

PERFORMANCE POLITICS AND THE BRITISH VOTER

CHAPTER FIVE

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

ELECTORAL CHOICES

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This chapter analyses party choice and turnout in Britain's 2005 general election. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the context in which this contest was held was quite different than that of the preceding, 2001, general election. At that time, Labour had been in a very strong position. The economy was vibrant, a sizable plurality of voters identified themselves as Labour partisans, and the issue agenda was dominated by public services such as the National Health Service and education, issues that Labour traditionally had claimed as its own. Labour Leader, Tony Blair, not especially popular, was more warmly received than his principal competitor, Conservative Leader, William Hague. However, by 2005, public opinion had shifted, and judgments about the performance of Prime Minister Blair and his New Labour government had become considerably more negative. Although the electoral system remained biased in Labour's favour, and most opinion polls showed the party holding a modest lead over the Conservatives, the party's 2005 electoral prospects were clearly more uncertain than they been four years earlier. Labour would likely win more seats than its rivals, but a hung parliament was a real possibility.

In this chapter, we employ BES data to document the mix of public beliefs, attitudes and opinions that governed electoral choice in 2005. We then examine the explanatory power of rival models of party choice to understand the forces that affected voting behavior in 2005. As part of this analysis, we investigate if the effects of party leader images -- a key component of the valence politics model of electoral choice -- vary

by voters' levels of political sophistication. Next, because the levels of support that parties receive are a function both of choices among parties and the choice to (not) participate in an election, we also study factors that affected turnout. Since it is arguably the case that the turnout decision is part and parcel of the larger party support decision people make -- 'none of the above' choice -- we specify a model that explicitly incorporates turnout as an option. The chapter concludes by highlighting major findings regarding what mattered for electoral choice in 2005.

Mixed Fundamentals

Economic Evaluations: In discussions of forces that drive election outcomes, analysts often emphasize the importance of 'fundamentals' (e.g., Gelman and King, 1993; Wlezien and Norris, 2005). Although the set of factors designated as fundamentals is not clearly defined, there is broad agreement that a healthy economy is a *sine qua non*. In this regard, after coming to power in May 1997, Labour had presided over a prolonged economic boom characterized by a felicitous mix of strong growth coupled with low unemployment and modest price increases. To be sure, not all parts of the country had participated equally in the good times, and some sectors of the economy, such as automotive manufacturing, had struggled. And, although inflation was generally low, soaring housing prices in London, the South East and parts of East Anglia were cause for concern. Younger people worried about their ability to buy a home, and older people worried that the housing bubble might burst, leaving them in financially untenable 'negative equity' positions.

Still, the overall economic picture remained rosy in the spring of 2005, and this was reflected in public assessments of the national economy and personal economic

circumstances. As the 2005 BES pre-election survey data in Figure 5.1 show, economic evaluations were quite positive, and only slightly less sanguine than in 2001.¹ Many respondents believed good economic times would continue or get even better. When they were asked to judge whether their personal finances had ‘got better,’ ‘stayed the same,’ or ‘got worse,’ over the past year, 67% said things had stayed the same or improved, and only 33% said they had deteriorated. The comparable numbers for 2001 were 73% and 27%, respectively. When asked about how things would develop in the year ahead, the balance of responses in 2005, as in 2001, was tilted very much in a positive direction for both personal finances and the national economy. Differences between 2001 and 2005 are somewhat larger for evaluations of how the economy had fared over the previous year. In 2001, 70% offered positive assessments and 30% offered negative ones. Four years later, the balance was still clearly positive, but the ratio, 58% to 42%, was less skewed. Overall, these evaluations complement objective data on the robust health of the British economy and suggest that Labour did have this fundamental secured as the 2005 election approached.

(Figure 5.1 about here)

Party Identification: Positive attitudes towards the economy were not mirrored in a second often-cited fundamental, partisanship. Since the development of the concept of party identification at the University of Michigan in the 1950s, political scientists have recognized that psychological attachments to political parties are important elements in the skein of forces affecting electoral choice. In its original formulation, party identification was conceptualized as a stable, long-term attachment that influenced the vote directly, and also helped to shape orientations to party leaders and currently salient

issues (Campbell et al., 1960). Over the past quarter century, a number of analysts have challenged this model's core claim that party identification typically is a stable feature of public political psychology. According to these critics, partisanship in the United States, Britain and elsewhere is characterized by ongoing individual-level dynamics (e.g., Achen, 2002; Alt, 1984; Fiorina, 1981; Franklin and Jackson, 1983; Franklin, 1992).

Despite sophisticated efforts to defend the traditional view (e.g., Green and Palmquist, 1990; Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2002), evidence from multi-wave national panel surveys indicates the reality of partisan instability. Sizable minorities of voters change their partisan attachments between consecutive general elections (Clarke et al., 2004, 2007). Some abandon one party and adopt another one, whereas others move back and forth between partisanship and nonpartisanship. Partisan instability is not novel as might be inferred from analyses documenting the aggregate dealignment of partisan forces in many mature democracies over the past few decades (e.g., Dalton, 2000; see also Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983). Rather, panel surveys, including those conducted in the 1960s by Butler and Stokes show that large numbers of voters vary their partisan attachments. Following Fiorina (1981) and others, we have argued that the mutability in partisanship in Britain at any time t can be usefully conceptualized as the product of a dynamic process. This process is one in which voters use current information about the performance of parties and their leaders to update their partisan attachments, with previous ($t-i$) information being progressively discounted over time (Clarke et al., 2004).

The finding that partisanship has dynamic properties does not negate its importance for understanding the choices voters make at particular points in time. In any given election, party identification has significant effects on voting behavior, and a party

with a sizable cohort of identifiers has an important fundamental on its side. For example, Figure 5.2 shows that Labour held a very substantial lead over the Conservatives and other parties at the beginning of the 2001 election campaign.² With a 42% share --17% more than the Conservatives and fully 33% more than the Liberal Democrats -- Labour definitely had the party identification fundamental secured when that campaign began.

(Figure 5.2 about here)

Four years later, as the outset of the 2005 campaign, Labour's cohort of identifiers had fallen to 34% (Figure 5.2). A saving grace for the party was that its competitors had made little headway. The Conservative share stood at a mediocre 25% -- exactly where it had been when the 2001 campaign started. The Liberal Democrats were even more disadvantaged; their group of identifiers stood at a meager 12%. Nationalist and other minor parties also had only very small groups of partisans, and nearly one-quarter of the electorate said that they did not identify with any party. Thus, although Labour retained a partisan edge when the 2005 campaign began, that edge was considerably reduced, and a large group of nonidentifiers lent considerable potential for short-term, campaign-related forces to determine the election outcome.

Party Performance: In keeping with the valence politics model of electoral choice presented in Chapter Two, we argue that party performance evaluations in a variety of areas are a third fundamental. In the 2005 BES pre-election survey, we asked respondents to evaluate government performance in several different areas.³ Their answers buttress the evidence presented in Chapters Three and Four that many people were unhappy with the job Labour had done in various policy areas. Negative

evaluations outnumbered positive ones in seven of 10 cases, including the national health service, pensions, transportation, taxes, crime, immigration and Iraq (see Figure 5.3). In some cases, the negative tilt was sizable and, in others, it was massive. Thus, only slightly over one-quarter of the BES respondents gave Labour a positive evaluation on crime, but over two-fifths gave the party a negative one. The comparable proportions for immigration (asylum seekers) were less than one in ten (positive) and more than seven in ten (negative). The Iraq numbers were terrible as well. Also, although respondents gave Labour a very modest 'thumbs up' on education, job evaluations for other public services such as the NHS, the railways, and pensions were clearly negative. There were only two bright spots, the economy and terrorism. Consistent with the positive economic evaluations discussed above, a slim majority gave Labour passing marks on the economy and less than person one in five gave the party a failing grade. For terrorism, judgments also were tilted in a positive direction. Indicative of the overall problem Labour faced, its average negative evaluation score across the ten policy areas was 44%, whereas the average positive score was only 29%.

(Figure 5.3 about here)

Additional perspective on these judgments can be gained by considering what kind of job the principal opposition party, the Conservatives, would do in various policy areas.⁴ Expectations about likely Conservative performance, summarized in Figure 5.4, contrast with those for Labour in several respects. Although, not unexpectedly, BES respondents were more likely to say they 'didn't know' how the Conservatives -- then out of power for eight years -- would do, positive judgments outnumbered negative ones in six of 10 areas. Also, even when negative opinions about the Conservatives were more

frequent than positive ones, the differences tended to be quite small. In addition, the Tories fared well on those issues that define the core of what we have termed the 'new issue agenda' in Chapter Three. On crime, two-fifths thought the Conservatives would do a good job, and less than one-fifth thought they would do poorly. For immigration and terrorism the story was the same -- positive evaluations cleanly outdistanced negative ones. Overall, the percentage of positive judgments about likely Conservative performance averaged 33%, and percentage of negative judgments averaged 24%.

The former figure is not substantially larger than Labour's average positive rating, but the latter is much smaller than that party's average negative rating. Although Tony Blair had spent nearly a decade taking every opportunity to remind the electorate about the misdeeds of previous Conservative governments, *circa* 2005 many voters did seem have received his message. A sizable number were unsure about what kind of job a Conservative government would do and, of those who had opinions, positive judgments outweighed negative ones. Viewed globally, party performance judgments were a fundamental Labour did not have firmly in place on the eve of the 2005 campaign.

(Figure 5.4 about here)

Emotional Reactions: An important, if typically, unstated assumption in valence politics models is that party and leader performance *evaluations* are what matter for electoral choice. Emotional reactions to economic, political and social conditions and events usually are ignored. Although some political psychologists (e.g., Conover and Feldman, 1986; Marcus, Neuman and Mackuen, 2000; Neuman et al., 2007) have questioned the wisdom of neglecting the role of emotions, the impact of emotional reactions has seldom been investigated in studies of party support in Britain, with existing

studies focusing on the impact of feelings about economic conditions (Clarke, Stewart and Whiteley, 1997; Clarke et al., 2004). In the context of the 2005 British general election, there are reasons to believe that emotions may have had significant effects. As discussed in Chapter Four, Britain's decision to join the United States in a war against Iraq triggered large protests and stimulated a storm of negative commentary about the decision and its principal proponent, Prime Minister Blair. Analyses presented in Chapter Four indicate that this negativity had grown by the time of the 2005 election. When presented with a list of four positive (happy, hopeful, confident, proud) and four negative (angry, disgusted, uneasy, afraid) words and asked to choose which words described their feelings 'about the situation in Iraq,' fully 82% of the BES pre-election survey respondents chose one or more of the negative words, and only 22% chose one or more positive words (Figure 5.5).⁵

(Figure 5.5 about here)

Other issues were emotion-laden as well. The NHS is a good example. A core feature in the set of public service policies that operationally define the welfare state in Britain and most other mature democracies, prompt access to high quality publicly funded health care is literally a matter of life and death for thousands of people. The hypothesis that news about, and personal experience with, the NHS generates emotions that have potential to affect voting behavior is certainly plausible. Finally, as in our earlier work, we believe that the economy is another intuitively attractive locus of politically consequential emotions. Economic hardship affects peoples' lives in many ways, and the old saying 'I'm mad as hell and not going to take it anymore!' encapsulates how voters may punish governments that have the misfortune to preside over hard times.

Another such saying, 'Happy days are here again!' conveys the buoyant emotions attendant upon good times -- emotions that can lead voters to reward incumbent governments for bulging pocketbooks.

In the 2005 BES pre-election survey, respondents were asked to use the eight words listed above to describe their feelings about the NHS and 'the country's general economic situation'. Paralleling evaluations of the health system discussed earlier, and indicative of possible dangers the issue posed for Labour, almost two-thirds of the BES respondents chose one or more negative words and only slightly over two-fifths chose one or more positive words. Reactions to the economy were different -- 55% selected one or more positive words, and 52% chose one or more negative words. Thus, although Britain's strong economy predictably had generated elements of a 'feel good' factor in a majority of the electorate, many people also reported that they had negative feelings about economic conditions. Later in this chapter, we will consider if, and how, these emotional reactions to the economy, the health service, and the situation in Iraq influenced voting in the 2005 election.

Issues and Leaders

A New Issue Agenda

In a seminal article published over four decades ago, Stokes (1963, see also Stokes 1992), argued that what he termed *valence issues* typically dominate national elections in mature democracies. As discussed in Chapter Two, valence issues differ from position issues such as the desirability of adopting the European Constitution. The latter have a clear 'pro-con' quality, and divide public opinion, sometimes very sharply. In contrast, valence issues have very one-sided distributions of opinion. Classic

examples are provided by the economy; virtually everyone favours a healthy economy characterized by low levels of inflation and unemployment. And, in Britain and most other contemporary democracies, there is a strong consensus that government should provide a generous supply of public services, with universal health care and affordable educational opportunities being exemplars. A strong consensus also exists concerning the responsibility of government to protect citizens from external and internal security threats, such as those posed by hostile foreign powers, terrorists, and common criminals. For valence issues, political debate centers on how best to accomplish the agreed upon goal, and which party and which leader are best able to do the job.

As observed in Chapter Two, political parties often are said to 'own' certain issues (e.g., Budge and Farlie, 1983; Kiewiet, 1983). In Chapter Three, we noted that the pattern of issue ownership in British politics changed shortly after the fiasco of the September 1992 currency crisis (see also Clarke et al., 2004). Almost overnight, the crisis obliterated the Conservatives' longstanding reputation for prudent stewardship of the economy. Subsequently, Labour's ability to claim that it was the party of sound economic management was strongly reinforced by the protracted prosperity that ensued after the party came to power in 1997. Labour also continued to enjoy its historic advantage as advocate and guardian of health care, education and other public services.

These issue ownership differentials had worked strongly in Labour's favour in 2001 when the public's issue concerns focused primarily on traditional concerns about the economy and public services. Then, the world changed. The horrific 911 terrorist attacks set in motion a chain of events, including the Iraq War, which dramatically reshaped the issue agenda of British politics. Issues such as crime, immigration and

terrorism—mentioned by less than one respondent in 10 in the 2001 BES—became highly salient. As shown in Table 5.1, almost half (49%) of the respondents in the 2005 BES pre-election survey cited crime, immigration, terrorism or the Iraq War as 'most important'⁶ (see Table 5.1, Panel A). With the exception of Iraq, all of these issues were heavily valenced. And even opinion on Iraq conflict was decidedly tilted in one direction -- well before the 2005 campaign began, public opinion had swung against the war. Although the increased salience of these issues did not completely overshadow concerns with the economy and public services, there clearly was a 'new issue agenda' in 2005, one which worked to invigorate aspects of party competition that had been only minor themes in earlier elections.

(Table 5.1 about here)

Conservative strategists recognized the new issue agenda and moved quickly to exploit it (Kavanagh and Butler, 2005). Data in Table 5.1, Panel A indicate that their success in doing so was limited. Although the Conservatives were seen as the best party on immigration and crime more often than their competitors, they trailed Labour slightly on the Iraq War, and badly on terrorism. Moreover, Labour maintained its lead on the issues that it had traditionally 'owned,' such as the NHS, education and pensions. And, consonant with its image as the architect of a near decade of unbroken prosperity, Labour had a large edge over the Conservatives (36% v. 14%) as the party best able to handle economic problems. Thus, despite the negative tenor of many of the evaluations of the party's performance in office, Labour was seen as better than the Conservatives on a range of issues. The result was that, as the election campaign was about to begin, Labour held a narrow overall lead over the Conservatives (26% v. 22%) as the party best on the

most important issues. This lead was much smaller than the one Labour had enjoyed in 2001, when its 'best party' issue share was 34%, and the Conservative share was only 15% (see Figure 5.6). Labour's issue hegemony had largely evaporated when the 2005 campaign began.

(Figure 5.6 about here)

But, this is not the end of the issue story. As Table 5.1 and Figure 5.6 Panel B show, Labour made important gains on the issues during the course of the 2005 campaign. Although the mix of 'most important issues' remained largely unchanged in the BES pre- and post-election surveys, 35% of those interviewed after the election selected Labour as best on the most important issue. This is a 9% increase over the pre-election figure. In contrast, the percentage (22%) selecting the Conservatives was unchanged, and the percentages selecting the Liberal Democrats increasing by only a trivial amount (1%). Examining the data in more detail reveals that Labour made sizable gains on several issues, with the percentage thinking the party was best increasing by 10% or more for the NHS, the economy, crime, terrorism and even the Iraq War. Labour thus made gains on a variety of salient issues during the 2005 campaign. Given its reduced cohort of identifiers and widespread negativism about its performance in office when the campaign began, these gains helped to give Labour the momentum it needed to secure a third consecutive electoral victory.

