39-59 year olds. We can see that this is not a generational effect. Something else has occurred to change the nature of concern about education. Is it something to do with parents being older as people increasingly delay starting families?[24] Or, has the focus of worry shifted from nursery and primary education towards secondary education and universities, so that it is being felt by those with older children? Remembering that this has happened in the context of a generally falling trend, it may be a matter of one particular concern having become less salient than of anything being more of a worry. Whatever the explanation, it is clear that there may be much to be learned from further investigation of the age patterns in concern about education.

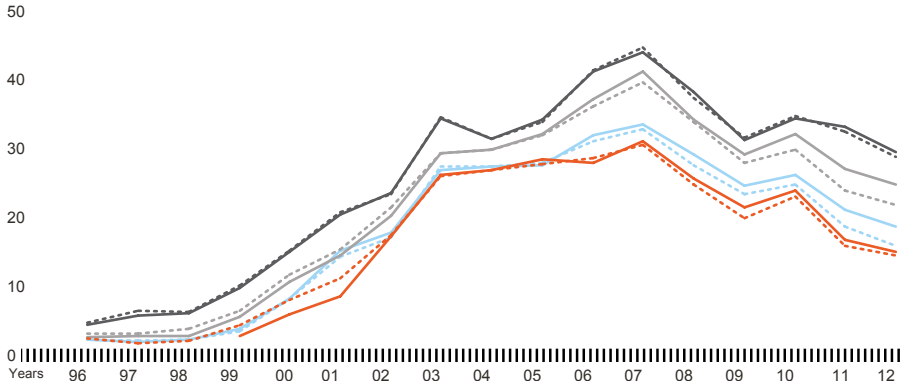
By way of contrast, let's look at an issue where there is a strong suspicion of a generational effect, "race relations/immigration/immigrants". This is an issue where the numbers expressing concern have always been higher among older age groups. There is no obvious reason why ageing should increase anybody's concern about immigration. On the other hand, since the size of the ethnic minority population in Britain has grown in the last few

Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)
- Age 60+
- Age 39 - 59
- Age 25 - 38
- Age 18 - 24

Figure FIFTEEN.

"What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?" (Race relations/immigration/immigrants %)



decades, older people were brought up in a period when there were fewer immigrants and Britain was less racially diverse than it is now. If, as seems probable, this experience is one of the factors that explains higher concern about or opposition to immigration, then we have a classic recipe for a generational difference in attitudes.

In figure fifteen, the lines for the oldest (60+) age group and the pre-war generation are barely distinguishable. Even as death begins to take its toll on the pre-war group and the older baby boomers make up an increasing proportion of the 60+ band, nothing much is changing. Further down the chart, each of the lines for the three younger generations has begun to move above its age group line in the last few years. This means that each of these age groups is steadily becoming less relatively concerned about race and immigration as it begins to absorb members of a younger generation for whom this is less of a natural issue.

This process could easily be obscured by the overall upward trend in concern: even with its falling back since 2007, as economic worries have started to squeeze out other issues as top-of-mind concerns, the numbers in each age group and each generation naming race or immigration as an important issue are far higher than in the mid-90s. In fact, the level of concern in generation Y is now more than three times as high as the level for the pre-war group in 1996. But the generational differences are also much clearer than they were then, and there can be no real doubt that but for these generational differences, the level of concern expressed on this issue would be even higher than it is. The proportion of the population that is particularly attuned to these concerns is falling, not through social-attitudinal change, but partly because it is beginning to die out. Nevertheless, the impact of these generationally formed attitudes is clearly small by comparison with the impact of external political factors and other causes of racial tension: our background and past experience has some influence on us, but our attitudes are being modified all the time.

So just as we "see" a gale by the bending of the trees even though we cannot see the wind itself, the great advantage of this generational analysis is that it allows us to see the forces that shape public opinion over time.

An age of change

An overview of Ipsos MORI's major programme of work on generational differences, and the implications for public policy and politics.

