

**Gender and political generations:  
support for redistribution and spending  
in the US and Britain**

**Rosalind Shorrocks (University of Oxford)**

**Maria T. Grasso (University of Sheffield)**

## **Abstract**

Women are more supportive of redistribution and social spending than men in the US and Britain, but we show that this gender gap is not stable across generations. In both countries, generations socialised during the affluent, post-war period c.1945-80 are particularly supportive of redistribution and this socialisation experience was particularly strong for women. For generations socialised during the post-1980, neoliberal, period there is divergence between the countries. In Britain support for redistribution and spending declines, as does the size of the gender gap. Conversely, both support for redistribution and the gender gap remain largely stable for all post-WWII generations in the US. We argue this divergence is due to differences between the countries in both the degree of change between the pre- and post-1980 periods and the level of welfare provision. This suggests that the gender gap in attitudes towards redistribution is mediated by socialisation experience and political context.

## 1. Introduction

Recent political developments show that gender matters for political outcomes. The US Democratic contest between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders has shown that young women in the US are particularly leftist. In the Iowa Caucus and New Hampshire Primary in February 2016, younger women in particular came out in support of Sanders. This prompted first female US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to quip that “there’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help each other,”<sup>1</sup> and Gloria Steinem suggested that younger women did not understand their true interests and had instead voted for Sanders since “when you’re younger, you think: ‘Where are the boys? The boys are with Bernie.’”<sup>2</sup> This somewhat mirrors a pattern seen in the British Labour leadership election in 2015, where women disproportionately favoured Jeremy Corbyn<sup>3</sup>, despite the presence in the race of Yvette Cooper, who argued it was time for the first woman leader of the Labour Party and made her gender an explicit part of her campaign, and Liz Kendall, who was congratulated by feminists for attacking the Mail on Sunday for asking about her weight in an interview.<sup>4</sup>

However, the lack of support some women give to female candidates compared to these left-wing men is less surprising when we consider that the academic literature has consistently and repeatedly shown that women in the US, Britain, and other Western countries are generally more economically left-wing – supportive of government spending, redistribution, and welfare – than men (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Norris

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/feb/13/madeleine-albright-hillary-clinton-go-to-hell-editorial>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/feb/06/bernie-sanders-gloria-steinem-women-voters-men-hillary-clinton>

<sup>3</sup> <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/08/10/corbyn-pull-ahead/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/labour-leadership-now-yvette-cooper-6161158>

1988; Howell and Day 2000; Campbell 2012). Such differences are generally attributed to material gender inequalities; that since women tend to be in weaker economic positions than men they will be more likely to support the more leftist candidates or parties. Many have argued that the interests of women in general are best supported through policies favouring higher spending on social services and greater levels of redistribution.<sup>5</sup> This argument has been put forward as an explanation for Sanders' and Corbyn's relative success amongst certain groups of women. Sarah Leonard argued in *The Nation*<sup>6</sup> that "voting for Hillary, is, unfortunately, a strike against poor people," whilst Sanders' "policies are better for women because they're more redistributive." Similarly, Emily Wight argued in Britain that Corbyn's anti-austerity agenda and commitment to universal free childcare meant he was a better candidate for women's interests<sup>7</sup> compared to Cooper and Kendall who abstained from voting against the Conservative government's cuts to the welfare bill.<sup>8</sup>

The experience of Corbyn in Britain and Sanders in the US suggests that the gender gap in attitudes towards social spending and redistribution has had consequences both for election outcomes and political campaigns. This is not just a recent phenomenon: the emergence of the modern gender vote gap in the US from the mid-1970s onwards, where women are more likely to vote for the Democrats than men, has been linked to women's economic preferences (Andersen 1999; Erie and Rein 1988;

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/aschoff-socialism-feminism-clinton-sandberg-class-race-wage-gap-care-work-labor/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thenation.com/article/which-women-support-hillary-and-which-women-cant-afford-to/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/emily-wight/jeremy-corbyn-and-womens-experiences-of-austerity>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2015/09/what-will-jeremy-corbyns-leadership-mean-women>

Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004). It seems that gender inequalities in socio-economic position affect political preferences and political outcomes via shaping men's and women's preferences in different ways.

However, we argue that the gender gap in economic attitudes changes across generations and as such we cannot expect it to remain a static feature of the political landscape. The literature on the formation of political generations shows how attitudes tend to be formed through the experiences of one's youthful, formative years, and then to become crystallized as individuals mature through the life-cycle. The different socialisation experiences of generations thus lead those who were born at the same time to hold similar opinions. In this respect, we expect the neoliberal political context of the 1980s to represent a substantially different socialisation context from the affluent, post-war period which included the widening of social programs under various administrations in the US and Britain. Thus we expect those coming of age during the immediate post-war period to be more supportive of redistribution and welfare than those coming of age during the 1980s and 1990s. But, crucially, we argue that women were particularly susceptible to the socialisation experience of the post-war period. The expansion of government spending of the period will have had a particular relevance for women, who tended to be in a weaker economic position in the labour force as well as experiencing a 'second shift' of caring unpaid labour in the home. We thus hypothesise that women's greater support for social spending and redistribution will begin with the generation which came of age in the post-war period.

We examine how the gender gap in attitudes towards redistribution and social spending changes over generations in the US and Britain. These two countries both had similar developments in relevant policy from the end of WWII onwards and have liberal

welfare regimes, as well as having appropriate data for age-period-cohort analysis in the form of the American National Election Study (1982-2008), British Election Studies (1987-2015) and British Social Attitudes Surveys (1983-2012). In Britain, the generation that came of age in the post-war period are more supportive of redistribution than those born before them, and the difference between the pre-war and post-war generations in this regard is indeed larger for women. In the US, it is only women of the immediate post-war generation who are more supportive of social spending, whilst there are very little generational differences for men. This suggests that women were more susceptible to the socialisation context of the affluent, progressive post-war period than men in both countries. For generations coming of age during the neoliberal and third-wave contexts, the US and Britain diverge from each other. In Britain, these younger generations are less supportive of redistribution than the post-war generation, and the gender gap narrows or even disappears for the younger generations. In the US, however, there is no evidence of a socialisation effect of the neoliberal and third-wave contexts, and the gender gap which emerges for the post-war generation remains of a similar magnitude for all subsequent generations. The picture in the US is thus one of much greater stability than that in Britain.

This suggests that the degree to which women are more economically left-wing than men is dependent on the political context during their formative years, and that this gender gap is not necessarily a permanent or static feature of the political landscape. Moreover, there are significant differences between the US and Britain: whilst in Britain the changing socialisation experience of those coming of age after the Second World War produces generational differences in support for social spending and redistribution, as well as generational differences in the gender gap, this is not the case in the US. This

strengthens the conclusion that the political context is important for shaping a generation's attitudes, since although the US and Britain had similar policy developments in the second half of the Twentieth Century, the changes brought by the advent of Thatcherism in Britain marked a greater break with the 1945-79 decade than in the US, since the immediate post-war period in Britain saw the creation of a free, tax-based national health service and nationalisation agenda which was never adopted in the US. Since the political context changed more in Britain, the generational differences were more pronounced.

Our findings indicate that the success politicians of the left can have with women voters cannot be guaranteed and suggests that we should expect fluctuations in the degree to which women's economic preferences lead them to support politicians such as Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn. The lack of a consistent gender gap for all generations in attitudes towards spending and redistribution in Britain may be a reason why there is no modern gender vote gap like that seen in the US (Campbell 2012). At the same time, the persistence of the gender gap in attitudes for all post-war generations in the US likely contributes to the gender vote gap which has been an important feature of the electoral landscape for decades.

## **2. Existing literature and theoretical expectations**

### **2.1 Gender and attitudes towards redistribution**

Women are consistently found to be more supportive of social spending on all types of welfare, including services and cash payments, than men are (e.g. Campbell, 2006; Howell and Day, 2000; Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999; Norris, 1988; Shapiro and Mahajan, 1986). Two main sets of reasons are usually given for this. The first is that

women are more compassionate than men, drawing on the work of Carol Gilligan (1982), who has argued that whilst men base moral decisions on an ethics of 'rights', women tend to base theirs on an ethics of 'responsibilities' or 'care.' She suggests that this is because women are more likely than men to think of themselves in a set of interconnected relationships rather than in isolation. This gender difference in moral thinking has been hypothesised to lead women to support policies which might help others, such as redistribution and state spending on services. Howell and Day (2000) find that women in the US are more egalitarian than men and attach more value to helping others than men do, which in turn makes them more supportive of social spending. Similarly, women have been more likely to vote sociotropically, giving more weight to the national economic situation than that of themselves or their family, whilst men are more likely to vote egotropically (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998; Welch and Hibbing 1992), and these differences do not appear to be related to gender differences in income, education, or labour force participation.

The second perspective is that women are more economically vulnerable and dependent on state spending than men are, as a result of their lower on average incomes and earning power, a factor that is also linked to women's higher support for the Democrats in the US (Andersen 1999; Erie and Rein 1988; Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004). Similarly, Kristi Andersen (1999) has argued that women are much nearer to seeing the effects of spending than men because they are more likely to be caring for children and the elderly, and so use services such as education, health, and social care to a greater extent. This means women have an interest in continued redistribution in the form of using taxes to spend on services, whilst for men the opposite may apply: since they are not using state services as much, men have more of



an interest in maximising their income through low taxation (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

The ‘compassion’ perspective expects gender differences in attitudes to be reasonably static, whilst the second perspective – ‘self-interest’ – expects the gender gap to vary with how economically vulnerable women are relative to men. The ‘developmental theory of gender realignment, put forward by Inglehart and Norris (2000; 2003) argues that modernisation has led to structural changes which have altered men’s and women’s roles, and in particular led to growing differences between men and women in socio-economic position. These changes include women’s entry into the labour force and higher education rates, as well as declining marriage rates, and are expected to make women less economically secure, because, for example, they receive lower pay than men in the labour force. At the same time, such changes are seen as making women more economically autonomous from men and thus more likely to develop distinct set of preferences. Others have argued that whilst women have entered new economic roles in the workforce at higher rates, this has not been coupled with a comparable decrease in home and family responsibilities as women still take on a disproportionate amount of caring and domestic tasks (Togeby 1994).

