COMING OF AGE
Growing Up Without Borders: An Exploratory Study Examining Coming of Age in the United Kingdom and the European Union

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine coming of age in the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU). The research provides a better understanding of "Generation E," young adults of Europe between the ages of 18 and 40 who have lived in an essentially borderless continent for the majority of their life. Specifically, this case study investigates Generation E in the UK, providing clues as to whether the EU is succeeding in creating a permanently unified Europe. The method of data collection was interviewing a diverse group of UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40. Results included four emergent categories, revealing that Generation E does not exist within the participants of the study. The outcome was attributed to three general factors working against EU unification efforts within the UK: nationalism, academic culture and superiority. Based on this information, recommendations were made as to what needs to be done within the UK to create a Generation E, based upon the aforementioned obstacles.

INTRODUCTION

In Reid's (2004) book, *The United States of Europe*, he defines Generation E as young adults of Europe between the ages of 18 and 40 who live in a continent that has been without borders for most of their lifetime. These individuals have also been referred to as the "Erasmus generation," named after the EU, an intergovernmental and supranational union of 25 democratic countries known as member states, sponsored university exchange program that has sent 1.2 million students to study abroad within Europe during their university years (Bennhold, 2005). The majority of those who are adapting a European identity are said to speak English, attend soccer games and live in countries other than their home nation. Generation E goes beyond the efforts of EU politicians who are trying to unite Europe through a vast array of laws and policies, as this generation represents "…a new breed of European: a person who considers the entire continent—not just one country or city—to be home" (Reid, p.199).

There is no doubt that Europe is coming together politically, economically and physically. Some contend that Generation E is a result of this merger. Major differences between this new breed of Europeans and other people across the world have been observed in technology, food and religion. Although Europe is home to companies that dominate the technology industry, such as Finland's Nokia and Germany's Siemens, Generation E is afraid of modern innovations. These individuals have an inherent fear that everything has the ability to kill you, including the technology they rely on daily. Reid says that for these people "fear has dropped a blanket of worry, of insecurity, over some aspects of contemporary life" (p. 220). The same type of obsessive trepidation carries over to food, as modern Europeans approach genetically modified crops (GMOs) with caution. Although common in North America, the EU has set strict restrictions on their production. Another distinct variation is observed in religion, which has been in decline as Generation E moves away from the church and towards a more secular society. Depending on how the question is asked, 82 percent of Americans say that God is very important to them, while less than 20 percent of Europeans express similar religious convictions (Rifkin, 2004).

The significance of Generation E is that they are a new, unstudied group of individuals who can provide clues as to whether the EU is succeeding in creating a permanently unified continent. While some distinctions have been made regarding characteristics of these individuals, no solid research has been conducted to explore why these trends are occurring. Although Reid contends that "In Tallinn and Seville, in Plymouth, Prague, and Paris, they read the same books, wear the same clothes, watch the same TV shows…and drink the same cocktails," there are no detailed studies to test the statement's validity (Reid, p.200).

For this reason, it has yet to be determined where the majority of these individuals come from, if they are represented in every member nation and if Generation E is truly a proper term for the classification of those who have grown up in a unified Europe. The UK provides an interesting case study because the county is confused and divided about its role in the world: should it try to be a key player in the new unified Europe, or should it shut out the EU and forge closer ties with the United States and become a self-determining world superpower.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review further examines what past research says about Generation E and coming of age in the UK and EU. First, the EU will be looked at, defined in detail and a brief history will be provided. Second, a similar assessment will be made concerning the UK's relationship with the EU. Finally, Generation E's relevance and future will be discussed.

The EU

The EU is an intergovernmental and supranational union of 25 democratic countries known as member states. (McCormick, 1999; Reid, 2004; Rifkin, 2004). In the space of forty years, Europeans have designed a system that would make it inconceivable that they would ever take up arms against each other again (McCormick, p. xii). The EU was established under that name in 1992 by the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), although many aspects of the Union existed before the treaties, dating back to the early 1950s. Major achievements of the EU include the completion of the single market and the replacement of individual national currency with a single European currency. The body's activities cover various areas of public policy, including agriculture, competition, transport, the environment, energy, telecommunications, research and development, working conditions, culture, consumer affairs, education and employment (p. 86).