Leaders

Historically, many commentators on British politics have claimed that party leader images have only minor effects on voting behaviour and election outcomes (e.g., Butler and Stokes, 1969; Crewe and King, 1994; King, 2002). However, a variety of

aggregate- and individual-level studies have challenged this conventional wisdom (see, e.g., Andersen and Evans, 2003; Clarke, Ho and Stewart, 2000; Clarke et al. 2004; Stewart and Clarke, 1992). Consonant with recent research (e.g., Sniderman, Tetlock and Brody, 1991; Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin), we argue that voters use images of the party leaders to help them make decisions in a political world where stakes are high and uncertainty abounds. In the language of cognitive psychology, leader images constitute heuristic devices that provide voters with cues about who will be a 'safe pair of hands' on the tiller of the ship of state.

Political leadership in a democracy is multifaceted. The norms and values that undergird a democratic political regime encourage voters to judge leaders in terms of multiple criteria. Competence is an important trait, but it is not enough. Leaders also should be trustworthy and responsive to public needs and demands. Thus, political leaders in a democracy should possess a felicitous combination of probity and wisdom that enables them to prosecute the public's business effectively, equitably and fairly. For their part, voters should judge leaders in terms of these criteria, and these judgments should inform their party support decisions.

We asked respondents in the 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys to rate party leaders on 0 to 10 point scales using the three criteria cited above, i.e., competence, responsiveness and trust.⁷ We also asked respondents to use 0-10 scales to tell us how much they (dis)liked each of the leaders.⁸ The results, presented in Table 5.2, Panel A, show that none of the leaders was especially well received by the electorate. But, in relative terms, competence was clearly Tony Blair's strong suit. Blair's competence scores were well above those of either of his major competitors, Michael Howard, the

Conservative leader and Charles Kennedy, the Liberal Democrat leader. In contrast, Blair fared relatively poorly on the responsiveness and trust scales. Indeed, he trailed Howard and Kennedy in both the pre- and post-election surveys on the responsiveness dimension, and Kennedy in both surveys on the trust dimension. He also trailed Howard on trust in the pre-election survey.

For his part, Kennedy consistently ranked first on trust and ranked first on responsiveness in the pre-election survey. On the post-election survey, he trailed Howard by only the narrowest of margins. Kennedy also was better liked than his rivals in both surveys, with Howard trailing in both cases. Again, it bears emphasis that these are relative comparisons. Kennedy was the only leader who managed to climb above the mid-point (5) on the 0-10 'like-dislike' scale, with a score 5.5 in the post-election survey.

(Table 5.2 about here)

These data tell us about the *content* of leader images in 2005. But, what about the *structure* of these images? Conceptual distinctions aside, is it the case that leader images are empirically multidimensional, with voters clearly distinguishing between traits such as competence, responsiveness, and trust? Or, alternatively, do voters have generalized images of the leaders, images that encompass various specific traits? If the latter is true, can a general 'like-dislike' scale effectively summarize several aspects of voters' images of leader traits? To answer these questions, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis of the competence, responsiveness, trust and affect variables for each of the three British party leaders. Separate analyses were carried out for the pre- and post-election survey data. The results strongly indicate that public images of the party leaders were tightly structured in 2005 (see Table 5.2, Panel B). All six analyses summarized in the table

yield single-factor solutions that explain between 73.6 and 83.7 percent of the item variance. Factor loadings are very impressive, ranging from a low of .83 to a high of .93. These results suggest that, for purposes of multivariate analyses of electoral choice, the like-dislike scales provide useful summaries of leader images. We employed these measures in previous work (Clarke et al., 2004), and will do again later in this chapter.

For now, comparisons of the leader affect scores in the 2001 and 2005 BES surveys provide further evidence that Labour's situation had deteriorated across the four years separating the two elections. In the 2001 pre-election survey, Tony Blair, although not highly regarded, had a considerably higher 'like-dislike' score (5.2) than Conservative Leader, William Hague (3.9), and a slightly higher one than Liberal Democrat Leader, Charles Kennedy (4.9) (see Figure 5.7). And, Blair's affect score increased to 5.6 points in the 2001 post-election survey, keeping him well ahead of Mr. Hague (4.1) and only very slightly behind Mr. Kennedy (5.7). Blair's 2005 pre- and post-election scores were worse than their 2001 equivalents and, unlike 2001, they did not increase over the election campaign. For his part, Michael Howard was only marginally better thought of than was his Conservative predecessor, William Hague who, by all accounts, was thoroughly disliked across much of the electorate. Kennedy's scores were virtually unchanged. The overall picture, then, is similar to those depicted for party identification, government performance evaluations, and perceptions of party competence on important election issues. Much of the electorate had soured on Labour Leader, Tony Blair, between 2001 and 2005. Below, we will document that these negative feelings had important consequences for voting behaviour in the 2005 election.

(Figure 5.7 about here)

Issue Proximities and Spatial Models

Since the publication of Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* in 1957, many political scientists have adopted spatial models of party competition as the explanatory vehicle in their analyses of electoral choice (for reviews, see Merrill and Grofman, 1999; Adams, Merrill and Grofman, 2005). As observed in Chapter Two, since the appearance of Down's work, spatial models have been the principal rivals to the social psychological approach to voting behavior exemplified by the studies by Campbell et al. (1954, 1960) in the United States, and adopted by Butler and Stokes (1969) in their landmark study, *Political Change in Britain*. According to Downsian spatial theory, voters discern where competing parties stand on various position issues and then calculate distances between parties' positions and personal 'ideal points.' Voters maximize utility by casting a ballot for the party which is closest to them. In an issue-proximity world, considerations such as party identification, leader images, or competence on valence issues are irrelevant.

In the 2005 BES, we measured respondents' locations and their perceptions of parties' locations on three position issues, as well as a general left-right scale.⁹ The latter scale long has been a staple concept in analyses of the ideologies of British political parties (e.g., Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 2001). For issue scales, we chose tax reduction-public services spending and punish criminals-rights of the accused, as well as the desirability of Britain's continued membership in the European Union. All three of these issues have been salient aspects of British political discourse for many years and, hence, could be expected to be position issues that would matter to the electorate.

Figure 5.8 displays mean absolute distances between BES respondents and the Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat parties on the four scales. Similar to much of the data already presented, these numbers suggest that Labour was not in a particularly advantageous position at the time of the 2005 election campaign. On average, the party was closest to the electorate on only one scale, tax reduction versus increased public spending. And, even here, the average distance from the voters was only one-tenth of a point less than that of the Liberal Democrats (1.5 v 1.6 points). On the punish criminals v. protect rights of the accused, Labour ranked last with an average distance of 2.5 points, being bested by both the Conservatives (average distance = 1.9 points) and the Liberal Democrats (average distance = 2.2 points). Labour also ranked behind the Liberal Democrats on the general left-right and EU membership scales, although, as Figure 5.8 shows, the three parties were ‘neck and neck’ on the EU scale. In the next section, we will consider how issue proximities and the several other variables discussed above affected voting behaviour in the 2005 election.

(Figure 5.8 about here)

Competing Models of Party Choice

The preceding discussion suggests that a variety of considerations may have influenced the choices voters made in the 2005 election. Viewed discretely, these are: (a) economic evaluations; (b) emotional reactions to the economy, Iraq and the NHS, (c) party identification; (d) leader images; (f) party preferences on important election issues—the vast majority of which are valence issues involving judgments about actual or anticipated party performance; and (g) issue-party proximities. As discussed in Chapter Two, party identification, party preferences on issues, and leader images collectively

comprise a valence politics model of electoral choice. Here, we evaluate the explanatory power of these several models.

We also will consider two additional models: a social class model, and a more general demographic model which includes age, social class, ethnicity, gender, and region of residence.¹⁰ Social class traditionally has been considered the axial socio-economic fault-line in British politics, and it was argued that the class cleavage could account for much of the variance in the choices voters made (Pulzer, 1967; see also Denver, 2003). In Butler and Stokes' (1969) arrestingly simple formulation, social class locations shaped life-long partisan attachments which, in turn, drove voting behavior in successive general elections.

In *Political Choice in Britain* (2004), we argued that data from the several BES surveys revealed that the claims advanced on behalf of the power of class models were unwarranted. Since at least the mid-1960s, no more than slightly over half, and typically less, of the electorate spontaneously identified with the middle or working classes. Moreover, properly calibrated, the correlation between class and voting was weaker than typically assumed and, as advocates the class-party dealignment had argued (e.g., Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983; Dalton, 2000), the correlation had declined over time. *Circa* 2001, social class models had less explanatory power than any of the other competing models of electoral choice. There is no reason to think that this situation had changed in 2005. Including several other socio-demographic variables in the analyses will enable us to compare their effects with class, and document their explanatory power in a political context where increasing attention is being paid to the political consequences of characteristics such as age, ethnicity and gender.

Tactical Voting: We also consider the impact of *tactical voting* on party choice. Tactical voting occurs in multiparty systems when voters take account of the competitive situation in their constituencies. For example, consider someone living in a constituency where three parties are running. That person might prefer Party A, but conclude that a second choice, Party B, has a better chance of defeating a third choice, Party C. To help keep Party C from winning, the voter supports Party B. The sincere preference is A, but the tactical preference is B. Tactical voting fits well with rational choice theories of political behaviour. In the present example, a voter gets less utility from B than would be provided by sure loser A, but more than would accrue if C wins.

Observers have claimed that sizable numbers of voters made tactical decisions in the 1997 and 2001 elections (e.g., Curtice and Steed, 1997, 2002; see also Norris and Wlezien, 2005). In the 2001 BES, 14% of the respondents said that they had behaved tactically¹¹ and, net of other considerations, self-identified tactical voters did behave differently. They were significantly more likely to choose the Liberal Democrats, and significantly less likely to opt for either Labour or the Conservatives (Clarke et al., 2004).

In 2005, there was considerable speculation before the election about a possible ‘unwinding’ of tactical voting -- people who had behaved tactically in 2001 would not do so again (Fisher and Curtice, 2005). The claim was that the Conservatives had been out of power for several years and were no longer a target of intense public hostility. However, there was also discussion that 2005 might witness anti-Blair/anti-New Labour tactical voting prompted by unhappiness over the decision to invade Iraq. In the event, nearly 11% of the 2005 BES validated voters said they had behaved tactically. Down slightly from 2001, this figure remains sufficiently large to gainsay the tactical ‘unwind’

conjecture. Below, we will see if tactical considerations had significant effects, net of other factors that influenced the vote.

Rival Models: To assess the relative explanatory power of competing models of electoral choice, we estimate the parameters in each of the competing models and compute McFadden and McKelvey R^2 statistics (Long, 1997). We also compute Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) model selection statistics (Burnham and Anderson, 2002). Rank-ordering models by their AIC values enables us to compare their relative explanatory power. The AIC imposes heavier penalties on models that are more richly parameterized than their competitors.¹² Smaller AIC values indicate superior model performance. We perform two sets of analyses. First we contrast voting for the governing Labour Party with voting for any opposition party. Since the dependent variable is a 0-1 dichotomy, binomial logit analysis is used for estimation purposes (Long, 1997). Second, we consider voting for the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, or other parties, with Labour voting as the reference category. Since the dependent variable is a four-category nominal scale, multinomial logit analysis is employed.

Table 5.3 summarizes the results. The social class and 'all demographic' models have very little explanatory power.¹³ This is also true for the emotional reactions model which is specified using three indicators of the balance of positive and negative feelings about the Iraq War, the health service, and the economy. The economic evaluations, issue-party proximities, and party best on most important issue models fare considerably better both in terms of their pseudo R^2 statistics and AIC values. Better still are the party identification and party leader models. Judged by its pseudo R^2 and AIC values, the party leader model outperforms all rivals in both sets of analyses.

(Table 5.3 about here)

There is also evidence that the valence politics model has strong explanatory power. Despite its rich parameterization, the valence politics model (which includes party identification variables, party best on most important issue variables, and leader image variables) has a considerably smaller AIC value than any of the models discussed thus far. However, the valence politics model does not statistically encompass all of its rivals in the sense of obviating their explanatory contributions (Charemza and Deadman, 1997). Rather, as Table 5.3 documents, a composite model which includes the variables from all of the several rivals, plus a tactical voting variable, outperforms the valence politics model -- the composite model has larger pseudo R^2 statistics, and a lower AIC value than any of its competitors. This result suggests that voting in 2005 was largely about valence considerations, but other things mattered as well. Since election campaigns put many considerations in play simultaneously-- ranging from multiple valence issues to multiple position issues to leader images to partisanship -- the superior performance of a composite model of voting makes sense.

Table 5.4 contains the detailed results of analyses of the composite model. Panel A shows that the valence politics variables perform as anticipated in the analysis of voting Labour v. voting for any of the opposition parties. Labour party identification increases the probability of a Labour vote, and identification with one of the opposition parties decreases that probability. In addition, choosing Labour as the party best on the most important issue enhances the probability of a Labour ballot, and choosing the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats reduces it. Believing Labour is best on the economy operates similarly—enhancing the probability of voting Labour. Party leader

effects are also as expected, with positive feelings about Blair increasing the likelihood of choosing Labour, and positive feelings about Michael Howard or Charles Kennedy decreasing it.

(Table 5.4 about here)

Regarding other variables in the model, all of the issue proximity variables work as advertised. Closer proximity to Labour increases the probability of voting for the party, and closer proximity to the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats decreases it. Of the emotional reactions, only feelings about the NHS matter; as anticipated, people who feel good about the health service are more likely to vote Labour. There are demographic effects as well. Consistent with conventional wisdom, working class people are more likely to vote Labour. Younger people also are more likely to choose Labour. And, despite conjectures that Britain's involvement in the Iraq War had alienated ethnic minorities, considered as a group such people were more likely than whites to support Labour. Moreover, Iraq is conspicuous by its absence—neither evaluations¹⁴ of nor emotional reactions to the situation in that war-torn country have significant effects on Labour voting.

The results of the analyses of voting for specific opposition parties v. voting Labour in Table 5.4, Panel B are basically a mirror image of those just discussed. For example, positive feelings about Michael Howard and Conservative party identification increase the probability of casting a Tory vote, and positive feelings about Tony Blair and Labour identification reduce that probability. Similarly, choice of party as best on most important issue, belief that Labour is best on the economy, and issue proximities all have the expected effects. Emotional reactions come also into play; positive feelings about the

Iraq war increase the probability of voting Conservative, and positive feelings about the NHS decrease it. Two demographics are noteworthy, with older people and middle class people being more likely to cast a Conservative ballot.

Mutatis mutandis, most of these patterns are repeated for Liberal Democrat voting, although the emotional variables do not have significant impacts. Also, in patterns opposite to Labour, Liberal Democratic voting is more prominent among older people and the white British majority. Finally, there is evidence that the Liberal Democrats benefited from tactical voting. In 2001, decisions to behave tactically had helped the Liberal Democrats and hurt both Labour and the Conservatives. In 2005, the Liberal Democrats again benefited, Labour again suffered, but the Conservatives were unaffected.

Overall, the composite model performs well. As noted, despite its elaborate parameterization, it has lower AIC values than any of its component models, and its pseudo R^2 values are larger. In the Labour v. all opposition parties analysis, the composite model correctly classifies nearly 88% of the voters. It does nearly as well in the various opposition parties versus Labour analysis, correctly classifying nearly 82%. The proportional reduction in prediction error statistics also are impressive, .68 and .70, respectively.

Party Choice Probabilities: Since the estimated parameters in Table 5.4 are logit coefficients, they are opaque regarding the *size* of the effects of various predictor variables in the composite model. To see how large these effects are, we compute the change in probability of voting for a party when a significant predictor variable is varied over its range, holding other predictors at their means (in the case of continuous

variables) or at 0 (in the case of dummy variables formed from multiple-category variables such as party identification or party best on most important issue) (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King, 1999).¹⁵ The resulting changes in probability of voting for a party (which range on 0 to 1) are multiplied by 100 for ease of exposition.