Such changes to women’s lives have occurred on a generational basis, with each new generation of women more likely to participate in the labour force and less likely to be married. As a result, each new generation of women is expected to be more left-wing in their economic attitudes than the last, widening the gender gap between men and women in younger generations. This leads to our first hypothesis:

***H1: Developmental hypothesis: The gender gap in attitudes towards redistribution widens for all younger birth cohorts coming of age in the post-war period or later.***

This perspective expects gradual change in the gender gap in attitudes toward social spending and redistribution across generations, according to generational changes to women's lives. However, this ignores the fact that whilst gender roles are changing, as is the political context with respect to social spending and redistributive policies. The next section argues that this is also relevant for shaping generational differences in the gender gap.

## **2.2 Gender and political generations**

Generational approaches to attitudinal change argue that attitudes are especially influenced during the formative experiences of young adulthood, when individuals are thought to be the most 'impressionable' (Mannheim 1968; Becker 1990; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Krosnick and Alwin 1989). 'Political generations' are formed through the collective political experiences of those born at the same time, shaping attitudes which differ from generation to generation due to the changing political context. Attitudes do not remain completely fixed once the formative years are over, and are also affected by subsequent events or changes in an individual's life. However, theories of political socialisation suggest that events during youth are particularly influential and as a result political generations differ on attitudes formed during these impressionable years. Previous research has found that the character of elections during a generation's youth can affect life-long partisan identification and likelihood to turnout to vote (Bartels and Jackman 2014a; Smets and Neundorf 2012) and that the party in power during a generation's youth has a lasting impact on their vote choice (Ghitza and Gelman 2014; Tilley and Evans 2014). Similarly, the generation who experienced their formative years during the 1960s and 1970s are particularly active in social movements and protests (Grasso 2014) and exposure to communism during youth has a lasting negative

influence on support for democratic values (Neundorf 2010; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2014).

The political context with respect to government spending and redistribution can be expected to shape a generation's attitudes towards these policies. In both the US and Britain, there was an increase in government spending and redistributive policies in the immediate post-war period, regardless of the party in power. In the United States, the post-war presidencies were characterised by the expansion of public spending, particularly in the 1960s with the 'Great Society' and 'War on Poverty'. The Nixon and Ford years of the 1970s were seen by many as years of moderate conservatism before the renewed leftist commitments emphasised in the presidency of Carter at the end of the decade. In Britain, the post-war period saw a consensus on the role of the state in the form of 'Butskellism', with both the Conservatives and Labour implementing policies which enhanced and supported the state's role, including the nationalisation of key industries and the development of the welfare state and national health service.

The post-war expansion of social spending and service provision in both the US and Britain had different implications for men and women. In both countries, the growth of the role of the state was built around the male-breadwinner model of the family with women as the primary care-giver, and women were made eligible for welfare to the extent that they were wives and mothers, entrenching these gender roles (Clarke 2001; Clarke, Langan, and Williams 2001; Fraser 1994). However, the expansion of the state in this period was particularly beneficial for women for two reasons. Firstly, most women at this time expected to be wives and mothers, and thus the reinforcement of these roles through the structure of the welfare state would not necessarily have been seen as a negative thing. In Britain in particular, women at the time campaigned for a

stronger welfare state and welcomed its post-war development precisely because it gave recognition to the value of women's unpaid work (Pateman 2014). Secondly, the post-war welfare state meant that women could have economic security outside marriage, by transferring their dependence to the state (Pateman 2014). As a result, the expansion of the welfare state provided a measure of independence for women by allowing them to remain single, which may have been particularly attractive to young women at the time who were not already married. Therefore, as a result of their greater use of state service provision through their roles as carers, and their greater economic vulnerability, women were likely to have looked on welfare state expansion more favourably than men.

The election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 in Britain, and Ronald Reagan in 1981 in the US, marked a significant break with the immediate post-war period. Reagan's presidency was marked by staunch adherence to neoliberal economics and conservative social morals in a backlash to the permissive 1970s. His policies were by and large continued under George Bush senior, taking office until 1993. Similarly, the Conservative government elected in 1979 in Britain set about significantly reducing the role of government through lower spending on social services and encouraging the role of the market. Although the Democrats in the US and Labour in Britain re-entered government during the 1990s, Clinton's and Blair's adoptions of 'third way' politics heralded more continuity with the neoliberal years than with the post-war consensus. Clinton's government emphasised fiscal responsibility and promised in his 1992 campaign to "end welfare as we know it." In Britain, although Blair's governments increased social spending and enacted policies designed to reduce inequality, they also remained committed to certain aspects of the Thatcherite project, including reforming social services to include private providers and developing a rhetoric of 'rights and

responsibilities', emphasising the state's role in reducing inequality but also an individuals' responsibility to help themselves. Moreover, it has been noted that the Blair government did not always foreground its redistributive policies (Sefton 2009).

At the same time as rolling back the welfare state, the New Right in the 1980s appealed to the ideal of the traditional family and wanted to increase the family's responsibility for its members (Clarke, Langan, and Williams 2001; Sapiro 1990). In conjunction with the scaling back of social provision during this time, this put more emphasis on women's role in the home. However, in contrast to the post-war period, women at this time were entering the workforce in much greater numbers and, with declining marriage rates and rising divorce rates, no longer had such a clear expectation of remaining in traditional gender roles. This is especially the case given the influence of the second-wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, women socialised during this later period may have a more negative view of the state which was simultaneously encouraging traditional roles and withdrawing support which otherwise may have enabled them to enter the labour force by helping with caring responsibilities. A similar argument can be applied to the subsequent 'Third Way' period during the 1990s and early 2000s. The Third Way prioritised privatisation and the market for social service provision over focusing on improvements to the lives of women, despite this also being a stated policy goal (Annesley, Gains, and Rummery 2007). New Labour's policies, for example, did not appear to affect the distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women and as such also helped perpetuate traditional gender roles. In the US, Clinton's welfare reforms especially in the form of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act substantially reduced the benefits women (and men) were entitled to and put in place policies which were pro-marriage, and

agenda that was continued under Bush (Abramovitz 2006).

This leads us to two hypotheses expecting an increase in support for social spending and redistribution for generations who came of age during the post-war consensus, and a decline for the younger, neoliberal and third way, generations. Moreover, because of the gendered nature of the impact of the changes between these periods, we expect these generational patterns to be greater for women than for men.

***H2: Post-war consensus hypothesis:** The generation socialised during the post-war period but before the rise of neoliberalism will be more supportive of social spending and redistribution relative to previous and subsequent generations.*

***H3: Gendered post-war consensus hypothesis:** The gender gap between men and women in support for social spending and redistribution will be the widest amongst the generation socialised in the post-war period before neoliberalism.*

### **2.3 Previous research on generational change in attitudes towards spending and redistribution**

In general, there is weak evidence for attitudinal change amongst the populations of the US and Britain as a whole during the Thatcher and Reagan eras (Taylor-Gooby 1988; Curtice and Fisher 2003; Bosanquet 1984; Taylor-Gooby 1987; Page and Shapiro 1992; Mayer 1992), and some have even argued that attitudes took a more liberal direction in the US in the 1980s (Davis 1992). In both countries, however, there was a drop in support for spending during the 1990s (Sefton 2009; Curtice and Fisher 2003; Schneider and Jacoby 2005). This has been linked New Labour's attempts to rid itself of its image as a high taxes/high spending party through emphasising public sector reform and individual responsibility in Britain, and the consensus amongst both Democrats and

Republicans during this period that welfare needed serious reform in the US.

However, despite the lack of evidence that the Conservative government's policies of the 1980s altered attitudes in the British population as a whole, there is evidence that they did for those who were *young* during this period. Russell, Johnston and Pattie (1992) found that those who were first-time voters in 1979 and 1987 were less supportive of nationalisation, trade unions, taxation, public spending, and the NHS than would have been expected given their young age. They conclude that the values and policies of Thatcherism had a particularly strong impact on those who were most 'impressionable', coining the phrase 'Thatcher's children' to describe this generation, although their analysis cannot indicate whether these generations remained particularly conservative in subsequent years. Similarly, using the British Social Attitudes Survey, Grasso, Farrall, Gray, Hay and Jennings (forthcoming) show that the generation that came of age during the consensus era are particularly supportive of redistribution and social spending, but subsequent generations were less supportive of such policies than the consensus generation.

In the US, there is contradictory evidence with respect to generational differences in attitudes towards redistribution. In data from the 1990s, the youngest cohort born after 1976 were found to be more, not less, supportive of government intervention to provide jobs for all, provide a decent standard of living, and reduce income differences between the rich and poor, than those born before 1960 (Edlund and Svallfors 2012). However, Edlund and Svallfors also found these cohort differences were no longer present in the 2000s, suggesting they may be confounded with period and age effects. Others have found that new cohorts have become gradually more supportive of spending on education and health, but that younger cohorts born after

1970 become less supportive of spending on social security (Fullerton and Dixon 2010). Our test of the post-war consensus hypothesis will thus provide a further test for a phenomenon already found in Britain with an additional dataset, and explicitly test the impact of the change between the immediate post-war period and subsequent neoliberal and third way periods on generational change in attitudes towards social spending for the first time in the US.

Almost no research has considered how the gender gap in attitudes might change with generation. In Britain, Campbell (2006) has found that the gender gap in socialist/laissez faire attitudes, towards redistribution and the role of government, is wider for cohorts born between 1947 and 1976 than those born 1907-1946, and slight widening of the gender gap on support for higher taxation and spending on health, education, and social benefits for the post-war cohorts compared to the pre-war cohorts. However, without breaking down the cohorts further this could lend support to either the developmental hypothesis or the gendered post-war consensus hypothesis. In the US, there have been no studies, to our knowledge, which examine how the gender gap in economic attitudes is different in different generations.

