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DOCTORAL THESIS

Assessing the widening age gap in British partisanship

The impact of values, maturation, and political mobilization

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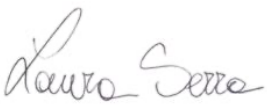
Declaration of Authorship

I, Laura Serra, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

Date: 22nd December 2022

Abstract

In Britain, age has traditionally been a strong predictor of vote choice, with older people much more likely to vote for the Conservatives and younger people much more likely to vote for Labour or the Liberal Democrats. Remarkably, this age gap has increased consistently over the last three general elections and was also well reflected in the 2016 EU membership referendum, with younger voters much more likely to support Remain over Leave, leading scholars and polling agencies alike to note that age appears to have become the new distinctive cleavage in voting behaviour. This thesis contributes to the growing interest in this field of research by examining how age-related characteristics influence electoral choices from three different perspectives. The project comprises three research papers. Using over time British Election Study data, the first paper examines the link between age, education, and liberal-authoritarian and left-right values. The second paper considers the influence of life-cycle effects and tests the impact of the delayed transition into adulthood on Conservative voting. The third paper shifts the focus to the supply-side and using a specially designed survey experiment tests the impact of political appeals directed at younger cohorts on the age gap in party support.

Acknowledgements

I have come across a recurring theme in the acknowledgement sections of PhD theses, which is that choosing to embark on this journey is something few doctoral graduates grow up dreaming of. This is true for me too. I did not even know what a PhD was before starting university. My parents are both university graduates, but they started working as soon as they completed their undergraduate studies (…it was a lot easier back then!). My mother, however, has always been very academically minded. She studied Biology at university and wanted to be a researcher. But then cupid struck, and she chose the quiet life of a Math and Science school teacher in rural Italy. She did get a second bachelor's degree while pregnant with me, which she did out of love for study rather than of hope for a career change. A favourite family anecdote is that on the day she was defending her thesis, the examiner asked my then 4-year-old brother if he also wanted a degree (a *laurea* in Italian, which to him must have sounded like Laura). In response, he pointed at mum's belly, "I already have one" he said.

While I got the passion for academia from my mother, the passion for politics comes from my father. He was a local councillor and had been a member of the various iterations of the mainstream left-wing party of Italy for most of my childhood. We'd watch the news with every meal, and I would hang on his every word. Whenever someone I did not know appeared, I'd ask him if we liked them (usually we did not). He is also incredibly knowledgeable about history, so when I was getting ready for school interrogations, I'd ask him for fun facts to impress my teacher. He would tell me all these interesting stories, which I now realise helped me find school a more enjoyable place; the more I learned the more fun it could be.

I was therefore very lucky to be raised in a family that deeply values education and ensured I had good opportunities. There is much to be grateful to one's parents for, but enabling me to do my university studies in this country is at the very top of my list. We are not a rich family, and my education here was only made possible by my mother taking up a teaching job in Eritrea for many years. I never say that doing a PhD has been the toughest thing I have ever done in my life, as there is no doubt this was leaving my father, my grandparents, my friends, and home to move to Asmara at just 13. At the time I was too angry to realise what an incredible experience this was, but it impacted me in many positive ways nonetheless. One such way is that I was confronted with the reality of the world outside of the little box I had lived in thus far. I had always been a curious child, but moving to a place so drastically different triggered in me the need to understand why some things come to be as they are. Countries,

governments, people. Choosing to study for a degree in International Relations was a step towards achieving that understanding. I was unsure of what I wanted to do with it, however. For a long time, I wanted to be a war correspondent. Then I wanted to join the UN or an NGO.

What ended up happening occurred entirely by chance (and a fair bit of hard work too, I suppose). At the end of my first year, I forgot to submit my choices for the modules I wanted to take in the second year, so I was randomly allocated to the ones with spaces left. One of these was a module in Political Behaviour, taught by the very first person I need to thank in these acknowledgements: Kaat Smets. It would be a massive understatement to say that I would not be where I am if it was not for Kaat. Studying the way people participate in politics was never something I had particularly considered. In fact, the first essay I submitted for that module was far from exceptional. But it made me determined to do better, and I worked hard in the second term to raise my grade. Kaat had also been my Research Methods lecturer in first year, and unlike most of my peers (and now my students), I strangely enjoyed quantitative research. So instead of simply writing an essay, I decided to undertake some original research for my second assignment in Political Behaviour. Well, that assignment went *much* better. It was by far the best undergraduate assignment I submitted. One thing in the feedback I received struck a chord with me. *You clearly have a knack for research.* While I had been a generally good student since childhood, none of my teachers ever pointed out that there was one specific thing I was particularly good at. So, although that comment might not seem like much, it gave me confidence to use that skill. I started including original (quantitative) research in all my assignments, and my grades went up substantially.

I (surprise, surprise!) asked Kaat to be my dissertation supervisor in my final year, and with the 2016 US presidential election looming and the increasing popularity of the likes of Salvini and Le Pen in Europe, I decided to do a project on the rise of the populist right. If at the start of university I was all about changing the world through diplomacy, by the final year I had become obsessed with electoral studies and data analysis (much to the chagrin of my friends, I managed to kill every pub conversation with "but that's not what the data says!"). The obvious next step was therefore to do a Master's degree in Research Methods – perhaps not the most exciting subject, but one that laid the foundations for my PhD. That takes me to the next people I need to thank: my supervisors Chris Hanretty and Oliver Heath. Not only did they entrust me with this opportunity, but they have been beyond helpful in supporting me through what is a notoriously challenging endeavour in the midst of a global pandemic. Their constant patience and availability are the reasons I did not give up all those times it felt too much, and I cannot thank them enough for their guidance.

If my academic mentors have been exceptional, the other people who have been in my life over the course of my studies are not half bad either. Many of these are the people I met when I moved here for university: Rebi, Marghe, Pier, and Oscar. You are the most intelligent and fun people I could have ever wished to share my university years with, and I am so happy to be able to say that we will be friends forever.

My partner, Josh, has been my lighthouse through this experience. From listening to me ramble about politics, to keeping me sane when I was freaking out, and being patient and understanding when I'd effectively lock myself in the study for days before a deadline, you have been amazing to say the least. I am so lucky to be with someone who is interested in and supportive of my work, but I am especially lucky to be with someone who can be empathetic about the mental challenges stemming from this undertaking. The self-doubt and insecurity can be debilitating (they certainly are for me), and the way you guide me out of my head in those moments is something I am beyond grateful for. I am also grateful for your incredible family, who have loved, supported, and cheered for me through these years as if they were my family too. I really am blessed to have you all in my life.

There are also many brilliant people I got to meet in my PhD cohort at Royal Holloway. You have all inspired and fascinated me – but there is one person in particular I want to dedicate this thesis to. Sarah Polani started this journey with me in 2018, but did not get to finish it. I enjoyed chatting with you so much and I was humbled by how you managed to do what we were doing in a new country with three young children. Your commitment to your work and family were touching and exemplary. Wherever you are, I hope you know you have left an indelible mark on all of us.

Laura Serra

London, December 2022

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Introduction

Remember when we cried as kids and our parents said, 'I'll give you something to cry about'?
We thought they were going to hit us, but instead they destroyed the housing market, quadrupled college tuition, and melted the ice caps.

(Internet meme, author unknown)

The current political climate across electoral democracies can be summed up this popular Millennial joke. While the argument may be reductive, it points to a sense of social antagonism between today's youth and the older generation, which, though not unprecedented, seems to be gaining increased traction.

In Britain, age has traditionally been a strong predictor of vote choice, with older people much more likely to vote for the Conservatives and younger people much more likely to vote for Labour or the Liberal Democrats (Tilley, 2002). The EU Referendum, as well as the 2017 and 2019 General Elections, reconfirmed this notion. The age gap in partisanship has become the widest it has ever been, leading scholars and polling agencies alike to consider it the new distinctive cleavage in voting behaviour (Ipsos MORI, 2017; YouGov, 2017, 2019; Curtice, 2020; Ford and Jennings 2020). The growing divide is thought to be driven by changes in values and attitudes across generations, with younger voters increasingly embodying progressive, socially liberal attitudes, and choosing the parties on the left to represent them, and older cohorts retorting against these shifts in what has been described as a *cultural backlash* (Norris and Inglehart 2019). While the extent to which recent electoral developments are attributable to increased ideological polarisation has been debated (e.g. see O'Grady 2022; Schäfer 2022), a widely agreed upon feature of current British politics is that the Conservative party's appeal to younger voters is comparatively low, and the trend shows no sign of reversal (e.g. Tanner et al. 2019; The New Statesman 2022). This is potentially significant electorally because theories of political socialisation maintain that electors remain relatively stable in their attitudes once these have been developed in their formative years (e.g. Smets and Neundorf 2014), suggesting that the Conservatives may be fighting against the 'tide of history' of social liberalism (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart 1997). Studying this age gap and the implications it might have in the future is therefore particularly relevant.

This thesis sits within this context and aims to explain what it is about age-related characteristics that affects electoral choices, and how robust such a link is. The project comprises three research papers,

each looking at aspects that have been identified as possibly driving the age gap in voting behaviour. Using over time British Election Study data, the first considers the expansion of higher education and its association with liberal-authoritarian and left-right values as the possible reasons behind the growing divide in partisanship. The second considers a different type of mechanism, the influence of life-cycle effects and the impact of the delayed transition into adulthood on Conservative voting. The third paper shifts the focus to the supply-side and, using a specially designed survey experiment, tests the impact of political appeals directed at younger cohorts on the age gap in party support.

This introductory chapter sets the context for the research and presents descriptive statistics to show the extent to which age groups and generations have developed distinctive participation patterns over the years. It also presents a review of the literature on generational theories of political participation, the gap that this research seeks to fill in this literature, as well as an overview of the thesis outline.