As the EU has grown, so has the body of laws and policies that drive its activities, and so have the powers and reach of the institutions that make, decide and implement those laws and policies (p. 87). Five institutions of the EU control the majority of this power: The European Commission, The Council of Ministers, The European Parliament, The European Court of Justice and The European Council. The European Commission is the executive branch, similar to the cabinet of the European government (Reid, p. 276). It is comprised of various ministers and other leaders who implement policies of the union. As for The Council of Ministers, it is comparable to a board of directors. It is made up of prime ministers and presidents of the member countries, who set a general direction for the union (p. 274). The legislative branch of the EU is The European Parliament, an assembly of individuals elected by citizens of member states who serve five-year terms. There are 732 seats, roughly one for each 600,000 people, which creates a constituency for each member about the same size as a congressional district in the United States (p. 279-280). The judicial branch of the EU most compares to The European Court of Justice, where citizens from any member country can bring a suit claiming a violation in rights (p. 162). Finally, the European Council is the name given to the twenty-five heads of state while they are meeting.

The principal reason why European countries began a push for unification through a union was to achieve economic integration. The benefits of a free market between member nations and what type of impact it will have on their economy can be seen differently by each country. Those who wanted an economic but not a political union, "…hoped that a more integrated market would strengthen their national economies and shore up their political regimes" (Rifkin, p. 206). For individuals who supported a more federal political union, they hoped that though a free market, individual member states would be, "…more interdependent and reliant on the Union, eventually drawing more political power away from their respective states…" (p.206). One of the more controversial and risky aspects of the integration includes switching to one currency. The Euro, the single European currency adopted first in 1999 by 11 member nations, first became a realization in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty, which created a three-stage schedule for the rollout of the new European money concluding in 2002 (Reid, p. 70).

The UK & the EU

British involvement in European integration is one of the most contested and enduring features in British politics during the second half of the twentieth century (1998, June 24; Atkinson & Skinner; 2002, BBC News, 2004; Gowland & Turner, 2000; Reid, 2004; Sheldon, 2001; Foster & Blair, 2002). Although a member of the EU, "public opinion in the UK has rarely shown active support for European integration, and there are consistently high polls recording indifference or opposition to the EU." (Sheldon, p.307). Within the UK, the EU debate has caused great rifts within political parties that make smooth integration impossible. They claim to be committed to the union; however, they have yet to adopt the Euro and still remain a strong dependable ally to the United States. These are areas that fellow EU nations are critical of. "The uncertainty surrounding the precise nature and extent of

British interest in the EU has been one of the elements of continuity in the British approach to European integration" (Gowland & Turner, p. xii).

In order for any single market economy to run efficiently, trade and investments should not be interrupted by exchange rate adjustments. This is one of the many benefits reaped by EU member nations that have adapted a single currency, yet the UK is continuing to follow a monetary policy affected by domestic politics. According to Market & Opinion Research International (MORI), there is a clear majority of UK citizens who oppose entry into the single currency arena. A specific question asked by MORI was, "Which of the following best describes your own view of British participation in the single currency?" According to those polled, 18 percent "…strongly support British participation," 24 percent were "…generally in favour of British participation, but could be persuaded against it if I thought it would be bad for the British economy," 24 percent stated they were "…generally opposed to British participation, but could be persuaded in favour of it if I thought it would be good for the British economy," 29 percent considered themselves "…strongly oppose British participation," and 5 percent answered that they "Don't know" (Atkinson & Skinner, 2002). The majority against taking part in the launch of the Euro was even larger. In reaction to public opinion regarding a monetary union, a popular British newspaper printed, "*The Sun* will not flinch from opposing the Euro. We are against it economically, politically and constitutionally. We will *fight, fight, fight.* And even if we lose, we hope people will use the words of one of the greatest of our statesman, Winston Churchill, and say….*This was their finest hour"* (1998, June 24). Citizens of the UK believe adopting the Euro would not help create the condition for a higher and more productive investment in Britain. Nevertheless, it is contended that adapting the currency would cement the UK's commitment to the EU, while non-participation lays open the possibility of the further erosion of British influence within the EU (Foster & Blair, p. 162).

