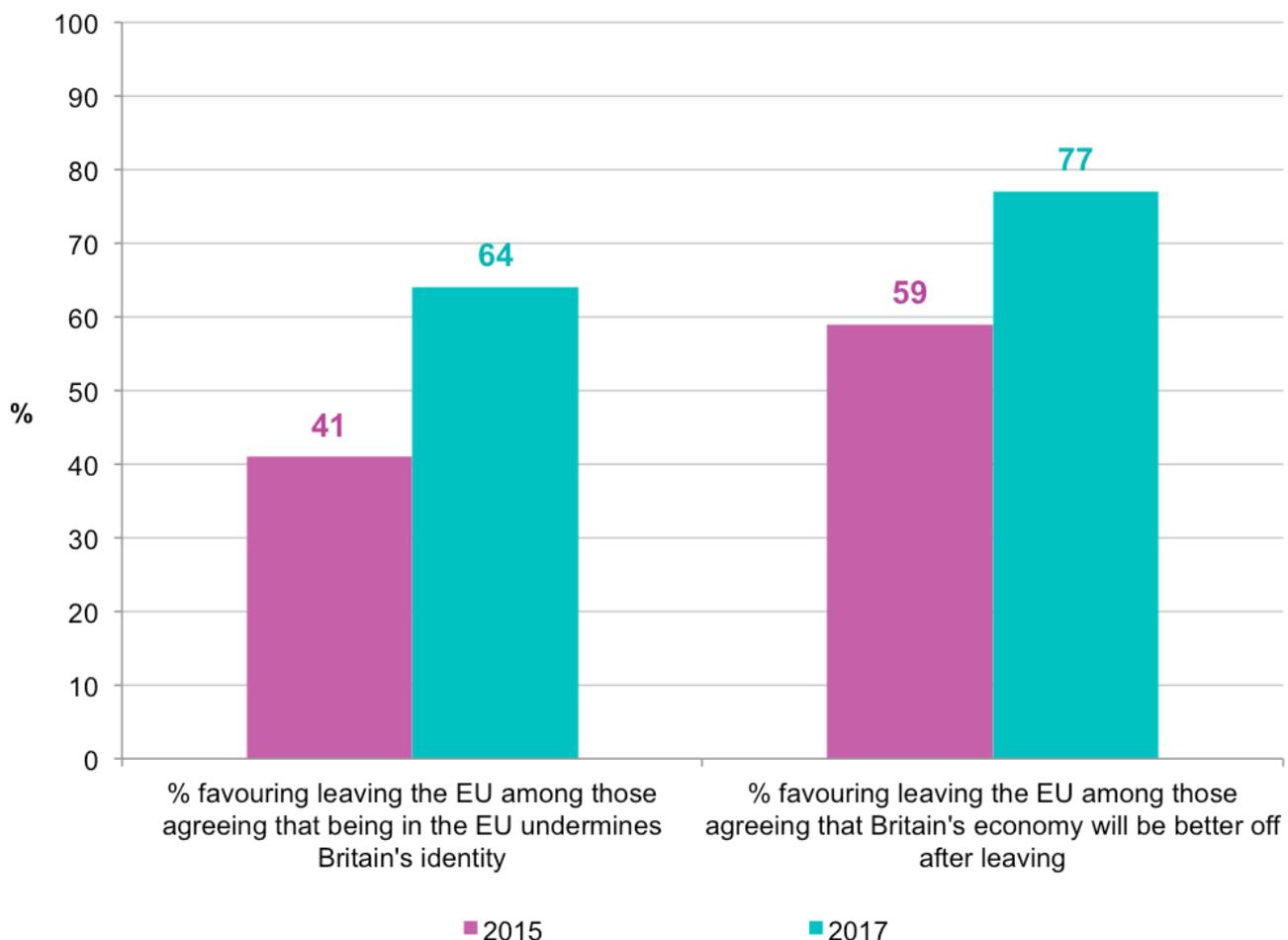# Europe

A more 'informed' public? The impact of the Brexit debate

What impact has the debate about Brexit before and since the referendum had on public attitudes to the EU? Has support for leaving increased because people have become more concerned about the implications of membership for their sense of identity, and are now more optimistic about the consequences of leaving? Or has it risen because of a strengthened relationship between voters' attitudes towards the EU on the one hand and their sense of identity, their values and their views of the consequences of leaving on the other?

Spotlight

Support for leaving the EU has increased considerably since 2015 among those who feel EU membership undermines Britain's identity, and those who think that leaving the EU would make the economy better.

Support for leaving the EU, by attitudes towards the EU

Bar chart showing % favouring leaving the EU among those agreeing that being in the EU undermines Britain's identity: 2015 = 41, 2017 = 64. And % favouring leaving the EU among those agreeing that Britain's economy will be better off after leaving: 2015 = 59, 2017 = 77.

Legend: ■ 2015   ■ 2017

Overview

From scepticism to withdrawal

Public opinion in Britain has long been sceptical about the country's membership of the EU, but support for leaving has increased in the wake of the Brexit debate.

- For the last 20 years, at least half of the public have been 'Eurosceptic', that is, they either wanted to leave the EU or wanted its powers reduced.

- However, as recently as 2015 only 22% said that they wanted Britain to leave the EU. Now, though, 36% hold that view.

A paradox

The rise in support for leaving the EU has <u>not</u> been accompanied by increased concern about the implications of EU membership or greater optimism about the consequences of leaving.

- The proportion who agree that membership of the EU undermines Britain's distinctive identity has fallen from 47% in 2015 to 41% now.

- Although only 31% feel strongly European, the proportion is up 6 points on 2015.

- 45% feel that the economy will be worse off as a result of leaving the EU, slightly above the 40% who held that view in 2015.

A more 'informed' electorate?

Support for leaving the EU has been more marked among those who are concerned about the implications of EU membership for identity or who are optimistic about the consequences of leaving.

- Support for leaving the EU has increased by 22 points since 2015 among those who agree that EU membership undermines Britain's distinctive identity, but by only 7 points among those who disagree.

- There has been an 18-point increase in support for leaving among those who think the economy will be better off as a result, but only a 7-point rise among those who think it will be worse off.

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Before the referendum, voters were subjected to five months of intense debate and competing claims about the merits of leaving or staying

Introduction

Campaigns, be they before an election or a referendum, can potentially change public opinion in two ways. The first, and more obvious, is that voters change their minds about which way to vote and, as a result perhaps, the balance of opinion is altered. The second, less obvious but perhaps equally important, is that the campaign influences the reasons behind voters' choices. In particular, we might anticipate that the choice that voters make becomes a clearer reflection of their sense of identity and the values that they uphold, together with their perceptions of the likely consequences of one side winning rather than another. If that happens, the debate in advance of polling day may have helped ensure that voters cast a more 'informed' vote that better reflects their values, identities and perceptions of the consequences of their choice, even if, perhaps, they have done so only as a result of using 'information shortcuts' (Bartels, 1996; Gerber and Lupia, 1999; Lupia, 1994; Popkin, 1994).