Performing these calculations for the Labour v. all other party voting analysis reveals that several variables had considerable potential to influence Labour voting. Most noteworthy are feelings about party leaders; as sentiment about Blair moves from the negative to the positive end of the 0-10 point affect scale, the probability of voting Labour increase by fully 67 points (see Figure 5.9). The effects of feelings about opposition party leaders, Charles Kennedy and Michael Howard, are also nontrivial, having the ability to change the probability of choosing Labour by 54 and 22 points, respectively. Party identification matters as well; for example, a shift from Liberal Democrat to Labour identification enhances the likelihood of casting a Labour ballot by 41 points. Issue effects are prominent too, with a shift from Conservative to Labour as the party best able to handle an important issue raising the probability of a Labour vote by 29 points. Issue proximity effects are even larger, with proximities to Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats having the ability to alter the likelihood of choosing Labour by 39, 54, and 45 points respectively. Among the other predictors, emotions about the NHS, choosing Labour as best on the economy, age, and ethnicity all have the ability to shift the Labour vote probability by 15 points or more.

(Figure 5.9 about here)

Iraq and Mr. Blair: Analyses presented in Chapter Four documented that evaluations of the situation in Iraq had highly significant effects on feelings about Tony Blair. This

finding was not unexpected; indeed, it is now conventional wisdom that Blair's insistence of prosecuting this protracted and unresolved conflict did much to lower his standing, both in his party and in the electorate as a whole. In the run-up to the 2005 election, many observers also voiced the opinion that negative reactions to this very unpopular war would erode Labour support. However, as shown above, evaluations of the war and emotional reactions to it did not have significant *direct* effects on Labour voting. Taken together, this evidence suggests that much of the negative impact of Iraq on Labour operated *indirectly* by driving down support for Blair.

We calibrate this indirect effect by using the regression analysis results in Table 4.x to determine how much Blair's thermometer scores varied as judgments about the Iraq situation moved from the negative to the positive end of the evaluation scale. Then, that change in Blair's thermometer score is fed into a Labour vote probability analysis to determine the change in probability. Other variables are held at their means or at zero as described above and, once again, calculated probabilities are multiplied by 100 to facilitate interpretation. To put the findings for the indirect Iraq effect in comparative perspective, similar calculations are performed for other significant predictors of feelings about Blair.

The numbers reveal that, *ceteris paribus*, increasingly negative evaluations of Iraq operating through feelings about the prime minister could lower the likelihood of voting Labour by 27 points. As Figure 5.10 illustrates, this is the second strongest of all such indirect effects, being surpassed only by issue proximity to Labour which could indirectly alter the probability of a Labour ballot by 35 points. As the figure also shows, all of the other indirect effects were much smaller, with none of them being able to shift the Labour

vote probability by more than 10 points. The conclusion is straightforward; Iraq mattered but, as hypothesized, it operated by affecting how people felt about Blair. Forceful chief advocate for what quickly became an unpopular war, the prime minister paid a heavy price in personal public approval. Part of that price, in turn, was passed on to his party.

(Figure 5.10 about here)

Figures 5.11 and 5.12 show how various predictor variables influenced the probability of voting for the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, respectively. The Conservative analysis emphasizes the importance of feelings about the party leaders, with changes in affect for Michael Howard shifting the probability of voting Conservative by fully 81 points (see Figure 5.11). Feelings about Blair are also noteworthy, moving the likelihood of casting a Conservative ballot by 35 points. Economic evaluations, party identification, and proximity to the Conservative issue-party proximities also have strong effects. Changing economic evaluations alter the likelihood of a Tory vote by 51 points, a shift from Labour to Conservative partisanship increases that likelihood by 33 points, and variations in proximity to the party on position issues does so by 35 points. Choosing the Conservatives rather than the Liberal Democrats as the party best able to handle the most important election issue boosts the Conservative vote probability by 40 points. Emotions are influential too. Changing feelings about the NHS and Iraq each vary the probability of casting a Conservative vote by 21 points.

(Figures 5.11 about here)

The Liberal Democrat story is again one that emphasizes leaders, issues and party identification. As illustrated in Figure 5.12, changes in feelings about Charles Kennedy alter the probability of a Liberal Democrat vote by 78 points, and changes in feelings

about Tony Blair do by 37 points. Variations in the proximity of the Liberal Democrats change the Liberal Democrat vote probability by 51 points and moving from Labour to the Liberal Democrats as party best on important issues changes it by 37 points. And, abandoning a Labour identification for a Liberal Democrat one boosts the likelihood of voting for Lib Dem by 42 points. Other effects, including tactical voting considerations, have considerably weaker effects. Much discussed as a source of Liberal Democrat support, with other factors held constant, making a tactical decision increases the likelihood of voting Liberal Democrat by only 10 points.

(Figure 5.12 about here)

In sum, the probability of voting analyses echo the results of comparisons of rival models presented earlier. Key variables in the valence politics model including feelings about party leaders, judgments about party competence on important issues and partisanship have strong effects on the probability of supporting various parties. Issue proximities are also influential and, in the Conservative, case, they are joined by economic evaluations and emotional reactions to the health service and Iraq. Below, we employ a mixed logit model that provides an alternative perspective on the determinants of party choice, and enables us to investigate the possibility that key predictor variables, such as party leader images, have heterogeneous effects.

Political Sophistication, Leader Images and Electoral Choice

The preceding analyses have employed standard binomial and multinomial logit models of party choice. Like ordinary least squares regression models, these logit models assume that the parameters associated with various predictors are fixed quantities. Relaxing this assumption enables researchers to pursue theoretically interesting lines of

inquiry. Here, we focus on the effects of leader images. As discussed above, until recently, it has been conventional wisdom among British political scientists that leader images were relatively unimportant components in the set of forces driving party choice. Given abundant evidence that this is not true, some analysts have begun a rear-guard action, conjecturing that leader image effects vary across the electorate, with more sophisticated voters being less strongly influenced leader images than less sophisticated ones (e.g., Bartle, 2006). Here, we pursue this line of inquiry, estimating a discrete choice model in which the coefficients associated with leader image variables are allowed to vary. These variations in the effects of leader images are hypothesized to be a function of voters' levels of political sophistication.

We utilize the mixed logit (MXL) model for this purpose (Glasgow, 2001, 2005; see also Train, 2003). In addition to allowing one to investigate heterogeneity in the effects of predictor variables, MXL models do not require the possibly untenable assumption that the probability of choosing one party rather than another is independent of other alternatives on offer. Analysts concerned about this 'independence or irrelevant alternatives' (IIA) assumption typically have advocated using multinomial probit models (e.g., Alvarez and Nagler, 1998; Alvarez, Nagler and Bowler, 2000; but see Dow, 2004). However, multinomial probit models do not permit the specification of random parameters. MXL has the dual advantages of allowing the analyst to relax the IIA assumption while specifying random parameters for selected predictor variables.

Here, we employ this latter feature of MXL models to investigate heterogeneity in the effects of party leader images. Following the tradition of discrete choice models in fields such as transportation economics, MXL models divide predictor variables into two

types -- characteristics of choices, and characteristics of choosers (e.g., Hensher, Rose and Greene, 2005). An example of the former would be the proximity of a party to a voter on a position issue such as the taxation-policy services spending scale. A party's position on such a scale is a characteristic of the choice that party presents to voters. An example of the latter would be a socio-demographic characteristic such as age, gender or social class. Regardless of what choices parties offer, at any point in time a voter's socio-demographic characteristics are what they are, e.g., a 45-year-old man working for a brokerage firm in the City or a 25-year-old woman working in the grocery section at Tesco's.

The MXL model permits choice set variation across individuals (Greene, 2002; see also Hensher, Rose and Greene, 2005). The latter is useful in situations where the set of competing parties varies from one locale to the next. For example, in the British case, the SNP and Plaid Cymru compete only in Scotland and Wales, respectively, and smaller parties such as Respect, UKIP and the British National Party (BNP) run only in selected constituencies. Mixed logit models permits analysis of these country- and constituency-specific choices as part of one comprehensive analysis of voting in Great Britain as a whole.

Formally, the mixed logit model is described as follows:

$$P(j|v_i) = \exp(U_{ji}) / \sum \exp(U_{ji})$$

In this setup, the utility of party choice j for voter i :

$$U_{ji} = \alpha_{ji} + B_j X_i + \Phi_j Z_{ji} + \Theta_{ji} W_{ji}$$

where: α_{ji} = alternative-specific constant (fixed or varying); B_j = vector of fixed coefficients; X_i = fixed individual characteristics; Φ_j = vector of fixed coefficients; Θ_j =

vector of varying coefficients; Z_{ji} & W_{ji} = choice-varying attributes of choices. The randomly varying coefficients are modeled as:

$$\Theta_{ji} = \rho_{jk} + \delta_{jk}\xi_i + \sigma_k\psi_{ki}$$

where: ρ_{jk} = constant term; δ_{jk} = coefficient for individual-specific mean; ξ_i = set of individual characteristics; σ_k = standard deviation of marginal distribution of ρ_{jk} ; ψ_{ki} = individual, choice specific random disturbances.

The mixed logit model is used to extend our analyses of party choice in three ways. First, we relax the IIA assumption by treating model constants as correlated random variables.¹⁶ Second, we explicitly allow for varying choice sets, treating the SNP as a choice available only in Scotland, and Plaid Cymru as a choice available only in Wales. Third, we investigate the possibility of heterogeneity in party leader image effects. As per the preceding discussion, we distinguish between characteristics of choices and characteristics of choosers (voters) by considering variables that parties might be able to manipulate in the short term and variables that parties cannot manipulate in the short term. Specifically, party leader images, party best on most important issues, and issue-party proximities are conceptualized as characteristics of the choices that voters make. All other variables are considered characteristics of the voters. Since SNP and Plaid Cymru are explicitly considered as choices in Scotland and Wales, respectively, we augment the set of predictor variables by including national identities.¹⁷ We treat Labour as the reference category, and estimate parameter vectors for Conservative, Liberal Democrat, SNP, and Plaid Cymru voting.

Estimates for a basic MXL model with random alternative-specific constants are summarized in Table 5.5. The story told these numbers is very similar to that told by the

simpler multinomial logit model. the predictors treated as a characteristic of the choices, i.e., leader images, party best on most important issue, and party-issue proximities, have highly statistically significant effects. Additional analyses (not shown) indicate that variations in these variables are capable of causing large changes in the likelihood that voters will opt for one of the competing parties. Several other predictors are important as well. In the case of Conservative voting, these include party identification, economic evaluations, emotional reactions to the NHS and Iraq, age, ethnicity and social class. Party identification and several other variables also have significant effects Liberal Democrat voting. Again, tactical voting is one of these variables. Voting for the nationalist parties is less well predicted, although party identification and ethnicity come into play. Noticeably absent is national identity, although further analyses strongly suggest that it works indirectly by encouraging SNP and Plaid Cymru partisanship. Overall, the model performs very well -- 73.6% of the voters are correctly classified and the McFadden R^2 is an impressive .74.

(Table 5.5 about here)

The testimony provided by the basic MXL model thus agrees strongly with that provided by the more familiar binomial and multinomial logit models discussed earlier. Differences in model specification occasioned by distinguishing between choices and choosers, including the SNP and Plaid Cymru as explicit choices, and relaxing the IIA assumption do nothing to alter the fundamental conclusions suggested by the simpler models. The stylized facts of what mattered for electoral choice in 2005 remain undisturbed. Core variables in the valence politics model, supplemented by party-issue

proximities remain 'great beasts', with several other variables coming into play depending upon which party is considered.

Leader Effects and Political Sophistication: We next specify a MXL model that enables us to determine if party leader effects are mediated by levels of political sophistication. Since theory dictates that leader image effects (with these images considered as a characteristic of choices) must be positive, we require a statistical distribution for the random leader image parameter that has support only on the positive side of the real number line (Greene, 2002). We choose the log normal.¹⁸ A random variable X has a log normal distribution if $\ln(X)$ has a normal distribution with mean μ and standard deviation σ . An example is shown in Figure 5.13.

(Figure 5.13 about here)

Variation in the random leader image parameter is hypothesized have a log normal distribution and to be a function of political sophistication. Political sophistication is measured as the interaction between amount of available information and information-processing ability. We proxy the former using a political knowledge index, and the latter using level of formal education.¹⁹ We consider two possible effects of sophistication on the leader image parameter. The first effect is a simple linear one—following previous research, we hypothesize that the strength of the leader image variable decreases as sophistication increases. The second possible effect is quadratic. Information about party leaders and evaluations of their performance is easily acquired because it floods the media. Hence, voters with moderate levels of political sophistication will have more information about the leaders (and more ability to process it) than unsophisticated voters, and the effect of leader images will be greater for the former group than the latter.

However, voters with high levels of sophistication have a broader range of political information, with leader images being only one aspect of what is at their disposal for making electoral choices. Having plentiful information and a well-developed capacity to process it, 'high cognitive' voters weigh leader images less heavily than do those with moderate levels of sophistication.

Table 5.6 summarizes how these rival models of the impact of political sophistication behave. Panel A shows that feelings about the leaders have significant effects on voting, as do party preferences on important issues and party-issue proximities. The coefficients for the latter two variables are the same order of magnitude as those estimated in the simple MXL model without a random leader effect. Note that the coefficient for the leader variable is a mean effect; it is negative because the variable is assumed to follow a log normal distribution, and the mean is less than 1.0. Also, consistent with the idea that the party leader effect varies across voters, the leader variable's coefficient has a statistically significant variance. And, as hypothesized, the impact of political sophistication, considered as a linear effect, is negative. This indicates that more sophisticated voters give less weight to leader images than do less sophisticated ones.

(Table 5.6 about here)

Panel B presents results for the quadratic specification of leader effects. Again, all coefficients, including the variance for the leader variable coefficient, are statistically significant. Both coefficients for the hypothesized quadratic effects of political sophistication also are significant and, as expected, the basic term is positive and squared term is negative. According to this model, the impact of leader images on party choice

varies in a nonlinear way. The impact is greater among moderately sophisticated voters than among both unsophisticated and highly sophisticated ones.

Taken together, these MXL estimates provide interesting evidence concerning possible heterogeneity in the effects of leader images -- key variables in the valence politics model of party choice. However, a caveat is in order. Although some analysts may find this heterogeneity theoretically attractive, it comes at a cost of specifying models that have more elaborate parameterizations than the basic MXL model presented earlier. In this regard, note that the AIC value for the simple MXL model is 1726.17, considerably less than either of the values for the models with leader images varying according to linear and quadratic effects of political sophistication. The AIC values for the latter two models are 1755.98 and 1754.94, respectively. These numbers suggest that the simpler model is preferable. As is necessarily the case, heterogeneity is purchased at the cost of parsimony. In the present instance, increases in model fit do not offset the cost. Suitably discounted, voting models with heterogeneous leader image effects caused by variations in political sophistication do not outperform a simpler model that assumes homogeneous effects across the entire electorate.

Turnout—and Party Choice

Although party choice is an important aspect of voting behaviour, the turnout decision is also fundamental. Historically, political scientists have considered these two decisions separately. The assumption is that people do the same. They decide whether to go the polls, and they choose among the parties. But, the decisions are unrelated, and can be analysed in isolation. In our previous work (Clarke et al, 2004), we followed this traditional approach, and considered turnout separately. Paralleling our work on party

choice, the turnout analyses were designed to test several rival models with currency in the literature on electoral participation. Specifically, these models are (a) general incentives; (b) rational choice; (c) civic voluntarism; (d) cognitive mobilization; (e) equity-fairness; and (f) social capital.

The core of general incentives model is the well-known rational choice model of turnout proposed by Riker and Ordeshook (1968, 1973). In this model, the decision to go to the polls is a function of a benefit-cost analysis, with (differential) benefits derived by having one's preferred party win an election discounted by the likelihood that an individual's ballot is 'pivotal', i.e., the vote that decides the contest. Since the probability that any single vote will be pivotal is vanishingly small (e.g., Gelman, King and Boscardin, 1998), costs will always be greater than benefits. Accordingly, Riker and Ordeshook supplemented their model with a 'D' term that they interpret as capturing expressive benefits individuals obtain only if they vote. These selective benefits are operationalised as sense of civic duty. Given the insuperable hurdle posed by the pivotality discount on collective benefits, the general incentives model replaces pivotality with the 'softer' concept of 'perceived personal influence'.²⁰ In this revised formulation, collective benefits are discounted by perceptions of one's ability to influence political outcomes. In addition, the general incentives model expands the core rational choice model to include group benefits, individual benefits and social norms.²¹ Civic duty is interpreted as providing system benefits.