Although America has outwardly taken a position that encourages UK integration with the rest of Europe, the UK is often criticized for being a strong ally with the country. Support from the United States is seen as British dependence on the country (Gowland & Turner, p.37). This association has been labeled the "special relationship," seen by many EU member nations as a barrier to European unity. In the future, the UK will have to evaluate this affiliation and decide if they want to continue alienating the rest of the member nations by being a close ally with the United States. This is a tough question for Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, and the rest of his countrymen who are facing increasing pressure from other member nations concerning the position they will take. When asked about countries joining the Union and not backing the United Stats, Keith Kettlewell, a citizen of the UK, informed the BBC, "I will never forgive our politicians who have foisted this unaccountable monster [the EU] upon us" (BBC News).

The UK's current conservative, post-imperial, foreign policy shows no indication of EU policy change to come. Despite Blair's popularity and persistent efforts, he has failed to turn public opinion towards supporting enlargement, or to shift the general indifference of the EU that still dominates polling figures (Sheldon**,** p. 325). He is strongly committed to the EU and he is the nation's leading advocate for joining the Euro. At the same time, Blair is so determined to be friends with Washington (Reid, p.250). For now, he has decided to keep the United States close and prevent his country from becoming "just another European country in the eyes of the United States" (Gowland & Turner, p. 81).

Generation E

Generation E is comprised of the educated, borderless, vigorous, and fairly prosperous members of Europe's youth culture (1993, July/August; Newman, 2005; Reid, 2004; Rifkin, 2004). While EU politicians are working hard to create a unified Europe in the markets and law books, young adults living in EU member nations are creating a unified society of their own, in offices and bars, in soccer stadiums, health clubs and Internet cafes (Reid, p.199). The ties that bind the new Europe are also beginning to connect together its youth. Unlike their parents, who grew up within the confines of nationhood, they are multilingual and multicultural. They are often described to be similar to "Generation X," the generation born in the United States after the baby boomers.

One significant way the EU is bringing its youth together is through several educational programs. In Rifkin's (2004) book, *The European Dream*, three high-profile education programs are noted: Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and the Youth program. Together, these programs establish common education projects that encourage student and teacher mobility between EU member countries, and are engaged in efforts to standardize curriculum (Rifkin, p. 62). They also coordinate job training and internship opportunities throughout the continent. Another notable effort is the Erasmus project, which has provided grants to over a million European students, allowing them to study in other member countries (pg. 62). The term Erasmus generation is derived from this popular project.

Youths are also coming together through pop culture, with such television programs as the "Eurovision Song Contest." The program is comparable to the United State's "American Idol"; however, instead of contestants coming from different states, they are coming from different European nations. Eurovision Song Contest is viewed

by over 250 million people and has been on the air for over 50 years (Newman, p. 39). A further example of how Generation E is coming together is the outpouring of new roads, rail lines, bridges, and tunnels. "This growth in the transportation infrastructure is largely a result of the EU—and massive EU subsidies for trains, airports, highways, and harbors" (Reid, p. 203). A large achievement in this infrastructure was the completion of the Channel Tunnel (also known as the Euro Tunnel or Chunnel) in 1993. The Channel Tunnel carries passengers by train from London to Paris or Brussels in about three hours and is operated by Eurotunnel (1993, July/August, p. 328). It has never been easier to travel form one European country to another.

In summary, literature on the EU, UK and the EU and Generation E were reviewed. Relevant literature discusses how the basic infrastructure of the union, reasons why member countries came together and how the body is evolving. With regards to the UK and the EU, experts explain that the British government has been faced with many hardships in terms of integration. Mixed feelings regarding the union and the failure of adapting a single market economy has left many to wonder what future role the UK will hold in the EU. Finally, Generation E was introduced and reasons why Europe's youth is coming together were examined. The research carried out in this study attempts to fill in the gaps of current literature that have defined Generation E, using the UK as a case study. By interviewing a diverse group of UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40, a better idea of whether the current definition of Generation E is all inclusive or a generalization.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions were developed that were investigated and answered during the study:
• RQ1: What type of shared values do citizens of the UK between the ages of 18 and 40 have with the rest of Europe?
• RQ2: Do citizens of the UK between the ages of 18 and 40 have an identity beyond one that is national or regional?
• RQ3: To the citizens of the UK between the ages of 18 and 40, what does it mean to be European?