In this chapter, we consider what impact the debate about Britain's membership of the EU – both before and since the referendum in June 2016 – has had on both the balance and the structure of public opinion in Britain towards the EU. There is, after all, every reason to anticipate that it should have made a difference. Before the referendum, the EU was for most voters a relatively distant institution about which many had probably not thought particularly deeply. Their answers to survey questions on the subject may well have been no more than 'top of the head' responses that were reckoned by respondents to be of little consequence – after all, they had not been asked to express their views on the subject on a ballot paper for over 40 years. However, now the future of Britain's membership of the EU has been put directly in their hands. Meanwhile, before the referendum, voters were subjected to five months of intense debate and competing claims about the merits of leaving or staying, while the issue has continued to attract attention and disputation as the UK has endeavoured to negotiate its withdrawal following the majority vote to leave. It would seem that there has been plenty of reason and opportunity for voters to think afresh about the issue.

Not only were voters being invited in the referendum to cast a vote on an issue with which many might well have been unfamiliar, but they were also required to reflect on a referendum debate whose content was multi-faceted (Clarke et al., 2017). In part, the question at stake was one of identity. For many advocates of a Leave vote, Britain's membership of the EU offended their sense of being part of an independent 'British' nation that they felt should be able to govern itself. In contrast, for some supporters of a Remain vote, membership of the EU reflected a European identity they held in common with those living across the continent and with whom, therefore, they were happy to share some resources and collaborate on making some policy decisions. In part too, the debate was about perceived and alleged consequences. What impact would leaving (or

remaining) have on the country's economic well-being, its influence in the world, or the level of immigration? That last issue had come to be particularly contentious given the UK's recent relatively high levels of net inward migration and the fact that the 'freedom of movement' provisions of the European Union gave EU citizens the right to come to the UK to live and work (Curtice, 2017a).

At the same time, the debate about EU membership also touched upon the values that people uphold – though not, perhaps, the ones that voters are usually thought to have at the back of their minds at election time (Heath et al., 1985). The principal division between supporters of Britain's two largest parties can be characterised as a debate between those on the 'left' and those on the 'right'. Those on the left would like to see Britain become a more equal society and feel that the government should intervene to help bring that about, a stance that tends to be associated with the Labour party. In contrast, those on the right tend to the view that it is more important that there are sufficient economic incentives for people to better themselves and thereby help grow the overall size of the economic cake. Those of this view would prefer the government to step back somewhat, a stance commonly regarded as closer to that of the Conservative party.

However, the EU referendum was not primarily about the merits or otherwise of equality. Rather, 'diversity' was its catchword. On one side of this debate were those who are comfortable with diversity, who feel that it is fine for individuals to follow their own moral code, to adhere to different social mores, and to embrace different identities and symbols, and who welcome the cultural variety created by a multi-linguistic, multi-racial and multi-religious society. Those who uphold this view may be regarded as 'libertarians' or 'social liberals'. On the other side were those who feel that a degree of commonality across these dimensions is needed, as without them the social cohesion that a society needs to function effectively is lost. These are society's 'authoritarians' or 'social conservatives'. In the EU referendum, the arguments of the Remain side in favour of multi-national co-operation and freedom of movement appeared closer to the values of social liberals, whereas the emphasis on an exclusive British identity and a need to reduce immigration more closely echoed the values of social conservatives.

But which of these various possible influences on how people voted – identity, values and perceived consequences – came to matter more in voters' minds and thus more closely reflected how they voted? Did the referendum campaign simply encourage voters to reflect further on the transactional consequences of being in or out of the EU? Or, as they learnt about the debate and considered the rather different set of values that were discussed, did it also stimulate them to think more about those values and their sense of identity – and thus perhaps ensured that their views about the EU became more firmly rooted and structured than they had been before the referendum was called? Just how the so-called Brexit debate has or

has not reshaped the character of attitudes towards the EU is what we seek to understand in this chapter.

Our inquiry falls into two halves. First, we assess whether the Brexit debate has changed the balance of public opinion by looking at recent trends in the distribution of voters' attitudes towards the EU, on their sense of identity and on their perceptions of the consequences of leaving the institution. Then we examine the impact of the debate on the reasons why people hold the views that they do. We assess how the relationship between, on the one hand, attitudes towards the EU and, on the other, people's sense of identity, their values, and their expectations of what would happen as a result of leaving the EU has evolved during the course of the EU referendum and the subsequent debate about Brexit. We conclude by assessing the implications of our findings for how well informed voters' attitudes towards the EU now appear to be.

Has the balance of opinion changed?

We begin by looking at the distribution of attitudes towards the EU. After all, the Leave side's victory in the EU referendum came as a surprise to many. Indeed, in our 2015 survey – conducted after that year's general election but before the referendum debate had really got under way – only 30% said that the UK should withdraw from the EU and 60% said that it should continue to be a member. It was certainly far from clear when that reading was obtained, a year before the referendum ballot, that Britain would necessarily vote to leave the EU. So, is it the case that the referendum campaign left the public more sceptical about the merits of EU membership than before, leaving perhaps a long-term imprint on public attitudes towards the institution?

To address this question we can, first of all, examine how people have responded when, at various points during the last quarter of a century, they have been asked:

> *Do you think Britain's long-term policy should be…*
>
> *… to leave the European Union,*
>
> *to stay in the EU and try to <u>reduce</u> the EU's powers,*
>
> *to leave things as they are,*
>
> *to stay in the EU and try to <u>increase</u> the EU's powers,*
>
> *or, to work for the formation of a single European government?*

The only minor change that has had to be made to the wording of this question since the referendum has been to introduce it by saying, "Leaving aside the result of the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, what do you think Britain's policy should be…" The wording of the answer options themselves remains almost completely unchanged (see the Voting chapter for full 2017 wording).

Table 1 Attitudes towards Britain's relationship with the EU, 1992-2017

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	10	11	11	14	19	17	14	13	17	14	15
Stay but reduce EU's powers	30	27	25	23	39	29	36	43	38	38	35
Leave things as are	16	22	20	20	19	18	23	20	19	21	23
Stay and increase EU's powers	28	22	28	28	8	16	9	11	10	10	12
Work for single European government	10	9	8	8	6	7	8	6	7	7	7
Unweighted base	*2855*	*1461*	*1165*	*1227*	*1180*	*1355*	*1035*	*1060*	*2293*	*1099*	*3435*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leave the EU	15	18	16	15	20	30	26	24	22	41	36
Stay but reduce EU's powers	32	38	36	36	35	37	39	38	43	35	33
Leave things as are	27	23	24	27	24	16	19	18	19	16	19
Stay and increase EU's powers	11	7	10	9	9	9	6	10	8	4	4
Work for single European government	6	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	3
Unweighted base	*2293*	*3199*	*4268*	*1077*	*1128*	*1103*	*2147*	*971*	*1105*	*1965*	*2009*

Source 1992: British Election Study

The rise in support for UKIP during the course of the 2010-2015 parliament was accompanied by a marked increase in support for withdrawal

Until 2008, typically only around 15% or so responded by saying that the UK should leave the EU (Table 1). However, the rise in support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) during the course of the 2010-2015 parliament was accompanied by a marked increase in support for withdrawal; by 2012, 30% said that the UK should leave. Although this trend was somewhat reversed thereafter, at 22% support for leaving was higher in 2015 than it had been at any time in the 1990s or 2000s.