Brexit and the 2017 and 2019 General Elections

In the aftermath of the Brexit referendum in June 2016, David Cameron resigned from government and was replaced by Theresa May, who found herself tasked with delivering the referendum result. Despite her support for 'Remain' during the referendum campaign, she announced her government would negotiate a *hard Brexit*, which would entail Britain's withdrawal from the single market and the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, as well as increased controls on immigration. Labour, on the other hand, appeared to be in disarray. Jeremy Corbyn's election as leader had bitterly divided both the party and its electorate, and the party's popularity was worsened by its hesitant position on Brexit. If on the one hand support for leaving the EU was high in working-class areas that had historically been more likely to vote Labour, the people who had actually voted for the party in recent elections were the same who supported remaining in the EU. Recent research highlighted how social democratic parties in general (e.g. Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2019, 2021) and Labour in particular (e.g. Swatton 2022) could benefit electorally by holding pro-EU stances. Yet while Labour supported Remain throughout the campaign, it did so rather quietly, and even more so in the referendum aftermath (e.g. Hayton 2022; Beech 2021). This awkward position was reflected in polls and in the results of local and by-elections, where Labour experienced a series of losses (Prosser, 2018; Heath and Goodwin 2017).

Within this context, the Conservatives held a large margin of advantage relative to the opposition, leading Theresa May's government to announce in April 2017 that there would be an early election.

The reason behind May's decision was that the government needed to consolidate its parliamentary majority to deliver the referendum result effectively. But, against early expectations, the election produced a hung parliament. Theresa May proved to be ill-equipped to campaign and faced a number of awkward interactions that decreased her popularity amongst voters. Jeremy Corbyn had the opposite experience, and significantly increased Labour's fortunes. Riding the populist wave with anti-austerity slogans, rail nationalisation, and tuition fees elimination, Corbyn managed to rally large portions of the electorate behind him, especially from the younger cohorts. Sloam and Henn argued that "the principal driving forces behind the 2017 election result included the increase in youth engagement and activism during the campaign and the vote, as well as the switch in youth support to the Labour party and Jeremy Corbyn as standard-bearers for cosmopolitan-left sentiment" (2019: 92). In fact, as with the Brexit referendum, the key demographic divides in the election were not between social classes, but between age groups and levels of education (Heath and Goodwin, 2017). The divide was so wide that YouGov (2017) noted age had replaced class as the "new dividing line in British politics" and Ipsos MORI (2017) further reported that:

> *Age was even more of a dividing factor than in 2015 (and the biggest we've seen since our records began in 1979). All the swing to Labour was among under 44s (and highest of all among 25-34s), while there was a swing to the Conservatives among over 55s. This is the biggest age gap we've seen in elections going back to the 1970s.*

Data gathered by Clarke and Whiteley (2017) from the Essex Continuous Monitoring Survey (ECMS) shows that in 2017, 63% of voters aged 18-29 supported Labour, a figure that dropped to 23% for voters over 65. This pattern is important because it came with a substantial increase the turnout levels of the same cohort. Their estimates indicate that while only 42% of under-30s turned out in 2015, two years later this rose to 61%, a surge that represented a major payoff for Labour. Although the extent to which youth turnout actually increased has been debated (e.g. see Prosser et al., 2018), there is widespread agreement over the notion that, regardless of how many young voters went to polls, those who did overwhelmingly supported Labour. Conversely, older voters overwhelmingly supported the Conservatives, making the divide much larger than in the previous election.

This pattern persisted two years later. As Theresa May failed to get parliament's approval for the deal negotiated with the EU, she announced her resignation in May 2019 and triggered a leadership contest for that summer, which saw former Foreign Secretary and Brexit supporter Boris Johnson become Prime Minister. Johnson's government called another general election for December 2019, and his

campaign strategy proved much more successful than that of his predecessor. The Conservative electoral mobilisation combined strong support for Brexit with socially conservative positions on immigration and identity, increasing spending on the NHS, infrastructure, the national living wage, and addressing regional divides – an approach that proved effective in appealing to traditional Labour voters (Cutts et al., 2020). At the same time, if in 2017 Corbyn had been an asset for Labour, the situation was reversed two years later. Dislike for Corbyn and confusion over the party's Brexit stance drove Leave supporters towards the Conservatives, and Remain supporters towards the Green party and the Liberal Democrats. Yet, although the Labour party underperformed across all ages compared to the previous election, they maintained a 30-percent majority over the Conservatives across the under 30s. The Conservative party, on the other hand, increased their support-base among older age groups. The tipping point of vote-switching between the two main parties was reduced to 39, and YouGov reported that "for every 10 years older a voter is, their chance of voting Tory increases by around nine points, and the chance of them voting Labour decreases by eight points" (YouGov 2019).

This divide once again testified to the continuation of a process whereby young people's support for progressive, leftist, and socially liberal policies was translated into increased support for Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens, and the SNP – whose combined vote-share exceeded 70% among the under 29 and 60% among the under 39 (Sloam and Henn, 2019). The Conservatives, on the other hand, gained votes in areas where they had historically struggled, such as those with large old, white, working-class populations and low levels of education (Cutts et al., 2020). In fact, if at the 2010 and 2015 elections the Conservatives had continued to thrive in areas with more graduates, this pattern was virtually reversed after Brexit (Sobolweska and Ford, 2020). This shift is not entirely surprising, as higher levels of education have a well-documented association with socially liberal attitudes and a rejection of conservative and authoritarian views (e.g. Stubager, 2008; Surridge, 2016). This educational and ideological divide was clearly evidenced in the support-bases underlying the Brexit referendum vote and the broader electoral cleavage of recent years. For example, Jennings and Stoker (2017) examined shifts in support for the two main parties since 2005 and noted that the new political cleavage of the century is between Labour-supporting citizens who reside in locations strongly connected to global growth, and Conservative-supporting citizens who do not. The former belong to urban-metropolitan areas and are generally more positive about the EU, equal opportunities for minorities, the impact of immigration, and changes from the past more generally; the latter live in peripheral and coastal areas and place themselves at the opposite ends of this spectrum.

Age and voting across time

Within this framework, two areas stand out as theatres of significant age differences in British politics: turnout and party-choice. Looking at over-time changes in these areas thus provides a useful starting point to determine whether there are any identifiable patterns.

Age differences in turnout

To illustrate how age is related to turnout and how this has changed over time, this section first examines the cross-sectional relationship between age in years and turnout; and then examines the overtime relationship between different age cohorts and turnout. The information is sourced from combining each of the British Elections Study post-election surveys since records began in 1964.

Figure 1.1 shows the relationship between age in years and turnout. The relationship is curvilinear: the probability of voting increases with age and then falls again towards the late stages of life. This is the approach taken by the *political life-cycle* theory, according to which participation levels are low for young people due to their low attachment to civic life (Putnam, 2000). Turnout then rises as people experience formative events such as leaving the family home, buying a house, and getting married (e.g. Stoker and Jennings, 1995). Participation is believed to then fall again for the older age groups as they undergo health problems, retirement or declining incomes and become politically alienated (e.g. Martin et al, 1974). Therefore, changes in participation throughout the lifespan do not occur merely because of getting older, rather they do so through the life experiences that come with age.

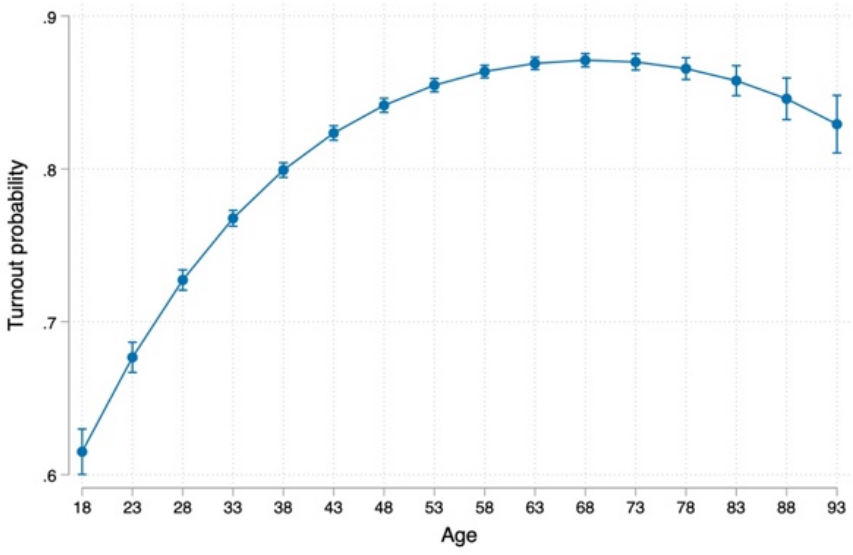


Figure 1.1 – Turnout probabilities by age (British Election Study 1964-2019)

At the same time, age differences in turnout can take various forms across generations. This is due to the changing impact of the political context on the development of turnout patterns, whereby cohorts who grew up in a highly politicised context would have a higher propensity to turn out to vote. For example, Smets and Neundorf (2014) find that general turnout levels and candidates polarisation contribute to altering turnout patterns from one generation to the next. However, they also find that it is differences in socioeconomic backgrounds that explain the largest share of variation in inter-cohort turnout levels. These effects impact generations to different extents. As educational and occupational patterns change, so does the timing of the life events that engender socioeconomic changes, which in turn determine specific participation patterns. This has resulted in a widening age gap in the turnout levels of young and older citizens in a number of countries (Smets, 2012). In fact, a well-documented feature of the UK and several other democratic polities is that the turnout age gap has widened consistently since the beginning of the millennium (e.g. Kimberlee, 2002; Cammaerts et al., 2014; Smets, 2016).