### **3. Data and Methods**

In order to analyse generational changes in attitudes this paper employs data from three large over-time studies: the British Election Study (1987-2015), the British Social Attitudes Survey (1983-2012), and the American National Election Study (1982-2008). The repeated cross-sections provided by these data are necessary to isolate generational differences, since age and period effects are potentially confounders for the effect of generation. Age effects suggest that younger people are more leftist than older



people. Moreover, certain historical moments – or periods – are understood to change everyone’s attitudes. As such, in order to identify generational effects we need to control for both age and period, or year of survey, in our models. The age-period-cohort ‘identification problem’ complicates things since the three effects are in a linear relationship with each other; as soon as we know two values we know the third:

$$\textit{Year of Birth} = \textit{Year} - \textit{Age}$$

As such, in order to ‘identify’ the model and capture net effects it is necessary to apply certain restrictions. This methodological hurdle has meant that a rich statistical literature has emerged over the years to ‘solve’ the ‘identification problem’. Here we follow the method presented in Grasso (2014) and apply both generalised additive models (GAMs) to plot an identified, smoothed cohort effect, in addition to age-period-cohort models with a categorized generation variable reflecting the theoretical distinctions based on the historical period of socialisation. This combined method allows us to deal with the identification problem in this context.

Given our interest in generational effects, year of birth is the main independent variable. The key period of socialisation will largely depend on the mechanism hypothesised (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart 1977; Bartels and Jackman 2014b). Given H2 and H3 rely on political awareness we would expect that socialisation should occur during the mid-teens to the mid-to-late 20s. We assign individuals to different political generations based on the historical phase in which they have spent the majority of their formative years (Grasso 2014). This method of categorizing generations has the advantage that it places emphasis on the historical period of a generation’s socialisation. The years of birth of the political generations are then derived from this information, as shown in Table 1. The generations are coded as follows: In the US, (1) Pre-war, born

1910-1924 (reference); (2) Post-war, born 1925-1959; (3) Neoliberal, born 1960-71; (4) Third way, born 1972-1986 (this includes those socialised under Bush II). In Britain, (1) Pre-war, born 1910-1924 (reference); (2) Post-war, born 1925-1957; (3) Neoliberal, born 1958-1975; (4) Third way, born 1976-1988. The differences in the coding between the US and Britain take into account that Thatcher was elected 2 years earlier than Reagan, and Blair was elected 4 years after Clinton. We include this measure of *Political Generation* in standard regression models, and then use Wald tests to test for statistical differences between these generations that are not the reference category. We then use the GAMs to cross-check the results from the age-period-cohort models, as the smoothed cohort plots enable us to visually inspect the cohort patterns and assess whether this matches our theoretically-derived categorical political generations.

**Table 1: Political Generations in the US and Britain**

	Pre-war	Post-war	Neoliberal	Third Way
Formative period	1930-44	1945-80 (US) 1945-78 (Britain)	1981-92 (US) 1979-96 (Britain)	1993-2008 (US)* 1997-2009 (Britain)
Years of birth	1910-24	1925-59 (US) 1925-57 (Britain)	1960-71 (US) 1958-75 (Britain)	1972-86 (US) 1976-88 (Britain)
Presidents	Hoover (1929-33); Roosevelt (1933-45)	Truman (1945-53); Eisenhower (1953-61); Kennedy (1961-63); Johnson (1963-69); Nixon (1969-74); Ford (1974-77); Carter (1977-81)	Reagan (1981-89); Bush Sr. (1989-93)	Clinton (1993-01); Bush Jr. (2001-09)
Prime Ministers	MacDonald (1929-35); Baldwin (1935-37); Chamberlain (1937-40); Churchill (1940-45)	Atlee (1945-51); Churchill II (1951-55); Eden (1955-57); MacMillan (1957-63); Douglas-Home (1963-64); Wilson (1964-70); Heath (1970-74); Wilson II (1974-76); Callaghan (1976-79)	Thatcher (1979-90); Major (1990-97)	Blair (1997-07); Brown (2007-10)

---

Notes: The differences in the coding between the US and British generations take into account that Thatcher was elected 2 years earlier than Reagan, and Blair was elected 4 years after Clinton. \*This period includes Bush Jr.

---

Generation is thus measured using the categorised *Political Generation* variable above in the age-period-cohort regression models, whilst it is measured using the continuous variable of *Year of Birth* in the GAMs. We use interactions between *Gender* (a dummy variable for being female) and the generation variable in both types of model to test for gender differences in the generational trends. Other than year of birth/cohort we also control for age and period to identify the generational effect. The description of variables henceforth applies to both the GAMs and the age-period-cohort regression models. *Age* is a three-level factor coded: (1) under 34 years; (2) 35-59 year; (3) over 60 years. We also control for *Year of Survey*.

For the dependent variables, higher values, or in the case of dummy variables the 1, mean agreement with the more leftist position. For the ANES analyses, we use a scale ranging from 1 for support for whether the government should provide fewer services to reduce spending versus a highest value of 7 meaning the government should provide more services even if it means increasing spending. This question was asked in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 2004, and 2008. For the analyses with the BES data, we employ a 1-10 scale for whether the government should cut taxes and spend less on health and social services to raise taxes and spend more. For the analyses with the BSA data, we use a dummy for whether the respondent wanted to increase taxes or not: ‘Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits’ (vs ‘Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now’ or ‘Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefit’). These questions were selected because they examined comparable types of attitudes between the three datasets, and

because they avoid using the words ‘welfare’ or ‘poor’ which have been found to produce very different responses in the US (Page and Shapiro 1992).

We also control for social characteristics which may differ between generations. We would expect to see evidence for the developmental hypothesis in models without the controls because the generational trends hypothesised by the developmental theory are argued to be due to changing gender roles for men and women: thus, once factors such as female labour force participation, marital status, and education level are controlled for, we would not necessarily expect to see a widening of the gender gap in younger cohorts. However, the socialisation effects we expect to see, hypothesised by H2 and H3, may be hidden by changes in social characteristics across generations. For example, the gender gap may well be wider in younger generations because of changing social roles for women, but once these are controlled for we may see a larger gender gap for the post-war generation, which would point to evidence for the socialisation effect in the gendered post-war consensus hypothesis. In all models, we include measures for home ownership, marital status, union membership, income band, social class, education level, employment status, and party identification. In addition, the ANES models include religious denomination (unavailable for the British data). We have made every effort to harmonise controls across datasets, although there are some differences in coding between the US and British datasets.

*Home Ownership* is a dichotomous variable for owning a house (outright or with a mortgage). *Marital Status* has four categories: Married/cohabiting (reference; widowed; divorced/separated; and never married). *Union Membership* is dichotomous for being a member of a union. *Income* is coded into three categories: those in the bottom third of the income distribution (reference); in the middle third, and in the top

third. *Social Class* is self-reported, with three categories: none (reference); working class; and middle class. *Employment Status* has six categories: in work (reference); in full-time education; unemployed; disabled or retired; looking after home; and other. *Education Level* in Britain is dichotomous: in the BES for having any qualifications or not, and in the BSA for having education above 16 or not. In the ANES, Education Level has four categories: grade school or less (reference); high school; some college; and college or advanced degree. *Party Identification* has the following categories in the BSA and BES: Conservative (reference); Labour; Liberal/Liberal Democrat; other; and none. In the ANES, it is coded as follows: Republican (reference); Democrat; Independent; other; and none. *Religion* in the ANES has four categories: Protestant (reference); Catholic; Jewish; and other/none. Descriptive statistics showing distributions and ranges of all variables can be found in the appendix for comparison across the datasets.

As detailed above we apply a method which combines age-period-cohort models and generalised additive models (GAMs). There are other approaches to age-period-cohort analyses but these would not have been as good a fit for the type of research question and data structure as the ones in this study. For example, some have suggested using hierarchical APC models (Yang and Land 2006; Yang and Land 2008) or the intrinsic estimator (IE) (Yang et al. 2008). However, we argue that in this case the combination of constrained generalised linear models and GAMs is a more appropriate methodological approach for multiple reasons. Firstly, the use of ordinary least squares regression (BES and ANES) and logistic regression (BSA) makes our results easy to understand, especially since they involve an interaction between gender and generation, and provide clear, statistical tests of our hypotheses using theoretically (rather than

arbitrarily) derived generational groups. The GAMs then allow us to check that our theoretical expectations with respect to political generations are valid. This method has been used by others to identify gender differences in the impact of socialisation on generations (Shorrocks 2016). Secondly, in our analysis we have few survey years relative to what is usually required in hierarchical modelling. Thirdly, there is some debate as to whether the IE can recover true age, period, and cohort effects, with simulation studies suggesting that under some circumstances they can incorrectly attribute trends in one of age, period and cohort to one of the other two (Luo 2013). In addition, Luo has argued that the intrinsic estimator relies on an essentially arbitrary constraint which can neither be justified theoretically nor established empirically.

#### **4. Results**

First we examine some basic descriptive results as presented in Table 2. The results show the raw means and percentages for support for redistribution across generations as well as the differences between men and women in ANES, BSA and BES datasets. The results from the ANES show that overall for each younger generation the mean is higher, indicating greater support for redistribution than the previous one. The generation socialised before and during WWII scores a mean of 4.04 on the 7-point scale, where higher values indicate support for raising taxes and more services (versus cutting taxes and fewer services). This rises to 4.17 for the post-war generation, to 4.53 for the neoliberal generation, and then again to 4.78 for the generation coming of age in the third way formative years (1980-1991). Each generation is statistically significantly different from the previous one at  $p < 0.001$ . In terms of gender differences, while men and women in the pre-war generation are as supportive of redistribution as each other, a

statistically significant gender gap is present for the younger three generations. The gender gap emerges for the post-war generation as women of this generation become more supportive of redistribution compared to women of the generation socialised in the pre-war period, but men do not. Both men and women then become more supportive of redistribution in the generations that came of age under neoliberalism and the subsequent third way period, but the gender gap remains stable in size, at 0.46 for the post-war generation, 0.44 for the neoliberal generation, and 0.48 for the third way generation. This first descriptive evidence from the US thus shows more support for the developmental hypothesis than the post-war consensus and gendered post-war consensus hypotheses, although this evidence is weak since we would expect the gender gap to grow in size across the younger generations. Instead, what we see in the US is an opening gap amongst the post-war generation that stabilises as women become increasingly more supportive of redistribution but are then tracked by men in this rising support amongst the younger generations.