Nevertheless, the proportion saying the UK should leave the EU has increased even more in the wake of the EU referendum. In our 2016 survey, undertaken shortly after the referendum, 41% said that Britain should leave the EU, and although the figure has subsequently fallen, at 36% it is still relatively high.[1] It seems that the EU referendum

1   We should note that, after leaving aside those who said they did not vote, only 45% of our 2017 sample reported having voted Leave in the 2016 referendum, below the 52% who did so in practice. It is thus possible that our 2017 reading somewhat underestimates the current level of support for leaving as reported in Table 1.

campaign has indeed had a marked long-term impact on the balance of attitudes towards the EU.

However, although support for leaving the EU in response to our long-running question had long been relatively low, the pattern of answers hardly ever suggested that the British public was in love with the institution. Ever since the late 1990s, the most popular response had been that the UK should stay in the EU but should try to reduce its powers. As a result, from 1998 onwards (with the single exception of 2003) at least half of the public could be classified as 'Eurosceptic', that is, they either said Britain should leave the EU or that it should try to reduce its powers. Indeed, by 2012 as many as two-thirds were of that view, and at 69% the latest figure is, in fact, little different. Thus, scepticism about the EU is perhaps no more widespread now than it was before the EU referendum. What has changed is that it has become more likely to be expressed in the form of support for leaving the institution rather than for just trying to loosen Britain's ties with it.

But what of people's perceptions of the consequences or otherwise of remaining in or leaving the EU? If the referendum campaign and the subsequent debate about Brexit altered people's views about the EU, then one might anticipate that their views about these consequences might have changed too. We would expect that more voters are optimistic about what Brexit will bring than had been the case before the referendum. At the same time, we might wonder whether their sense of identity changed as well, with fewer feeling in any way European. In order to establish whether or not this has happened, on our most recent survey we repeated a suite of questions that, with one exception, we initially asked in 2015, before the EU referendum campaign had largely got under way. This suite provides us with a unique indication of the extent to which people's perceptions of the consequences of Brexit and their sense of identity have changed over the course of the EU referendum and beyond.

For some critics of Britain's membership of the EU, the central issue in the EU referendum was one of legitimacy

For some critics of Britain's membership of the EU, the central issue in the EU referendum was one of legitimacy. As we noted earlier, they felt that, as an independent state, Britain should not have to abide by rules and regulations passed by the EU that the UK government might well have opposed in the Council of Ministers. Not least of the possible motivations for holding this view is the absence of any sense of European identity that could potentially underpin a willingness to share decisions and resources with other European countries. Indeed, there might even be a concern among some people that membership of the EU has served to undermine what they think is a distinctive British identity that they believe should be highly valued.

To capture how much support there is now for this outlook we first of all ask:

How much do you agree or disagree that being a member of the European Union undermines Britain's right to be an independent country that makes its own laws?

There is widespread support for this view: 57% agree while just 27% disagree (and 17% say that they neither agree nor disagree). At the same time, as Figure 1 shows, when invited to choose from a list of national identities associated with Britain and Ireland, less than one in five pick "European" as one of the identities that they acknowledge. Evidently, most voters in Britain do not feel they share an identity in common with their European neighbours. That said, it appears that the referendum campaign may have helped ignite a sense of being European among a small minority. At 18%, the proportion who now say they are European is higher than it has been at any point during the course of the last 20 years.

Figure 1 Proportion selecting "European" identity, 1996-2017
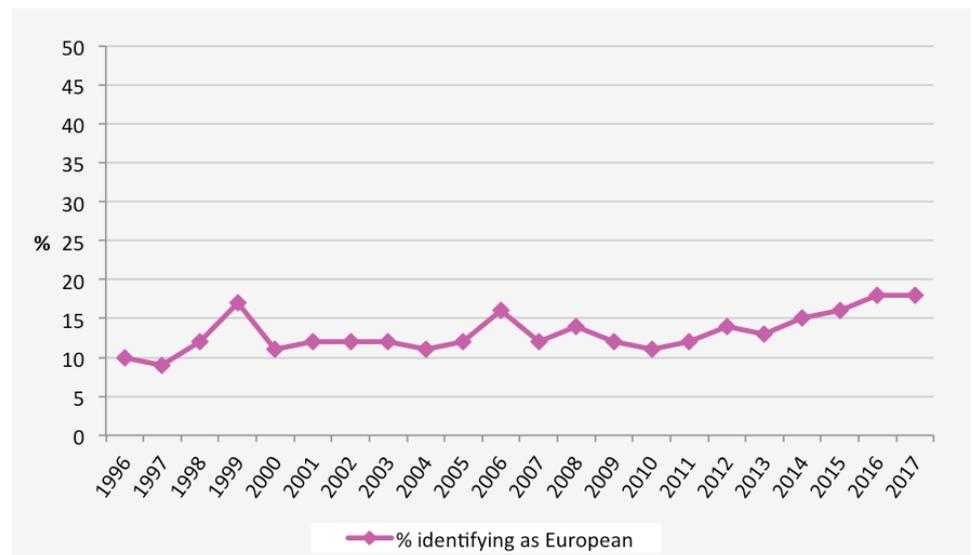
The data on which Figure 1 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

The relative weakness of most people's sense of European identity is confirmed by the pattern of responses to a second, more nuanced measure that we asked in 2015 and again in 2017. In this instance respondents were presented with a scale that ran from "1" on the left-hand side to "7" on the right-hand side. The "1" was labelled "not at all European", while the "7" was described as meaning "very strongly European". We asked:

Here is a scale I would like you to use to describe to what extent you think of yourself as European. The more European you feel, the further to the right you would put yourself. The less European you feel, the further to the left you would put yourself.

As Table 2 reveals, in our most recent survey around a half (51%) give themselves a score of between 1 and 3 on this scale, implying

a relatively weak sense of European identity. Only around three in ten (31%) put themselves at between 5 and 7, suggesting that they have a reasonably strong sense of being European. In contrast, when we ask people to use the same 0-7 scale to describe how "British" they feel, nearly three-quarters (74%) record a score of between 5 and 7.[2] That said, here too there is some sign that a few more people now feel more European than did before the referendum campaign started; the proportion giving themselves a score of between 5 and 7 was just 25% in 2015, 6 percentage points below the latest figure.

Table 2 Strength of European identity, 2015 and 2017

	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
European identity	%	%	
1 – not at all European	27	27	0
2	16	12	-4
3	13	12	-1
4	18	16	-2
5	12	12	0
6	7	10	+3
7 – very strongly European	6	9	+3
Unweighted base	*1105*	*1025*	

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

Indeed, there is also little sign that the referendum served to broaden the level of concern about the impact of EU membership on Britain's distinctive sense of identity. Here we ask:

> *How much do you agree or disagree that being a member of the European Union is undermining Britain's distinctive identity?*

As Table 3 shows, nearly half agreed with this proposition in 2015. However, the figure has now fallen by 6 points to 41%, while, conversely, there has been an 7-point increase in the proportion disagreeing. The question of British identity may have been a source of concern for many voters in the EU referendum (see further below), but evidently those concerns are no more common now than they had been before the EU referendum campaign.