The first research question is in reference to what Europeans have in common. It will specifically address the assertion that individuals within the Generation E age group have similar interests. The second research question will provide information as to how the EU is effecting the view citizens of the UK have regarding their identity. If they truly are a part of Generation E, then they will recognize the EU as their government and people living in member nations their fellow citizens. The third research question examines what it means to be European. By investigating this it will become clear as to if being European is the same as being British.

METHOD

This study will be approached through qualitative research and the data collection used will be interviews. Qualitative research is defined by Reinard (2001) as observations in predominantly nonnumeric terms. This type of research tends to describe or interpret communication exchanges while describing the human condition by using general views of social action. Interviews will be the most effective way to obtain information from a specific audience. The combination of qualitative research and interviews provides an outlet to study coming of age in the UK and the EU during a time when they have grown up without borders.

Participants

The participants for this study were citizens of the UK between the ages of 18 and 40. 35 participants, all of who live in the London area, were interviewed. London was chosen as the location to conduct the research, because it is a diverse metropolis with a high population of UK citizens. Individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 40 needed to be interviewed, as that is the age group of those who have gown up for most, if not all, of their lives in a united Europe. A varied group of non-random participants were selected. Non-random refers to samples that are selected by the discretion of the researcher. They are often quick and cheap to create, even if they usually are less representative than random ones (Sampling, 2004).

In order to reduce outside influences, each participant was interviewed individually. Interviewees were selected on a non-random basis, including the following selection factors: age, educational background, location within London and professional background. Other factors determined to be significant were also included. The goal was to select a assorted pool of individuals to take part in the study. Questions for the interviews were predetermined and open to probing.

Measurement

To determine the opinions of UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 regarding coming of age in their country and the EU, individual interviews were conducted. This form of measurement was used because it allowed for personal interaction that made participants more willing to share information. Such questions as, "Where have you traveled outside of Britain?" and, "If someone asked you where you are from, how would you answer them?" were used to bring the discussion to a personal level (see Appendix A). In addition, personal interviews allowed for probing. This helped to gain more information based off of the interviewee's answers.

Procedures

London area university campuses were chosen as interview sites because they are a common place to find 18 to 40 year olds. Prior to traveling to London, research was conducted in order to determine the best campuses to look for potential participants. Three institutions that are part of the University of London system of schools were chosen because of their large size: the Imperial College London, Kings College London and London School of Economics (LSE). Once at the universities, participants were located in their student unions, approached and asked to participate. Each institution was informed of the study and gave permission to conduct the dialogues.

All of the questioning was conducted face-to-face, from Jan. 16 until January 20, 2006. Before the interviews took place, necessary steps to receive IRB approval were followed and completed. This included compiling a list of basic interview questions and the creation of an informed consent form that was signed by each participant prior to questioning (see Appendix A & B). The interviews were recorded, so an effective data analysis could be conducted at a later date.

Data analysis

Since the research is qualitative, the analysis was based off of the interviews and independent research. Specifically, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) constant comparative analysis was used. The first step taken to analyze the data was to organize and prepare it for analysis. This involved transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes and arranging data into different types. The second was the read through the data collected in order to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning. Third, a coding procedure was used to begin detailed analysis, which involved taking data, placing it into categories and labeling each category with a term. Fourth, the coding process was used to generate categories and themes for analysis. Finally, how the description and themes will be represented in the final narrative was established.

RESULTS

The results presented emerged during the data analysis. These categories, worded as declarative statements about growing up without borders, represent how UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 feel about coming of age in the UK and the EU. In addition, they answer the questions that ground this research project. Table one identifies the categories that emerged in this study and includes evidence of Generation E's lack of existence within the established age group of UK citizens.

Table One

Emergent Categories of Growing up without borders

1. Stagnant schooling
2. The EU as a major economic unit
3. Being European is a luxury many cannot afford
4. Nationalism over the European community

The emergent categories, described individually, were mutually exclusive and significant in that they provided the greatest insight into UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40. In order to demonstrate personal flavor of participant's experiences, yet maintain confidentiality, every account includes a fictional name. As the EU is a contemporary body, the Generation E age group would have learned differently about the unification. Therefore, the first category described in the results reviews what participants know and how they learned about the EU.