**Table 2: Support for spending in the US and Britain by gender and generation**

	Raise taxes and more services vs. cut taxes and fewer services (7-point scale, ANES)			Increase taxes and spend more vs. Reduce taxes and spend less/Keep taxes and spending (dummy variable, BSA)			Raise taxes and spend more vs. cut taxes and spend less (10-point scale, BES)		
	Overall	Men	Women	Overall	Men	Women	Overall	Men	Women
Pre-war	4.04	4.00	4.01	50.3%	50.5%	50.2%	6.94	6.92	6.95
Post-war	4.17	<b>3.93</b>	<b>4.39</b>	55.7%	<b>54.1%</b>	<b>57.0%</b>	6.81	<b>6.65</b>	<b>6.96</b>
Neoliberal	4.53	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.74</b>	50.6%	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	6.44	<b>6.31</b>	<b>6.55</b>
Third way	4.78	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.99</b>	36.3%	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>	5.89	5.83	5.94

*Notes: Bold means gender difference is statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$*

In the British data there is more support for the post-war consensus hypothesis. In the BSA, there is a curvilinear pattern as predicted by H1, showing a rise in support for redistribution amongst the post-war generation and then a decline with the neoliberal and third way generations. Each generation is statistically significantly different from the previous one at  $p < 0.001$ . The gender gap grows from the pre-war generation to the post-war generation, from 0.3 to 2.9. It then becomes a little smaller for the neoliberal generation (2.3), before growing again for the third way generation (4.9). This provides at best some weak evidence for the developmental hypothesis. The BES results also provide evidence for the post-war consensus hypothesis to some extent. Although here the mean support is higher amongst the pre-war generation (statistically significant at  $p < 0.1$ ), it falls for the neoliberal and third way generations relative to the post-war generation as predicted. The differences between the post-war and neoliberal generations, and the neoliberal and third way generations, are statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ . Moreover, the BES provides evidence for the gendered post-war consensus hypothesis, as the gender gap is widest – .31 on the 10-point scale – for the post-war generation. It narrows to .24 for the neoliberal generation, and to a statistically insignificant .11 for those socialised during the third way period. These results provide no evidence for the developmental hypothesis.

On the whole, then, the descriptive results from Table 2 provide some limited, but inconsistent, support for our hypotheses. Moreover, the even the raw data shows that the gender gap is not consistent across generations. However, here the generation effects are not identified and therefore could be confounded by ageing and period effects.

For this reason, we turn to examining the results from the full models presented in Tables 3-5 and those from the Wald tests for coefficient differences in Table 6 which



provide more appropriate tests for our hypotheses. Two sets of models are shown: model 1 with just Political Generation, Gender, Age and Year of Survey, and model 2 with the controls included. For greater clarity, the predicted values from the ANES and BES scales, and the predicted probability of wanting to increase taxes and spending in the BSA, for men and women of the four generations from both models, with other variables held at their means or medians, are also presented. Finally, we show the smoothed cohort effect results from the generalised additive models (GAMs) to verify the cohort trends.

Turning first to the results from the US with the ANES data in Table 3 we can see that there are few generational differences in support for redistribution for men: looking at the main effect of generation, the post-war generation is less supportive than the pre-war generation in model 1, but this becomes statistically insignificant once the controls are added. No subsequent generation is statistically significantly different from the pre-war generation, although the Wald tests in Table 6 show that the neoliberal generation are significantly more supportive of redistribution than the post-war generation (but, interestingly, the third way generation is not), which goes against the post-war consensus hypothesis. There is a significant gender gap in support for redistribution across all three of the post-war, neoliberal and third way generations in Model 1, but not for the pre-war generation. In Model 2, when all the relevant controls are added, the gender interactions reduce in size by about a quarter but remain statistically significant, indicating the gender gap in the post-war generation onwards is partially related to differences between men and women in socio-economic characteristics as the developmental theory would expect.

**Table 3: Support for spending on public services in the United States, ANES (APC models)**

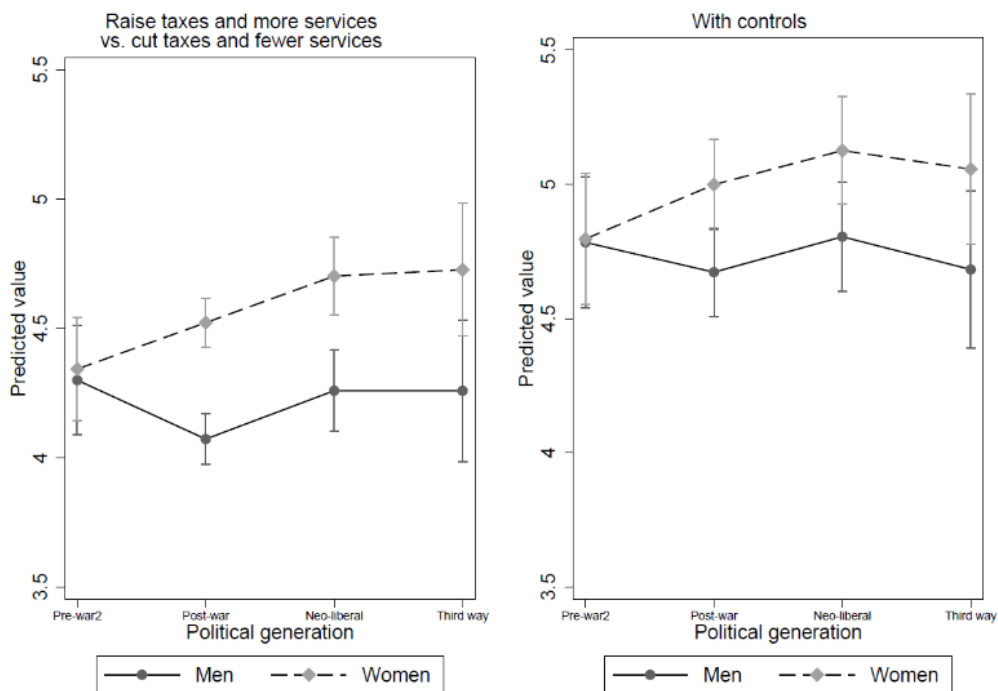
	Model 1: APC	Model 2: with controls
Political generation. Reference: pre-war		
Post-war generation	-0.228 (0.105)**	-0.111 (0.100)
Neoliberal generation	-0.041 (0.127)	0.021 (0.123)
Third way generation	-0.041 (0.175)	-0.101 (0.169)
Gender (female)	0.043 (0.103)	0.013 (0.101)
Post-war*gender	0.407 (0.111)***	0.313 (0.106)***
Neoliberal*gender	0.400 (0.128)***	0.308 (0.123)**
Third way*gender	0.425 (0.178)**	0.361 (0.170)**
Age. Reference: 18-34		
Aged 35-59	-0.184 (0.046)***	-0.158 (0.045)***
Aged 60+	-0.257 (0.084)***	-0.380 (0.085)***
Year of Survey. Reference: 1982		
1984	0.153 (0.067)**	0.166 (0.064)***
1986	0.541 (0.067)***	0.518 (0.063)***
1988	0.320 (0.070)***	0.339 (0.066)***
1990	0.540 (0.070)***	0.510 (0.066)***
1992	0.204 (0.080)**	0.237 (0.076)***
2004	0.624 (0.086)***	0.699 (0.082)***
2008	0.700 (0.091)***	0.571 (0.088)***
Employment status. Reference: in work		
In FT education		0.151 (0.111)
Unemployed		0.248 (0.068)***
Disabled/retired		0.213 (0.064)***
Looking after the home		0.081 (0.059)
Other		0.129 (0.863)
Owns house		-0.196 (0.039)***
Marital status. Reference: married/cohabiting		
Widowed		0.240 (0.072)***
Divorced/separated		0.109 (0.049)**

Never married		-0.013 (0.049)
Union membership		0.182 (0.052)***
Race. Reference: white		
Black		0.609 (0.052)***
Hispanic		0.243 (0.067)***
Other		0.133 (0.078)*
Party ID. Reference: Republican		
Democrat		0.850 (0.043)***
Independent		0.515 (0.043)***
Other		0.513 (0.236)**
None		0.463 (0.071)***
Income. Reference: low		
Middle		-0.116 (0.044)***
High		-0.170 (0.051)***
Social class. Reference: none		
Working class		0.108 (0.041)***
Middle class		-0.006 (0.041)
Religion. Reference: Protestant		
Catholic		0.216 (0.039)***
Jewish		0.512 (0.118)***
Other/none		0.129 (0.050)**
Education. Reference: Grade school or less		
High school		-0.078 (0.081)
Some college		-0.184 (0.086)**
College or advanced degree		-0.278 (0.089)***
Constant	3.942 (0.117)***	3.491 (0.143)***
$R^2$	0.05	0.16
$N$	9,137	9,137