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2   Our contention that people's attitudes towards the impact of the EU on Britain's sovereignty are closely linked to their sense of identity is also clear from further analysis of this question. Among those with a score of between 1 and 3 on our European identity scale, no less than 68% agree that being a member of the EU undermines Britain's independence and its ability to make its own laws. In contrast, just 31% of those with a score of between 5 and 7 do so.

Table 3 Perceptions of the consequences of EU membership for British identity, 2015 and 2017

	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Being a member of the EU undermines Britain's identity	%	%	
Agree	47	41	-6
Neither	20	20	0
Disagree	30	38	+7
Unweighted base	*1105*	*1025*	

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

A second key issue in the referendum campaign concerned what the economic consequences of leaving the EU would be. It was a subject on which the Remain side in particular was inclined to focus, with various warnings that Brexit would be bad for the British economy (Oliver, 2016). It is little wonder that Remain emphasised this issue. As can be seen from the top half of Table 4, even in 2015 voters were more inclined to think that the economy would be worse off as a result of leaving the EU than thought it would be better off (the full question wording can be found in the appendix to this chapter). However, there is no sign that voters have now become less inclined to think the economy would be worse off. Rather, there appears to have been a slight increase in the proportion expressing that view, while somewhat fewer now feel that it would not make much difference either way. Meanwhile, the bottom half of the table reveals that the proportion who think that unemployment will be higher as a result of leaving the EU is now 8 points higher than it was before the referendum. All in all, there is little sign here of greater optimism about the economic consequences of Brexit.

There is little sign here of greater optimism about the economic consequences of Brexit

Table 4 Perceptions of the economic consequences of leaving the EU, 2015 and 2017

	2015	2017[+]	Change 2015-2017
Perceived impact of leaving EU			
Impact on the economy	%	%	
Better off	24	26	+2
Won't make much difference	31	25	-6
Worse off	40	45	+5
Impact on unemployment	%	%	
Higher	25	32	+8
Won't make much difference	46	44	-2
Lower	24	20	-4
Unweighted base	*1105*	*1025*	

[+]*Question wording was amended in 2017 to take account of the vote to leave the EU in 2016. Full etails are given in the appendix to this chapter.*

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

The EU referendum debate was also about the UK's relationship with the rest of the world. Different views were expressed as to whether Britain would be more or less influential outside the EU. At the same time, the Leave side focused on the recent relatively high levels of net migration into the UK and the fact that thanks to the EU's 'freedom of movement' provisions the UK was limited in what it could do to control immigration from EU countries. Table 5 shows how attitudes towards these issues now compare with what they were before the EU referendum.

Table 5 Perceptions of the consequences of leaving the EU for Britain's influence in the world and for the level of immigration, 2015 and 2017

	2015	2017[+]	Change 2015-2017
Perceived impact of leaving EU			
Impact on influence in the world	%	%	
More influence in the world	17	26	+10
Won't make much difference	44	38	-7
Less influence in the world	36	35	-1
Impact on immigration	%	%	
Higher	9	5	-3
Won't make much difference	31	39	+7
Lower	57	54	-3
Unweighted base	*1105*	*1025*	

[+]*Question wording was amended in 2017 to take account of the vote to leave the EU in 2016. Full details are given in the appendix to this chapter.*

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

Here at least we do see some signs of a change of outlook that might be thought to have helped underpin increased support for leaving the EU. Before the EU referendum only 17% thought that the UK would have more influence in the world if it left the EU, while slightly more than twice as many (36%) took the opposite view. The latter figure has not changed significantly, but the proportion who think that Britain will have more influence as a result of leaving the EU has increased by 10 points to just over a quarter (26%). Perhaps the UK government's portrayal of post-Brexit Britain as 'Global Britain' has had some impact on attitudes here (House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 2018).

It remains the case that well over half (54%) expect leaving the EU would reduce immigration

On the other hand, there is little sign that the expectation that leaving the EU would serve to reduce immigration has become any more common. This belief was already widespread before the EU referendum was held, and it remains the case that well over half (54%) are of that view. Meanwhile, the already rare view that immigration would be higher as a result of leaving the EU is now even less in evidence and this in turn has helped to increase the proportion who think leaving the EU will not make much difference to the level of immigration.

The success of the Leave side in the referendum campaign, accompanied as it was by the widespread perception that leaving the EU would reduce immigration, has led some to take the view that the referendum campaign served to increase hostility towards immigration (see, for example, Oyekanmi, 2016). We can assess this proposition by taking advantage of the fact that at various points during the last six years, we have included the following question:

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is extremely bad and 10 is extremely good, would you say it is generally bad or good for Britain's economy that migrants come to Britain from other countries?

At the same time, we have also asked:

And on a scale of 0 to 10, would you say that Britain's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by migrants coming to live here from other countries?

Table 6 summarises the pattern of results to these two questions. In both cases those proffering a score of between 0 and 3, thereby indicating a relatively negative attitude towards immigration, are grouped together, as are those with a more or less neutral score of between 4 and 6 and those with a positive one of between 7 and 10.

Table 6 Perceptions of the impact of migrants, 2011-2017

	2011	2013	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Perceived impact of migrants who come to Britain from other countries					
Impact on Britain's economy	%	%	%	%	
Bad (0-3)	42	39	28	17	-11
Neither (4-6)	36	38	38	35	-3
Good (7-10)	21	21	34	47	+14
Impact on Britain's cultural life	%	%	%	%	
Undermined (0-3)	40	38	33	23	-10
Neither (4-6)	33	34	35	32	-3
Enriched (7-10)	26	27	31	44	+12
Unweighted base	*3311*	*3244*	*2167*	*1025*	

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

When we first asked these questions in 2011, the public was clearly doubtful about the merits of migration. Around two in five thought that migrants were bad for Britain's economy and that it undermined the country's cultural life, whereas only around a fifth to a quarter took the opposite view. The picture was little different in 2013 (Ford and Heath, 2014). But by the time of our 2015 survey, opinion was somewhat less negative. By then more (34%) thought that migrants were good for the economy than thought they were bad (28%), while almost as many thought that immigration enriched the country's cultural life (31%) as reckoned that it undermined it (33%). Now opinion seems to have moved quite markedly further in this direction (see also Ipsos MORI, 2018). In our latest survey, approaching a half

(47%) believe that migrants are good for Britain's economy, while only around one in six (17%) feel that they are bad. At the same time, almost twice as many (44%) now say that migrants enrich Britain's culture as feel that they undermine it (23%). There is little sign here that the EU referendum campaign served to make Britain less tolerant towards migrants; rather they have apparently come to be valued to a degree that was not in evidence before the referendum campaign.

A question of identity?