Stagnant schooling

After asking the first interviewee, Beatrice**,** how the UK would benefit from adapting the Euro, she responded, "you would probably know more about this subject than I would." Beatrice's response was the first indication that the curriculum in UK schools includes little information concerning the EU or European integration. It became more evident after asking the interviewees basic questions about the EU, for example, if they could name five

nations that are members of the Union. Anne said, "I'd be lucky to get three." "No, I can't think of any actually," said Charles. "It depends if you count Wales." Even before attending a university, instruction at the undergraduate level sparsely covered the EU. "There was never much of an emphasis on it," said Albert. "Even if our schooling focused on the EU, I wouldn't have cared about it anyway." Participants went on to explain that while in a university program, the majority of your classes focus on your concentration, which is why they have had little education regarding the EU.   "I'm a computer science major, so I don't have any classes that talk about politics," said William.

Zara presents another consensus among the participants when she stated, "besides learning more about the EU, we need to learn more about each other." Eugenie added, "in order to become closer, we need to learn to speak other languages." After visiting three London-area college campuses and talking to several students, it became evident that UK citizens do not have a firm grasp on any language besides English. "I speak a bit of French," "I know enough German to get by on a holiday" and "American slang is my specialty" were all examples of how participants described their knowledge of foreign dialects. Most of the interviewee's foreign language skills were learned before entering a university and were not emphasized, as institutions of higher education in the UK do not require it for admittance into many of their programs. After asking Henry if he thought speaking another language would be beneficial, he responded, "how can Europe be considered one if we can't even understand each other?"

The EU as a major economic unit
The majority of interviewees agreed that the only benefit the UK gains through EU membership is potential economic gains. "It's basically all about the improvement of monetary conditions," said Henry. When asked to expand on how EU member nations benefit fiscally, the participants were unable to explain their reasoning in detail. Andrew said, "I really don't know why membership is beneficial for trade." "I can't really explain why, but it's the main reason why we joined the union," said Sarah. Edward said, "I heard on the BBC that we joined to set up better trade relations with other nations and that was as much as I wanted to know." Further probing revealed that popular news programs and close family members shaped views, about the EU and the importance membership brings to the UK's financial system. It was also discovered that politics is not a common topic of conversation between the Generation E age group. "Political issues such as this are something I don't talk about with my friends," said Andrew. "It's not that we all disagree on the issues, it's that it's a bore."

Even though UK students fail to talk politics on a regular basis, they are vocal about one policy issue. Even though it was established that college students believed membership to the EU had a variety of economic advantages, none of the students questioned supported transitioning from the Great Britain Pound (GBP or Pound) to the Euro. "Just because our country takes advantage of the economic benefits offered through membership to the EU, does not mean we need to use their currency," said Henry. The closest an interviewee came to saying they supported the change was, "I'd prefer not" and "It's all the same to me."

Being European is a luxury many cannot afford
Although the interviewees live in a region filled with discount airlines and hotels that can take you from London to Paris for just £34 and book you a room for £27, it is not common for them to travel outside their country. While a handful of the individuals talked about their travels that took them throughout the world, many had never left the UK. "I've been to parts of Germany and that's really it," said Rose. Yet, everyone stated that they do plan to travel outside their country some time in the future. Amelia said, "It would be nice to get around but I haven't got anything on my plate." The reason why is that despite the low travel prices, Britain's do not; have a lot of disposable income. "I have had to work hard to get to where I am now," said Edward. "I am more worried about how I will afford a house before I turn 50 then if I will get to ski the Alps next month."

Many blame their money problems on the high taxes that plague most EU member nations. "They tax you for everything in the EU and the UK," said Estella. "Not only do we have to pay a 17.5 percent VAT tax on a new TV we purchase, but we are charged a yearly tax for just owning that piece of the equipment." The EU and local governments justify their taxation systems because it funds social programs they deem necessary for their society. Some of the many ventures funded include study abroad programs such as the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth and Erasmus projects. "Unfortunately these study abroad programs often only benefit the rich," said Peter. "You have to have a lot of money to take part in the study abroad programs, said Zara. "Even then, it's not something most families want to invest in." Many of the other students interviewed commented that they were too focused on their studies to take part in any of the aforementioned programs designed to "boost the image of the EU".