Declining turnout levels among young adults have caused concern in many Western democracies. Numerous explanations have been put forward to describe this changing pattern of youth voter turnout. These can be generally grouped across four main accounts (Kimberlee, 2002):

(1) "Youth focused" explanations suggest that non-participation is a consequence of young people's age or their social background, for example their higher levels of mobility, living in privately rented accommodations, and separation from enduring personal and social relationships (e.g. Johnston and Pattie, 1997).

(2) "Politics focused" explanations draw attention to barrier created by either state institutions or political parties that tend to exclude young people from politics and therefore fail to attract this cohort (e.g. Deveraux et al., 1995).

(3) "Alternative value" explanations suggest that young people are attracted to alternative political ideas and movements that are outside the ambit of political parties, a shift in values that has encouraged greater tolerance and a broadening interest in non-material political issues, which are poorly addressed by the existing stock of parties, particularly in systems which use single-member districts (Sloam 2014; Henn et al. 2017).

(4) "Generational" explanations point to changing social circumstances, transition journeys to 'adult statuses', and unique events experienced by young people that undermine their ability to participate or prevent them from knowing how to do so. For instance, Smets (2016) finds that decreasing turnout levels in Britain can largely be explained by the delayed transition of the youth into adulthood. Young

people no longer experience formative events at the same points in life as previous generations did, and are therefore ill-equipped to participate to the same extent.

In the context of the UK, the widening gap in turnout is shown in Figure 1.2[1]. As evidenced by the graph, young people have always been less likely to turn out to vote than their older counterparts. What has become remarkably apparent is that their turnout levels have plummeted in recent years, corroborating past research on the matter (e.g. Blais et al., 2004). Since the 1990s, it appears that young people have become increasingly less likely to vote while the turnout levels of older voters have remained stable, suggesting that it is lower turnout levels across the youth that drive the general decrease in turnout (Smets 2012).

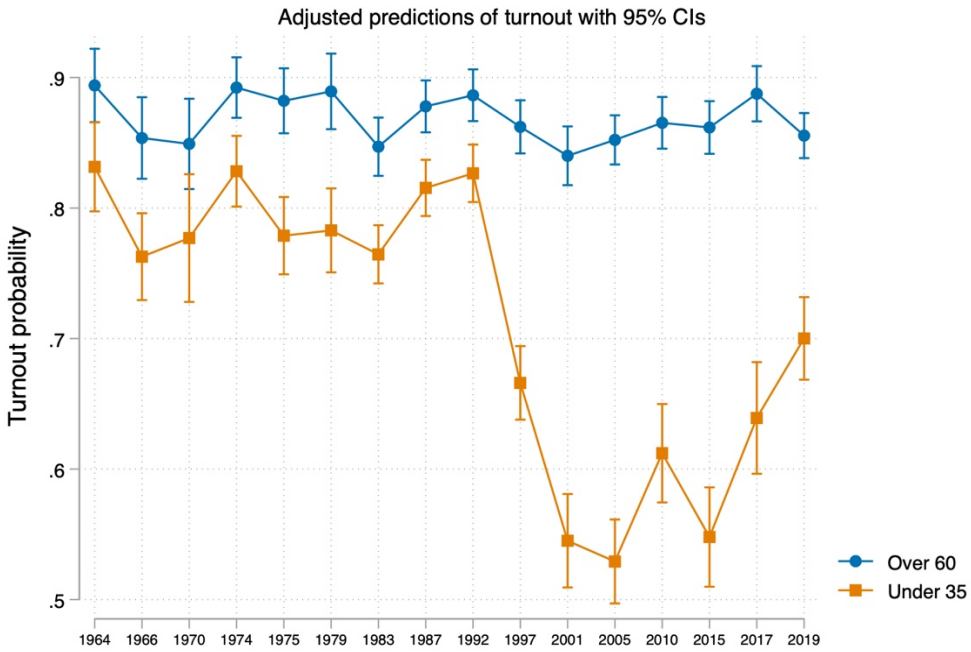


Figure 1.2 – Turnout probabilities by age, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

However, the graph also shows that youth turnout decline has not always been steady. In fact, it seems to have plummeted after 1992 and reached its lowest level in 2005, but then increased again in 2010 and has been steadily on the rise since 2015. These fluctuations suggest the presence of possible period effects contracting and boosting participation in certain years. For example, it has been argued that the significant drop in turnout at the 1997 general election could be attributed to the small ideological gap between the two main parties, rather than a more widespread trend towards lower turnout. In fact, looking at individual voter abstention in 1992 and 1997 reveals that the changes are due to the

[1] Figure 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate turnout probabilities from logistic regression models of the interaction between age and election years. Full model results can be found in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix A.

perceived lack of important policy differences between the Labour and Conservative parties (e.g. Pattie 2001). In this view, the highly politicised context of post-Brexit Britain could thus explain why youth turnout has picked up in recent years.

Young people in advanced industrial democracies are today faced by a particularly tough environment – austerity measures have reduced public spending on services which young people were high users of, and the labour market has become hostile to new entrants, leading to high levels of youth unemployment (ONS 2017; Erk, 2017). Political structures too contribute to the alienation of young voters. In fact, the British First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system provides little incentive for politicians to engage with young people, who are notoriously smaller in number and tend not to vote, and squeezes out third parties, who tend to be popular across this cohort (e.g. Sloam 2014; Sloam and Henn 2018; Henn et al. 2017). The upcoming requirement of voter IDs at the ballot box could further exacerbate this, as the accepted forms of identification are predominantly held by older people, but not younger ones – which has prompted concerns that young people will find it comparatively harder to vote (Electoral Reform Society 2022; Byline Times 2022).

But worsening economic conditions and political structures alone cannot explain the decrease in participation, since the FPTP system has been in place even at times when youth turnout was high, and there have been times of hardship for young people in past decades as well – most notably in the 1980s (Schmelzer, 2008). Other explanations therefore look at how social, economic, and political changes have resulted in *value change*. As outlined in previous sections, a major trend in advanced industrial democracies has been the emergence and growth of post-material and secular-rational values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). In this context, young people have developed conceptions of citizenship that are more relevant to their everyday lives. Dalton (2009) here makes a distinction between 'duty citizens' and 'engaged citizens', whereby young people can be characterised as engaged citizens who are tolerant and outward looking, believe in helping those worse off than themselves, and frequently participate in non-electoral forms of politics. In this view, a shift has occurred from consumer politics to community campaigns and international networks facilitated by social media; from the ballot box to the streets and the Internet; from political parties to social movements and networks (Sloam, 2014; Giugni and Grasso 209; Garcia Albacete 2014; Pickard 2018, 2019). There is therefore evidence to suggest that young people are not apathetic about politics, they have their own views and engage in a variety of ways.

Age differences in partisanship

In this thesis, partisanship refers to vote-choice rather than party identification. Although the two often correspond, there are cases where voters have shifted preferences away from the party they had traditionally aligned themselves with, and the present research aims to examine these changes in voting preferences.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, age has always been a strong predictor of vote-choice in the United Kingdom, but in recent years, the association has become even more remarkable. This shift is illustrated in Figure 2[2].

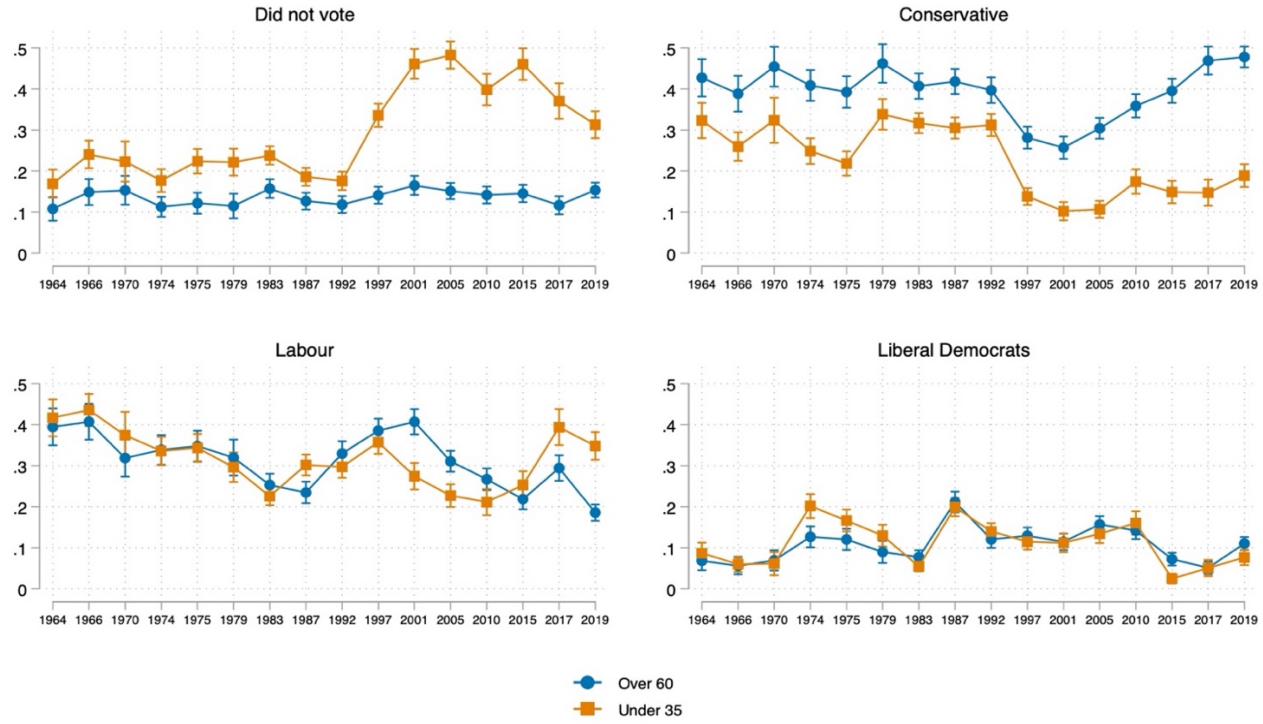


Figure 2 – Vote-choice probabilities by age, British Election Study (BES) 1974-2019

The graph shows that the two voting outcomes that vary most by age are abstention and voting for the Conservative party. In both instances, younger voters are about 30-percentage points less likely to turn out to vote, or to support the Conservative party, than the over 60. Yet while the turnout gap has contracted in recent years, the Conservative gap has widened significantly since records began. Voting for the Liberal Democrats (and voting for 'other parties', which were omitted from the figure but are reported in Appendix A) does not seem to depend much on age. The Labour vote, on the other hand,

[2] Figure 2 plots voting probabilities from multinomial regression models of the interaction between age and election year. Full model results can be found in Table 3 of Appendix A.

did not seem to vary by age in the first half of the period examined, but this changed under New Labour (1997-2005), when the under-35 became significantly less likely to support the party than the over 60. This gap was then *reversed* over the last three general elections, as younger voters have become about 10- to 20-percentage points more likely to support Labour than older ones.