We have then uncovered something of a paradox. On the one hand Britain is more supportive of leaving the EU than it was before the referendum campaign began. Yet for the most part there is little sign that the campaign resulted in a balance of opinion that was more optimistic about the consequences of leaving or which was increasingly of the view that membership was at odds with the country's sense of identity. True, the public is now rather more likely to think that leaving the EU will increase Britain's influence in the world, but equally, voters seem to have become somewhat less likely to be concerned about the implications of membership for Britain's distinctive sense of identity. Perhaps, therefore, rather than making people more likely to be doubtful about the merits of EU membership, the referendum campaign had a different impact – to heighten people's sense of identity and thus the extent to which their attitudes towards the EU reflect that identity? Maybe, in turn, their choice came to reflect their values and perceptions of the consequences of leaving the EU more closely too. In other words, perhaps those who were concerned about the implications of EU membership for their sense of identity are now markedly more likely to want to leave the EU, as are those who have a socially conservative outlook and those who are optimistic about the consequences of leaving the EU. Perhaps it was developments such as these that helped ensure that what was already a widespread Euroscepticism became rather more of a determination to leave the EU?

Approaching a half (47%) believe that migrants are good for Britain's economy

If this is what has happened, the first pattern that we might anticipate is that people's concern about the cultural impact of Britain's membership of the EU should have come to be more clearly related to support for leaving. Support for leaving the EU should have increased above all among those who feel that EU membership undermines Britain's distinctive sense of identity. This is indeed what has happened. As Table 7 shows, support for leaving the EU (as measured by the question detailed in Table 1) is as much as 22 points higher now than in 2015 among those who agree that EU membership threatens Britain's distinctive identity, compared with just 7 points higher among those who disagree.[3] Although, as we have observed previously (Table 5), fewer people now feel that EU membership undermines Britain's distinctive sense of identity, we can now see those that do hold that view have become especially more likely to back leaving the EU. In short, the question of identity has seemingly come to play a more central role in people's attitudes towards the principle of EU membership.

> **The question of identity has seemingly come to play a more central role in people's attitudes towards the principle of EU membership**

Table 7 Support for leaving the EU, by perceptions of the consequences of EU membership for British identity, 2015 and 2017

% favouring leaving the EU	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Being a member of the EU undermines Britain's identity			
Agree	41	64	+22
Neither	7	28	+21
Disagree	3	10	+7

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

This conclusion is further supported by the evidence in Table 8, which shows for 2015 and 2017 the proportion who said that Britain should leave the EU (as in Table 1), broken down by the reported strength of their European identity. The increase in support for leaving the EU has been much greater among those with a relatively weak sense of European identity than it has among those with a relatively

3   This difference in the increased probability of supporting the EU is statistically significant at the 1% level. Although not reported in detail, similar tests inform the commentary on subsequent tables.

Note that we can also measure change in the level of support for leaving the EU in 2015 and 2017 using an alternative measure. In 2015 we asked respondents, "Do you think that Britain should continue to be a member of the European Union or should it withdraw?", to which, once we leave aside those who said, "Don't Know", 33% said "withdraw". In 2017, we asked, "If you were given the chance to vote again, how would you vote – to remain a member of the European Union, to leave the European Union, or would you not vote?", and on this occasion (again leaving aside those who said "Don't Know" or that they would not vote) 41% stated that they would vote to leave. If we are willing to regard the two questions as functionally equivalent to each other, they may be said to record an 8-point increase in support for leaving between 2015 and 2017. This alternative measure paints a less dramatic (and statistically insignificant) picture of a change in the relationship between perceptions of the impact of EU membership on identity. Support for leaving increased by 13 points among those who agree that EU membership undermines Britain's distinctive identity, by 20 points among those who neither agree nor disagree, but only by 6 points among those who disagree.

strong sense. Across all those who gave themselves a score of between 1 and 3, there has been a 21-point increase in support for leaving, compared with just a 4-point increase among those with a score of between 5 and 7.[4]

Table 8 Support for leaving the EU, by strength of European identity, 2015 and 2017

% favouring leaving the EU	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Strength of European identity			
1 – not at all European	36	54	+18
2	29	53	+24
3	19	44	+25
4	14	30	+17
5	9	18	+8
6 or 7 – very strongly European	10	11	+1

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

The increase in support for leaving the EU since 2015 has been much greater among those with a strong sense of English identity

There is one further indication of the changed relationship between identity and people's views about EU membership. One of the features of the pattern of voting in the EU referendum in England is that those who regard themselves as wholly or primarily English were much more likely than those who say they are wholly or primarily British to vote to Leave the EU (Henderson et al., 2016; Curtice, 2017b). In Table 9 we show (for those living in England) the level of support for leaving the EU in each of the last four years, broken down by whether people say they mostly feel English or mostly feel British (for further details of this measure of national identity see the chapter on Scotland by Curtice and Montagu). It shows that the increase in support for leaving the EU since 2015 (and indeed before that) has been much greater among those with a strong sense of English identity , a change that was already clearly in evidence in our 2016 survey and is still apparent 12 months later. There has been a 26-point increase in support for leaving the EU among those who describe themselves as "English, not British" compared with just a 5-point increase among those who say they are "British, not English".[5] As a result, the two groups now have very different views about EU membership. (Note that the sample sizes used for "more English" and "more British" categories for 2014 and 2015 are relatively low and should therefore be interpreted with caution.)

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4   Alternatively, if we look at the change in the pattern of response to the two questions detailed in the previous footnote, the increase in support for leaving proves to be 17 points among those who give themselves a score of between 1 and 3, whereas there is actually a small drop of 3 points among with a score of between 5 and 7. (In contrast to the position in the previous footnote, this difference is statistically significant at the 1% level. Although not reported in detail, similar tests of statistical significance also inform the commentary in subsequent footnotes.)

5   Using our alternative measure of the change in support for leaving the EU described in footnote 3, we find that there has been a 16-point increase among those who say they are "English, not British", but a 5-point fall in support among those who say they are "British, not English".

Table 9 Support for leaving the EU, by national identity, England, 2014-17

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change 2015-2017
National identity					
English, not British	40	36	69	62	+26
More English than British	29	23	47	45	+22
Equally English and British	23	19	42	36	+17
More British than English	22	21	38	34	+13
British, not English	25	22	33	27	+5

Source: British Social Attitudes respondents in England only. In 2014 those born in Scotland or Wales are excluded

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

The sample sizes used for "More English than British" and "More British than English" categories for 2014 and 2015 are relativel low and should therefore be interpreted with caution

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

A question of immigration?

Attitudes towards the EU are, then, more closely linked to people's sense of identity now than they were before the referendum. But is this pattern also reflected in the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and support for leaving the EU? After all, attitudes to immigration often vary according to people's sense of identity; for example, those who describe themselves as English have been repeatedly shown to be less liberal than those who consider themselves British in their attitudes towards immigration, and, indeed, to ethnic minorities (Curtice and Seyd, 2001; Jeffery et al., 2014). Meanwhile, immigration is perhaps above all the issue in the debate about Britain's membership of the EU where attitudes might be thought to reflect whether someone is a social liberal or a social conservative. So, although, as we have already noted (Table 6), those who embrace immigration are more common now than they were, perhaps those who do not uphold that view have become firmer in their opposition to EU membership?