To escape the burden of EU taxation, several UK families move to non-member countries in Europe or various other locations. "I lived in Singapore most of my life and came back to the UK to attend a university," said Samuel. Individuals who grew up abroad explained that nations outside the EU are looking for educated professionals to

make a move and work for multinational corporations (MNCs). "It's not that hard to make the move," said Edward. "There are fairly large English-speaking communities in foreign countries and we all attend the same private school." This confinement of sorts hinders students who live abroad from adapting new languages and cultures. It keeps them within their comfort zones, allowing them to live in an environment familiar to them. Zara said, "My parents will move back to the UK after they retire, as will their friends who work with them abroad."

Nationalism over the European community

The university students interviewed where not shy in hiding their patriotism for the UK. When Arthur was asked what it means to be European, he said, "How should I know, I'm British." Another question asked was, "explain one positive aspect of being a member of the EU?" To this, the majority of the participants answered with a simple, "No." When inquirers were made as to negative aspects, students listed several points off the top of their heads. Philip said, "Do you have enough time for me to list them all?" This is a common attitude that can be seen in the other categories reviewed so far. In Stagnant education it was discussed how UK citizens do not feel compelled to learn about other EU nations. They would instead prefer to stay within their communities as, mentioned in "Being a European is a luxury that many cannot afford," even while living abroad. Also, in "The EU as a major economic" a powerful message is portrayed when the British people voice, in unison, their opposition to leaving the Pound for the Euro.

It was revealed through the interviews that many students studying in London area universities are from different countries. "Half of the people in my program are from China," said Victoria. "Well over 50 percent of the students in my school are from other countries," said Ernest. It's a statistic that they are proud of." Despite the high numbers of international students studying in their country, the interviewees demonstrated their nationalism when they were asked if any of their friends are citizens of other countries. "I try to stick with my own kind," said Frances. "Everyone in this school hangs out with people who have common nationality." Andrew said, "Now that you mention it, I don't really have any friends from other counties." The most popular reply to why students don't branch out and make friends from different cultures was the language barrier.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study support the specific problem stated in previous sections of the paper. Generation E does not exist within the participants of the study, therefore the group is not necessarily represented in every EU nation and the existing definition of Generation E is not a proper term for the classification of those who have grown up in a unified Europe. Moreover, the UK will need to take necessary, critical steps if they want to create a more unified Europe and an age group within their nation that identifies with Generation E. The explanation for this result can be attributed to three general factors working against EU unification efforts in the UK: nationalism, academic culture and superiority. These three areas will be discussed along with the limitation of the study and what suggestions should be made for future research.

Academic culture

After finishing the interviews, it became clear that the UK educational system does not sufficiently cover the EU and unification efforts. Some of the reasons why this could be is because it is a fairly new organization and since the UK's membership is highly contested by its citizens, schools are unlikely to swiftly adapt their curriculum to include the institution. In addition, higher education in the UK is highly specialized and focuses mostly on the individual's program. Unlike American universities, UK institutions do not have large general education requirements, if any at all. This provides an environment that limits education in the area of politics and current events to many students.

The message being sent by educators to the student population is that European integration and the EU are not important enough to discuss. This instills a traditionalist viewpoint that encourages the Generation E age group within the UK to continue viewing themselves as separate from the rest of the European community their age. Administrators, educators and families of students need to push for change in the current UK curriculum to include a greater emphasis on European unification and the EU. With this adjustment, UK students can move towards making an informed decision regarding where their country fits within the rest of Europe.

Another recommendation for the UK educational system would be to include a foreign language requirement. By requiring students to start young, they will be more apt to learn the language and continue studying it later on in life. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of being able to speak different dialects. This requirement would also be beneficial on a university level for several reasons. One is the fact that there are many international students studying in the universities of the UK. Also, this will aid graduates with gaining employment, surviving in the constantly globalizing world and dropping the language barrier isolating the UK from other EU member nations.