The gap in voting for the two main parties, Labour and Conservative, is thus the one displaying the most significant shifts over the period. This is clearly displayed in Figure 3[3].

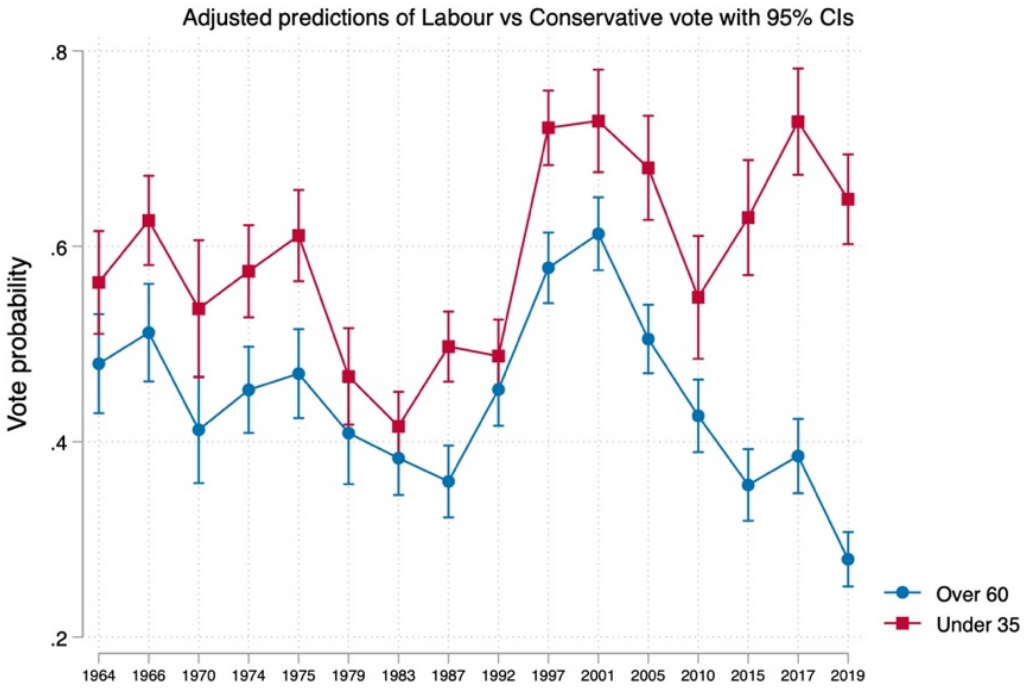


Figure 3 – Probability of voting Labour over Conservative by age, British Election Study (BES), 1964-2019

The graph shows that young people have always been more likely than older cohorts to vote for Labour rather than the Conservative party. For much of the early period, the magnitude of this age gap remained relatively stable, and confidence intervals overlap in 1964, 1970, 1979, 1983, and 1992. However, after 2001 the age gap has widened significantly, and was particularly large in the three most recent elections. While young voters have increased their support for Labour, older cohorts have become much more likely to support the Conservative party. This is possibly attributable to the 'cultural backlash' thesis put forward by Norris and Inglehart (2019), whereby globalisation and increased cultural exchanges, along with their economic implications, have pushed a significant portion of older

[3] Figure 3 plots the probability of voting Labour over Conservative (measured as a dummy variable with a value of 1 if respondents voted for Labour, and 0 if they voted for the Conservatives) for the two groups. Full model results can be found in Table 4 of Appendix A.

generations towards more conservative outlooks. Young people, on the other hand, were raised through these societal changes, and therefore developed cosmopolitan outlooks that make them tolerant of diversity and outsiders (e.g. Sloam and Henn 2019). However, recent studies have questioned the extent to which cultural polarisation is behind the widening age gap in voting behaviour (e.g. Schäfer 2022, O'Grady 2022). These studies demonstrate that while polarisation exists on some dimensions, the divide is stable overtime rather than displaying an increasing trend. This suggests that the more plausible explanation behind the voting age gap is one of increased *politicisation* of these attitudes. The political activation of sociocultural and socioeconomic issues, rather than deeply held ideological stances, may be what is driving these shifts in support. In this view, whether this relationship will hold in the future remains unclear. A closer look at the established theories of generational differences in voting behaviour provides a starting point to look for answers.

Theoretical framework: generational theories of voting behaviour

How voters acquire their political attitudes has long been a central focus of research in political socialisation. In particular, how *generational differences* occur is still a contested aspect which, if resolved, would allow us not only to understand the past and present, but also make predictions about the future (Neundorf and Niemi, 2014). The assumptions behind studies that assess generational differences is that three factors play a pivotal role: ageing, inter-cohort experiences, and time (Yang and Land, 2013). These are normally referred to as ageing, cohort, and period effects (for an overview see Serra and Smets, 2022).

Ageing effects refer to changes that are associated with individuals' progression through the life-cycle. As social roles change with age, the accumulation of social experiences increases. Therefore, ageing effects result from processes inherently associated with getting older, including psychological changes relating to values and preferences. For example, ageing has been linked with increased conservatism and authoritarianism, cognitive inflexibility or close-mindedness, and long-term attitude stability indicative of a resistance to change. These and other personality-related attributes have been argued to account for the association between age and conservative values (Cornelis et al., 2009) and could also account for the link between age and Conservative voting. At the same time, age effects can also derive from the social changes that occur over the life-cycle. As people get jobs, get married, have children and retire, their structural position in society changes along with their priorities and responsibilities, which

may influence political orientations through their impact on investments and resources (Binstock and Quadagno, 2001). This follows rational choice models of decision-making, which maintain that individuals gather information on options and proceed to choose the option that best fits their preferences and values at a given time. Because the *transformative experiences* outlined above irreversibly alter one's position in society, they may also prompt unexpected changes in the preferences and values on which decisions are based (e.g. Paul 2014).

Generational or cohort effects regulate how citizens might differ in their political attitudes because of different socialisation experiences that manifest themselves in their belief system (e.g. Grasso et al., 2017; Dinas and Stoker 2014; Smets and Neundorf, 2014). These are defined as enduring inter-cohort distinctions attributable to the common 'imprinting' of cohort members as individuals undergo similar shared socialising experiences during late adolescence and early adulthood.

Generational differences are thought to primarily stem from two distinct sources of influence:

1) *Long-term processes*, such as the growing prevalence of post-materialist values through generational replacement (e.g. Inglehart, 1990), a shift that has been thought to explain increasing social liberalism among younger cohorts. This notion that is potentially significant electorally as it implies that right-wing parties are fighting against 'the tide of history' on social liberalism.

2) The *political context* in the period when people enter the electorate. As voters come of age at times when different parties are successful and different issues are salient, they can be characterized as forming more or less distinct political generations. Their long-standing political preferences may therefore reflect the dominant political forces present during the period when they came of political age. If a particular party is dominant during a voter's formative years they may carry that predisposition with them throughout their electoral career. This view has typically been elaborated by authors advocating the 'Michigan model' of voting behaviour, whereby voting decisions are derived from long-term affective attachments to political parties learned during early adulthood which then stabilize over the life-course (Campbell et al., 1960). The years in which voters enter the electorate are argued to be highly consequential: new voters are flexible and unstable and much more responsive to new events than older voters (Converse, 1976). This notion follows from Bayesian models of political learning, whereby voters are believed to rationally update their expectations of future partisan behaviour using past events (e.g. Fiorina 1981; Green and Gerber 1998; Achen 2002). Because young voters inevitably lack the experience of past events, their views are more susceptible to reflect the political climate present when they come of political age (see e.g. Bartles and Jackman 2014).

Period effects regulate how attitudes or behaviour might be a function of the current political, economic or societal situation and idiosyncratic events that produce fluctuations over time and affect all age groups simultaneously. That is, period effects are specific to the period the election takes place and apply to all voters at the same time. These can be notable or decisive national and international happenings, such as the creation of the Welfare State in Britain after the Second World War, deindustrialisation in the 1970s, or the global financial crisis in 2007–2008 and the resultant Great Recession (Pickard, 2019). But they can also include changes in parties' strategies. For example, Clarke and Whiteley (2017) argue that Labour's surprising performance in 2017 might well be a period effect. In that election, voters chose Labour to a much larger extent than they had done in 2015, and as the party's attractiveness seemed to markedly change in only two years, the change could be relative to a combination of the Brexit effect and Corbyn's new leadership and new campaign strategies.