Key factors in the civic voluntarism model are resources (e.g., education, energy, income, physical capacity, time) individuals possess, together with the mobilizing activities of political parties and various social groups.²² The cognitive mobilization

model views electoral participation as a consequence of knowledge of and involvement in the political process,²³ whereas the equity-fairness model sees participation as being driven by a sense of relative deprivation.²⁴ This feeling of relative deprivation motivates people to become politically active. Finally, the social capital model hypothesizes that turnout and other political activities are products of high levels of social trust and 'pathways to politics' provided by facilitative social networks.²⁵

Analyses of these models using the 2001 BES data demonstrated that the general incentives model outperformed its rivals, but that variables from the other models also contributed to explaining turnout. Accordingly, we specify a composite model of turnout in the 2005 general election that includes variables from each of the competing models. Region of residence is added as an additional demographic control. Since the dependent variable (vote/do not vote) is dichotomous, we use binomial logit to estimate model parameters.

Many of the predictors have statistically significant effects (see Table 5.7). Several variables from the general incentives model behave as expected. Thus, influence-discounted benefits, anticipated personal benefits, civic duty and social norms all have significant positive effects, and perceived costs of participation have significant negative effects. In accordance with the civic voluntarism model, variables that proxy politically relevant resources also have significant effects. These include age, disability status, education, gender and social class. Party mobilization also works as anticipated. This variable is often cited as one of the factors in the civic voluntarism model, but it also might be claimed by the social capital model. Political knowledge, a key element in the cognitive mobilization model, is significant too. Overall, the composite turnout model

performs quite well, correctly classifying nearly 80% of the BES respondents as either voters or nonvoters.

(Table 5.7 about here)

We next calculate how the probability of going to the polls changes as the value of a predictor varies, with other variables held at their means. The results, displayed in Table 5.7, reveal that six predictors are capable of changing the probability of voting by 20 points or more. As in 2001, civic duty has the largest impact. As civic duty moves across its range, the probability of voting increases by 44 points. Three other variables from the general incentives model also have large effects. Variations in influence-discounted benefits, perceived personal benefits, and social norms alter the likelihood of going to the polls by 31 points, 35 points, and 31 points respectively. Political knowledge, a key variable in the cognitive mobilization model also has a large influence—the probability of casting a ballot increases by 36 points as political knowledge moves across its range. Finally, age has a noteworthy impact; other things equal, increases in age from its minimum to its maximum value boosts the likelihood of voting by 26 points.

The relationship between turnout and age indicates that, even with controls for a large number of important explanatory variables, younger people are less likely to go to the polls. It bears emphasis that age is strongly correlated with civic duty which, as just noted, is the strongest single predictor in the composite turnout model. As illustrated in Figure 5.13, the proportion of 2005 BES respondents who indicate a sense of civic duty increases strongly and monotonically across several age cohorts. For example, the percentage agreeing with the statement that they would seriously neglect their duty as a

citizen if they did not vote is slightly less than 50% among 18 to 25 year olds. Among those 66 and older, fully 90% agree with the statement. Similarly, 62% and 93%, respectively, of these two age groups agree that it is every citizen's duty to vote in an election. Absent very long-run panel data, it is very difficult to disentangle life-cycle and age cohort effects. However, analyses conducted using the 2001 BES strongly suggest that these age relationships contain a significant generational component (Clarke et al., 2004). If so, it is very unlikely that turnout in British general elections will rebound sharply in the foreseeable future. The relationship between age, turnout, and other forms of political participation will be revisited in Chapter Seven.

(Figure 5.13 about here)

None of the Above: As observed, the vast majority of studies of voting behavior have analysed party choice and turnout separately. However, nonvoting can be viewed as an option which flows naturally from major theories of party choice. For example, according to the logic of Downsian issue-proximity models, the expectation is that people who perceive that all parties are equally distant on issue-position scales, will be indifferent among the choices on offer and, hence, will abstain. They have no incentive to bear the costs associated with making a trip to the polls. This line of reasoning is central to the Riker-Ordeshook model discussed above. Valence politics models also suggest that nonvoting is a sensible option for people who are nonpartisans and do not believe that any party or any leader is able to handle important problems. There is no current or past information about party or leader performance that prompts a party choice.

More simply, commentators routinely suggest that dissatisfaction with one or more of the parties will encourage people to stay at home. This conjecture is often

directed at people who could be expected to vote for the governing party. In 2001, for example, observers hypothesized that a combination of neo-liberal economic policies and tepid public service investment would cause Tony Blair's New Labour government to lose its socialist 'heartlands'. Discontented Labour supporters would not bolt to another party; rather, they would sit the election out. In 2005, this hypothesis was invigorated by disaffection among members of Labour's left-wing and ethnic minority communities over Blair's decision to join U.S. President George W. Bush in the war against Iraq. Many of these traditionally strong Labour supporters would show their unhappiness with 'that bastard' Blair and his party by choosing 'none of the above'.

Here, we test these hypotheses by specifying a unified model that includes the several predictors from both the party choice and turnout models. The dependent variable has four party choice categories (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, other parties) and a fifth, nonvoter, category. Since the campaign context was one where the possibility that many disgruntled Labour supporters would stay at home had been widely discussed, using Labour voting as the reference category facilitates interpretation. By using Labour voting this way, we can see if factors that encouraged some voters to choose a party other than Labour prompted others not to vote at all. Multinomial logit is used to estimate model parameters.

Table 5.8 contains parameter estimates for selected predictor variables in this model. Two general observations are in order. First, all key predictor variables from the traditional composite models of party choice and turnout continue to behave as expected. For example, positive feelings about Tony Blair lessen the likelihood of voting for any of the opposition parties, and positive feelings about Michael Howard and Charles Kennedy,

enhance the likelihood of voting for the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, respectively. Similarly, key predictor variables from the turnout models such as influence-discounted benefits, costs, civic duty, political knowledge and social norms work as anticipated. In this regard, note that the signs on the coefficients for these variables are reversed from Table 5.7 above because the unified model uses Labour *voting* as the reference category. Several other familiar findings about what drives party choice and turnout can be found in the table.

(Table 5.8 about here)

The second general observation is what constitutes the 'value added' in the unified model. This concerns the significant effects of several party choice variables on turnout. There is a very clear pattern—the Labour variables are *negatively associated* with membership in the non-voter category. Controlling for all other considerations, people who disliked Blair, those who did not think Labour was best on important issues, those who were unimpressed with Labour's ability to manage the economy, those who were distant from Labour on position issues and Labour identifiers were more likely to be non-voters in 2005. All of these relationships are consistent with conjectures about the 'stay at home' behaviour of people who otherwise would cast a Labour ballot.

There is more. Table 5.8 also shows positive relationships between key Conservative variables and nonvoting. For example, people with positive feelings about Tory Leader, Michael Howard, were more likely to be nonvoters than Labour voters, as were people who favoured the Conservatives on the most important issue, and those who identified themselves as Conservative. Although these relationships are sensible; after all people with pro-Conservative attitudes would be more likely to be nonvoters than Labour

voters, they also hint at a failure of the party to get all of their potential supporters to the polls. This, in turn, is consistent with evidence we will present in Chapter Six indicating that the Conservatives' 2005 campaign was largely a failure. *Ceteris paribus*, having pro-Conservative attitudes on the key variables in the dominant valence politics model of party choice is associated with nonvoting. This was not good news for Mr. Howard and his party in 2005. We will consider this finding again in Chapter Six which analyzes party support and the 2005 election campaign.

Conclusion: By Default

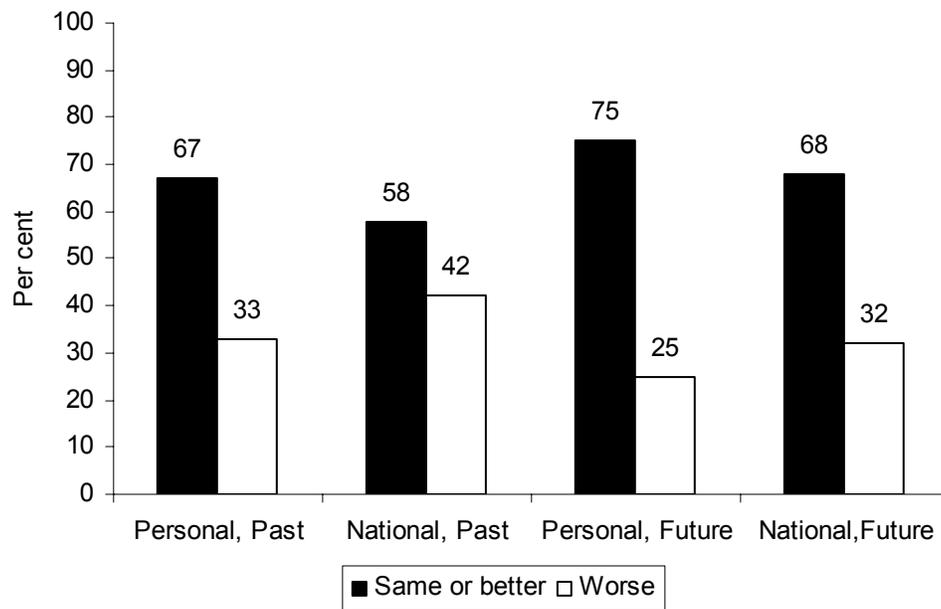
Coming into the 2005 general election, Labour was in a weaker position than it had been at the time of the preceding, 2001 election. Data presented in this chapter clearly indicate that only one of the 'fundamentals', a healthy economy, was solidly in place. Voters recognized that Labour had done a good job in managing the economy and gave the party due credit. However, other fundamentals were not in good order. Judgments about Labour's performance in several policy areas were generally unflattering and, with the exception of how it had dealt with the threat of terrorism, large majorities of voters gave the government failing grades for its handling of 'new issues' such as crime, immigration, and the war in Iraq. In addition, Labour partisan share and the percentage selecting the party as best on important election issues were both down substantially. Many voters grudgingly recognized Prime Minister Blair's competence but, in part because of his dogged insistence on pursuing an ill-advised war with Iraq, feelings about him had shifted from lukewarm to chilly. Nor could Labour take solace in its proximity to voters on important position issues—in most cases, either the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats were closer to where voters wanted them to be.

Not everything was bad news for Labour. There were two major factors working in the party's favour. First, the electoral system had a pro-Labour bias. The distribution of party support across the constituencies was such that Labour typically required fewer votes to win seats than was the case for its rivals.²⁶ Second, and also very important, the electorate did not enthusiastically endorse any of the opposition parties. Although 'Champagne Charlie' Kennedy remained a popular leader of the Liberal Democrats, the number of Liberal Democrat identifiers in the electorate remained extremely meager, and few voters believed the party would be best able to handle important issues. Similarly, the Conservatives had made only very limited headway on important issues and, although the balance of expectations about how a Tory government would perform was positive, many voters were unsure about what a Conservative future would bring. The Conservatives also had exactly the same share of identifiers as they had four years earlier, and their new leader, Michael Howard, was only slightly more well-liked than his decidedly unpopular predecessor, William Hague. Labour thus retained a competitive edge on the variables that mattered but, in most cases, this was largely by default.

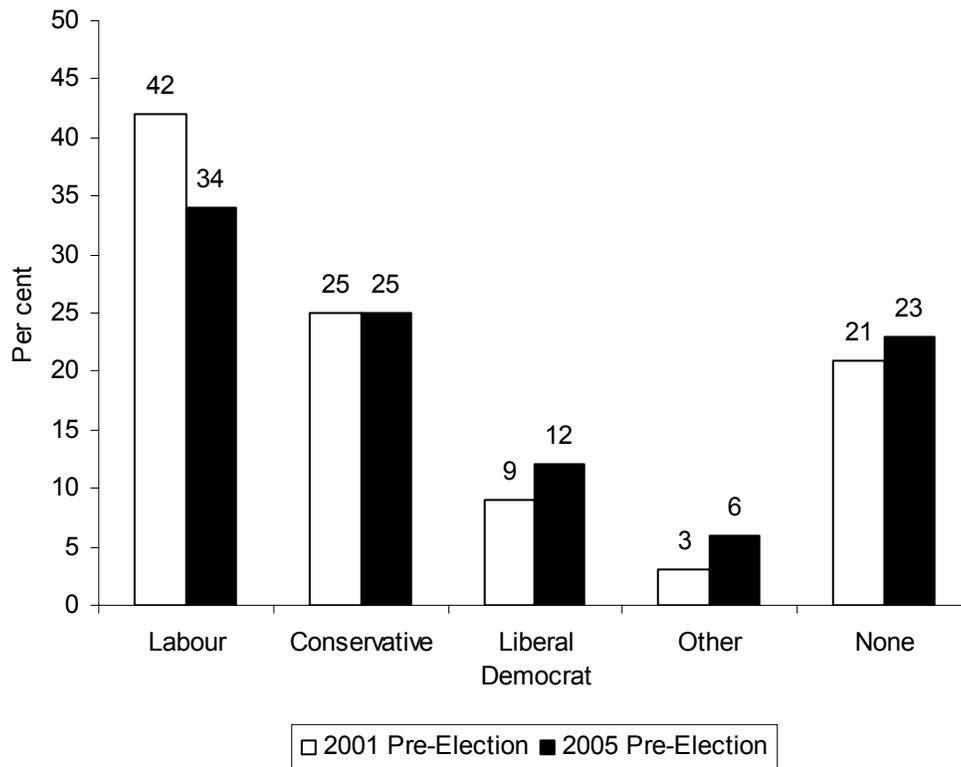
What was very similar to 2001 was the explanatory power of rival models of electoral choice. As in 2001, social class and other demographic variables were decided non-starters. In sharp contrast, key variables in the valence model -- partisanship, party preferences on important election issues, and leader images -- continued to have strong effects on the vote. But, and again similar to 2001, the valence model did not have the field to itself. Party-issue proximities made significant contributions to explanation, and a general composite model outperformed all of its components. These findings about the performance of rival models are robust, being endorsed not only by standard logit

models, but also by a more technically sophisticated mixed logit model. Parameter estimates for this latter model suggest that the impact of leader images may vary in a nonlinear way with voters' levels of political sophistication. Although this result is consonant with recent, and not so recent, theorizing about how different groups of voters use political information, model selection criteria caution that the costs of enhanced model complexity may be a price not worth paying. Simpler party choice models perform well.

Voter turnout was up only very slightly in 2005 above its dismal 2001 level and, again, several rival models contribute to explaining who went to the polls and who did not. The general incentives model again performs best, with age-related differences in sense of civic duty suggesting the presence of possibly strong downward pressures on turnout in future elections. When considering factors that influence turnout in particular electoral contexts, it is important to recognize that the decision not to cast a ballot can be considered as a 'none of the above' choice. An analysis of a unified model that incorporates both party choice and turnout provides evidence that this was the case in 2005. As numerous commentators speculated in the run-up to the election, several important factors that were prompting some voters to support a party other than Labour, were prompting others to stay at home. The evidence also suggests that the Conservatives did not benefit fully from forces working to their advantage. Some people who should have gone to the polls to cast a Tory ballot did not bother to do so. Taken together, these two findings again indicate that to a substantial extent, Labour won by default in 2005. In the next chapter, we will consider how various factors affecting party choice and turnout were influenced by the 2005 election campaign.