Table 10 provides some support for this proposition. It shows for 2015 and 2017 the proportion of people who said that Britain should leave the EU, broken down by people's perceptions of the impact of migrants on (a) Britain's cultural life, and (b) the country's economy. The first half of the table shows that support for leaving the EU has increased much more among those who either think migrants have undermined Britain's cultural life or that they have not had much impact either way, than it has among those who feel that the nation's culture has been enriched. Among the first two groups the increase in support for leaving the EU has been 25 and 21 points respectively, whereas among those who feel that migrants have enriched Britain's culture, the increase has been just 9 points. On the other hand, there

Support for leaving the EU has increased much more among those who either think migrants have undermined Britain's cultural life or that they have not had much impact either way

is no systematic evidence that voters' perceptions of the economic consequences of immigration have come to be more closely linked to their likelihood of being a supporter of leaving the EU. Rather, we simply find that there has been a marked increase in support for leaving among those who think that immigration has not made much difference either way to Britain's economy.[6]

Table 10 Support for leaving the EU, by attitudes towards the cultural and economic consequences of immigration, 2015 and 2017

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Perceived impact of migrants on Britain's cultural life			
Undermined (0-3)	37	62	+25
Neither (4-6)	19	40	+21
Enriched (7-10)	9	18	+9
Perceived impact of migrants on Britain's economy			
Bad (0-3)	43	57	+14
Neither (4-6)	17	46	+28
Good (7-10)	10	20	+10

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

A sense of values?

But have people's views about leaving or staying in the EU also come to reflect more whether they are a social liberal or a social conservative, a libertarian or an authoritarian? To measure that concept more directly we combine our respondents' answers to six questions designed to measure where people stand on this dimension (see the Technical details to this report for further details). We have then used this measure to divide our sample into the one third or so most libertarian or socially liberal, the one third or so most authoritarian or socially conservative, and the one third or so who lie in between these two positions. As Table 11 reveals, when we do so we find that, even though it was already somewhat higher in the first place, support for leaving the EU has increased during the course of the last two years by more among authoritarians/social conservatives (by 19 points) than it has among libertarians/social liberals (among

6   Our findings are supported if we compare the change in the pattern of responses to the two questions detailed in footnote 3. Support for leaving on these measures increased by 22 points among those who think migrants undermine Britain's cultural life, by 14 points among those who think that they do not make much difference either way, and by just 5 points among those who think migration undermines the country's culture. The equivalent analysis by perceptions of the impact of immigration on Britain's economy identifies increases of 19 points among those who think it has been bad, and 22 points among those who think it has not made much difference, though only one of 4 points among those who think the economic impact has been beneficial.

whom the increase has been 9 points). We can also see that the strengthened link between people's values and support for leaving the EU was already in evidence in our 2016 survey, conducted shortly after the EU referendum.[7]

Table 11 Support for leaving the EU, by libertarian/authoritarian values, 2014-2017

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change 2015-2017
Placement on libertarian-authoritarian scale					
Libertarian	13	8	21	17	+9
Neither	22	20	45	35	+15
Authoritarian	39	36	63	55	+19

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter
Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

So, as well as being more clearly linked to their sense of and concerns about identity, people's attitudes towards the EU have also become more closely linked to the values that they uphold, and in particular to whether they can be characterised as a liberal or an authoritarian. There seems to be little doubt that the referendum and the subsequent debate about Brexit have left in their wake an electorate whose views about the EU are more clearly structured by their identity and values, and thus one that is also more polarised. As a result, it is perhaps also an electorate that might now be less willing to change its mind.

A matter of consequences?

But what of voters' perceptions of the consequences of Brexit? Have these also become more strongly linked to people's preference to remain in or leave the EU? Or, given that people's attitudes towards the EU have come to be more closely linked to their values and sense of identity, perhaps their perceptions of the transactional costs and benefits of leaving have come to play less of a role in shaping their attitudes towards membership of the institution?

First of all, in Table 12 we examine how the relationship between people's perceptions of the economic consequences of leaving the EU, and support for leaving the EU changed between 2015 and 2017. In the top half of the table we can see that there was already a very strong relationship in 2015 between perceptions of whether Britain's economy would be better or worse as a result of Brexit and people's propensity to back leaving the EU (Curtice, 2016). Hardly anyone

7   This analysis is confirmed if we use the alternative measures introduced at footnote 3. The proportion backing withdraw/leave on these measures increased by two points among liberals, by 12 points among those in the centre and by 18 points among authoritarians.

(just 3%) who thought that leaving the EU would make the economy worse favoured leaving the EU, while nearly three in five (59%) of those who thought the economy would be better supported leaving. Nevertheless, this gap widened yet further. Support for leaving the EU increased by 18 points among those who thought the economy would be better, but by only 7 points among those who thought it would get worse. That said, the biggest increase (22 points) has been among those who thought that Brexit would not make much difference either way to the economy.[8]

> Support for leaving the EU increased by 18 points among those who thought the economy would be better

Table 12 Support for leaving the EU, by perceptions of the economic consequences of leaving the EU, 2015 and 2017

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2015	2017	Change 2015-2017
Britain's economy			
Better off	59	77	+18
Won't make much difference	20	42	+22
Worse off	3	9	+7
Unemployment			
Higher	11	23	+12
Neither	23	44	+21
Lower	34	41	+6

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

In contrast, the link between support for leaving the EU and perceptions of the consequences of leaving for unemployment was relatively weak in 2015. Even among those who thought that unemployment would fall, only around one in three (34%) favoured leaving. Meanwhile, if anything, this relationship has weakened even further during the Brexit debate. Support for leaving actually increased slightly more among those who thought that unemployment would increase as a result of Brexit than it did among those who thought it would be lower.[9] Certainly, it is only among those who thought that leaving the EU would not make much difference that there is a marked increase in support for leaving the EU. [10]

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8   However, under the alternative measures introduced in footnote 3, the differences are not so stark. There is a 9-point increase in support for leaving among those who thought the economy would be better off, a 14-point increase among those who thought it would not make much difference, and a 5-point increase among those who thought the economy would be worse. However, the difference between the increase among those saying the economy would be worse and that among those giving any other response is still significant at the 5% level.

9   But the difference in the increase in support in the two categories is not statistically significant.

10   The pattern of the increases in support for leaving using the alternative measures in footnote 3 is similar (but not statistically significant). There has been a 10-point increase in support for leaving among those who thought that unemployment would be higher, a 12-point increase among those who thought it would be the same, and a 4-point increase among those who thought it would be lower.

Meanwhile, the first half of Table 13 reveals that in 2015 people's perceptions of the consequences of Brexit for Britain's influence in the world were also quite strongly related to their propensity to support leaving the EU. Just over half (54%) of those who felt that Britain would have more influence supported leaving, compared with just 5% of those who thought that Britain would have less influence. Even so, this gap has also widened somewhat following a 14-point increase in support for leaving the EU among those who thought that Britain would have more influence, compared with just a 2-point increase among those who thought it would have less. In contrast, there was little indication in our 2015 survey that people's perceptions of the consequences of Brexit for immigration had much of a relationship with support for leaving the EU and this remained the case in 2017.[11]

Table 13 Support for leaving the EU by perceptions of the consequences of leaving the EU for Britain's influence in the world and for the level of immigration, 2015 and 2017

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2015	2017*	Change 2015-2017
Perceived impact of leaving the EU on Britain's influence in the world			
More	54	68	+14
Won't make much difference	24	40	+15
Less	5	7	+2
Immigration			
Higher/won't make much difference	13	31	+18
Lower	29	40	+12

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

So, there is some sign that in the case of the consequences of Brexit for the economy and for Britain's influence in the world, both of which were strongly related to people's attitudes towards the EU even before the EU referendum campaign got under way, perceptions have become even more strongly related to attitudes towards leaving in the wake of the Brexit debate. On the other hand, when we look at people's expectations of what might happen to immigration and unemployment, there is no sign of what was already a relatively weak relationship having been strengthened in any way. It seems that the issues that already seemed to matter to voters have come to matter more, whereas those that were relatively peripheral to the Brexit debate in voters' minds have remained that way.