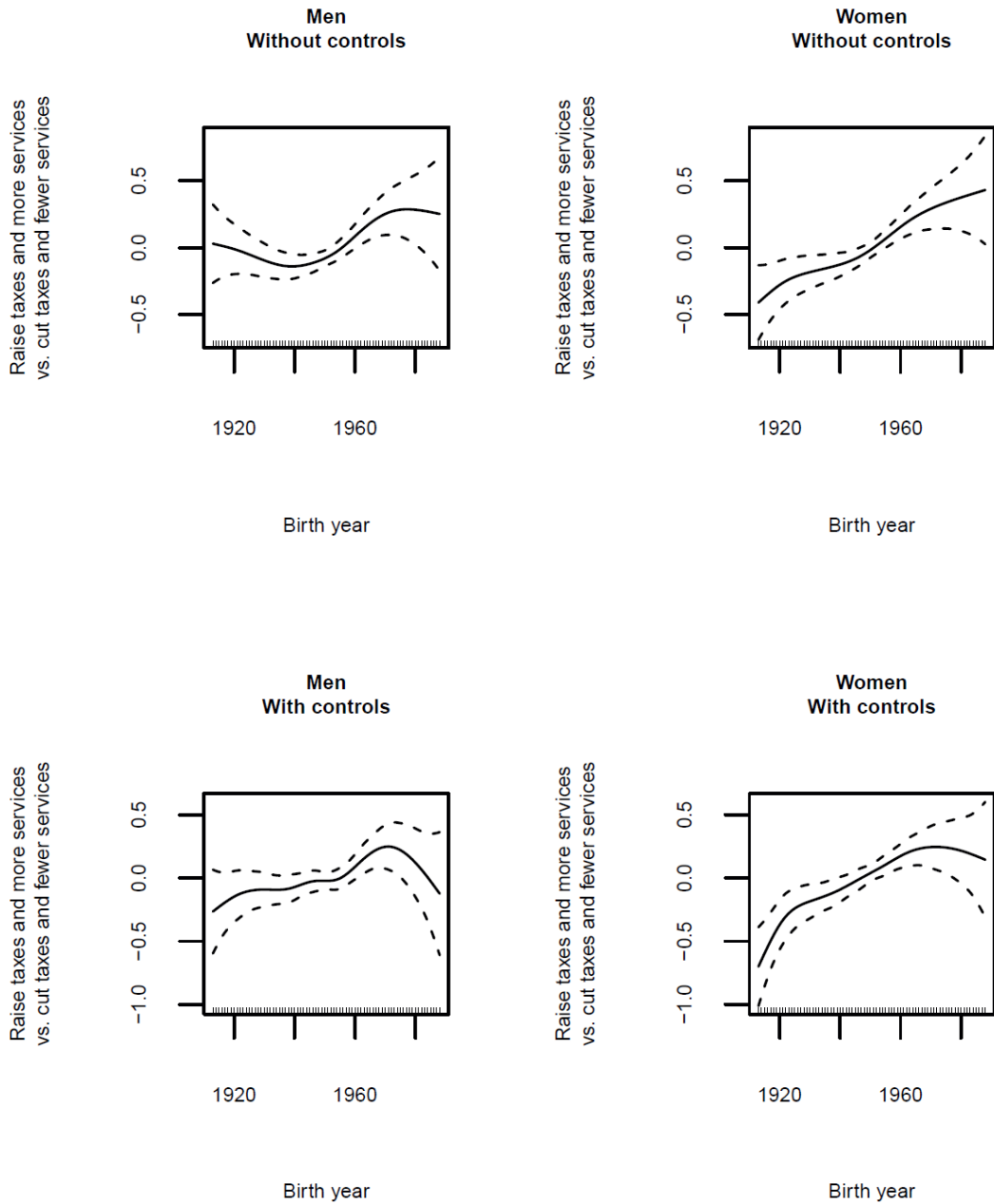
NB: \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors are in parentheses

These findings are visualised in Figure 1 where we can see that the gender gap opens up with the post-war generation and remains stable across subsequent generations. Examining the results from the plots of the smoothed cohort effect from the generalised additive models (GAMs) in Figure 2 confirm these results and show they are robust: there is an increase in support for spending across generations which is steeper for women than for men, especially once the controls are introduced. In the US, therefore, we see an increasing generational trend towards increasing taxation and spending, which begins with the post-war generation for women but not until the neoliberal generation of men. As a result, the gender gap widens for the post-war generation, and then remains stable for subsequent generations. This offers some evidence that women in the US were particularly influenced by the socialisation experience of the post-war period, but the hypothesised socialised effect of the post-1981 period has not materialised in the US.

**Figure 1: Predicted support for spending on social services in the United States by gender and generation from models 1 and 2, ANES**



**Figure 2: Generational trends in the United States for support for spending on social services for men and women, ANES (GAMs)**



Turning to the results from the BSA presented in Table 4, we find evidence for the post-war consensus hypothesis: the post-war generation are more supportive of redistribution than the pre-war, neoliberal, and third way generations. Wald tests in Table 6 show that these differences are all statistically significant. In terms of the gender gap, model 1 without the controls shows that women of the post-war, neoliberal, and third way generations are more supportive of spending than men compared to the pre-war generation, for which there is no gender gap. Again, this reduces in size once the controls are added, indicating this is mostly due to gender differences in socio-economic position in accordance with the developmental theory. The gender gap is then wider for the post-war generation than for the neoliberal generation, offering some support for the gendered post-war generation hypothesis. Figure 3 illustrates these results and the decreasing pattern of support for redistribution amongst the neoliberal and third way generations relative to the post-war generation. Moreover, the GAMs in Figure 4 show that this pattern is robust to alternative specifications of the age-period-cohort modelling as the smoother for year of birth clearly replicates the generational trajectory from the predicted effects reported in Figure 3.

**Table 4: Support for spending in Britain, BSA (APC models)**

	Model 1: APC	Model 2: with controls
Political generation. Reference: pre-war		
Post-war generation	0.150 (0.048)***	0.180 (0.050)***
Neoliberal generation	-0.044 (0.059)	0.018 (0.062)
Third way generation	-0.443 (0.085)***	-0.373 (0.089)***
Gender (female)	-0.083 (0.054)	-0.007 (0.057)
Post-war generation*gender	0.217 (0.059)***	0.142 (0.061)**
Neoliberal*gender	0.213 (0.062)***	0.068 (0.064)
Third way*gender	0.319 (0.088)***	0.170 (0.091)*
Age. Reference: 18-34		
Aged 35-59	0.117 (0.029)***	0.136 (0.030)***
Aged 60+	0.046 (0.041)	0.084 (0.048)*
Year of Survey. Reference: 1983		
1984	0.376 (0.082)***	0.363 (0.084)***
1985	0.576 (0.080)***	0.528 (0.082)***
1986	0.564 (0.071)***	0.545 (0.073)***
1987	0.679 (0.072)***	0.691 (0.074)***
1989	0.995 (0.072)***	1.043 (0.074)***
1990	0.925 (0.074)***	0.943 (0.076)***
1991	1.412 (0.088)***	1.444 (0.090)***
1993	1.306 (0.073)***	1.311 (0.076)***
1994	1.060 (0.071)***	1.007 (0.073)***
1995	1.168 (0.070)***	1.100 (0.073)***
1996	1.164 (0.071)***	1.124 (0.074)***
1997	1.223 (0.088)***	1.212 (0.091)***
1998	1.263 (0.073)***	1.223 (0.075)***
1999	1.063 (0.072)***	1.022 (0.075)***
2000	0.749 (0.076)***	0.716 (0.079)***
2001	1.126 (0.072)***	1.057 (0.075)***
2002	1.296 (0.072)***	1.274 (0.075)***

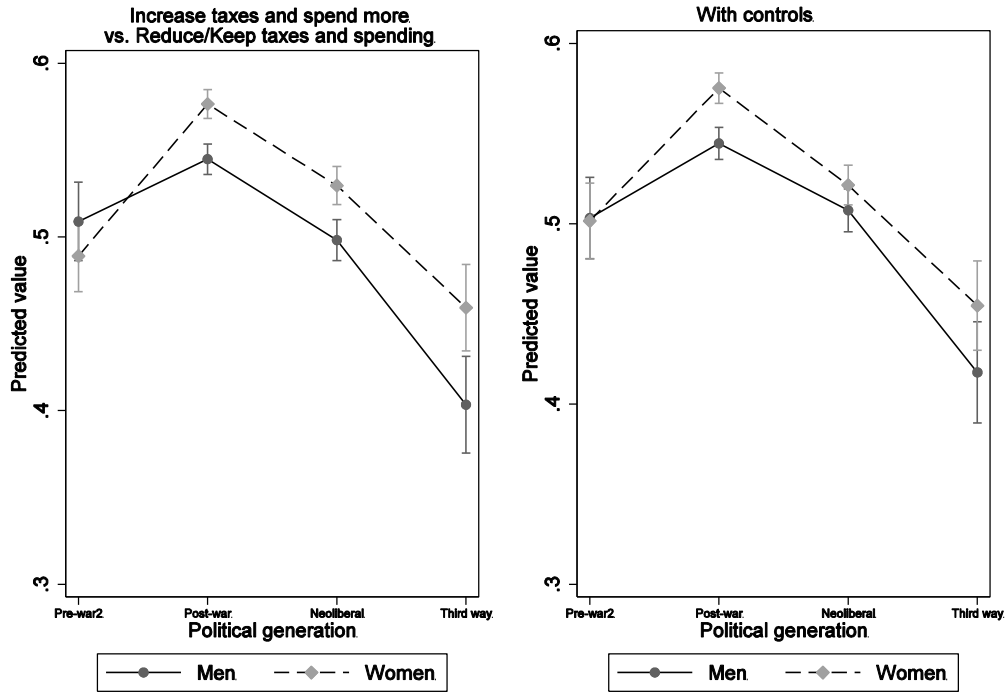
2003	0.771 (0.072)***	0.743 (0.075)***
2004	0.731 (0.078)***	0.720 (0.081)***
2005	0.631 (0.078)***	0.561 (0.080)***
2006	0.673 (0.073)***	0.651 (0.076)***
2007	0.486 (0.074)***	0.462 (0.077)***
2008	0.343 (0.079)***	0.374 (0.082)***
2009	0.233 (0.094)**	0.242 (0.097)**
2010	-0.004 (0.076)	-0.046 (0.079)
2011	0.213 (0.076)***	0.206 (0.079)***
2012	0.207 (0.076)***	0.189 (0.079)**
Owns house		-0.062 (0.022)***
Marital status. Reference: married/cohabiting		
Widowed		-0.004 (0.029)
Divorced/separated		-0.146 (0.034)***
Never married		-0.051 (0.027)*
Union membership		0.187 (0.022)***
Income. Reference: low		
Middle		-0.050 (0.025)*
High		-0.006 (0.034)
White		0.554 (0.042)***
Social class. Reference: none		
Working class		-0.077 (0.058)
Middle class		0.041 (0.058)
Left education by age 16		-0.122 (0.021)***
Employment status. Reference: in work		
In FT education		0.822 (0.022)***
Unemployed		0.746 (0.029)***
Retired		0.565 (0.044)***
Looking after home		0.270 (0.031)***
Other		0.483 (0.102)***
Party ID. Reference: Conservative		
Labour		0.254