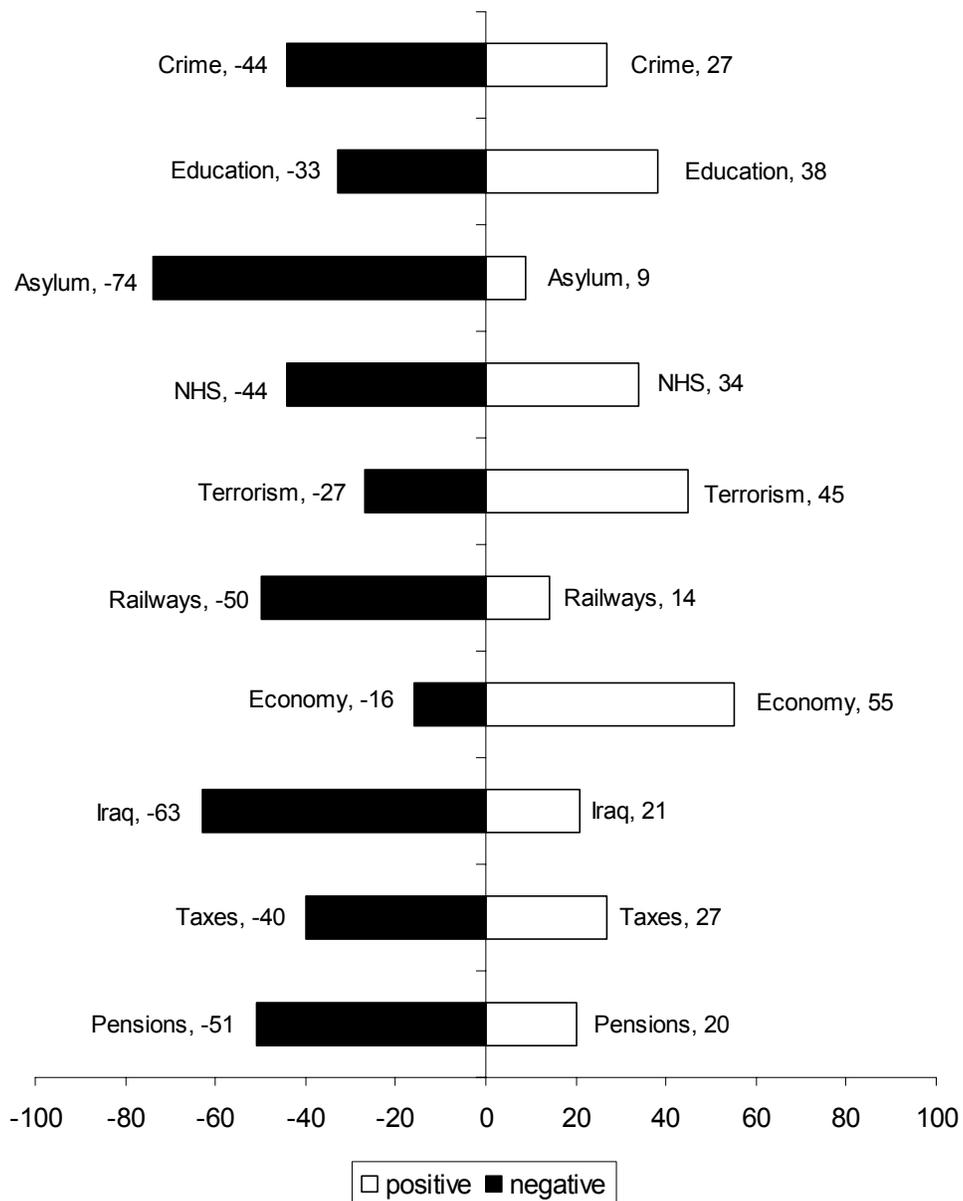
FIGURE 5.1 ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS, 2005

Source: 2005 BES pre-election survey.

FIGURE 5.2 DIRECTION OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION, 2001 AND 2005

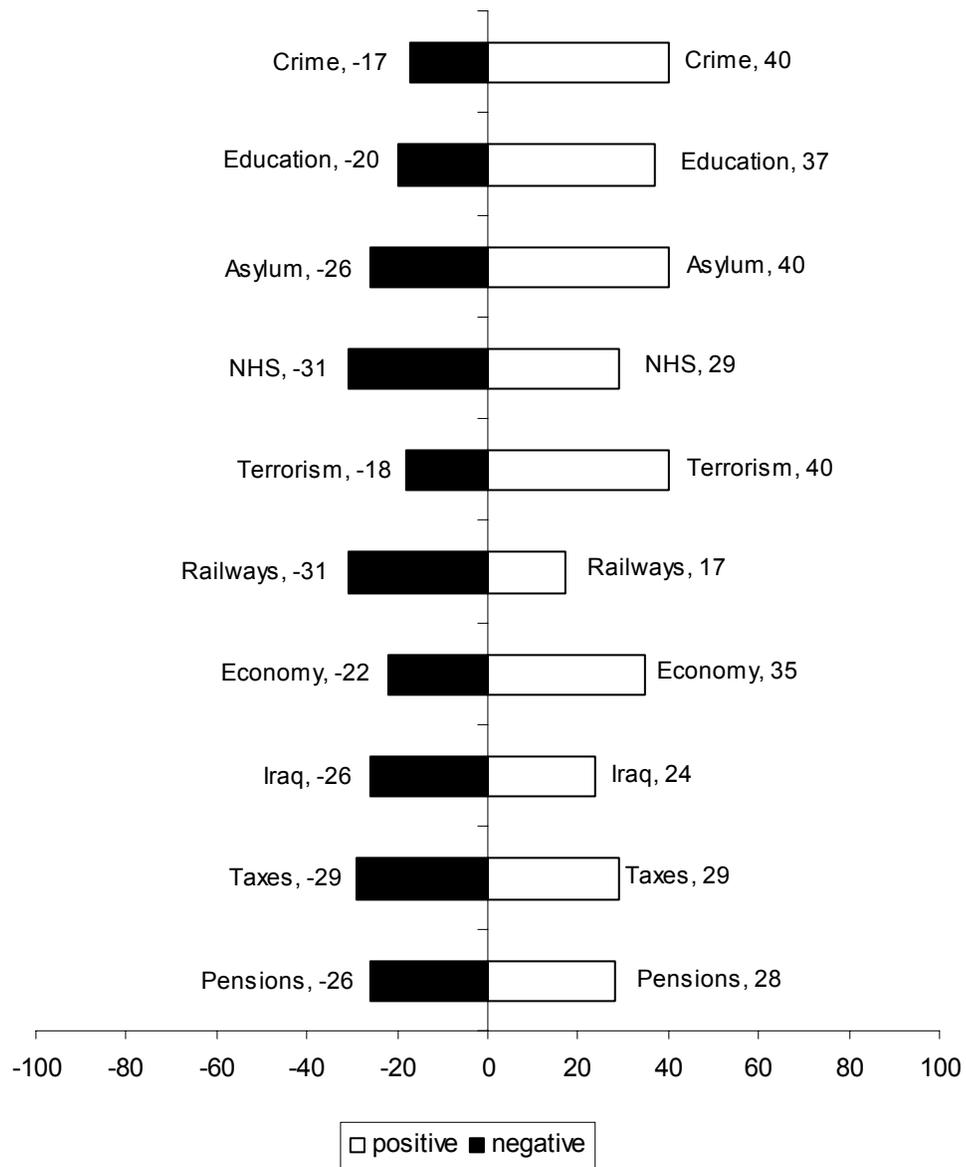
Source: 2001 and 2005 BES pre-election surveys.

FIGURE 5.3 GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS, 2005



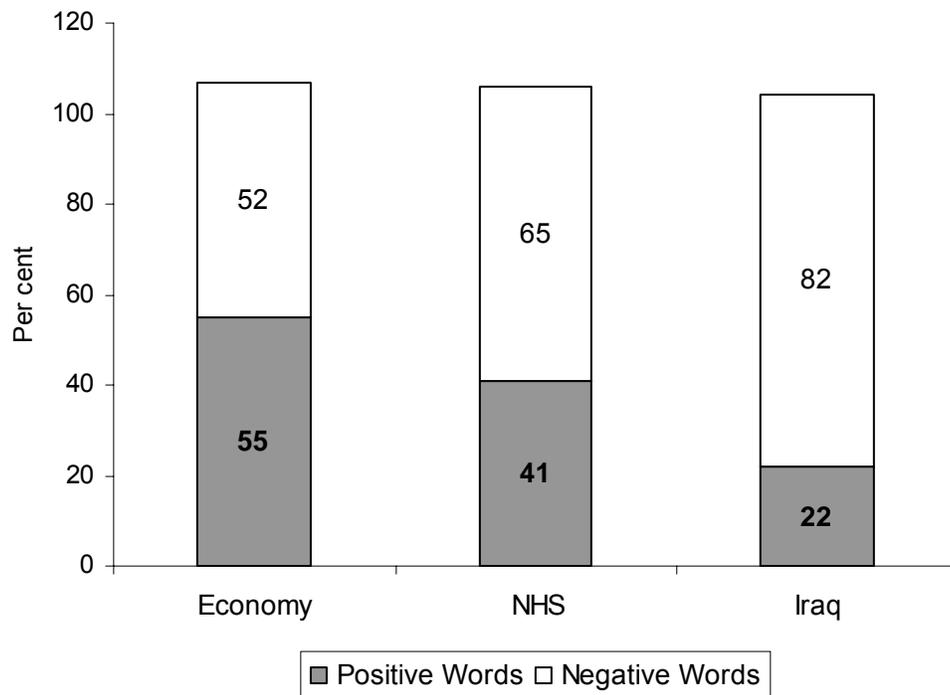
Source: 2005 BES pre-election survey.

FIGURE 5.4 ANTICIPATED CONSERVATIVE PERFORMANCE, 2005



Source: 2005 BES pre-election survey.

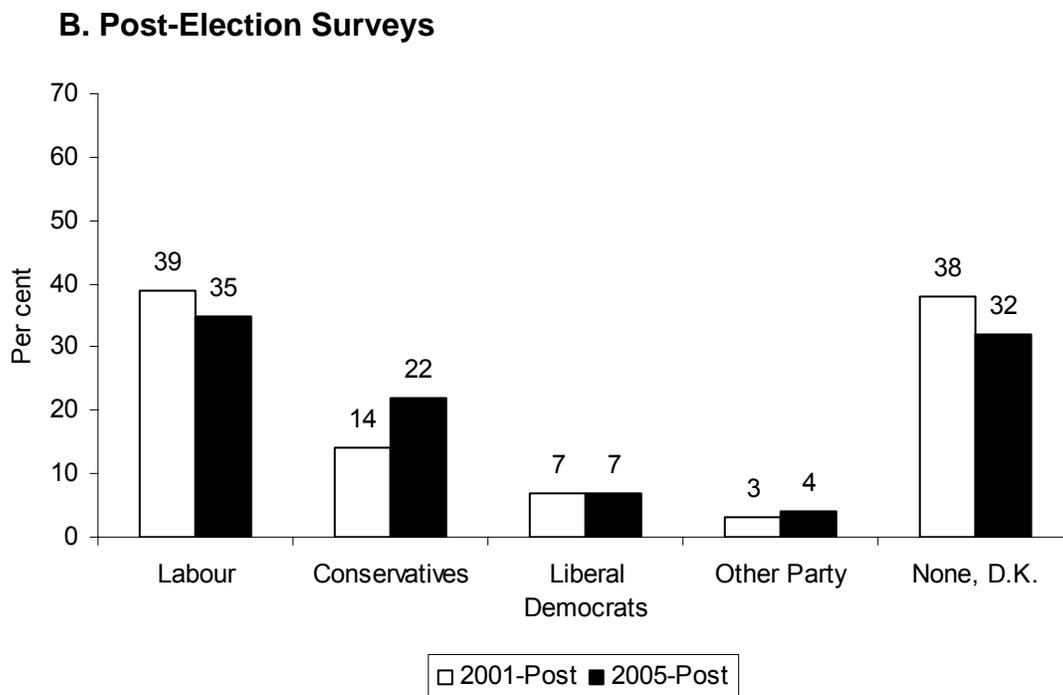
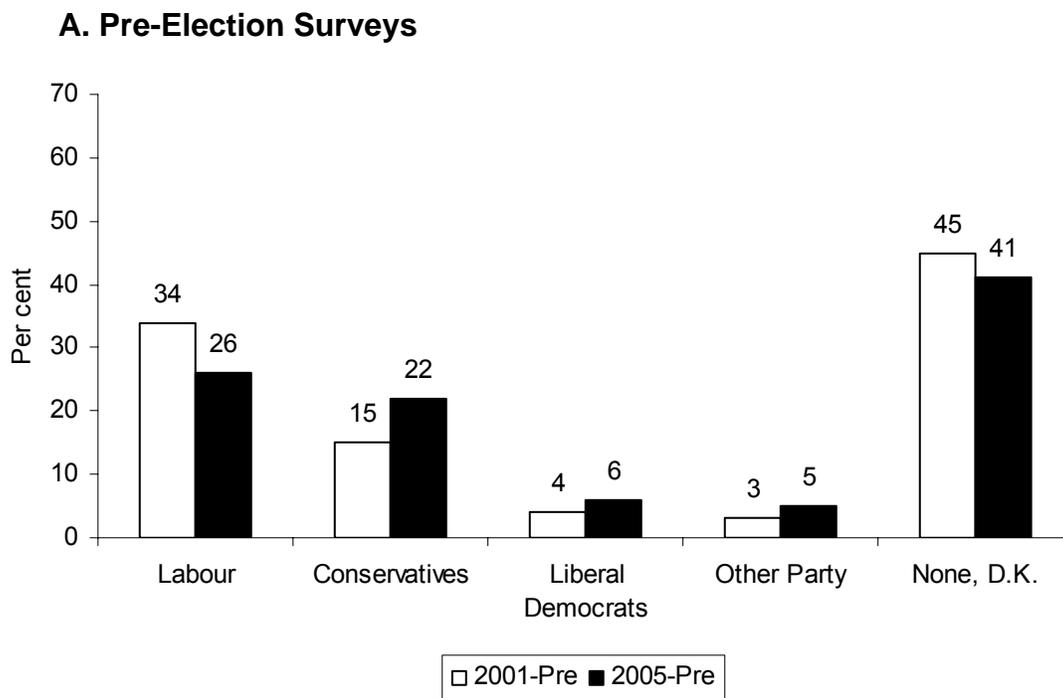
FIGURE 5.5 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO ECONOMY, NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE AND IRAQ WAR



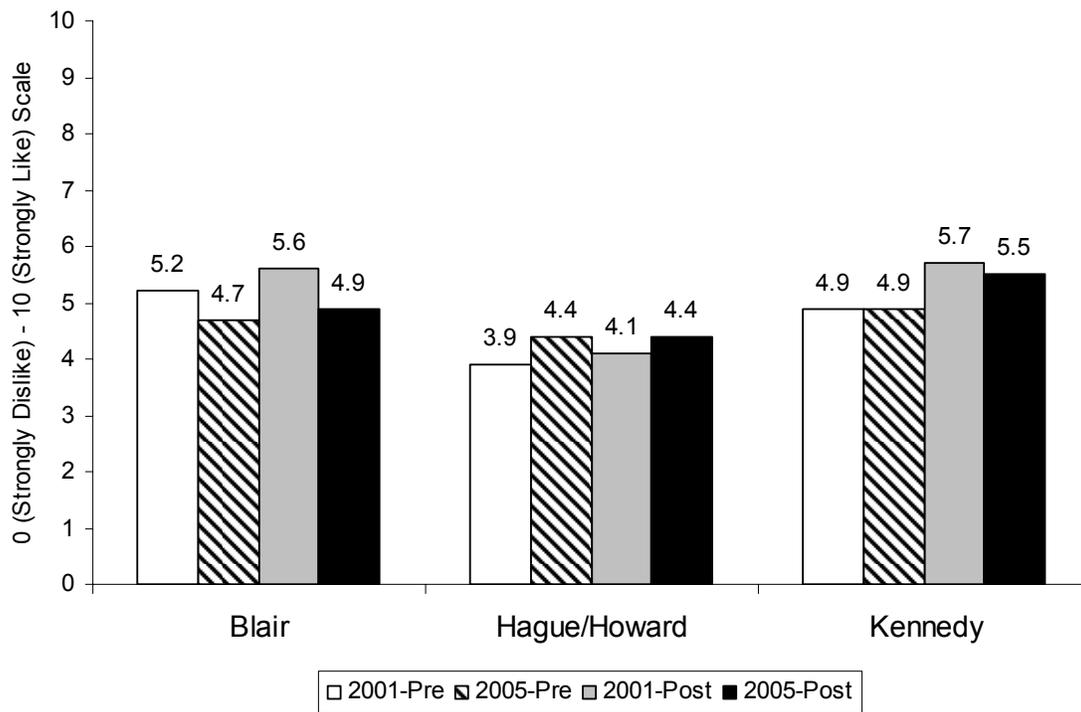
Note: percentages exceed 100 because multiple mentions possible.

Source: 2005 BES pre-election survey.