An overview of the research on socialisation and life-cycle effects on British partisanship

In the context of Britain, several studies have shown that there is a relationship between ageing and conservatism, with the old identifying with the party of the right more than the young. However, while divergence has been recognised, the reasons for these differences are much more contested. Butler and Stokes (1974) were among the first to argue that these gaps were due to differing formative experiences (i.e. cohort effects), rather than an ageing process linked to conservatism. Similarly, Russell et al. (1992) found that, although there is a tendency for ageing to lead to increased identification with the Conservative party, formative experiences of electoral generations result in cohort differences that persist, and by examining 'Thatcher's Children' (those who came of age between 1979 and 1987) they conclude that socialisation during Thatcher's terms in office meant that first-time electors in that period were more Conservative than they would have been given their age. Tilley (2002) reached similar conclusions, finding linear elements to ageing along with cohort effects that account for older members of the electorate being more Conservative. This is echoed by Grasso et al. (2017), who showed how the generations that came of age during Thatcher's and Blair's governments shared similar political values. The "Thatcher effect" persisted onto "Blair's babies" – namely those who came of age under New Labour – who displayed more conservative cultural and socio-economic attitudes than would be normally expected at their age.

These studies follow the classic definition of political socialisation, according to which an individual's learning of social patterns corresponds to their societal position as mediated through various agencies

of society (Hyman, 1959). An important implication of this strand of research is the assumption that it produces relatively enduring orientations toward politics in general, and that such socialisation occurs very early in life, i.e. what was learned prior to adulthood would remain unchanged in later life. Other studies, however, found that opinions change more often than not over time, and that even though the extensive carryover into adulthood applies to important personality variables, the influence of early socialisation on political attitudes remains uncertain (e.g. Marsh, 1971). As a consequence, scholars have begun to consider the impact of life-cycle and aging effects, along with the possible period effects that alter political attitudes (e.g. Bartels and Jackman, 2014). This is in line with the idea of partisanship less as a form of identity, and more as an attitude that comes about as a function of informed reactions to the performance of governments and opposition parties on a number of policy areas, most notably the economy. As governments and economic good times are never permanent, an individual's affiliation with a political party is always subject to 'rational updating' (e.g. Gerber and Green, 1998).

Research questions and contribution

Age is not the sole demographic predictor of political participation and voting preferences. However, previous sections of this introductory chapter highlighted how the importance of age in determining voting behaviour has been on the rise. This thesis thus focuses on age and age-related characteristics because it is the aspect where there have been the most significant changes in recent years. In fact, although differences in voting by ethnic background or class also exist, these associations have remained more or less stable over time and did not experience shifts as striking as that produced by age. Class voting in Britain has been on the decline for some time (e.g. see Evans and Tilley 2012; Angelucci and Vittori 2023), while differential voting by ethnic background continues to occur in the expected directions – whereby minorities are more likely to affiliate themselves with the parties on the (e.g. see Sanders et al. 2014; Martin 2019; Martin and Mellon 2020). Gender, on the other hand, has shown interesting changes in recent years insofar as, since 2017, women have become more likely to support the Labour party. Yet while gender is an interesting development to study, the saliency of gender as a driver of distinctive voting patterns is a rather recent phenomenon (e.g. see Campbell and Shorrocks 2023; Green and Shorrocks 2023). Age, on the other hand, has a longstanding association with voting, and this association has become even more pronounced in recent years, making it today's *most distinctive cleavage* in British voting behaviour.

Moreover, although division by age occur in other established democracies as well, these are often less prominent than the trend that currently exists in the United Kingdom. This can be partly explained by the nature of the British party system, which favours the dominance of two parties, and therefore lends itself to the establishment of clearer demographic divisions. However, even places with similar party systems, such as the United States, have not experienced as unprecedented as that evidenced in the UK. In fact, while a divide does exist in the US too and it has increased with younger generations, its size has remained stable since its emergence at the 2008 Presidential Election, and is much smaller than the gap evident in the UK today (cf Figure 4 below and Figure 3 showed earlier).

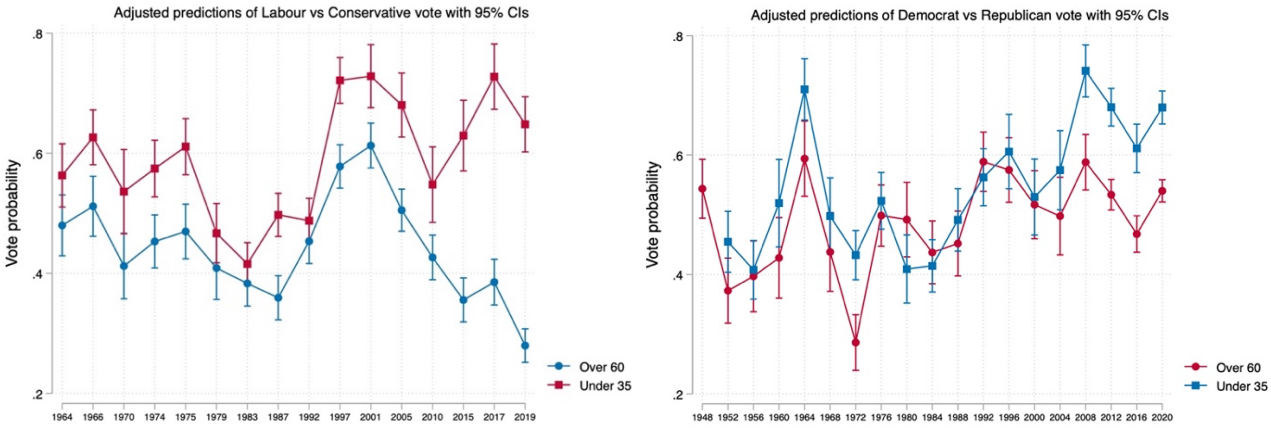


Figure 4 – Left-hand panel displays Labour vs Conservative vote probability (BES 1964-2019); Right-hand panel displays Democrat vs Republican president vote probability (ANES 1952-2020)

In Britain, on the other hand, the voting age-gap has increased consistently at every election after 2015, generating renewed interest into the matter. The British case is therefore both part of a wider international trend whereby young people increasingly display distinctive preferences and participation patters, but also unique in the extent to which this trend has materialised. As the forerunner of age-based voting, the UK thus serves as the ideal context where to study the development of these shifts and theorise about what these might look like elsewhere under similar conditions.

A further contribution brought about by this thesis is the novel approach it takes to examine the relative influence of age, period, and cohort effects on voting behaviour. While there are well-established theories around the influence each of these have on the formation of political attitudes and participation patterns, a fundamental problem with trying to measure these effects is that the model is statically under-identified. As age, period, and cohort variables are collinear, the empirical challenge of separating effects that are linear functions of each other arises. This cannot be achieved without the

inclusion of additional assumptions (for an overview of these methods, see Serra and Smets 2022). While this thesis does not aim to resolve the statistical age-period-cohort conundrum, it does set off from the widely agreed notion that age, period, and cohort effects are often at work simultaneously. Therefore, this project seeks to unpack these effects by examining the possible mechanisms at play behind age, generations, and periods. In other words, it aims to determine what it is about age- and time-related characteristics that affects voting. It does by addressing the following research questions.

Cohort effects: to what extent does the expansion of higher education explain generational differences in voting?

There is something about the youth of today that is different from its predecessors, and possible explanations point to the expansion of higher education and the impact this has on value-formation and, ultimately, voting preferences (e.g. Stubager, 2013; Surridge, 2016; Scott 2022; Simon 2021, 2022). Millennials are the most educated generation to date, and Gen Z is on track to surpass them. As certain educational backgrounds are increasingly associated with specific political attitudes, the education-value linkage may explain diverging generational patterns in voting behaviour.

Ageing effects: to what extent does the delayed transition into adulthood explain age differences in voting?

As well as being more highly educated than its predecessors, the youth of today also differs from previous generations in a more fundamental way: it stays "young" for longer (e.g. Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Smets 2016; Bialik and Fry 2019). As voters experience catalytic events such as completing education, getting a full-time job, buying a home, and starting a family later than they used to, it could be that the widening gap is a by-product of this delay. This has been recognised by Conservative supporters and politicians as well. In November 2022, the founder of conservative think-tank Bright Blue quit his post "*accusing the government of betraying his generation as it faces stagnant wages and little help with punishing housing and childcare costs*" (The Guardian 2022). Similarly, Conservative councillors and MPs interviewed by *PoliticsHome* (2022) noted that the party should be doing more to attract young voters via affordable housing and childcare support, but that they are struggling to implement the relevant measures due to backbench resistance (The Guardian 2022). In this view, young voters' increased reluctance to associate themselves with the Conservative party may be due to the broadening lack of economic incentives for doing so.

Period effects: to what extent do party group-appeals impact the age gap in voting preferences?

Examining voting patterns from the bottom up overlooks the role played by parties themselves in shaping public opinion and attracting voters. For example, Labour's surge in support among the youth has been attributed to the party's renewed appeals to this cohort with policies directly targeted at young voters (e.g. Sloam and Henn, 2018). Already in 2015, then party leader Ed Miliband began addressing youth issues in the run-up to the election, and promised to get rid of most unpaid internships, abolish zero-hour contracts, deliver votes at 16, and reduce university fees to £6,000. In 2017, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership made youth issues even more central. Across all manifestos, Labour was the one dedicating more space to the youth. Conversely, right-wing politicians and commentators lament the lack of appeal that the Conservative party developed towards younger voters. A study by centre-right think-tank Onward reported that the biggest threat to the Conservatives' future is the growing age gap in voting intention, and that the only way to retain a majority would be to focus on winning over a younger generation of voters or the party would risk being pushed to the sidelines and become unable to govern (Tanner, O'Brien, Kanagasooriam, 2019; Financial Times, 2019). Therefore, the youth's increased support for parties on the Left in general, and for Labour in particular, could be a product of the increased attention (or lack thereof) parties devote to this cohort.