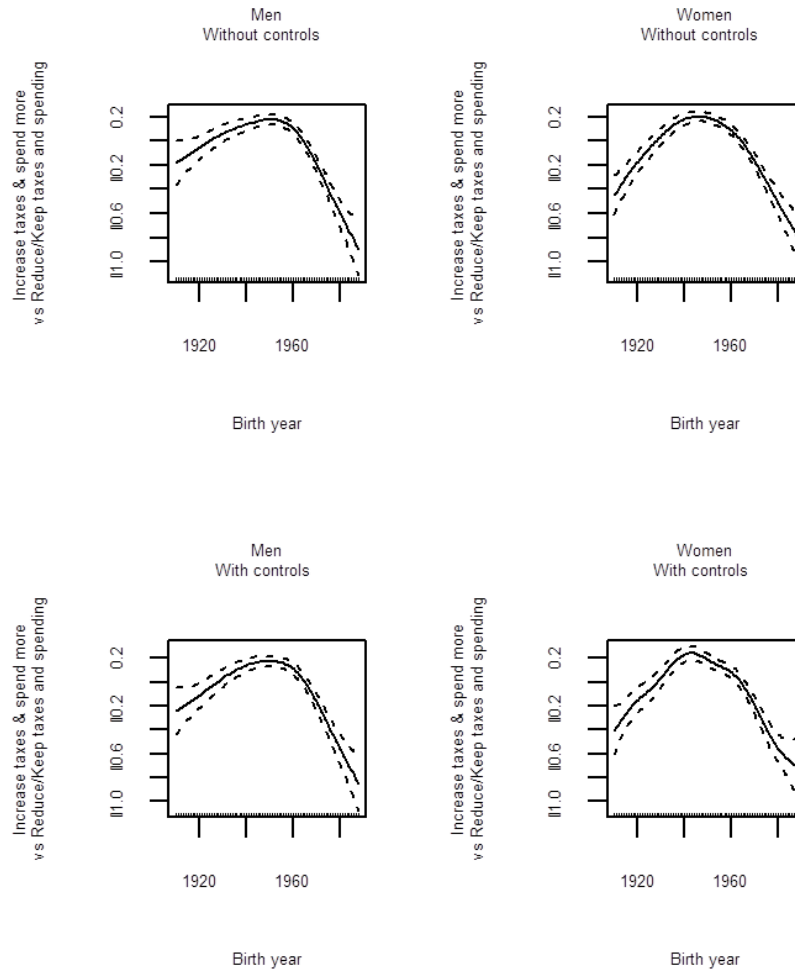
Liberal/Liberal Democrat		(0.042)***
		0.132
Other		(0.038)***
		0.126
None		(0.032)***
		0.422
Constant	-0.826	(0.043)***
	(0.077)***	-1.802
<i>Pseudo-R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.06
<i>Log-likelihood</i>	-39176.088	-38039.482
<i>N</i>	58,732	58,732

NB: \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors are in parentheses.

**Figure 3: Predicted support for spending on social services in Britain by gender and generation from models 1 and 2, BSA**



**Figure 4: Generational trends in Britain for support for spending on social services for men and women, BSA (GAMs)**



Finally, the results from the BES models also for Britain reported in Table 5 show evidence for the post-war consensus generation, with the neoliberal and third way generations less supportive of redistribution than the post-war generation, although there is no difference between the pre-war and post-war generations. As with the BSA, the Wald tests in Table 6 confirm that the differences between the post-war generation and the younger generations are statistically significantly different from each other.

There is also evidence for the gendered post-war consensus hypothesis, with the largest gender gap present for the post-war generation, which then narrows for both the neoliberal and third way generations. Figure 5 once more visualises the decreasing support for redistribution amongst the younger generations in Britain, showing a wide gender gap for the post-war generation which becomes almost non-existent for the third way generation. Figure 6, with the smoothed cohort effect plots confirms again that our results are robust to alternative specifications of the age-period-cohort models. In Britain, therefore, we find evidence that the post-war period was a socialisation context that produced a generation who are especially supportive of spending and redistribution, particularly amongst women.

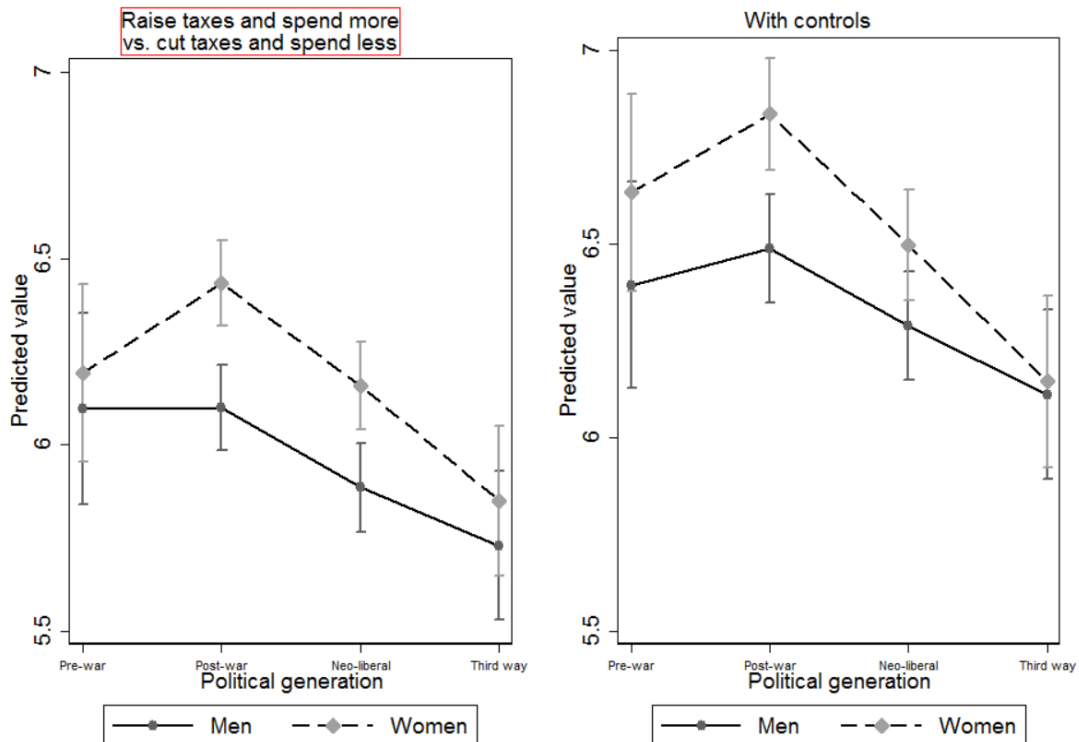
**Table 5: Support for spending in Britain, BES (APC models)**

	Model 1: APC	Model 2: with controls
Political generation. Reference: pre-war		
Post-war generation	0.002 (0.116)	0.095 (0.114)
Neoliberal generation	-0.213 (0.138)	-0.106 (0.136)
Third way generation	-0.368 (0.170)**	-0.283 (0.169)*
Gender (female)	0.095 (0.132)	0.239 (0.131)*
Post-war generation*gender	0.239 (0.143)*	0.107 (0.139)
Neoliberal*gender	0.179 (0.147)	-0.030 (0.145)
Third way*gender	0.026 (0.174)	-0.205 (0.171)
Age. Reference: 18-34		
Aged 35-59	0.156 (0.061)**	0.128 (0.060)**
Aged 60+	0.287 (0.090)***	0.115 (0.098)
Year of survey. Reference: 1987		
1992	0.336 (0.076)***	0.395 (0.074)***
1997	0.810 (0.063)***	0.705 (0.062)***
2001	0.079 (0.065)	-0.080 (0.066)
2005	-0.359 (0.063)***	-0.463 (0.064)***
2015	-0.176 (0.080)**	-0.168 (0.081)**
Owns house		-0.094 (0.046)**
Marital status. Reference: married/cohabiting		
Widowed		-0.181 (0.080)**
Divorced/separated		-0.059 (0.069)
Never married		-0.057 (0.056)
Union membership		0.176 (0.045)***
Income. Reference: low		
Middle		-0.058 (0.053)
High		-0.032 (0.060)
White		0.506 (0.078)***
Social class. Reference: none		
Working class		0.093 (0.043)**
Middle class		0.075 (0.049)
Degree		0.093