FIGURE 5.6 PARTY BEST ABLE TO HANDLE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE, 2001 AND 2005

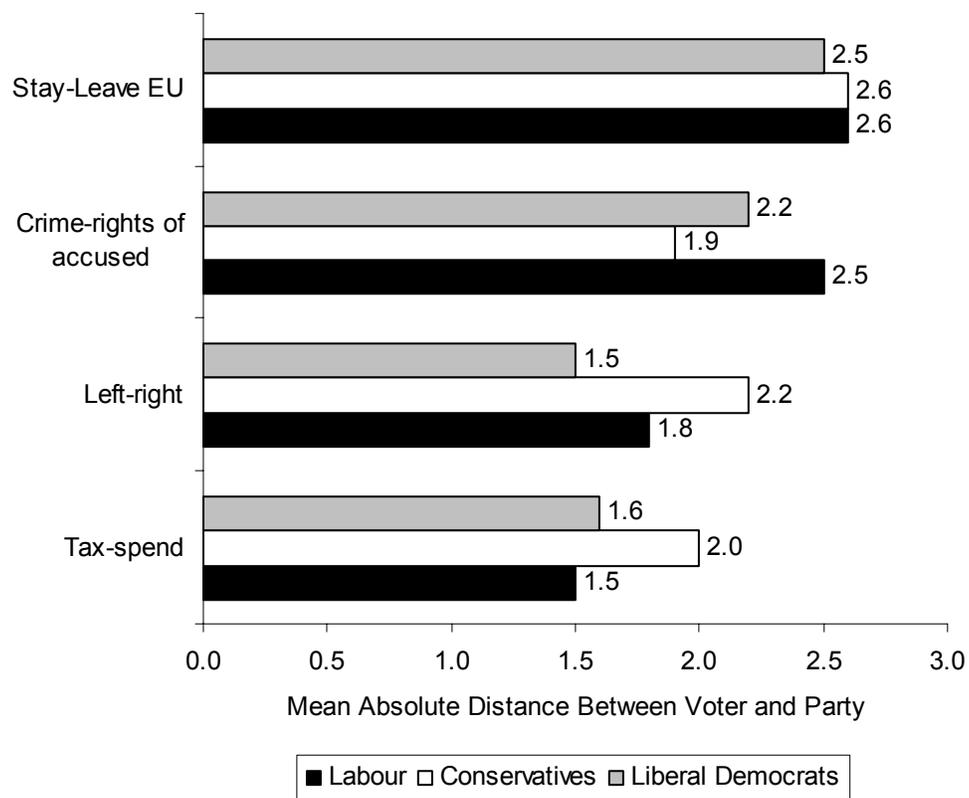


Source: 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys.

FIGURE 5.7 FEELINGS ABOUT PARTY LEADERS, 2001 AND 2005

Source: 2001 and 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys.

FIGURE 5.8 AVERAGE ISSUE-PROXIMITY DISTANCES BETWEEN VOTERS AND PARTIES, 2005



Note: stay-leave EU data from pre-election survey; crime-rights of accused, left-right and tax-spend data from post-election survey.

Source: 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys.

FIGURE 5.9 EFFECTS OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES ON PROBABILITY OF VOTING LABOUR, COMPOSITE VOTING MODEL

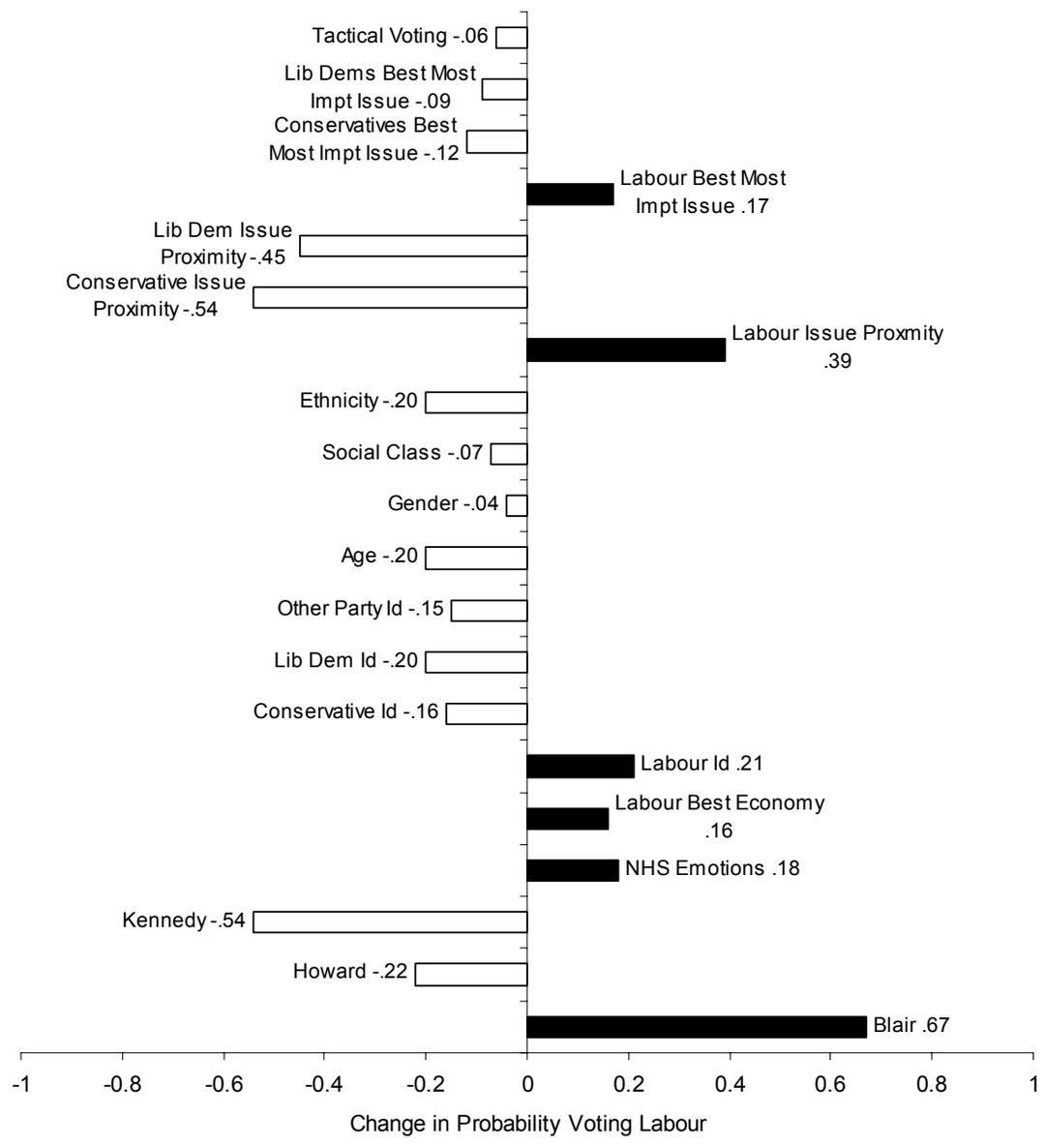


FIGURE 5.10 CHANGES IN PROBABILITY OF LABOUR VOTE ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN FEELINGS ABOUT TONY BLAIR, SELECTED EFFECTS

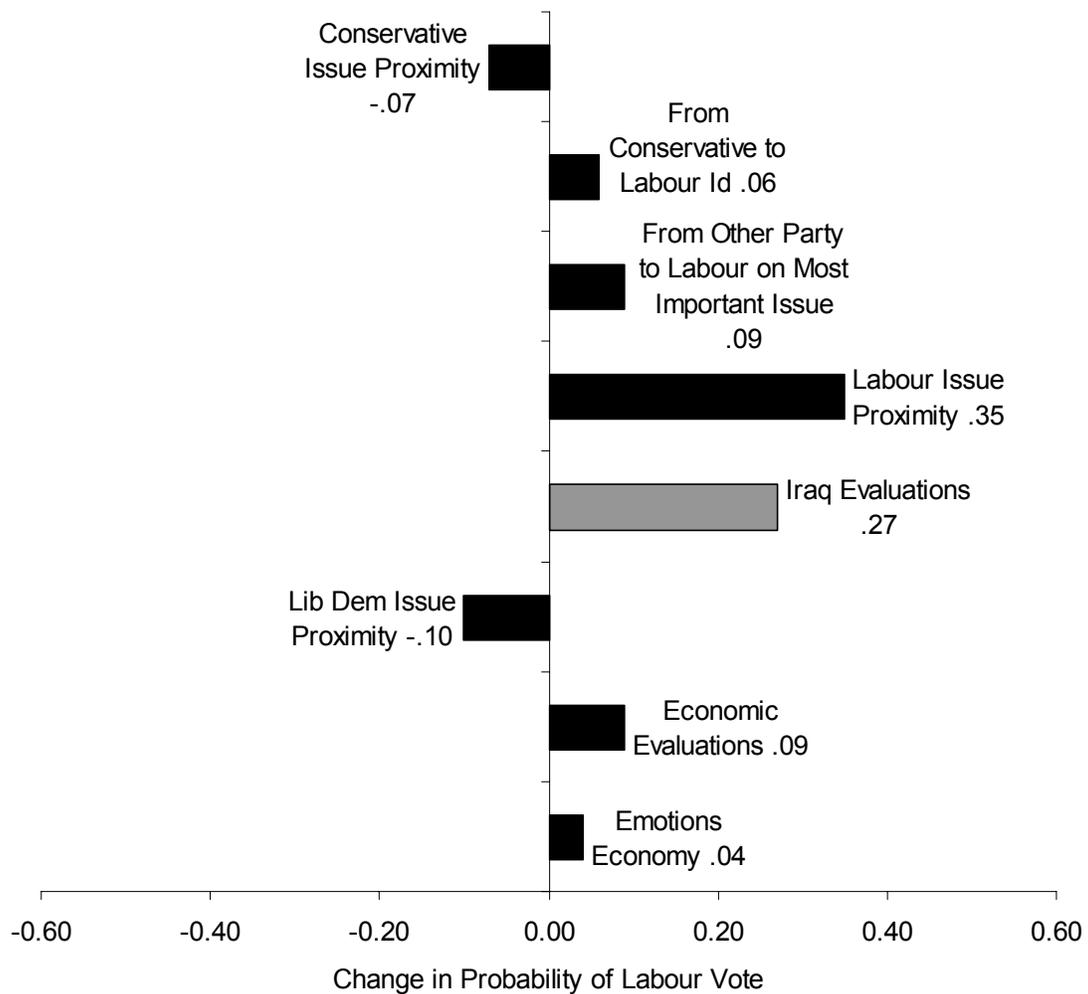


FIGURE 5.11 EFFECTS OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES ON PROBABILITY OF VOTING CONSERVATIVE, COMPOSITE VOTING MODEL

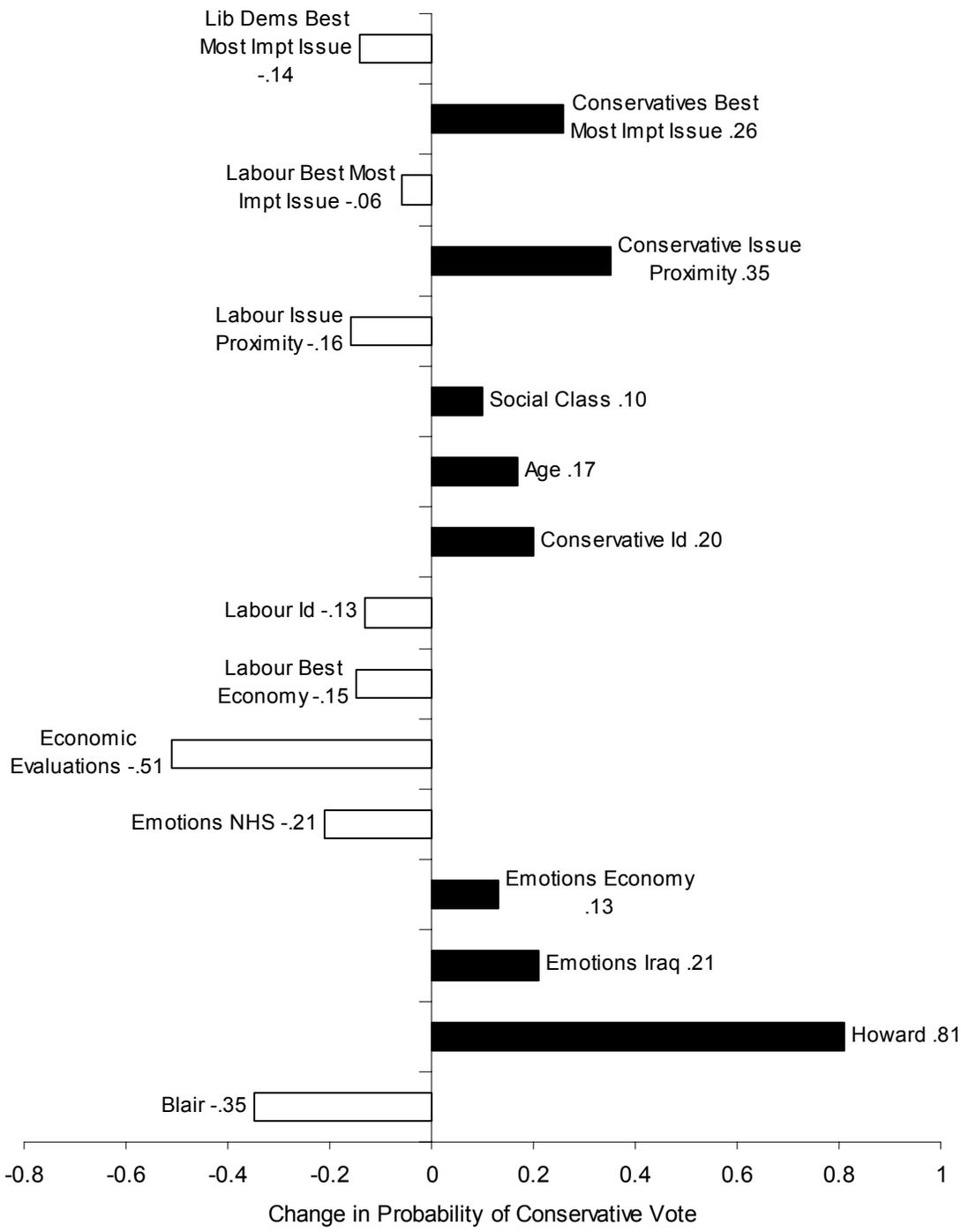
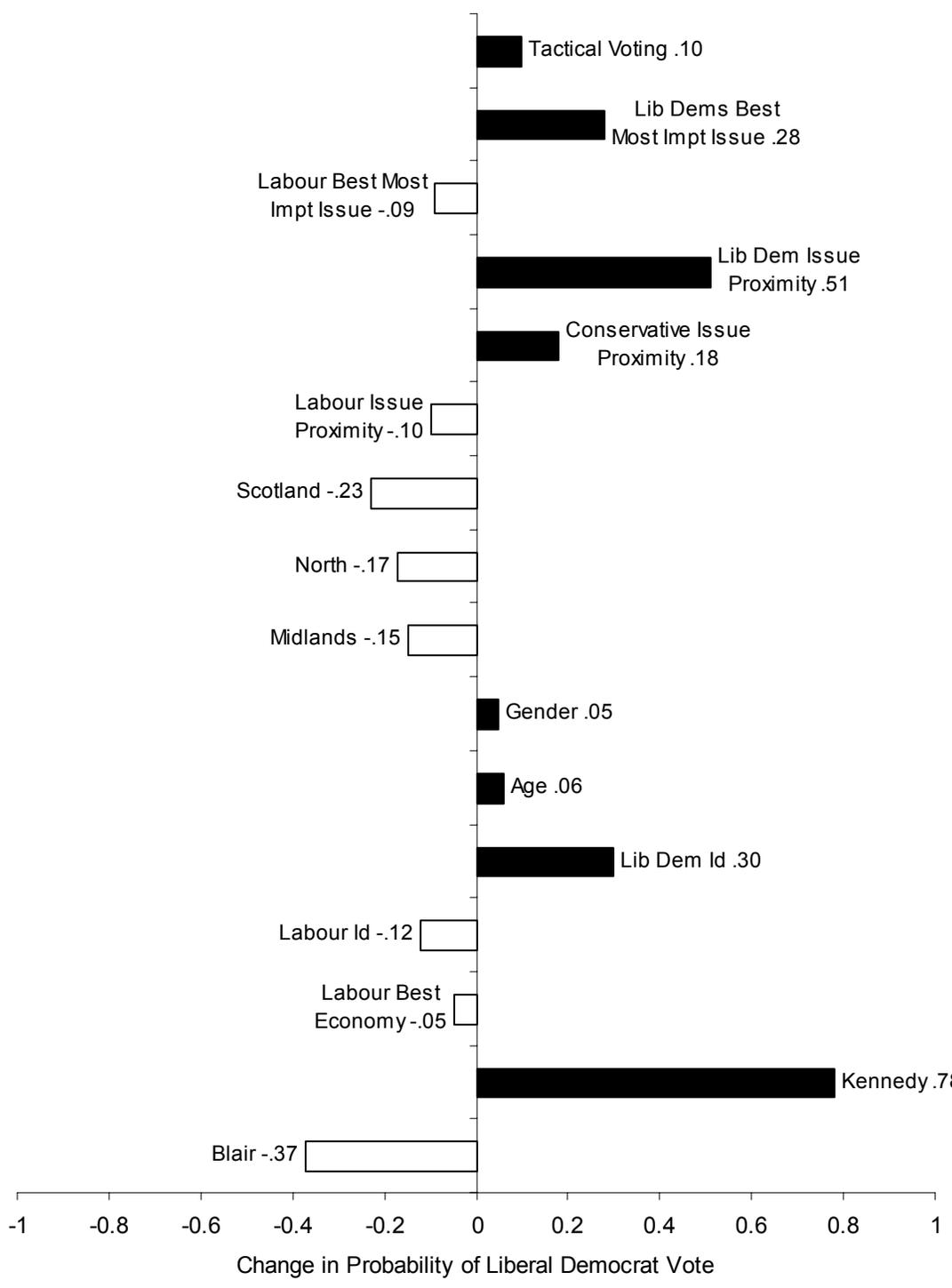
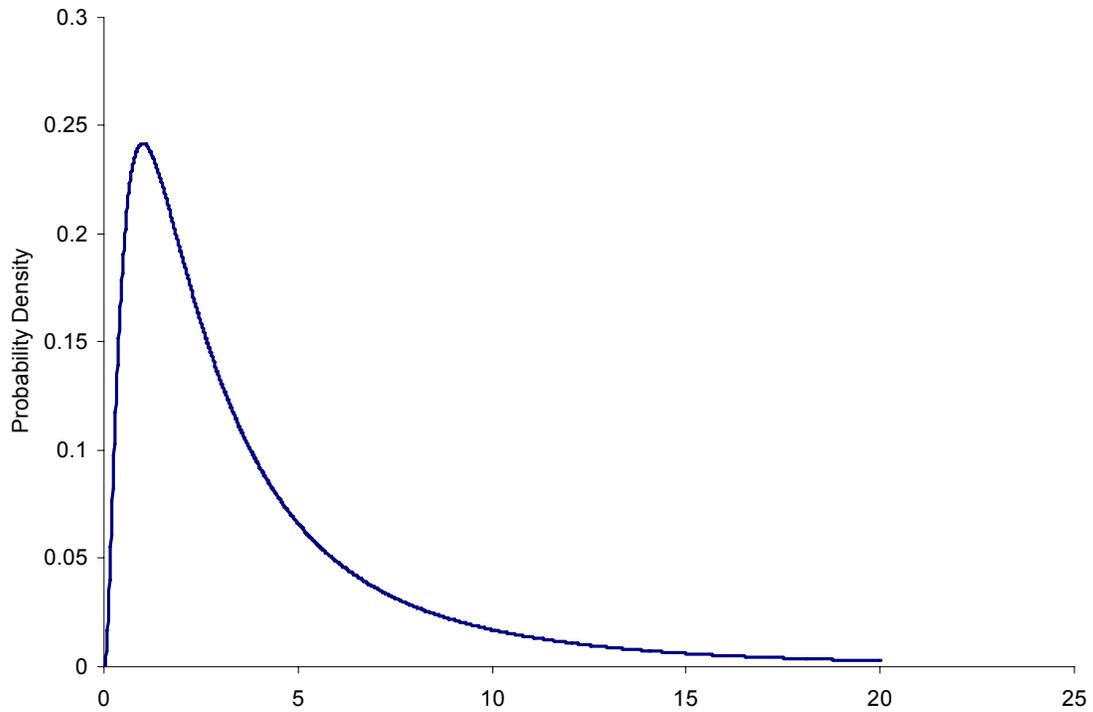