Nationalism

Citizens of the UK are devoted to the interests of their culture and nation. They believe that they will benefit from acting independently rather than collectively, emphasizing national rather than international goals. This is not to say that they do not show any concern in foreign policy, just that their goal in that area is to remain independent from the rest of the European community. A powerful example of this was the interviewee's position against monetary unification. Out of all 35 participants, none expressed interest in adopting the Euro. One explanation for this result can be the fact that currency is a symbol of a nation's heritage. Another explanation is that currency is a symbol of a nation's wealth. The Pound is considered one of the top forms of international currency, as is the United States Dollar, the Japanese Yen and the Euro. These are the moneys being used everyday to conduct business on a global level. The question to many UK citizens then becomes, why should they convert to the Euro when their currency system is already recognized as one of the best?

The next few decades will provide to be crucial for the UK, as they will decide if they are fully committed to the EU or if they are better off as independent. It is an interesting situation, as the general population holds nationalistic views, while government officials have, outwardly, supported moving closer to full integration with the Union. As mentioned in the Academic culture section of the discussion, the general population is not well versed in historical and current events revolving around their government. There is nothing wrong with a nationalistic culture; however, if the UK is truly committed to the EU, they need to put some of these tendencies behind them. If UK politicians had enough courage to abandon the Pound for the Euro, Britons will be taking large step towards unification. The Euro plays the role of a vital organ to the EU, one that is needed for the Union to succeed. Citizens may not like the change at first, but their opinions concerning the decision are apt to chance in the decades that followed.

An additional step that can be taken by the UK government in order to bring its people closer to those living in other countries is to make travel between EU member nations more affordable. One way this can be done is through travel tours that are subsidized by the government. The government can also help bring in MNC's to recruit citizens of the UK for employment. The same goes for the study abroad programs. By creating grants that allow students of all financial means to take advantage of such projects as Erasmus, more children, with greater diversity, will be able to participate.

Superiority

The general attitude of the Generation E age group, residing in the UK, is the quality of being superior, believing that their country has the competitive advantage over other EU nations; thus, they display a sense of being better than others their age. This goes for their opinion of individuals from other EU countries living in Britain as well. Individuals need to diversify their friends, by meeting and interacting with citizens of other nations. One would think this would be easy to do, as the UK is a diverse country. At the university level, schools can encourage this interaction though group work in classes and extracurricular activities. At a countrywide level, the government can promote the desegregation of ethnic communities and put on events to bring community members together.

While the attitude of superiority held by the British can be attributed to the UK's academic culture and sense of nationalism, it can also be traced back to Britain's colonial era when they were the world's super power. By the late 1960s, the UK was on its way to creating the largest empire on the planet by colonizing North America, India, Africa and various other locations. Although still powerful, the UK is not seen as a world super power as it once was several decades ago. This can be a hard mindset to change, as it is difficult to recognize your country's changing status in the world. Only with time, along with a combination of further unification steps between the UK and other EU nations, will opinions of superiority begin to change.

Limitations

Limitations of the research findings relate to the participants interviewed. The representatives from the three London area colleges are only a small representation of the identified age group that is labeled as Generation E. Although the selection process assured they were diverse and came from different backgrounds, it is still hard to account for all perspectives. In addition, a greater perspective of the issue would best be reached by sampling the Generation E population living in more than one member nation.

Future research

In future research relating to this study, it would be important to broaden the number of participants interviewed. Equally important would be to travel to different locations in the UK and into other member nations. Since many of the participants discussed their unhappiness with the EU in general, it would be beneficial to interview political leaders directly involved in the organization. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to talk to the age group outside that of Generation E. They are the individuals who experienced the start of European unification, which would give the researcher a better idea of what they are experiencing from their perspective and how they have and are influencing the younger generations.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the research provided evidence that Generation E does not exist within citizens of the UK. In addition, recommendations were made as to what needs to be done within the UK to create a Generation E. The first research question addressed what type of shared values citizens of the UK between the ages of 18 and 40 have with the rest of Europe. It was established that there are little shared values within this age group. One reason behind this is because of the stagnant schooling plaguing the UK. Teachers and administrators are failing to promote the EU and European unification within the classroom; thus, students are not learning about the political institutions and cultures of other nations throughout Europe. In addition, foreign languages are not emphasized, and UK citizens find themselves struggling with language barriers. In terms of the EU as an economic unit, the majority of participants agreed that the fiscal benefits that come with membership is one of the only positive aspects they associate with the organization. Nonetheless, they also agreed that their currency should not be converted to the Euro.