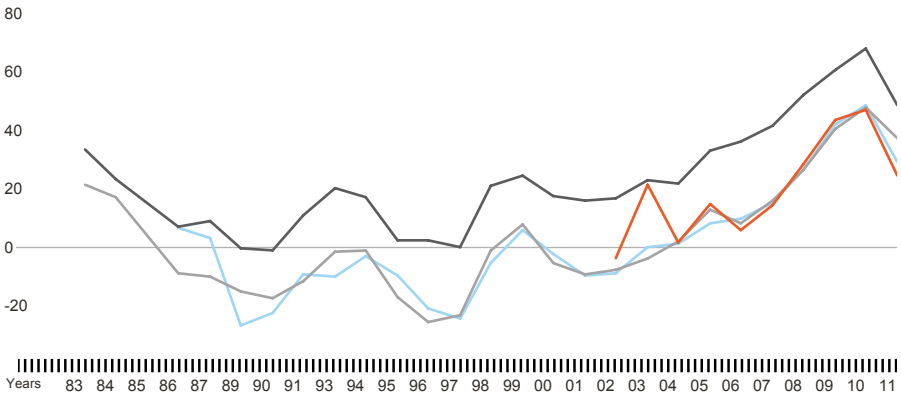
 Bobby Dufffy

 Michael Clemence

The study of generation X, generation Y, the baby boomers and the pre-war generation has been a major piece of work for Ipsos MORI throughout 2013, involving people from across our organisation. We have put together a microsite (www.ipsos-mori-generations.com) to house the different topics we have considered. Here are some extracts of that work.

Figure SIXTEEN.

"How satisfied or dissatisfied would you say you are with the way in which the National Health Service runs nowadays?"(Net satisfied %)



How satisfied are we with the NHS?

One of the recurring themes of our generational analysis is how frequently the pre-war generation stands out as different from other generations – and this is the case with satisfaction with the NHS, as the chart above shows.

The generations follow a similar trend – there are undulations in the 1980s and 1990s and then a sustained increase in satisfaction across each generation in the 2000s (as health service funding increased). Most recently, there has been a significant decline in the 2011 survey – although it is worth noting that surveys that focus on more particular aspects of experience of the NHS have not seen quite this level of decline yet (which we have written about elsewhere[25]).

Nevertheless, even with this decline the difference between the pre-war generation and the rest has been maintained, as it has throughout the period covered. This suggests that being old in itself is not the primary explanation for the gap: we would expect the difference to increase if that was the case, as more of that pre-war generation entered into this older group.

Instead, it points to the importance of growing up when the NHS was being founded and first delivered. This in turn could be due to pride in its institution, or memory of what life was like before it existed. It has often been observed that older groups are happier with many aspects of public services, and one explanation suggested is that people expect less (or are more forgiving) as they move into older age[26].

However, the trends seen here suggest that these sorts of lifecycle effects may turn out to be less important than a cohort effect specific to the pre-war generation, in the case of health services at least. This is important to understand: as the composition of the population changes, we may see one older population being replaced by another that is a lot less grateful.

Who feels poor?

Differences in income and wealth between generations are a mainstay of discussions on intergenerational equity. These tend to focus on the extent of pensioner poverty, the relative wealth of baby boomers and the significant financial pressures on the youngest generations. Indeed, these are each covered in interviews within this edition of *Understanding Society*, including reference to recent analysis that shows the aggregate increase in pensioner income over the last few years, in contrast to a decline in income among the youngest generation[27].

But, how do the different groups *feel* about their income levels and how has this changed within the generations over time? As figure seventeen shows, it is a very varied picture.

One major shift stands out – the changing proportion of generation X who think they have a 'low' income. In 1987 generation X were the most likely to say they had a low income (62%) - but by 2006 that level had more than halved to 28%, making them the least likely to rate their income as 'low'.