Contents of the thesis

The project comprises three research papers, each described below.

Paper 1: Value Change, Education, and Voting in Britain Across Generations

Using data from the British Election Study (1987-2019), this paper examines how the expansion of tertiary education and inter-generational shifts along liberal-authoritarian and left-right economic values motivate changes in electoral behaviour. Results show large cohort effects on liberal-authoritarian value change, with all cohorts becoming significantly more liberal over the years. On the other hand, there are little between-cohorts differences on left-right economic values, and cohorts do not show any significant change in either direction. Education has a strong association with increased liberalisation, yet this has become weaker for cohorts who already display above-average levels of liberalism, such as Millennials. Higher education thus appears to have become less important over time in terms of shaping values within cohorts, and with the expansion of education, education-based value differences have diminished rather than increased. Moreover, against the notion that shifts in sociocultural attitudes explain the growing voting age gap, results show that these have become more electorally salient in recent elections, but values alone do not explain the age divide. The more convincing story pertains socioeconomic backgrounds, with income and education absorbing most of the age variation.

Paper 2: Delayed Maturation and Conservative Voting

Life events such as completing education, getting married, having a child, starting a full-time job, or buying a house now occur later than they used to. The delayed maturation thesis thus maintains that, in some sense, 25-year olds in the UK are now "younger" than 25-year olds from previous generations because they have undergone fewer life-cycle events. This has been found to explain decreased youth turnout, and may also explain the widening age-gap in party choice. As young adults lack many of the life experiences that irreversibly alter their structural position in society, their increasing reluctance to support the Conservative party may due to the more widespread lack of economic incentives for doing so. This paper tests this hypothesis using data from the British Household Panel and Understanding Society (1991-2020) and British Election Study (1964-2019). Results show that higher maturation levels have a large impact on voting for the Conservative party, and this effect is particularly strong for the Millennial generation. For this cohort, each increase on the 'maturation index' results in a 4.3% increase in their chances of voting Conservative. This suggests that if certain life stages were achieved earlier in life, the Conservative vote-share across the youth would be significantly higher.

Paper 3: The Impact of Party Appeals on the Age Gap in Voting Preferences

This paper shifts the focus from voters to parties and tests whether appeals directed at younger voters have an impact on the age gap in party support. This is done through a survey experiment containing group appeals adapted from the Labour and Conservative 2019 electoral manifestos. These age-based appeals are both symbolic and substantive in nature, and cover both economic and cultural issues. Results show that appeals directed at the youth have a large effect in increasing the support levels of this group and, against expectations, they do not trigger a decrease in support from older voters. This is the case even for appeals containing young citizens' cultural policy preferences. Moreover, while Labour has a clear advantage on youth support, the Conservative party is able to close this gap with proposals in line with the preferences of young voters – especially around the issue of university tuition fees. In a context of increasingly low youth support for the Conservatives, these results thus have important implications for the party's campaign strategies and policy proposals.

Chapter 1

Value Change, Education and Voting in Britain Across Generations

Introduction

The "political gap" between older and younger generations in the UK is getting larger, with younger people much less likely to turn out to vote than their older counterparts, and much more likely to support the parties on the left than previously. Young voters increasingly display liberal and progressive attitudes, and scholars seeking to explain these shifts in preferences often point to the expansion of higher education.

A great deal of research has been carried out on intergenerational value-change. Inglehart's influential account posits that with better economic prospects and technological advancements, voters have gradually abandoned materialist values in favour of postmaterialist ones. That is, they are no longer mainly concerned with improving the economic situation of their household and the country, and are now more concerned with cultural issues, such as individuals' rights and freedoms and the role the state should have in society (Inglehart, 1990). It is especially on this latter cultural ideological dimension that age differences in opinions have become the most apparent, with young voters much more likely to hold liberal views on the postmaterialist dimension than their older counterparts, and much more likely to choose parties on the left to represent them (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2019). Less clear, however, is what motivates these differences and whether they are a temporary or permanent feature of attitude formation and voting behaviour.

The expansion of education is arguably one of the most important developments of recent decades. Accordingly, the literature on the association between education and value development has received a large number of contributions in recent years. Most of these have sought to identify a causal link between them, with the association increasingly regarded as a direct higher education effect (e.g. Hainmuller and Hiscox 2007; Stubager 2008; Surridge 2016; Scott 2022). Other studies have questioned the notion whereby higher education has a causal impact on socially liberal values, arguing instead that the association is a proxy for family socialisation and attributable to self-selection into higher education (e.g. Persson 2015; Simon

2022). These diverging findings are likely stemming from the periods the authors look at. In fact, Simon (2022) notes how research that identifies a causal link between education and value-change tends to explore the effect among pre-2000 graduates (e.g. Scott 2022 and Surridge 2016 use British Cohort studies), but more recent graduates have experienced a fundamentally transformed higher education environment in terms of funding arrangements, subject offerings, and diversity in the student body (Carpentier 2018). The present research sits within this context and departs from attempts at identifying causality, aiming instead to explore changes in the education-liberalism association across different generations, as well as the impact this association has on the generational gap in voting behaviour.

While the association between educational attainment and sociocultural attitudes is well-documented, the impact they have on voting has been given less attention and has often led to competing results. For example, higher education used to be associated with increased economic affluence and a preference for right-wing parties, but recent years saw the emergence of an *educational cleavage* whereby graduates increasingly supports culturally progressive policies and the parties on the left. Rising educational levels could thus have important implications in eventually closing the age gap in values and vote-choice as younger, more educated, generations replace older, less educated, ones. Yet, while extensive research has been conducted on the (causal) association between education and liberalism, the impact that they both have on voting has attracted less attention. To this end, the research paper presented in this chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is there an age cleavage in attitudes and, if so, on which issues or ideological dimensions? For how long has it existed, and is it likely to be a permanent or temporary feature?
- What's the relationship between education and ideological dimensions, and what impact do they have on voting?

This research provides an assessment of how opposing political values and beliefs motivate differences in voting behaviour. In particular, I examine the association between education and value formation, as well as the impact that values and education ultimately have on voting behaviour. Results show that the liberalising effect of education has become weaker for recent generations who display above-average levels of liberalism, and that there are no clear educational

differences on economic attitudes. Moreover, the Labour party comes out as the party who has befitted most from these compositional shifts in the electorate, with graduates taking the lead in supporting it compared to previous generations. At the same time, although values' impact on voting has increased in recent years, this is the case for all generations examined, and does therefore not explain the widening age-gap in preferences. This analysis thus provides an important step to understand the present political climate, as well as what forms it may take in the future.

Theoretical background

Changing value cleavages

The past few decades have witnessed the growth of a remarkable consensus over the observation that, across most Western societies, the political orientations of young and old citizens differ in fundamental ways. Results from the World Value Survey show how young people display strong adherence to democratic norms, tolerance towards a broad variety of lifestyles, and support for diversity and gender equality to greater extents than their predecessors (Hooghe, 2004).
At the same time, there seems to have been a reversal of this trend in recent years. Right-wing think-tank Onward conducted a study on the changing attitudes of young people in the UK, finding that detachment to democracy and civic norms is one the rise across young adults, who are increasingly embracing authoritarian attitudes (Stanley et al. 2022). Similarly, a recent report by the Bennet Policy Institute at the University of Cambridge, highlighted how:

> *Globally, youth satisfaction with democracy is declining – not only in absolute terms, but also relative to how older generations felt at the same stages in life. There are notable declines in four regions: Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, western Europe, and the "Anglo-Saxon" democracies, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States*
>
> (Foa et al. 2020: 4)

Yet the report also noted that this is less evident in places who have recently elected a populist left-wing leader, suggesting that youth dissatisfaction with democracy is stronger in places with right-wing and mainstream left governments (Foa et al. 2020).

Generational shifts towards liberalism and authoritarianism have thus been at the centre of academic research for some time. As these issues became more electorally relevant, scholars began to study the effects of *generational replacement* as a key process driving social and political change. One of the first to do so was Ronald Inglehart (1971), who argued that there is a hierarchical order to human goals, whereby individuals first seek to fulfil subsistence needs such as water, food, and shelter. They then seek to acquire material goods to attain a comfortable margin of economic security, and finally they turn to higher order *postmaterialist values*, such as the need for belonging, or aesthetic and intellectual needs. In this view, basic value priorities are thought to reflect the prevailing economic conditions when a certain generation is socialised. Older generations who experienced economic strain after the second world war maintained a high priority for materialist values throughout their lives, while postwar generations satisfied their economic needs and shifted priorities towards postmaterialist values. This was echoed by Dalton (1977), who further noted that the effect of generational replacement on value-change would diminish as societies approach their "saturation level" of affluence.

The true extent of post-war affluence and its impact on social values has been object of debate (see Clarke and Dutt, 1991; Inglehart and Abramson 1992, 1994; Rahn and Transue, 1998), yet the notion of different generations embodying divergent value sets that impact political attitudes persists. This pattern has become increasingly evident since the 1980s. As the income levels and amount of leisure time at the disposal of the working class increased, many adopted lifestyles closer to that of the middle classes. Consequently, the working class gradually lost its revolutionary potential in favour of other groups such as environmentalists, those opposed to nuclear power, the peace movement, and the women's movement (Inglehart and Rabier, 1986). Within this context, the traditional class-conflict was superseded by an ideological conflict often referred to as the *liberal-authoritarian* value cleavage (see Flanagan and Lee 2003 for an overview of how this cleavage is conceptualised).