The second research question focused on the identity of UK citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 and if they considered themselves influenced more nationally or regionally. In the results section, it became clear that the Generation E age group does not have much of an identity beyond one that is local. This is because being European is a luxury many cannot afford. With high taxes, low wages and other priorities, the younger generations of the UK find it hard to enrich their lives with travel outside their country's borders. This also leads to problems in regards to sending their children oversees for exchange programs which are often only feasible for the wealthy members of their society. Even citizen's who take jobs outside the UK move to non-member countries because they do not believe in many of the social programs administrated in member nations. The main policy issue the British are trying to escape would be the tax situation in all EU nations.

The third research question dealt with what it means to be European to the Generation E age group who are citizens of the UK. By the end of the project it was determined that to the interviewees it means nothing to be European because they consider themselves British. This sense of nationalism over the European community was a strong trend that was hard to ignore. A powerful picture was painted when participants discussed their lack of interaction with individuals from other counties. This superior attitude can be traced back to the UK's imperialistic age, when it was considered to be one of the world's largest super powers.

Several recommendations, which were discussed in the Discussion, for the UK have been formulated as the result of this study if they want to move further towards unification with the rest of the EU member nations. First, educators need to change their current curriculum to include more information on the European unification and the EU. A critical part of this emphasis would be to add a foreign language requirement, allowing students to master another dialect. Second, UK politicians need abandon the Pound for the Euro. At the same time, they need to make travel throughout Europe more affordable for their countrymen. This can be done thought tours sponsored by the government and the creation of additional grants for study abroad programs. Third, patients will be required. It cannot be expected that the British people will change all of their onions overnight. Opinions take a long time to form; therefore, they will take a long time to change. Yet, if the following recommendations are followed, citizens of the UK may begin to feel closer, faster, to their fellow Europeans.

This study will benefit political science research in the future by providing a basis for further investigations into the term Generation E and how it relates to the citizens of that age in the UK. Researchers will be able to build on my recommendations and learn from the limitations discussed. In general, the purpose of the study was to open the eyes of the political science community to the fact that it is still too early to call most Europeans, living in EU member nations, between the ages of 18 and 40 part of Generation E. While there are great strides within the community being made to reach this point, there is still a great deal of ground that needs to be covered.

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APPENDIX A

Daniel Fischer
Interview Protocol (all are open to probing)

1.   What is your age?
2.   Where were you born?
3.   How long did you live in that location?
4.   Have you lived anywhere else and if so, where?
5.   How long have you lived in each of these locations?
6.   What is your educational background?
7.   What type of activities did you take part in during your education?
8.   What is your professional background?
9.   What are your hobbies?
10.   Where have you traveled outside of your home country?
11.   Do you plan to travel outside of your home country in the future?
12.   Do you speak any other languages besides your native one?
13.   What do you and your friends do when you hang out?
14.   Do you have friends from other countries?
15.   Do you find you have a lot in common?
16.   Do you agree on political issues?
17.   Is information regarding the European Union integrated into your education?
18.   Can you name all of the member nations of the European Union?
19.   Would you like to see the United Kingdom adopt the Euro?
20.   Explain a positive aspect of being a member nation of the European Union.
21.   Explain a negative aspect of being a member nation of the European Union.
22.   Have you ever faced discrimination because you are European?
23.   If someone asked you where you are from, how would you answer them?
24.   What do you think you have most in common with the citizens of Great Britain?
25.   What do you think you have most in common with Europeans?
26.   Explain what it means to you to be English.
27.   Explain what it means to you to be European.
28.   Can you define "Generation E?"
29.   What is your favorite "football" team?

APPENDIX B

Growing Up Without Borders: An Exploratory Study Examining Coming of Age in the United Kingdom and the European Union

Informed Consent Form

The purpose of the interview is to gather information for research on examining coming of age in the United Kingdom and the European Union. Your identity will be kept confidential.

1. I have been informed that I will be interviewed about my experience growing up in the United Kingdom and the European Union.
2. I have been informed that the interview will last approximately 30 minutes.
3. I have been informed that the interview will be taped and that those tapes will be destroyed after the research project is completed (5/12/2006).
4. I have been informed that there are no known risks involved in the participation of this study.
5. I have been informed that participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

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Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (608) 785-8124.

_____   _____
Researcher Signature   Participant Signature

_____   _____
Date   Date