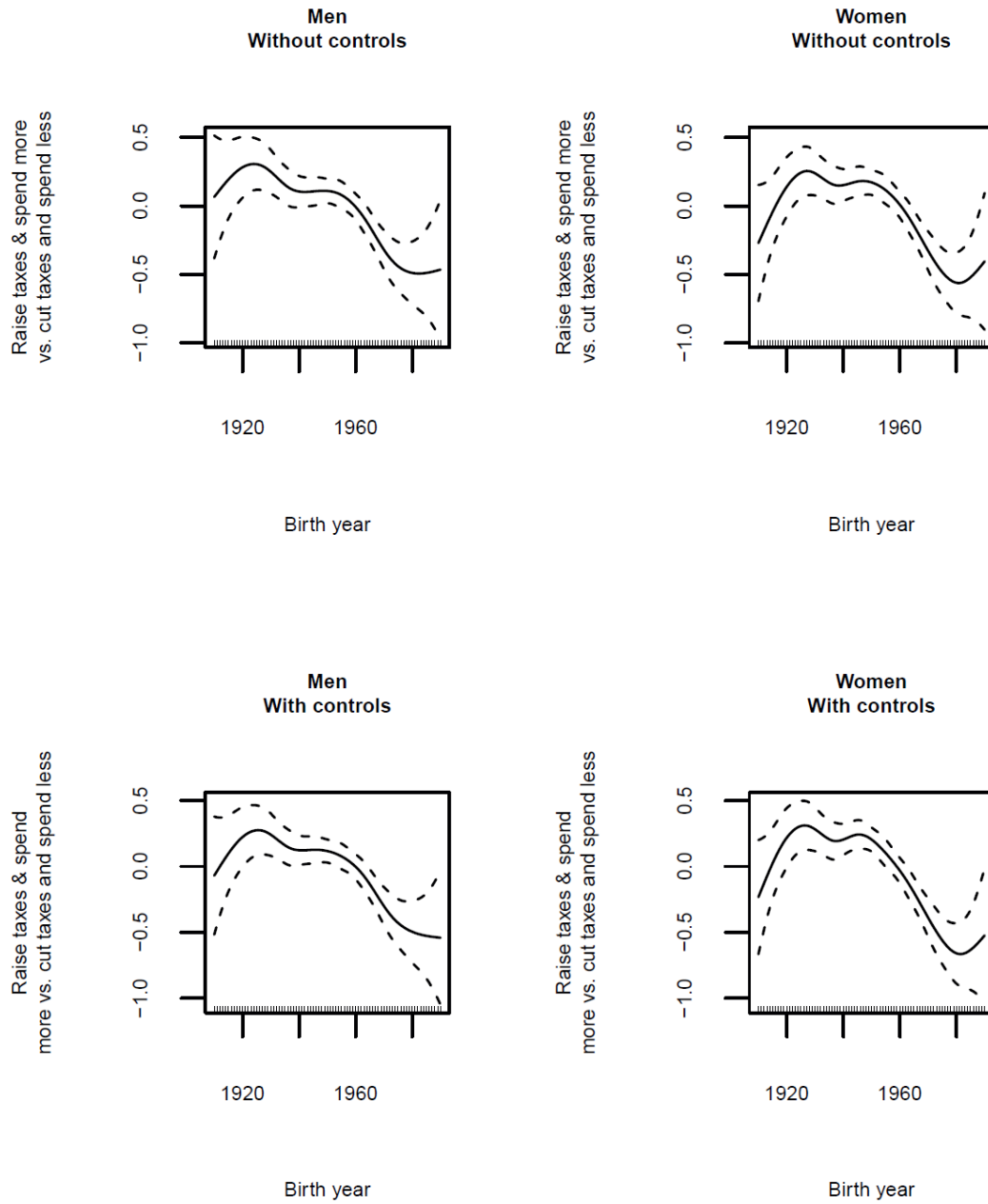
		(0.040)**
Employment status. Reference: in work		
In FT education		0.321
		(0.130)**
Unemployed		0.085
		(0.093)
Disabled or retired		0.338
		(0.070)***
Looking after home		0.184
		(0.070)***
Other		0.270
		(0.176)
Party ID. Reference: Conservative		
Labour		1.175
		(0.047)***
Liberal/Liberal Democrat		0.939
		(0.060)***
Other		0.732
		(0.087)***
None		0.434
		(0.060)***
Constant	6.300	5.082
	(0.131)***	(0.163)***
$R^2$	0.05	0.11
$N$	13,865	13,865

NB: \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors are in parentheses

**Figure 5: Predicted support for spending on social services in the United States by gender and generation from models 1 and 2, BES**



**Figure 6: Generational trends in Britain in support for spending on social services for men and women, BES (GAMs)**



**Table 6: Wald test results**

<b>Coefficient comparison</b>	Raise taxes and more services vs. cut taxes and fewer services (7-point scale, ANES)	Increase taxes and spend more vs. Reduce taxes and spend less/Keep taxes and spending (dummy variable, BSA)	Raise taxes and spend more vs. cut taxes and spend less (10-point scale, BES)
<b>Main effects</b>			
Post-war = Neoliberal	**	***	**
Post-war = Third way	ns	***	**
Neoliberal = Third way	ns	***	*
<b>Gender interactions</b>			
Post-war = Neoliberal	ns	*	*
Post-war = Third way	ns	ns	ns
Neoliberal = Third way	ns	ns	ns

\*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

This paper examined how the gender gap in attitudes to redistribution and social spending changes across political generations with data from three major electoral studies from the US and Britain. We analysed ANES, BSA and BES data and showed that the post-war period c.1945-80 in both countries was a crucial socialisation experience with respect to these attitudes. In Britain, the generation socialised during this period, born 1925-57, is by and large more supportive of spending and redistribution than the generations socialised in the pre-war period or during the post-1980 neoliberal and third way contexts. Moreover, the gender gap where women are more leftist than men first emerges for the post-war generation: in neither country is there much consistent evidence that women of the pre-war generation were any more supportive of redistribution and social spending than men. In Britain, the gender gap then narrows again for the generations socialised in the post-1979 period (born 1958-88), under the premierships of Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair.

This is evidence that the socialisation context of the immediate post-war period was important for generational change in attitudes towards redistribution and spending, but also for the gender gap in such attitudes. Women of the post-war generation became even more supportive of this role of government than men of this political generation. We argue that this is because of their closer relationship to the state, the benefits they received as a direct consequence of the post-war expansion of spending, and the congruence between the roles the welfare state expected women to fulfil and the expectations of women themselves. This shows that gender differences in political attitudes are mediated by political context.

For generations born after 1958, the trajectories of the US and Britain diverge. In the US, younger generations are somewhat more supportive of redistribution and spending than older generations, whilst in Britain, those socialised during the neoliberal and third way periods are less leftist than the post-war generation. Moreover, whilst the gender gap remains stable for all generations born in the US after 1925, the gender gap in Britain narrows for the generation born 1958-75 and therefore socialised during the neoliberal period primarily under Margaret Thatcher. There is also evidence from the BES, although not the BSA, that the gender gap continues to narrow for the very youngest generation, born 1976-88. The stable gender gap in attitudes across generations in the US is likely to contribute to the existence in modern elections of the gender gap where women are more supportive of the Democrats than men. The changing attitudinal gender gap in Britain is possibly one of the reasons why such a gender vote gap has yet to emerge there: women of the post-war generation are indeed more leftist than men, but this does not hold for other generations.



The diverging trends are likely due to differences between the US and Britain in the role of government in providing services and redistributive policies. While there are similarities between the US and Britain in terms of the comparison between the post-war period and the neoliberal period, the US never came close to the British model of a national health service and nationalisation of key industries. As a result, the difference in Britain between the post-war and neoliberal periods were much greater than the difference in the US, and it is therefore unsurprising that the generational impression left by the post-1979 period is greater in Britain than that of the post-1981 period in the US. Moreover, there still remain fundamental differences in terms of social spending and taxation between the two countries, with a much weaker social safety net in the US. This is particularly relevant for women: for example, guaranteed paid maternity leave still does not exist in the US. The stabilisation of the gender gap for all post-1925 generations in the US, and the contrasting narrowing of the gender gap for younger generations in Britain, suggests that gender differences remain more marked in country contexts characterised by less generous welfare. The differences between the US and Britain also indicate that explanations for generational change in gender gaps which emphasise common causes across post-industrial nations such as the developmental theory have limitations: although some of the gender gap for younger generations is related to differences in social characteristics between men and women, country-specific socialisation contexts also produce different gender gaps within different political generations.

The results of our analysis therefore confirm that women are more leftist than men with respect to redistribution. In the US in particular, young generations of women display support for redistribution even higher than the generation of women coming of

age in the post-war period. Recent support for Bernie Sanders in the US Democratic contest with Hillary Clinton on the part of younger women in particular confirms this trend. However, in Britain it appears that younger generations of women are less supportive of redistribution than the generation coming of age in the post-war period. The recent support of Bernie Sanders and the growing leftism amongst younger generations of women in the US might suggest that younger generations of women in the two countries may be becoming increasingly similar as young American women become more leftist and young British women move away from the wholehearted support for the welfare state espoused by older generations. While this might translate into decreasing support for universalism in Britain, it may lead to greater public support for social services in the US, particularly more generous maternity leave arrangements.

## References

- Abramovitz, M. 2006. "Welfare Reform in the United States: Gender, Race and Class Matter." *Critical Social Policy* 26 (2): 336–64. doi:10.1177/0261018306062589.
- Andersen, Kristi. 1999. "The Gender Gap and Experiences with the Welfare State." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 32 (1): 17–19.
- Annesley, Claire, Francesca Gains, and Kirstein Rummery. 2007. *Women and New Labour: Engendering Politics and Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bartels, Larry M., and Simon Jackman. 2014a. "A Generational Model of Political Learning." *Electoral Studies* 33 (July): 7–16. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.06.004.
- Bartels, Larry M, and Simon Jackman. 2014b. "A Generational Model of Political Learning." *Electoral Studies* 33. Elsevier Ltd: 7–18.  
doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.06.004.
- Becker, Henk A. 1990. *Life Histories and Generations: Volume I*. Isor/Rijksuniversiteit Te Utrecht.
- Bosanquet, Nick. 1984. "Social Policy and the Welfare State." In *British Social Attitudes: 1984 Report*, edited by Roger Jowell and Colin Airey, 75–98. London: Gower Publishing Company.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Suzanna De Boef, and Tse-Min Lin. 2004. "The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap." *American Political Science Review* 98 (3): 515–28. doi:10.1017/S0003055404001315.
- Campbell, Rosie. 2006. *Gender and the Vote in Britain: Beyond the Gender Gap?* Colchester: ECPR Press.
- . 2012. "What Do We Really Know about Women Voters? Gender, Elections and Public Opinion." *The Political Quarterly*.