One of the most profound consequences of the emergence of this cleavage has been its impact on the issue agenda. Although economic growth remains a salient issue, economic issues have shifted away from being position-issues that divide the population into different economic groups, to valence-issues that push the electorate toward or away from the party (or coalition) in power in response to upturns and downturns. At the same time, political polarisation

increasingly occurs on the "new politics" issues highlighted by the liberal-authoritarian cleavage, such as quality of life, the role of women, same-sex relationships, abortion, immigration, and the environment. Within this context, scholars began to consider the implications these changes would have for traditional left-right distinctions. Kitschelt and Hellemans (1990) argued that new political movements like ecologism break away from one-dimensional political discourse into a multidimensional space, supporting leftist non-market regimes of resource allocation, but not sharing the conventional left's fascination with economic production. In this respect, they suggest that the meaning of left and right, rather than disappearing, is being adapted to incorporate new politics issues. Similarly, Knutsen (1995) finds that traditional notions of left and right, rather than becoming irrelevant, persist while absorbing materialist/postmaterialist and authoritarian/liberal orientations.

In response to voters being increasingly moved by a variety of issues, political parties began to seek support not exclusively on the basis of identification with the social group whose interests they claim to represent, but also among other groups in society. Van der Brug (2010) tested the extent to which structural vs. new politics issues determine vote-choice and how their relative impact has changed across generations. Their analysis showed that voters do "get stuck in their ways" and maintain the attitudes developed during their formative years, so that the generations who came of age before the fall of the Berlin Wall would display higher levels of traditional structural voting, while the generations born thereafter are more influenced by the new politics agenda. But results also note that this pattern is not linear over time or across countries, and increases in ideological voting are sometimes followed by increases in structural voting. These differences are most likely due to changes at the supply side, so that elections fought more strongly in left-right terms engender a greater impact of these dimensions on vote-choice. For example, Grasso et al. (2017) found that young British voters who came of age under Conservative Prime Minister Thatcher displayed stronger preferences for right-wing economics than would be expected at their age, which persisted throughout adulthood and possibly explain the Labour party's right-wards shift under Tony Blair a decade later.

The studies cited above look at top-down processes whereby voters develop certain attitudes through the dominant narrative present when they come of political age. But a fundamental change occurred in the past few decades that has also been found to influence political

behaviours and opinions, is the unprecedented expansion of tertiary education. As the number of university graduates has more than doubled in under 20 years (Department for Education 2020), a growing body of academic research has sought to examine the extent to which this explains the growing relevance of the ideological age-gap and its impact on voting. In this view, value formation and their association on voting consist of bottom-up processes instead. The following section reviews this literature.

The link between education, values, and voting

As values appear to have become an increasingly relevant drive for political preferences, possibly at the expense of citizens' structural locations, it is important to understand not only the extent of their impact, but also how they are formed. Previous analyses have pointed to the role of education as a determinant of liberal-authoritarian values, with highly educated people more likely to espouse liberal values and less educated ones more likely to be authoritarian (e.g. Harrop and Miller, 1987; Hyman and Wright, 1979; van de Werfhorst and de Graaf, 2004). The recent growth of this divide has led several scholars to conceptualise it as an *education cleavage* whereby "high education, together with transferable skills, leads to universalistic-libertarian values… and support for left libertarian parties, while lack of education amplifies concerns about immigration, increases support for law and order programs based on traditional morality, and trigger support for authoritarian conservative or radical right-wing parties" (Enyedi 2008: 292). This division of cosmopolitan versus nationalist attitudes coincides in most European countries with the educational chasm. On one side of the conflict line are the more highly educated citizens who accept social and cultural heterogeneity and approve of multiculturalism. On the other side are citizens with low educational levels who are very critical of multiculturalism and who prefer a more homogeneous national culture (Bovens and Wille, 2017). This becomes politically relevant as nationalist parties draw large portions of the low- and medium-educated voters, while Green and social liberal parties attract voters from the upper end of the educational spectrum (Ford and Jennings, 2020).

There thus appears to be a clear pattern in the association between education and political values. Less clear, however, is why that is the case. One of the ways in which education is believed to foster more liberalism is known as the *socialisation model*, which maintains that the contact with

peers and educators through formal and informal interactions is a formative experience that instils a set of liberal values with a lasting impact (e.g. Stubager, 2008).

According to the *cognitive model*, on the other hand, more knowledgeable and cognitively sophisticated individuals tend to be more tolerant and therefore liberal. This is believed to be the case because, through education, individuals become aware of variety in the human race and are able to generalise across situations that deviate from their own lives (e.g. Weakliem, 2002). The socialisation and cognitive models both maintain that education has a direct effect on value formation, but there is also the possibility of education affecting values indirectly by contributing to the development of lifestyles that are more conducive to liberal values. This is the view held by the *allocation model*, whereby higher levels of education lead to better work prospects and living conditions, which in turn make individuals psychologically secure and less fearful of competition from outgroups. For example, Kriesi (1998) found that individuals employed in professional services have postmaterialist and socially liberal outlooks and support social-democratic economic policies, which brings them closer to new social movements and to the parties on the left. This echoes findings by Heath and Savage (1995), who reported that already in the 1980s, public sector professionals such as doctors had moved to the political left because of the marketisation of public services.

Besides promoting social liberalism, higher educational levels are normally associated with interest in politics and feelings of political efficacy, thereby making educated people more likely to actively participate in politics. However, as noted earlier, this connection might exist solely because education acts as a proxy for social class and cognitive ability (e.g. Egerton, 2002; Kam and Palmer, 2008; Lindgren et al., 2019). Yet this pattern does not seem to be particularly stable over time. For example, in the United Kingdom the 90s witnessed a decrease in differential abstention by social class (e.g. see Weakliem and Heath, 1999). However, class-based abstention rates seem to have re-emerged in recent years (e.g. see Evans and Tilley 2017, Heath 2018). Similarly, the relationship between the effect of education on voting preferences has also produced mixed results. While Marshall (2016) finds that extending the school leaving age by a year in 1947 made voters more likely of supporting the Conservative party as it raised salary prospects, recent elections witnessed graduates increasingly supporting the parties on the left (e.g. Heath and Goodwin, 2017; Jennings and Stoker, 2018; Cutts et al., 2020). This might be

attributable to the fact that, while education has often been found to promote socially liberal values, its impact on economic values is more ambiguous. In fact, in the Danish context, Stubager (2010) finds that as parties began to converge on economic positions, the effect of education on these attitudes has become trendless.

Research contribution

Departing from studies of the education-social liberalism linkage, this research also considers the association between education and economic attitudes. This is because while the education-social liberalism linkage is well-established, the one between education and economic liberalism sits in a more debated environment. For example, Weakliem (2002) finds that education is associated with more individualism and therefore opposition to high taxation and to bigger roles of the state in the economy. This is echoed by Gelepitis and Giani (2022) who conclude that while higher education seems to foster norms of inclusion, they erode norms of (economic) solidarity. Similarly, Scott (2022) finds that graduates appear more economically left-wing at 26, and more right-wing at 30, which is consistent with a lag in the graduate premium to earnings. Yet media commentators – as well as political figures – describe Millennials and the first cohorts of 'Generation Z' as overwhelmingly *socialist*. A notable example is the repositioning of *Teen Vogue*, the youth edition of the famous fashion magazine, away from the traditional fashion and celebrity gossip content towards increased political (left-wing) content. Some of the articles recently published in the magazine include:

- 'How I can critique capitalism — even on an iPhone', 1 May 2019
- 'Kshama Sawant: I'm a socialist taking on Amazon and a corporate onslaught in Seattle', 23 October 2019
- 'The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrates the failures of capitalism', 24 March 2020
- 'Socialist Feminism: What is it and how can it replace corporate "Girl Boss" feminism?', 5 May 2020
- 'Class solidarity: What it is and how you can engage in it', 2 June 2020
- 'How White Supremacy and capitalism influence beauty standards', 19 October 2020

Besides popular culture, the notion that younger generations increasingly hold left-wing economic attitudes was further remarked upon in prominent pieces in *The Economist* and *The New Statesman* which discussed the rise and implications of 'Millennial Socialism'. Survey

evidence also points to the predominance of left-wing attitudes across the youth. A recent report by the Institute of Economic Affairs found that the overwhelming majority of respondents aged 16-34 (N=2000) reported positive views of socialism, with 67% saying they would like to live in a socialist economic system (Niemietz 2021). As noted in the report:

> *"Young people associate 'socialism' predominantly with positive terms, such as 'workers', 'public', 'equal' and 'fair'. Very few associate it with 'failure' and virtually nobody associates it with Venezuela, the erstwhile showcase of '21st Century Socialism'. Capitalism, meanwhile, is predominantly associated with terms such as 'exploitative', 'unfair', 'the rich' and 'corporations'."*
> (Kristian Niemietz, July 2021, *Left Turn Ahead: Surveying Attitudes of Young People Towards Capitalism and Socialism*, Institute of Economic Affairs)

Yet the degree to which these views are entrenched in the political outlook of younger generations is questionable. In fact, the report goes on to note that:

> *"Socialist ideas are widespread, but they are also thinly spread. When presented with an anti-capitalist statement, the vast majority of young people agree with it (in our survey, this was true of every single anticapitalist statement, without exception). However, when presented with a diametrically opposed pro-capitalist statement, we often find net approval for that statement too. This suggests that when young people embrace a socialist argument, this is often not a deeply-held conviction. It may simply be the argument they are most familiar with."*
> (Kristian Niemietz, July 2021, *Left Turn Ahead: Surveying Attitudes of Young People Towards Capitalism and Socialism*, Institute of Economic Affairs)

The latter point is especially relevant within the context of growing accusations towards universities for being spaces that promote "woke" and "anti-capitalist" sentiments (e.g. Torres, 2020), despite evidence showing that the distribution of academics' political views does not differ from that of professionals in other industries (van de Werfhorst, 2019). The education-values linkage and its effect on voting is therefore a particularly relevant research subject, especially considering that the number of people completing higher education has steadily increased over the past decades, with the ONS reporting that while in 2002 the number of graduates across the population aged 21-64 stood at 24%, this figure rose to 42% in 2017, and now possibly exceeds

50% (Department of Education 2020). There is thus reason to believe that education has had a differential impact on the political preferences of different age cohorts over the years, and the remainder of this chapter will attempt to shed light into this by assessing (1) the extent to which attitudes and values have shifted over the years, (2) the impact of education on value change, and (3) the relative impact of values and education on vote choice.