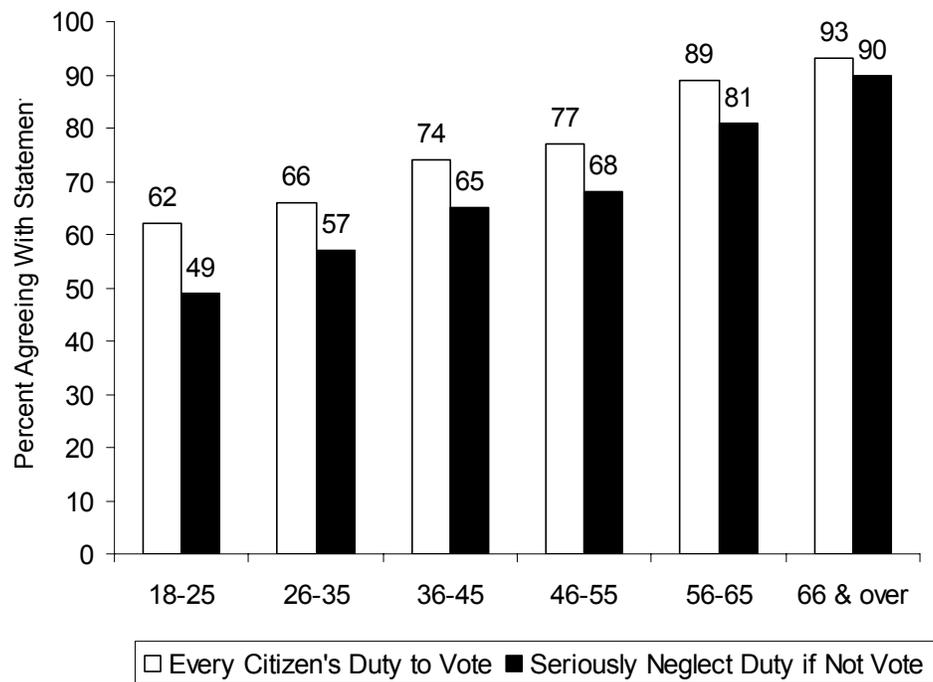
FIGURE 5.12 EFFECTS OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES ON PROBABILITY OF VOTING LIBERAL DEMOCRAT, COMPOSITE VOTING MODEL



**Figure 5.13. EXAMPLE OF A LOG-NORMAL DISTRIBUTION
WHERE $\ln(X)$ IS $\sim N(1,1)$**



Definition: a random variable X has a lognormal distribution, with parameters μ and σ , if $\ln(X)$ has a normal distribution with mean μ and standard deviation σ .

FIGURE 5.14 SENSE OF CIVIC DUTY BY AGE GROUP, 2005

Source: 2005 BES post-election survey.

Table 5.1 Most Important Issue in 2005 General Election
and Party Best Able to Handle It

<i>A. Pre-Election Survey</i>		Best Party				Total Mention Issue
Issue	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberal Democrats</u>	<u>Other Party</u>	<u>None/DK</u>	
NHS	26a	19	7	4	45	16b
Education	38	18	6	5	34	7
Pensions	32	23	11	1	33	2
Economy	36	14	7	5	39	11
Taxes	17	30	6	1	45	2
Euro, EU	30	23	12	4	32	2
Crime	22	25	9	4	40	11
Immigration	18	31	4	7	41	25
Terrorism	42	15	2	1	41	6
Iraq War	24	14	9	3	50	7
All Other	22	18	10	9	41	12
Total Party Best	26	22	6	5	41	
<i>B. Post-Election Survey</i>		Best Party				Total Mention Issue
Issue	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberal Democrats</u>	<u>Other Party</u>	<u>None/DK</u>	
NHS	45a	18	6	3	29	16b
Education	46	15	18	3	19	7
Pensions	31	32	7	1	29	2
Economy	48	18	7	2	27	13
Taxes	23	26	8	1	41	2
Euro, EU	36	21	11	4	28	7
Crime	32	29	4	2	33	14
Immigration	19	32	4	6	39	21
Terrorism	54	11	2	1	32	2
Iraq War	46	8	14	4	28	5
All Other	30	13	11	10	36	11
Total Party Best	35	22	7	4	32	

a - horizontal percentages

b - vertical percentages, s: pre-election = 3423, post-election = 3962.

Source: 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys.

Table 5.2 Party Leader Images, 2005

A. Mean Scores on 0-10 Leader Image Variables, Pre- and Post-Election Surveys

	<u>Leader</u>					
	<u>Blair</u>		<u>Howard</u>		<u>Kennedy</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
Affect	4.73	4.92	4.38	4.44	4.88	5.52
Competence	5.70	5.85	4.95	4.91	5.01	5.31
Responsiveness	4.83	4.99	5.02	5.01	5.04	5.00
Trust	4.24	4.40	4.32	4.33	4.74	5.22

B. Factor Loadings for 0-10 Leader Image Variables, Pre- and Post-Election Surveys

	<u>Leader</u>					
	<u>Blair</u>		<u>Howard</u>		<u>Kennedy</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
Affect	0.91	0.93	0.85	0.90	0.83	0.89
Competence	0.88	0.88	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.87
Responsiveness	0.90	0.91	0.84	0.85	0.85	0.87
Trust	0.92	0.93	0.89	0.90	0.87	0.87
Eigenvalue	3.28	3.35	3.04	3.12	2.94	3.07
% item variance explained	81.9	83.7	75.9	78.1	73.6	76.6

Source: 2005 BES pre- and post-election surveys.

Table 5.3 Rival Models of Electoral Choice in the 2005 General Election

Panel A. Dependent Variable: Vote Labour v. Vote for Another Party

<i>Model</i>	<u>McFadden R²</u>	<u>McKelvey R²</u>	<u>AIC†</u>
Social Class	.01	.02	2622.19
All Demographics	.04	.07	2571.15
Emotional Reactions	.07	.13	2471.30
Economic Evaluations	.29	.44	1896.61
Issue-Party Proximities	.24	.46	2020.09
Party Best Most Important Issue	.27	.40	1943.69
Party Identification	.36	.48	1698.23
Party Leaders	.40	.65	1595.42
Valence Politics	.55	.74	1215.08
Composite Model‡	.59	.78	1145.39

Panel B. Dependent Variable: Vote Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Other Party with Labour as the Reference Category

<i>Model</i>	<u>McFadden R²</u>	<u>McKelvey R²</u>	<u>AIC</u>
Social Class	.01	--	4837.22
All Demographics	.07	--	4630.24
Emotional Reactions	.05	--	4669.76
Economic Evaluations	.23	--	3772.71
Issue-Party Proximities	.25	--	3679.92
Party Best Most Important Issue	.25	--	3710.23
Party Identification	.36	--	3183.11
Party Leaders	.39	--	3023.69
Valence Politics	.54	--	2317.10
Composite Model	.60	--	2143.62

† - Akaike Information Criterion; smaller values indicate better model performance.

‡ - composite model includes all predictors for other models plus tactical voting.

Note: McKelvey R² is undefined for multinomial logit model.

Table 5.4 Binomial and Multinomial Logit Analyses of Voting in the 2005 General Election, Composite Specification

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<u>Panel A</u>		<u>Panel B</u>	
	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>	<u>Other Party</u>
Age	-.01**	.02**	.01*	.02*
Ethnicity	-.97***	.43	1.02**	2.89**
Gender	-.26	-.18	.27	.77**
Region†:				
South East	-.04	.52	-.15	-.92
South West	.16	.15	-.18	-1.20
Midlands	.12	.28	-.55	.33
North	.28	.31	-.66*	.06
Wales	-.12	-.01	-.46	1.23*
Scotland	-.04	.21	-.81*	1.19*
Social Class	-.38*	.85***	.25	.06
Party Identification:				
Conservative	-1.09***	1.56***	.14	.52
Labour	.91***	-1.72***	-.88***	-.33
Liberal Democrat	-1.51***	.25	1.69***	.89*
Other Party	-.98**	.51	.40	2.77***
Party Leader Affect:				
Blair	.41***	-.50***	-.41***	-.38***
Howard	-.13***	.58***	-.00	.14*
Kennedy	-.31***	.04	.49***	-.01
Party Best on Most Important Issue:				
Conservative	-.91***	1.42***	.08	.79*
Labour	.80***	-.84**	-.72***	-.80*
Liberal Democrat	-.66*	-1.21*	.84**	-.89
Other Party	-.10	-.84	-.32	1.00*
Party-Issue Proximities:				
Conservative	-.09***	.20***	.07**	.15***
Labour	.15***	-.14***	-.12***	-.19***
Liberal Democrat	-.12**	-.03	.17***	.10
Economic Evaluations	.09	-.55***	-.05	.17
Party Best on Economy	.94***	-1.28***	-.67***	-.42
Iraq Evaluations	.02	.05	-.06	-.09
Emotional Reactions:				
Economy	-.04	.15	.08	-.16
Iraq	-.06	.22*	.05	.09
NHS	.13*	-.24**	-.07	-.30**
Tactical Voting	-.34x	-.13	.43*	.50
Constant	2.53*	-2.95	-4.80***	-5.73**
McFadden R ² =	.59		.60	
McKelvey R ² =	.78		---	
% Correctly Classified =	87.5		81.6	
Lambda =	.68		.70	

*** - $p \leq .001$; ** - $p \leq .01$; * - $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test

† - Greater London is the reference category; --- - not defined

Note: two analyses are presented. Panel A: binomial logit analysis of voting for Labour v. voting for any of the opposition parties; Panel B: multinomial logit analysis of Conservative, Liberal Democrat and other party voting, with Labour voting as the reference category.

Table 5.5 Mixed Logit Model of Party Choice in the 2005 General Election

Predictor Variables

Characteristics of Choices:	β				
Party Leader	0.67***				
Party Best Most Important Issue	1.63***				
Party-Issue Proximities	0.32***				
Characteristics of Choosers:	<u>Party Vote</u>				
	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>	<u>SNP</u>	<u>Plaid Cymru</u>	
	β	β	β	β	
Party Identification:					
Labour	-1.98***	-1.88***	-4.26*	0.10	
Conservative	2.09***	0.40	-3.42	3.24	
Liberal Democrat	0.85	3.20***	-1.92	1.86	
Other Parties	0.22	0.44	6.28x	4.40**	
Economic Evaluations	-0.56***	-0.08	-0.08	-0.85	
Attitudes Toward Iraq War	-0.02	-0.13	-0.02	0.34	
Emotions-Economy	0.15	0.03	-0.35	0.50	
Emotions-NHS	-0.31**	-0.16	-0.49	-0.50	
Emotions-Iraq War	0.28**	0.07	0.58	-0.07	
National Identity	-0.02	-0.25	0.77	0.29	
Tactical Voting	0.04	0.68*	1.68	0.54	
Age	0.03***	0.03**	0.09*	0.06	
Ethnicity	1.14*	1.57**	0.94	0.93	
Gender	0.05	0.64*	0.64	0.75	
Social Class	1.29***	0.42	1.67	0.31	
Constant	-3.66***	-3.73**	-6.75	-6.65	

Log-likelihood = -792.08

N = 2011

McFadden R² = .74

*** - p ≤ .001; ** - p ≤ .01; * - p ≤ .05; one-tailed test

Table 5.6 Summary of Mixed Logit Models of Party Choice, with Political Sophistication Effects on the Impact of Feelings about Party Leaders

A. Linear Effects of Political Sophistication on Impact of Party Leaders

Characteristics of Choices:	β	<u>s.e.</u>
Feelings about Party Leaders	-0.27***	0.16
Party Best Most Important Issue	1.40***	0.19
Party-Issue Proximities	0.22***	0.05
	δ	<u>s.e.</u>
Standard Deviation in Party Leader Coefficient	1.12***	0.06
Impact of Political Sophistication on Party Leader Coefficient	-0.22***	0.06
Log-likelihood = -800.99		
N = 2011		
McFadden R ² = .74		
AIC = 1755.98		

B. Quadratic Effects of Political Sophistication on Impact of Party Leaders

Characteristics of Choices:	β	<u>s.e.</u>
Feelings about Party Leaders	-1.11***	0.30
Party Best Most Important Issue	1.27***	0.19
Party-Issue Proximities	0.21***	0.05
	δ	<u>s.e.</u>
Standard Deviation in Party Leader Coefficient	0.88*	0.49
Impact of Political Sophistication		
Party Leader Coefficient: Linear	0.86*	0.38
Squared	-0.24**	0.10
Log-likelihood = -799.47		
N = 2011		
McFadden R ² = .74		
AIC = 1754.94		

*** - $p \leq .001$; ** - $p \leq .01$; * - $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test

Note: coefficients for party best on most important issue and party-issue proximities are fixed, not random. Political sophistication is measured as interaction of level of formal education and political knowledge.