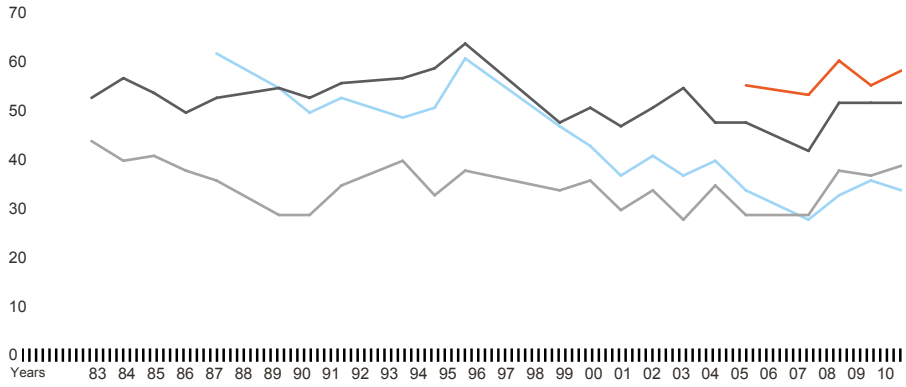
This is a huge change, reflecting the move from education to employment, and increases in income as careers progressed. Generation X were aged 18-21 in 1986, but were 30-43 by 2009, when earning potential is much higher.

In contrast, the pre-war generation has been relatively consistent in the proportion counting themselves as poor – but that lack of change is itself interesting. In 1983, only 26% of this cohort were retired, but by 2009 85% were. This is a major shift in employment position, and the fact that it has not been reflected in a similar shift in feelings of poverty is likely to result from a mix of falling expectations and the significant real terms increase in pension income over that period.

The most worrying group is the youngest generation: they are still the most likely to feel poor (58% do), despite many having spent more time in the labour market by 2009. This cohort seems unlikely to be following a similar trajectory to generation X any time soon, particularly bearing in mind we have had 3-4 years of poor economic performance since the last survey. Generation Y just seem particularly unlucky, experiencing extended economic and wage stagnation at a crucial and vulnerable time in their careers – and it is therefore crucial that there is a significant policy focus on supporting them.

Figure SEVENTEEN.

"Among which group would you place yourself … high income, middle income or low income?" (Low income %)



Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

The long, slow decline of political parties

Engagement with formal politics is an area where generational differences are widely seen as an important dividing line, with various studies showing younger generations engaging less with traditional political parties[28]. Previous analysis suggests that as well as generational effects, lifecycle effects may be important too, as it takes some time for political affiliation to "crystallise" among young adults.

Looking at one aspect of political identification – whether people see themselves as supporters of a particular political party – the overall trend is for a gradual decline in commitment to a particular party over the last 25 years (from around 50% to around 40%). The only surprise here is that the fall is not steeper. Looking at the differences between generations over time helps explain this.

The first key point here is that each generation is very flat (allowing for some short-term blips) and in strict generational order, which suggests a very strong cohort effect. There is little sign of a lifecycle effect - for example, of younger generations settling down to follow a particular party and take the place of pre-war party supporters (the upswing among generation X and generation Y in 2010 will be worth following, although it is likely to be circumstantial, related to the General Election that year).

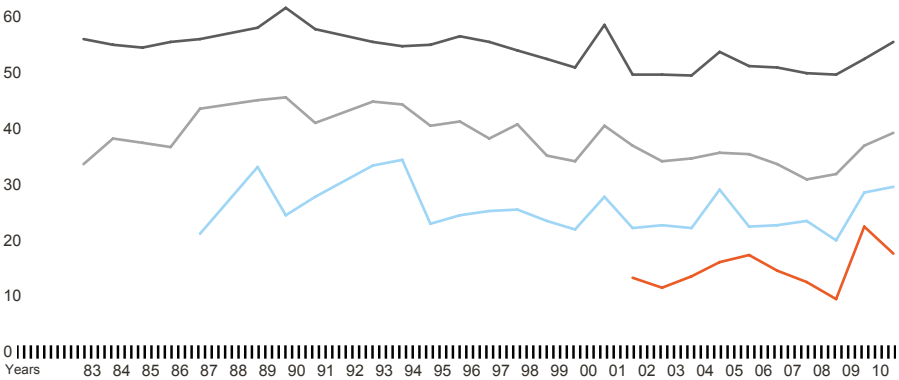
The second key point is that the significantly more solid party identification among the pre-war generation is holding the average up. As this generation dies out, a decline in party support looks inevitable – the generational tide is working against this type of political identification.