The issues that already seemed to matter to voters have come to matter more

11   According to the measures introduced in footnote 3 there was an 11-point increase in support for leaving among those who thought that Brexit would increase Britain's influence in the world, whereas there was a less than 2-point increase in the remaining two groups combined. Meanwhile, support for leaving increased by 13 points among those who thought that immigration would not fall, but by only 5 points among those who thought that it would, thereby confirming that, if anything, the relationship has weakened somewhat, though both here and in Table 13 the differences are not statistically significant.

The demographic divide

Given that in some respects at least attitudes towards the EU have become more polarised in the wake of the Brexit debate, we might anticipate that some of the demographic differences in attitudes towards the EU might have widened too. Previous research has clearly established that two demographic divisions in particular underlay the way in which people voted in the EU referendum – age and educational background (Curtice, 2017a; 2017b). Younger people and graduates were more likely to vote Remain while older voters and those with few, if any, educational qualifications were mostly inclined to back Leave. But have the EU referendum and the subsequent debate about Brexit served to strengthen this divide?

Table 14 suggests that they did, and especially so in the case of educational background. Support for leaving the EU increased between 2015 and 2017 by just 7 points among graduates while it grew by as much as 25 points among those without any qualifications. At the same time, support for leaving the EU increased by 21 points among those aged 55 and over but by only 12 points among those aged under 35. The Brexit process did not just unveil a country that was deeply divided on the question of Brexit but also served to accentuate that division.[12]

> **Support for leaving the EU increased between 2015 and 2017 by 25 points among those without any qualifications**

Table 14 Support for leaving the EU, by age and highest educational qualification, 2014-2017

% saying Britain should leave the EU	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change 2015-2017
Age Group					
18-34	17	11	33	23	+12
35-54	24	24	34	34	+11
55+	32	28	53	49	+21
Highest Educational Qualification					
Degree	11	13	20	19	+7
Higher education below degree /A Level	26	19	38	33	+13
CSE/O Level	27	27	54	50	+23
None	37	29	57	54	+25

The sample sizes on which the figures in this table are based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Figures showing change between 2015 and 2017 in this table are calculated from the unrounded data, rather than the data rounded to the nearest whole number that are reported in the table. As a result they will sometimes vary from the difference between the rounded figures by +/-1 point

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12   There is, however only limited evidence of these patterns if we use the alternative measures introduced at footnote 3. Support for leaving increased by 4 points among the under 35s, by 10 points among those aged 35-54 and by 9 points among those aged 55 or over. However, support increased by just 3 points among graduates, compared with increases of 10, 16 and 13 points respectively in the other three educational categories at Table 14.

A more structured preference?

People's attitudes towards the EU now better reflect their sense of identity, their values and their perceptions of the consequences of leaving

It appears then that, despite the majority vote to Leave, the EU referendum campaign and the debate about Brexit have not, for the most part, resulted in people becoming more optimistic about the consequences of leaving the EU, more doubtful about the merits of immigration, or more concerned about the implications of EU membership for their sense of identity. However, the campaign and debate have ensured that the relationship between people's attitudes towards the EU and their sense of identity, their values, and to some extent their perceptions of the consequences of leaving the EU has strengthened. To that extent, it can be argued that the EU referendum and the debate about Brexit have helped ensure that people's attitudes towards the EU are now 'better informed' than they were beforehand, that is, they now better reflect people's sense of identity, their values and their perceptions of the consequences of leaving. At the same time, this means that people's views on the subject have become more polarised too, and that a sharper demographic division on the subject is now more in evidence.

Of course, all of these potential influences on people's attitudes towards the EU are interrelated. For example, those who are most concerned about the impact of EU membership on Britain's distinctive identity are also much more likely to think that the economy would be better if we left the EU. It is thus perhaps not surprising that, having found that the relationship between support for leaving the EU and, say, identity has strengthened, we should find that, for the most part, it has also strengthened in respect of, for example, perceived consequences too. As a result, it is difficult to argue that, for example, identity has become relatively more important than, say, perceptions of the consequences of leaving, in shaping people's attitudes towards the EU. What, however, we can confirm is that collectively all the considerations we have examined have become more important. If we undertake a logistic regression of support for leaving the EU against all of our measures of identity, values and consequences,[13] we find that whereas in 2015 our measures between them accounted for 37% of the predicted support for leaving the EU, in 2017 they account for 43%.[14] Attitudes towards the EU do now appear to be more clearly structured and thus 'informed' than they were before the EU referendum campaign began in earnest.

13   Except whether someone feels wholly or mostly British/English, which is only available for respondents living in England.

14   The three key predictors in the model are: perceptions of the impact of leaving the EU on Britain's economy and on its influence in the world, together with the perceived implications of EU membership for Britain's distinctive sense of identity, all three of which were shown earlier to have become more strongly related to people's attitude towards leaving the EU. It is thus probably the strengthening of these relationships in particular that has been especially important. The full models are included in the appendix to this chapter.

Conclusions

The decision to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU was a controversial one, and especially so among those advocates of UK membership that felt the ballot posed an unnecessary risk. The majority vote to Leave only reinforced that controversy. Meanwhile, there has been plenty of criticism of the quality of the campaigning on both sides of the argument. Claims that leaving the EU would mean that there would be £350m a week extra to spend on the NHS or that it would leave every family £4,300 worse-off have been variously criticised as baseless, tendentious or misleading, and that they were iconic of a campaign that did not serve voters well.

Yet voters seem to have survived the experience. For the most part they proved relatively resistant to attempts to change their minds about what the consequences of leaving the EU would be. What they do seem to have done during the referendum campaign – and since – is to align their views more closely, not just to their perceptions of some of the consequences of leaving the EU, but also to their sense of identity and whether they uphold a socially liberal outlook or a more conservative one. And it is this development that helps explain – albeit not entirely – why voters in Britain have so far emerged from the Brexit process more critical of Britain's membership of the EU. Those whose perceptions, sense of identity and values already predisposed them in 2015 to take a sceptical view of the EU have particularly come to the view that the UK should leave. Their decision may not be a popular one in all quarters, but it does bear the hallmarks of being an 'informed' one.

For the most part voters have proved relatively resistant to attempts to change their minds about what the consequences of leaving the EU would be

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Appendix

The data on which Figure 1 is based are shown below.