Table 5.7 Binomial Regression Analysis of Composite Model of Turnout
in the 2005 General Election

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	β	Change in Probability of <u>Voting</u>
Influence-discounted benefits	.04***	.31
Costs	-.04*	-.12
Civic duty	.13***	.44
Political knowledge	.22***	.36
Perceived group benefits	-.06**	
Perceived personal benefits	.08***	.35
Social norms	.10***	.31
Relative deprivation	.01	
Social trust	.74	
Political interest	.02	
Party mobilization	.32***	.15
Socio-demographics:		
Age	.02***	.26
Disability	-.26*	-.05
Education	.05x	.04
Ethnicity	.21	
Gender	-.19*	-.04
Social class	.43***	.08
Region†: South East	.37*	.12
South West	.27	
Midlands	.73***	.14
North	.08	
Scotland	.36x	.07
Wales	.59*	.11
Constant	-6.18***	

McFadden $R^2 = .26$

McKelvey $R^2 = .41$

% Correctly Classified = 79.6

Lambda = .35

*** - $p \leq .001$; ** - $p \leq .01$; * - $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test.

† - Greater London is the reference category.

Table 5.8 Parameters for Selected Predictors in Unified Model of Electoral Choice

Predictor Variables	Electoral Choice [†]			
	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>	<u>Other Party</u>	<u>Nonvoter</u>
A. Party Choice Variables				
Party Leader Affect: Blair	-.39***	-.34***	-.32***	-.17***
Howard	.44***	-.06	.06	.11***
Kennedy	.09*	.48***	.06	.03
Party Best on Most Important Issue:				
Labour	-.97***	-.78***	-1.01***	-.23
Conservative	.75**	-.12	.59	1.11***
Liberal Democrat	-1.44**	.78**	-1.10*	-.10
Other Party	-.92	-.20	.90*	.26
Party Identification:				
Labour	-1.70***	-1.03***	-.56	-.53***
Conservative	1.15***	-.01	.22	.47*
Liberal Democrat	-.20	1.43***	.44	.75**
Other Party	-.09	.19	2.00***	-.05
Party-Issue Proximities:				
Labour	-.13***	-.10***	-.16***	-.08***
Conservative	.18***	.04	.11**	.01
Liberal Democrat	.03	.20***	.12*	.07*
Economic Evaluations	-.39***	-.06	.19	-.08
Party Best on Economy	-1.28***	-.71***	-.48	-.85***
Iraq Evaluations	.10	-.12	-.09	-.08
Emotional Reaction: Economy	.14*	.12*	-.07	.04
NHS	-.22***	-.06	-.26**	-.05
Iraq	.01	-.00	-.02	.07
B. Turnout Variables				
Influence-discounted benefits	.01	-.01	-.01	-.02**
Costs	.10	.01	.08	.10**
Civic duty	-.05	-.06	-.06	-.23***
Political knowledge	.13*	.04	-.09	-.19***
Group benefits	.02	.01	-.04	.02
Personal benefits	.04	.03	.20**	-.03
Social norms	.02	.01	.01	-.11**
Party mobilization	.09	.19*	.02	-.32***
Relative deprivation	.13*	.15**	.28***	.11*
Social trust	.04	.02	.03	.01
Age	.01*	.01**	.01	-.01*
Ethnicity	-.05	.90**	2.70**	.22
Gender	-.11	.22	.96***	.38**
Social class	.39*	.13	-.15	-.35**

McFadden R² = .45

% correctly classified = 68.4

Lambda = .54

*** - p ≤ .001; ** - p ≤ .01; * - p ≤ .05; one-tailed test.

† - Labour voting is the reference category.

Endnotes

1. Economic evaluations were measured using the results of an exploratory factor analysis of responses to the following questions: (a) 'How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago?' (b) How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?' (c) 'How do you think the financial situation of your household will change over the next 12 months?' (d) 'How do you think the general economic situation in this country will develop over the next 12 months?' Responses were scored: 'lot worse' = -2, 'little worse' = -1, 'don't know' = 0, 'little better' = 1, 'lot better' = 2. The factor analysis yielded one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1, and a factor score variable was computed.
2. Party identification was measured using responses to the standard BES question: 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, [Scottish National (Scotland)/Plaid Cymru (Wales)] or what?' 0-1 dummy variables were created for Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and miscellaneous other parties. Respondents stating 'none,' 'no party,' or 'don't know' were treated as the reference category.
3. The question wording is: 'How well do you think the present government has handled each of the following issues?' The numbers designated 'positive' in Figure 5.3 are the percentage of respondents judging that the government has handled a particular issue 'very well' or 'fairly well' and the numbers designated 'negative' are the percentage judging that the government has handled that issue 'fairly badly' or 'very badly.' The order of presentation of issues was randomized.
4. The question wording is: 'How well do you think a Conservative government would handle each of the following issues?' The order of presentation of issues was randomized. The numbers in Figure 5.4 are computed as described in note 3 above.
5. The questions are: (a) 'Which, if any, of the following words describe your feelings about the country's general economic situation?' (b) 'Which, if any, of the following words describe your feelings about the National Health Service?' (c) 'And which of them describes your feelings about the situation in Iraq?' Respondents could choose from one to eight words, state that none of the words applied. Since multiple responses were possible, percentages total to more than 100.
6. The question wording is: 'As far as you're concerned, what is the *single most important issue* facing the country at the present time?' (emphasis in original). Respondents supplying an issue were then asked: 'Which party is best able to handle this issue?' For purposes of the multivariate analyses, 0-1 dummy variables are created for Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, and miscellaneous other parties. Respondents not designating a most important issue, those stating that no party was best able to handle the most important issue, those stating they did not know which party is best, were treated as the reference category.

7. The questions are: (a) 'Now, some questions about the party leaders. Using a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means a very incompetent leader and 10 means a very competent leader, how would you describe [Tony Blair, Michael Howard, Charles Kennedy]?' (b) 'Now please use the 0 to 10 scale to indicate the extent to which the different leaders respond to voters' concerns. How would you describe [Tony Blair, Michael Howard, Charles Kennedy]?' (c) 'Now please use the 0 to 10 scale to indicate how much trust you have for each of the party leaders, where 0 means no trust and 10 means a great deal of trust. How much do you trust [Tony Blair, Michael Howard, Charles Kennedy]?' The order of (a), (b) and (c) were rotated, and the order of the leaders was rotated within that rotation.

8. The question wording is: 'Now, let's think more generally about the party leaders. Using a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means strongly dislike and 10 means strongly like, how do you feel about [Tony Blair, Michael Howard, Charles Kennedy]. The order of the names of the leaders were randomized.

9. Respondents were asked to place themselves and Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties on 0-10 scales for the following dimensions: (a) left-right, (b) tax-spend, (c) EU membership, (d) crime-rights of the accused. The issue-proximity variables were the average absolute distances between the respondent and each of the parties on the four dimensions.

10. Age is age in years; ethnicity is a 0-1 dummy variable with respondents designating themselves as 'white British' scored 1, and all others scored 0; gender is scored male = 1, female = 0; region of residence is a series of 0-1 dummy variables with Greater London as the reference category; social class is the six-category Registrar General (RG) classification. For respondents not able to be classified using the RG scheme who have a spouse/partner, we use the spouse/partner's RG classification.

11. Tactical voting is measured using responses to the following question: 'People give different reasons for why they vote for one party rather than another. Which of the following best describes your reasons?' (a) 'the party had the best policies', (b) 'the party had the best leader', (c) 'I really preferred another party but it stood no chance of winning in my constituency'. Respondents choosing (c) are considered tactical voters and are scored 1; all other voters are scored 0.

12. The $AIC = -2 * (\ln L(\theta|x)) + 2 * K$ where $\ln L(\theta|x)$ is the value of the likelihood for a model K is the number of estimated parameters in the model (Burnham and Anderson, 2002).

13. The relationship between social class and voting remains very weak if one uses the Heath-Goldthorpe class measure rather than the Registrar General's measure. Using the Heath-Goldthorpe measure in the Labour v. opposition binomial logit analysis yields a McFadden $R^2 = .02$. The model correctly classifies 61.4% of the respondents, less than 1% more than could be done using a naive mode-guessing procedure. For the multinomial logit analysis of voting for specific opposition parties with Labour as the reference

category, the McFadden $R^2 = .02$, and the model correctly classifies 41.1%, 2.1% better than mode guessing.

14. Orientations towards the Iraq War were measured using the results of an exploratory factor analysis of responses to the following questions: (a) 'How well do you think the present government has handled the situation in Iraq?' Responses to (a) were scored 'very well' = 5, 'fairly well' = 4 'neither well nor badly' or 'don't know' = 3, 'fairly badly' = 2, 'very badly' = 1; (b) 'Using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means a complete failure and 10 means a complete success, how would you rate the war in Iraq?' (c) Please tell me whether you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove of *Britain's involvement in Iraq?*' (emphasis in original). Responses to (c) were scored 'strongly approve' = 5, 'approve' = 4, 'don't know' = 3, 'disapprove' = 2, 'strongly disapprove' = 1. Item (a) is from the pre-election survey, and (b) and (c) are from the post-election survey. The factor analysis yielded one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1, and a factor score variable was computed.

15. In a binomial or multinomial logit model, the size the effect of any predictor variable depends on the values of all other predictor variables (Long, 1997). Here, we illustrate what such effects are for each predictor, given plausible values for other predictors.

16. To ensure identification in the MXL model, we follow the same rules used to establish necessary conditions for identification in a multinomial probit model. See, e.g., Glasgow (2001).

17. The national identity question is 'Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?' Response categories differ in England, Scotland and Wales. For example, in Wales, the response categories are: (a) 'Welsh not British', (b) 'More Welsh than British', (c) 'Equally Welsh and British', (d) 'More British than Welsh', (e) 'British not Welsh', (f) 'None of the above', (g) 'Other [Write In]'. In Scotland substitute 'Scottish' for 'Welsh', and in England, substitute 'English' for 'Welsh'. For purposes of the multivariate analyses the variable is coded as a five-point ordinal scale with (a) = 5 and (e) = 1. Respondents in categories (f) and (g) are coded 3.

18. The log normal distribution has support only on the positive side of the real line. The log normal distribution is defined as $f(x) = 1/[x\sigma(2)^{1/2}] * e^{-[\log(x)-\mu]^2/2\sigma^2}$ and $0 < x < \infty$, $\mu > 0$, $\sigma > 0$, where: μ is the scale parameter, σ is the shape parameter, and e is the base of the natural logarithm. See www.statsoft.com/textbook/stdisfit.html.

19. Political knowledge was measured as the number of correct answers to the following 'true-false' statements: (a) 'Polling stations close at 10 pm on election day,' (b) 'The Liberal Democrats favour a system of proportional representation for Westminster elections,' (c) 'The minimum voting age is 16,' (d) 'The standard rate of income tax payable is 26 p in the pound', (e) 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for setting interest rates in the UK,' (f) 'Labour wants university students to pay a fee of up to 3,000 each year for their education,' (g) 'The Conservative Party favours imposing strict limits on the number of asylum-seekers who can enter Britain each year,' (h) 'Any

registered voter can obtain a postal vote if they want one – by ringing their local council and asking for a postal vote.’ The order in which (a) – (f) was asked was randomized. Age completing formal education is used to measure level of education.

20. Differential benefits are measured using data from 0-10 'dislike-like' scales for various parties, missing data recoded to mean values for each scale. These data are used to calculate mean absolute distances. For example, suppose that person A rates the Conservatives at 9, Labour at 3 and the Liberal Democrats at 5. The absolute gaps between these three numbers are $9-3 = 6$ for the Conservative/Labour comparison; $9-5 = 4$ for the Conservative/Liberal Democrat comparison; and $5-3 = 2$ for the Liberal Democrat/Labour comparison. The average differential benefits gap for person A is $(6+4+2)/3 = 4$. Now consider person B, who dislikes all three parties and rates them all the same, at 2. Each pair-wise party comparison is now $(2-2 = 0)$ and the average differential benefits gap is 0. Political influence is measured using a 0-10 scale: 'On a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 means a great deal of influence and 0 means no influence, how much influence do *you* have on politics and public affairs?' (emphasis in original). Missing data were coded to the mean of the response distribution. Costs of voting are measured by asking respondents if they 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the following statements: (a) It takes too much time and effort to be active in politics and public affairs'; (b) 'People are so busy that they don't have time to vote'. Responses are recoded from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree') with 'don't know' responses coded 3. Recoded responses to (a) and (b) are summed to form an additive index. Sense of civic duty is measured using the following questions: (a) 'It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election,' (b) I would be *seriously* neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote' (emphasis in original). Responses to (a) and (b) were scored: 'strongly agree' = 5, 'agree' = 4, 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' = 3, 'disagree' = 2, 'strongly disagree' = 1. Responses to (a) and (b) were summed to form a civic duty index.

21. The group benefit questions are: (a) 'Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for groups that people care about like pensioners or the disabled'; (b) 'When people like me vote, they can really change the way that Britain is governed'. Responses are scored from 'strongly agree' = 5 to 'strongly disagree' = 1 with 'don't know' scored 3. Responses to (a) and (b) are summed to form a group benefits index. Responses to the following 'agree-disagree' statements were used to measure the perceived personal benefits of voting: (d) 'Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for me and my family,' (e) 'I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote,' (f) 'I would feel very guilty if I didn't vote in a general election.' Responses are scored: 'strongly agree' = 5, 'agree' = 4, 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' = 3, 'disagree' = 2, 'strongly disagree' = 1. Responses to (d), (e) and (f) are summed to form a personal benefits index. Social norms are measured using responses to the following statements: (g) 'Most of my family and friends think that voting is a waste of time,' and (h) 'Most people around here usually vote in general elections.' Responses to (g) were scored: 'strongly agree' = 1, 'agree' = 2, 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' = 3, 'disagree' = 4, 'strongly disagree' = 5. Responses to (h) are scored: 'strongly agree' = 5, 'agree' = 4, 'neither agree nor disagree'

or 'don't know' = 3, 'disagree' = 2, 'strongly disagree' = 1. Responses to (g) and (h) are summed to form a social norms index.

22. Party mobilization was measured using four dichotomous items (scored 0-1) concerning whether: (a) someone tried to convince the respondent to vote for a party; (b) a party canvasser visited the respondent's home and talked to him/her; (c) someone from a party telephoned the respondent to ask them how they would vote; (d) someone from a party contacted the respondent on election day to see if they had voted or intended to vote. The party mobilization variable is sum of (a) – (d). Level of education is age completing formal education, and disability status is scored: have disability = 1, do not have disability = 0.

23. The political knowledge index is described in note 19 above. Political involvement is measured using the following question: 'How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics?' Response categories are: 'a great deal' (scored 4), 'quite a lot' (scored 3), 'some' (scored 2), 'not very much', 'don't know' (scored 1).

24. The relative deprivation variable was measured using: (a) 'The government generally treats people like me fairly,' (b) 'There is often a big gap between what people like me expect out of life and what we actually get.' Responses to (a) are scored: 'strongly agree' = 1, 'agree' = 2, 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' = 3, 'disagree' = 4, 'strongly disagree' = 5. Responses to (b) are scored from 'strongly agree' = 5 to 'strongly disagree' = 1. The relative deprivation variable is the sum of (a) and (b).

25. Two questions with 0-10 scales were used to measure social trust: (a) 'On balance, would you say that most people can't be trusted or that most people can be trusted?' End-points on the scale are: 0 'most people can't be trusted' and 10 'most people can be trusted.' (b) 'Do you think that most people you come into contact with would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?' End-points on the scale are: 0 'try to take advantage' and 10 'try to be fair'. The social trust variable is the average score on (a) and (b).

26. The average size of the electorate in Labour-held seats in 2005 was 66,857, the average for Conservative seats was 72,956, and the average for Liberal Democrat seats was 69,431. See Johnston, Rossiter and Pattie (2006).