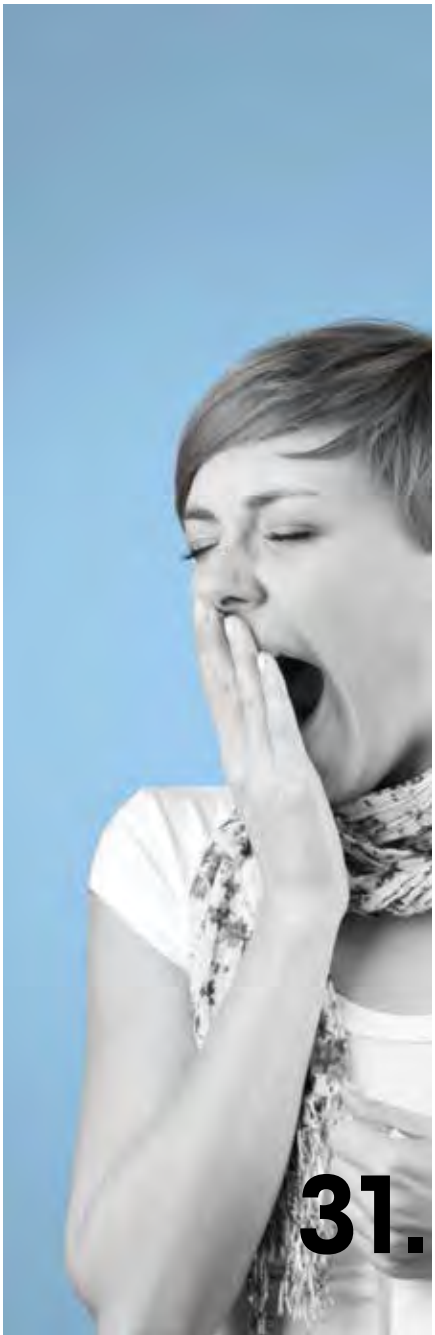
This pattern of decreasing attachment across generations has been observed across most western democracies, but the UK stands out for the size of the gap between its youngest and oldest generations. Generational analyses of European Social Survey data put the gap at 36 percentage points for the UK, compared with 25 and 27 in Germany and France respectively.

So, we are far from unique in having a generational gap between more politically engaged older groups and less engaged younger groups – but we are the most extreme example.

Figure EIGHTEEN.

"Do you think of yourself as a supporter of any one political party?" (Yes %)





Do we still want a monarchy?

The birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's first child is the latest in a string of events that have helped increase the Royal Family's popularity amongst the British public, as shown in our recent polling with King's College London[29]. The public's preference for keeping the monarchy rather than Britain becoming a republic is at the highest levels recorded since opinion polling on the subject began.

Figure nineteen shows the shifts in the numbers in each generation who feel that it is "very important" for the monarchy to continue. The perceived importance of the monarchy is considerably lower than it was in the early 1980s, but after a broadly static period between about 1994 and 2006, there now seems to a clear upward trend emerging. In 2011, the view that the monarchy was very important reached 42% - which is the highest level of support since 1994. After two further years of pomp and ceremony – the Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics and the birth of Prince George – approval is likely to have risen higher still (as shown in our more recent polling).