Table A.1 Proportion selecting "European" identity, 1996-2017

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
% identifying as European	10	9	12	17	11	12	12	12	11	12	16
Unweighted base	*1180*	*1355*	*3146*	*3143*	*3246*	*3287*	*3435*	*4432*	*3199*	*4268*	*4290*

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% identifying as European	12	14	12	11	12	14	13	15	16	18	18
Unweighted base	*4124*	*4486*	*3421*	*3297*	*3311*	*3248*	*3244*	*971*	*4316*	*2942*	*3988*

The full wording for the questions presented in Tables 4 and 5 is shown below.

2015 wording:

If Britain were to leave the EU, do you think Britain's economy would be better off, worse off, or wouldn't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot better off, A little better off, Wouldn't make much difference, A little worse off, A lot worse off)

And if Britain were to leave the EU, do you think unemployment in Britain would be higher, lower, or wouldn't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot higher, A little higher, Won't make much difference, A little lower, A lot lower)

If Britain were to leave the EU, do you think Britain would have more influence in the world, less influence, or wouldn't it make much difference? Please choose a phrase from the card.

(A lot more influence, A little more influence, Won't make much difference, A little less influence, A lot less influence)

And if Britain were to leave the EU, do you think unemployment in Britain would be higher, lower, or wouldn't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot higher, A little higher, Won't make much difference, A little lower, A lot lower)

2017 wording:

From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think that as a result of leaving the EU Britain's <u>economy</u> will be better off, worse off, or won't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot better off, A little better off, Won't make much difference, A little worse off, A lot worse off)

And from what you have seen and heard so far, do you think that as a result of leaving the EU <u>unemployment</u> in Britain will be higher, lower, or won't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot higher, A little higher, Won't make much difference, A little lower, A lot lower)

From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think that as a result of leaving the EU Britain will have more <u>influence</u> in the world, less influence, or won't it make much difference? Please choose a phrase from the card.

(A lot more influence, A little more influence, Won't make much difference, A little less influence, A lot less influence)

(From what you have seen and heard so far,) do you think that as a result of leaving the EU <u>immigration</u> to Britain will be higher, lower, or won't it make much difference? (Please choose a phrase from the card.)

(A lot higher, A little higher, Won't make much difference, A little lower, A lot lower)

Unweighted bases for Table 7 are shown below.

Table A.2 Support for leaving the EU, by perceptions of the consequences of EU membership for British identity, 2015 and 2017

Unweighted bases	**2015**	**2017**
Being a member of the EU undermines Britain's identity		
Agree	*548*	*445*
Neither	*216*	*204*
Disagree	*307*	*360*

Unweighted bases for Table 8 are shown below.

Table A.3 Support for leaving the EU, by strength of European identity, 2015 and 2017

Unweighted bases	2015	2017
Strength of European identity		
1 – not at all European	304	300
2	178	118
3	154	127
4	200	161
5	124	123
6 or 7 – very strongly European	137	186

Unweighted bases for Table 9 are shown below.

Table A.4 Support for leaving the EU, by national identity, England, 2014-2017

Unweighted bases	2014	2015	2016	2017
National identity				
English, not British	159	183	261	258
More English than British	82	97	172	177
Equally English and British	332	399	723	725
More British than English	78	85	139	165
British, not English	102	111	216	222

Unweighted bases for Table 10 are shown below.

Table A.5 Support for leaving the EU, by attitudes towards the cultural and economic consequences of immigration, 2015 and 2017

Unweighted bases	2015	2017
Perceived impact of migrants on Britain's cultural life		
Undermined (0-3)	377	260
Neither (4-6)	389	347
Enriched (7-10)	323	411
Perceived impact of migrants on Britain's economy		
Bad (0-3)	313	187
Neither (4-6)	453	377
Good (7-10)	325	452

Unweighted bases for Table 11 are shown below.

Table A.6 Support for leaving the EU, by libertarian/authoritarian values, 2014-2017

Unweighted bases	2014	2015	2016	2017
Placement on libertarian-authoritarian scale				
Libertarian	290	253	483	527
Neither	220	384	581	461
Authoritarian	271	305	469	618

Unweighted bases for Table 12 are shown below.

Table A.7 Support for leaving the EU, by perceptions of the economic consequences of leaving the EU, 2015 and 2017

Unweighted bases	2015	2017
Britain's Economy		
Better off	271	280
Won't make much difference	355	261
Worse off	416	443
Unemployment		
Higher	264	317
Neither	524	473
Lower	256	196

Unweighted bases for Table 13 are shown below.

Table A.8 Support for leaving the EU, by perceptions of the consequences of leaving the EU for Britain's influence in the world and for the level of immigration, 2015 and 2017

Unweighted bases	2015	2017
Perceived impact of leaving the EU on Britain's influence in the world		
More	177	280
Won't make much difference	386	
Less	382	342
Immigration		
Higher/Won't make much difference	442	464
Lower	620	541

Unweighted bases for Table 14 are shown below.

Table A.9 Support for leaving the EU, by age and highest educational qualification, 2014-2017

Unweighted bases	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
Age Group				
18-34	*186*	*222*	*398*	*422*
35-54	*349*	*366*	*662*	*692*
55+	*429*	*515*	*899*	*893*
Highest Educational Qualification				
Degree	*211*	*260*	*470*	*530*
Higher Education below Degree/A Level	*273*	*293*	*537*	*560*
CSE/O Level	*258*	*280*	*514*	*512*
None	*205*	*248*	*390*	*361*

Multivariate analysis

The multivariate analysis technique used is logistic regression, about which more details can be found in the Technical Details chapter of the report. The dependent variable is whether the respondent supports leaving the EU. A positive coefficient indicates that the group are more likely than the reference group (shown in brackets) to support leaving the EU while a negative coefficient indicates the group are less likely than the reference group to support leaving the EU.

Table A.10 Logistic regression models of support for leaving the EU, 2015 and 2017

	2015		2017	
	Coefficient	**Standard Error**	**Coefficient**	**Standard Error**
Identity				
Think of self as European (Weakly (1-3))				
Not strongly (4)	***-1.08	0.34	-0.41	0.29
Strongly (5-7)	-0.49	0.37	-0.51	0.33
Is EU membership undermining identity? (Neither/Disagree)				
Agree	***-1.20	0.48	***-1.32	0.30
Immigration				
Impact on economy	-0.36	0.31	-0.29	0.29
Impact on cultural life	-0.51	0.33	-0.31	0.31
Values (Libertarian)				
Neither	0.28	0.37	0.33	0.35
Authoritarian	0.48	0.38	0.57	0.36
Consequences				
Economy (Better off)				
No difference	***-1.36	0.24	***-1.38	0.27
Worse off	***-2.76	0.41	***-2.16	0.33
Unemployment (Higher)				
Neither	0.64	0.34	0.44	0.29
Lower	0.73	0.38	0.25	0.36
Influence in the world (More)				
No difference	*-0.66	0.27	-0.39	0.26
Less	***-1.38	0.38	***-1.59	0.38
Immigration (No Difference/Higher)				
Lower	**-0.68	0.24	0.41	0.24
Constant	0.00		1.16	
McFadden Pseudo R-squared	37%		42%	
No. of cases	*838*		*719*	

*=significant at 95% level **=significant at 99% level ***=significant at 99.9% level

Publication details