- Chaney, Carole Kennedy, R. Michael Alvarez, and Jonathan Nagler. 1998. "Explaining the Gender Gap in US Presidential Elections, 1980-1992." *Political Research Quarterly* 51 (2): 311–39.
- Clarke, John. 2001. "US Welfare: Variations on the Liberal Regime." In *Comparing Welfare States*, edited by Annan Cochrane, John Clarke, and Sharon Gewirtz, 2nd ed., 114–53. London: Sage.
- Clarke, John, Mary Langan, and Fiona Williams. 2001. "The Construction of the British Welfare State." In *Comparing Welfare States*, edited by Allan Cochrane, John Clarke, and Sharon Gewirtz, 2nd ed., 30–68. London: Sage.
- Curtice, John, and Stephen Fisher. 2003. "The Power to Persuade? A Tale of Two Prime Ministers." In *British Social Attitudes: The 20th Report*, edited by Alison Park, John Curtice, Katarina Thomson, Lindsey Jarvis, and Catherine Bromley, 233–45. London: Sage.
- Davis, James. 1992. "Changeable Weather in a Cooling Climate Atop the Liberal Plateau: Conversion and Replacement in Forty-Two General Social Survey Items, 1972-1989." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 56 (3): 261–306. doi:10.1086/269322.
- Edlund, Jonas, and Stefan Svallfors. 2012. "Cohort, Class and Attitudes to Redistribution in Two Liberal Welfare States: Britain and the United States, 1996-2006." In *Ageing Populations in Post-Industrial Democracies: Comparative Studies of Policies and Politics*, 206–25. Oxford: Routledge.
- Erie, Steven P, and Martin Rein. 1988. "Women and the Welfare State." In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, edited by Carol McClurg Mueller, 173–91. London: Sage Publications.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1994. "After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State."

- Political Theory* 22 (4): 591–618.
- Fullerton, Andrew S., and Jeffrey C. Dixon. 2010. “Generational Conflict or Methodological Artifact? Reconsidering the Relationship between Age and Policy Attitudes in the U.S., 1984-2008.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74 (4): 643–73.  
doi:10.1093/poq/nfq043.
- Ghitza, Yair, and Andrew Gelman. 2014. “The Great Society, Reagan’s Revolution, and Generations of Presidential Voting.”  
[http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/unpublished/cohort\\_voting\\_20140605.pdf](http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/unpublished/cohort_voting_20140605.pdf).
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Grasso, Maria T. 2014. “Age, Period and Cohort Analysis in a Comparative Context: Political Generations and Political Participation Repertoires in Western Europe.” *Electoral Studies* 33 (March). Elsevier Ltd: 63–76.  
doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.06.003.
- Grasso, Maria T., Farrall, Stephen, Gray, Emily, Colin, Hay, and Jennings, Will. Forthcoming. Thatcher's Children, Blair's Babies, political socialisation and trickle-down value change: An age, period and cohort analysis. *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Howell, Susan E., and Christine L. Day. 2000. “Complexities of the Gender Gap.” *Journal of Politics* 62 (3): 858–74.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1990. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton

University Press.

Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2000. "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women's and Men's Voting Behavior in Global Perspective." *International Political Science Review* 21 (4): 441–63.

———. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Iversen, Torben, and Frances Rosenbluth. 2006. "The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 1–19.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1981. *Generations and Politics: A Panel Study of Young Adults and Their Parents*. Princeton University Press.

Kaufmann, Karen. M, and John. R Petrocik. 1999. "The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (3): 864–87.

Krosnick, Jon A., and Duane F. Alwin. 1989. "Aging and Susceptibility to Attitude Change." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57 (3): 416–25.

Luo, Liying. 2013. "Assessing Validity and Application Scope of the Intrinsic Estimator Approach to the Age-Period-Cohort Problem." *Demography* 50 (6): 1945–67.  
doi:10.1007/s13524-013-0243-z.

Mannheim, Karl. 1968. "The Problem of Generations." In *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, edited by Paul Kecskemeti, 276–321. London: Routledge & K. Paul.

Mayer, William G. 1992. *The Changing American Mind: How and Why American Public Opinion Changed between 1960 and 1988*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Neundorf, Anja. 2010. "Democracy in Transition: A Micro Perspective on System Change in Post-Socialist Societies." *The Journal of Politics* 72 (4): 1096–1108. doi:10.1017/S0022381610000551.
- Norris, Pippa. 1988. "The Gender-Gap: A Cross-National Trend?" In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, edited by Carol Mueller, 192–217. Beverley Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pateman, Carole. 2014. "The Patriarchal Welfare State." In *The Welfare State Reader*, edited by Christopher Pierson, Francis Castles, and Ingela Naumann, 3rd ed., 102–19. Cambridge.
- Pop-Eleches, Grigore, and Joshua a. Tucker. 2014. "Communist Socialization and Post-Communist Economic and Political Attitudes." *Electoral Studies* 33 (March). Elsevier Ltd: 77–89. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.06.008.
- Russell, A .T., R. J. Johnston, and C. J. Pattie. 1992. "Thatcher's Children: Exploring the Links between Age and Political Attitudes." *Political Studies* 40 (4): 742–56.
- Sapiro, Virginia. 1990. "The Gender Basis of American Social Policy." In *Women, the State, and Welfare*, edited by Linda Gordon. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Schneider, Sandra K., and William G. Jacoby. 2005. "Elite Discourse and American Public Opinion: The Case of Welfare Spending." *Political Research Quarterly* 58 (3): 367–79.
- Sefton, Tom. 2009. "Moving in the Right Direction? Public Attitudes to Poverty, Inequality, and Redistribution." In *Towards a More Equal Society? Poverty,*

- Inequality, and Policy since 1997*, edited by John Hills, Tom Sefton, and Kitty Stewart. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shapiro, Robert Y., and Harpreet Mahajan. 1986. "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- Shorrocks, Rosalind. 2016. "Modernisation and Government Socialisation: Considering Explanations for Gender Differences in Cohort Trends in British Voting Behaviour." *Electoral Studies* 42. Elsevier Ltd: 237–48.  
doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2016.03.004.
- Smets, Kaat, and Anja Neundorf. 2012. *The Making of Political Generations : Party Preferences and National Governments across Western Democracies*. Nuffield's Working Papers Series in Politics. Oxford: Nuffield's Working Papers Series in Politics.
- Taylor-Gooby, Peter. 1987. "Citizenship and Welfare." In *British Social Attitudes: The 1987 Report*, edited by Roger Jowell, Sharon Witherspoon, and Brook Lindsay, 1–18. London: Gower Publishing Company.
- . 1988. "The Future of the British Welfare State: Public Attitudes, Citizenship and Social Policy under the Conservative Governments of the 1980s." *European Sociological Review* 4 (1): 1–19.
- Tilley, James, and Geoffrey Evans. 2014. "Ageing and Generational Effects on Vote Choice: Combining Cross-Sectional and Panel Data to Estimate APC Effects." *Electoral Studies* 33 (July). Elsevier Ltd: 19–27.  
doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.06.007.
- Togebly, Lise. 1994. "Political Implications of Increasing Numbers of Women in the



Labor Force.” *Comparative Political Studies* 27 (2): 211–40.

Welch, Susan, and John Hibbing. 1992. “Financial Conditions, Gender, and Voting in American National Elections.” *The Journal of Politics* 54 (1): 197.  
doi:10.2307/2131650.

Yang, Yang, and Kenneth C. Land. 2006. “A Mixed Models Approach to the Age-Period-Cohort Analysis of Repeated Cross-Section Surveys, with an Application to Data on Trends in Verbal Test Scores.” *Sociological Methodology* 36 (2006): 75–97.

———. 2008. “Age-Period-Cohort Analysis of Repeated Cross-Section Surveys: Fixed or Random Effects?” *Sociological Methods & Research* 36 (3): 297–326.  
doi:10.1177/0049124106292360.

## Appendix

### A.1 Variable descriptive statistics, ANES

	mean	sd	min	max
Gender	0.54	0.50	0	1
Political Generations	2.24	0.73	1	4
Year of birth	1948.97	16.74	1913	1988
Age groups	1.82	0.72	1	3
Year of survey	1991.81	9.02	1982	2008
Tenure (owns or mortgage)	0.64	0.48	0	1
Marital status	1.92	1.20	1	4
Union	0.10	0.31	0	1
Household income	2.02	0.81	1	3
Race	1.44	0.82	0	4
Class	1.10	0.80	0	2
Education	2.65	0.89	1	4
Party identification	2.27	1.06	1	5
Employment status	1.98	1.48	1	6
Religion	1.67	1.02	1	4

---

N 9137

## A.2 Variable descriptive statistics, BSA

---

	mean	sd	min	max
Gender	0.54	0.50	0	1
Political Generations	2.36	0.75	1	4
Year of birth	1950.30	17.82	1910	1988
Age groups	2.03	0.73	1	3
Year of survey	1998.48	8.23	1983	2012
Tenure (owns or mortgage)	0.69	0.46	0	1
Marital status	1.82	1.16	1	4
Union	0.23	0.42	0	1
Household income	1.84	0.71	1	3
White	0.95	0.21	0	1
Class	2.53	0.55	1	3
Education	0.65	0.48	0	1
Party identification	2.26	1.26	1	5
Employment status	2.48	1.77	1	6

---

N 58732

---

### A.3 Variable descriptive statistics, BES

---

	mean	sd	min	max
Gender	0.53	0.50	0	1
Political Generations	2.36	0.74	1	4
Year of birth	1950.30	17.82	1910	1988
Age groups	2.04	0.73	1	3
Year of survey	1998.69	8.58	1987	2015
Tenure (owns or mortgage)	0.69	0.46	0	1
Marital status	1.79	1.16	1	4
Union	0.23	0.42	0	1
Household income	2.03	0.82	1	3
White	0.95	0.21	0	1
Class	0.65	0.75	0	2
Education	0.52	0.50	0	1
Party identification	2.36	1.32	1	5
Employment status	2.34	1.61	1	6

---

N	13865			
---	-------	--	--	--

---