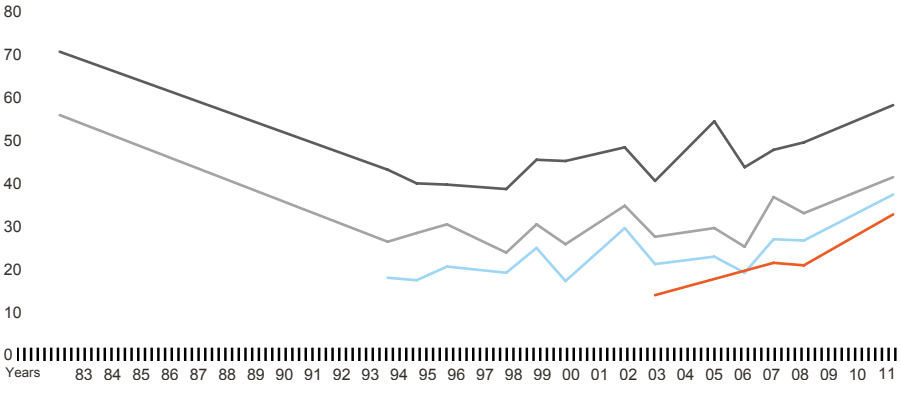
But there are clear generational differences in this support, with the pre-war generation standing out as particularly different and significantly more supportive. At the other end of the scale, generation Y are the least convinced. One-third thinks the monarchy is 'very important' and a further third think it is 'quite important': the remainder do not think the monarchy is important, but only 7% overall call for its outright abolition.

What is particularly interesting, however, is that the movement of opinion among the different generations has been almost completely in line. The positive impression that the Royal Family has succeeded in making over the past few years has boosted the monarchy among young and old alike, just as the fall in enthusiasm between the early eighties and early nineties affected the pre-war generation and the baby-boomers equally.

So it does not seem that the increasing ambivalence of the younger generation towards the monarchy is a sign that they are already set in those ways and cannot be won over by the Royal Family. However, if every generation entering adulthood continues to start out less supportive of the monarchy than its predecessor, maintaining overall levels of support will be steadily harder as the 21st century progesses.

Figure NINETEEN.

"How important or unimportant do you think it is for Britain to continue to have a monarchy?" (Very important %)



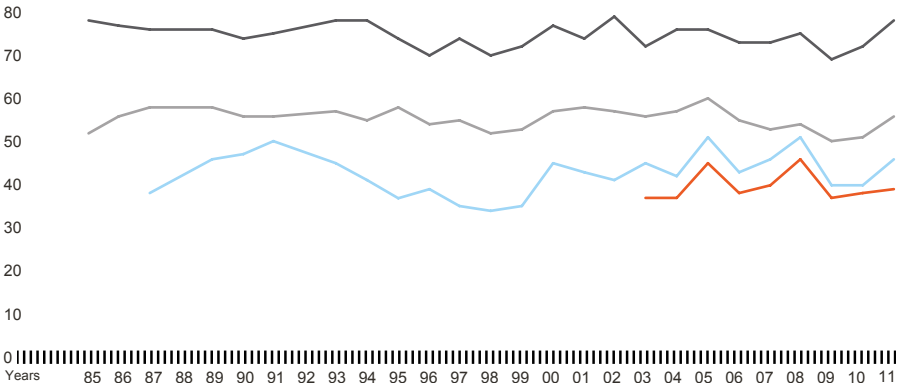
Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

The long, slow decline of religion

Figure TWENTY.

"Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?" (Yes %)



The proportion of the total population who see themselves as belonging to a particular religion is declining – from around two-thirds (65%) in the mid-1980s to around half (53%) by 2011. That is not particularly surprising or new – the 2011 Census figures show a similar decline, although differences in the question mean the proportions are different.

But as the chart above shows, this decline is almost entirely related to changes in the generational make-up of the population.

In a pattern similar to the one observed in political identification, each generation exhibits nearly ruler-flat religiosity – with every generation holding a lower level of religious attachment than their elders. The gaps between the generations are getting successively smaller, with the pre-war generation more different from baby boomers than baby boomers are from generation X and Y. The gap is smallest between the youngest two generations – generation Y starts out at a similar level of religious attachment to generation X, around four in ten.

Of course, generational effects are far from all that is going on in religious trends. As the Census highlights, it is actually Christianity that is declining, while all the other main religions are increasing (mostly related to immigration). However, given these make up a small proportion of the overall religious community, the aggregate trend is still firmly downwards.

It is also worth noting that despite the fall in those stating an affiliation with a particular religion there has been very little change in regular attendance at religious meetings over the past 30 years. Our generational analysis of attendance is also more encouraging for religions, as younger generations have increased their attendance in recent years: they are still less likely to regularly attend than older generations, but have increased enough to keep overall attendance stable. This suggests that the fall in affiliation has come from cultural or nominal Anglicans rather than those with an active faith. The likely result of these changes is that society will settle at a new, more stable, norm where religion remains an important part of identity for a significant but smaller minority across generations.

Are homosexual relations wrong?

Attitudes towards homosexuality show one of the largest 'period effects' of any attitude measured in the British Social Attitudes survey. In 1983, around half thought that sexual relations between adults of the same sex was always wrong, but by 2010 this had dropped to around 20%.

But while all generations have shifted in their views, the pre-war generation still stand apart with much lower levels of acceptance. In figure twenty-one, the proportion of people in every generation who consider homosexuality to be 'always wrong' has declined in almost every year (since 1987), and the rate of change is similar across all generations, maintaining a strong generational divide. The gap between pre-war and baby boomer respondents in 1983 was 24 percentage points. In 2010 it was 21.

But this is not the full picture, and there is other evidence that, if anything, the divide between the pre-war generation and the rest has grown. This is most noticeable when looking at the proportions who believe that homosexual relations are "not wrong at all" (see our generations website for the details): whilst a majority of respondents from generations X and Y in 2010 believe that sexual relations between adults of the same sex are not wrong at all (55% for both), and the figure for baby boomers is 45%, for pre-war respondents it is still just 17%.

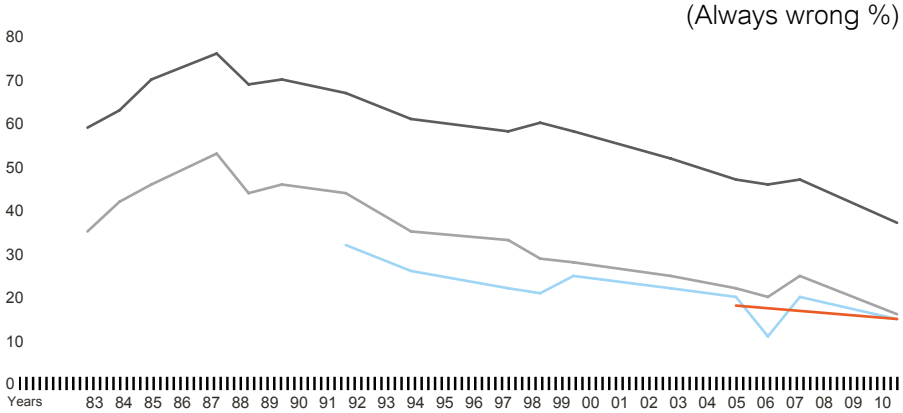
The trend data also show the impact of major events on wider opinion. In particular, looking at the data for 1983 and 1987, the effect of the AIDS epidemic is very clear. This cut across generations – the proportion saying that homosexuality is "always wrong" rose 18 percentage points amongst baby boomers and 17 percentage points in the pre-war generation during these years. Attitudes towards homosexuality in these two generations only reached 1983 levels again over a decade later, around 1995.

It seems then that both the general cultural context and generational replacement effects are moving British society towards greater tolerance of homosexuality – but major events can still significantly affect these values.

Figure TWENTY-ONE.

"Are sexual relations between two adults of the same sex always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?"

(Always wrong %)



Key.

- Pre-war (born before 1945)
- Baby boomers (1945-65)
- Generation X (1966-1979)
- Generation Y (1980-2000)

The changing role of women?

There is a long tradition of generational analysis of deeper values, such as on the role of women. This is understandable: it seems obvious that the context you grew up in will be key to forming these sorts of attitudes – and the data seems to confirm this.

The chart shows very flat generational lines, indicating hardly any change of opinion within each generation over the 20 years covered. But it also shows a very clear distinction between the attitudes of the pre-war generation and the rest of the population – with those born before 1945 half as likely as all other generations to disagree with the statement that it is a husband's role to earn money and a wife's to look after the home. This has a significant effect on the overall trend line.

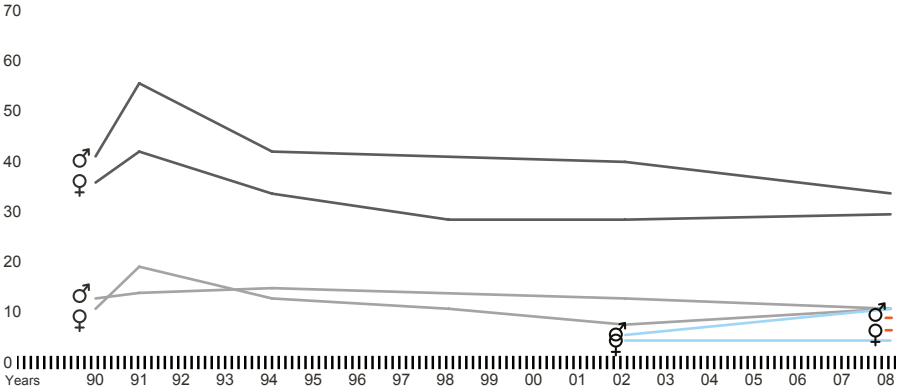
The flatness of the lines suggests that views of gender roles are pretty much set from early in life. This has been seen in other studies, for example, one showing that support for working mothers is set early in teenage years and remains steady into young adulthood[30]. Whilst the overall trend does show a rise in disagreement, this change is mostly driven by generational replacement rather than individuals changing their minds about gender roles. This rise therefore looks set to continue, as the more traditionally-minded members of the older generation die out and are replaced by younger generations.

As part of our analysis we also broke this down by gender within generations as shown in figure twenty-two. This suggests that generational effects are dominant and the culture you were brought up in has more impact than your own gender.

So, for example, there is little difference between the views of male and female members of the baby boomer generation, generation X and generation Y – few of either sex believe that it's a wife's job to look after the home.

Figure TWENTY-TWO.

"A husband's job is to earn money, a wife's job is to look after the family home" (agree %)



As with the overall pattern, the pre-1945 generation stand out as different. Women from that generation are less likely than men from the same cohort to agree that a wife's role is in the home – but they are still much more likely to feel that way than women from younger generations. When you were born is more important than your gender.

So from a family policy point of view, we now clearly have three generations where both men and women are in agreement that such blunt distinctions in gender roles are a thing of the past.

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FIGURE References

1. Source: Eurostat

2. Source: Ipsos MORI / 985 British adults aged 15+, 5-25 April 2013

3. Source: British Social Attitudes / All points represent >200 responses

4. Source: British Social Attitudes / All points represent >200 responses

5. Source: British Social Attitudes / All points represent >200 responses

6. Source: British Social Attitudes / All points represent >200 responses

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8. Source: British Social Attitudes / All points represent >200 responses

9. Source: Scottish Public Opinion Monitor / All certain to vote (3,703). Data collected quarterly among c1,000 Scottish adults aged 18+

10. Source: Scottish Public Opinion Monitor / All certain to vote (3,703). Data collected quarterly among c1,000 Scottish adults aged 18+

11 Source: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey/ All points represent >400 responses

12. Source: Ipsos MORI Political Aggregates / All points represent >400 responses

13. Source: Ipsos MORI Political Aggregates / All points represent >400 responses

14. Source: Ipsos MORI Political Aggregates / All points represent >400 responses

15. Source: Ipsos MORI Political Aggregates / All points represent >400 responses

16. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >180 respondents

17. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >180 respondents

18. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >200 respondents

19. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >200 respondents

20. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >200 respondents

21. Source: British Social Attitudes. / All points represent >200 respondents

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