Answers to these questions fill important lacunae in the literature. While several authors have attempted to unpack the link between education and social liberalism (e.g. Stubager, 2008; Surridge, 2016; Cavaille and Marshall, 2018) as well as between education and economic attitudes (Scott 2022; Simon 2022), studies that also considers their relative impact on voting preferences are scarce. One such example is from Stubager (2013), who sought to address the relationship between education, authoritarian-libertarian values and voting in Denmark, and concluded that education leads to the formation of education-based identity and authoritarian-libertarian values, but it does not have much of a role on economic values. Their research also shows that voting preferences reflect the positions of parties on the authoritarian-libertarian dimension, so that highly educated respondents prefer the Social Liberals, while low educated respondents display stronger affiliations with the populist-right Danish People's Party. In the UK, similar research has been undertaken by Simon (2021), who tests the education-values effects on the 2016 EU membership referendum, as well as the 2017 and 2019 General Election, and finds that the education effect on voting is largely mediated by cultural and economic values. This chapter adds to this research in two ways. First, it covers a period of three-decades to determine whether the relationship between education and values, as well as their impact on voting, has changed over the years and across generations. As noted in earlier sections, higher education has traditionally been associated with socially liberal and economic right-wing attitudes. Yet the expansion of higher education for recent generations has coincided with increases in authoritarianism as well as conflicting positions on economic attitudes, suggesting that the trend may not be as linear as originally hypothesised.

Second, it evaluates the relative impact of economic left-right values and social liberal-authoritarian values on voting to examine the extent to which they influence the political preferences and behaviour of different age groups, as well as whether certain values exert a stronger influence than others.

Hypotheses

Drawing from the literature on value-change and generational replacement, it can be expected that young people in Britain will display a higher propensity for socially liberal values (namely those associated with greater tolerance for diversity) than older generations. As the parties on the Left have been found to incorporate these values, it can also be expected that younger generations will show support for left-wing economic values. However, the generational gap is expected to decrease in magnitude as older generations die off and are replaced by younger and more liberal ones. Therefore, the first hypothesis to be tested states that:

H1 – *Young Britons are more likely to hold socially liberal and economically left-wing values than their older counterparts, but the gap is narrowing as new generations replace older ones.*

Previous literature has further highlighted that socially liberal values are linked to higher levels of education. Education is believed to foster progressive values through a process of socialisation whereby young students come into contact with different viewpoints and cultures, as well as develop the cognitive skills necessary to understand and accept them, which makes them more tolerant and outward-looking. Yet the degree to which higher education fosters value-change has been questioned in recent years, and the association appears to be less robust than was previously thought. This may be due to the expansion of higher education, which is now less selective, resulting in decreased differences across graduates and non-graduates. In this respect, the second hypothesis to be tested states that:

H2 – *Education is associated with value-change but the association is less strong for more recent generations.*

Although in recent years highly educated individuals have reportedly supported the parties on the Left, this effect has been found to probably stem from the values that were formed during their educational experiences (e.g. see Stubager 2008; Simon 2021), rather than education *per se*. Similarly, when it comes to economic values, these are likely to stem from the improved career opportunities and higher salaries that result from education. Therefore, it can be expected that

the association between education and voting is mediated by the social and economic values that stem from education. In this view, the third hypothesis to be examined states that:

H3 – *Values suppress the effect of education on vote-choice.*

Following up from the hypotheses above, it can also be expected that it is specifically differences in education levels and value positions across older and younger generations that motivate the age gap in voting. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis to be investigated maintains that:

H4 – *Values and education absorb the effect of the age gap on vote-choice*

Data and methods

In order to test these hypotheses, I combine data from the British Election Study (BES) post-election surveys from 1964 to 2019. However, consistent data on values only becomes available since 1987. While there are other, possibly more extensive, datasets measuring value-change in the United Kingdom (e.g. the British Social Attitudes survey), the main outcome I am interested in examining are changes in voting preferences, and the BES is best placed to do this as it contains the highest quality electoral data for the United Kingdom. Surveys are conducted just after the election, ensuring that vote recall is at its most accurate (e.g. see Johns and Heath 2010).

Vote-choice is measured through questions asking respondents which party they voted for in the most recent general election. As the availability of parties has changed over the years and differs across areas, these questions were recoded into a variable with the following response options: "Did not vote", "Conservative", "Labour", "Liberal Democrats", "Other party".

Age is measured as a continuous scale but also as three categories: under 35, 36-59, over 60. This choice is informed by the changing patterns of higher education take-up rates, as well as the attempt to capture voters' formative election years. As voters stabilise their behaviour after roughly three elections (Butler and Stokes 1974), setting the cut-off at 35 allows to create a group with more stable voting patterns and make more meaningful overtime comparisons.

Generations can and have been conceptualised in various ways, and a great deal of research has been undertaken to determine what makes a generation (e.g. see Grasso 2016; Garcia-Albacete 2014). As this study is interested in the intersection between society's structural changes and political attitudes, I have decided to examine the four generations that are commonly understood as the prevalent generations in society today: Pre-war (born before 1944), Baby-boom (born between 1945-1959), Generation X (born between 1960-1979), and Millennial (born after 1980). While political generations may differ from these, and there may be variance in the political attitudes of certain groups within each of these, the choice to use *social* rather than *political* generations stems from the nature of the research; this chapter is interested in the effect of the expansion of higher education on attitudes and voting, thus having generations that roughly correspond to 20-year birth cohorts allows to better compare the effect of changes in education participation, vis-à-vis value development and political behaviour. Using these four generations seems the most straightforward and universally understood way of doing so – as further evidenced by research carried out by the Pew Research Center, who adopted the same unit of analysis for their generational studies. While the four groups are not all equal in size (younger people tend to have lower survey response rates, and there are therefore fewer Millennials than the other cohorts in the data), any missing data was replaced with multiple imputation (described later) to increase results robustness. Moreover, the analysis was repeated shifting the cut-off birth years and the results were always the same, suggesting that the chosen measure is robust enough to ensure precise estimates.

The two value dimensions are measured by a number of indicators that have now become the standard measure of social and economic liberalism in the UK (e.g. see Evans et al., 1996; Surrdige 2016). The economic dimension concerns issues of distribution, public ownership and the balance of power between employees and employers, while the social dimension covers issues of personal freedom and authority. Following this conceptualisation, in this study left-right values are measured as a factor of three survey items asking respondents (1) whether there is a different law for the rich and the poor, (2) whether ordinary people get their fair share of the country's wealth, and (3) whether wealth should be redistributed. Liberal-authoritarian values, on the other hand, encapsulate positions ranging from deference to autonomy, from order and obedience to independence and self-determination, and from self-denial and strict moral codes

to self-indulgence and realisation (Flanagan and Lee, 2003). In this study, liberal-authoritarian values are thus measured as a factor of four survey items asking respondents (1) whether they think criminals should be given stiffer sentences, (2) whether the death penalty should be brought back for some crimes, (3) whether young people don't have enough respect for traditional values, and (4) whether censorship is necessary to uphold moral standards. These measures do not cover several important aspects where opinion is increasingly divided along age lines, such as attitudes towards gender and sexuality or environmental protection. However, the main focus of this study is to assess how attitudes have shifted across generations, and it is therefore crucial to use items that have been measured consistently throughout the period studied. For both value dimensions, data availability limits the number of indicators that can be used. For example, questions on gender and sexuality, or on the environment, were not asked in most of the survey years. However, the included indicators all scale well (see factor analysis results in Appendix B), which suggests that they are suitable indicators of broader ideological dimensions.

Education is measured by the survey questions asking respondents to indicate the highest level of education they have achieved. As qualifications have changed over time, for convenience responses to these questions were recoded into four categories: (1) no qualifications, (2) pre-16 qualifications (corresponding to today's GCSEs), (3) post-16 qualifications (corresponding to today's A-levels), (4) degree or other professional qualifications equivalent to a degree (e.g. for nursing).

Affluence is measured through income. Including income in the analyses allows to test for possible allocation effects, as well as to control for the well-established association between higher incomes and Conservative voting (e.g. Marshall, 2016; Afonso, 2015). To ensure consistency across the years, this is coded in quintiles.

Multiple imputation of missing data

Unfortunately, not all demographic and attitudinal questions were asked in every post-election survey or to the entire sample. Moreover, younger generations have a much smaller sample size than older ones. An overview of the missing data is presented in Appendix B. Because missing data and uneven sample sizes could affect the robustness of the results, missing data is replaced

by multiple imputation. The method chosen to impute data is that described by Royston (2004, 2005), who proposed the use of iterative chained equations (ICE) to create a series of alternative datasets constructed with the information available. The analysis is run on a combination of these to then average parameters to single estimates. The number of datasets that need to be constructed depends on the amount of missing data. Here, the variable with the most missingness are the value scales, with just over 50% of data unavailable. This is because several of the questions included in the values indicators were not asked in certain years or were only asked to a subset of the sample in others. Therefore, it is recommended to impute at least 10 alternative datasets in order to achieve results that are at least 95% efficient (e.g. see Rubin 1987; Royston 2004, 2005).

Modelling strategy

To test H1 and H2, namely the extent to which young people are more socially liberal and economically left-wing than other age groups and the extent to which this differs by educational background, I first compute changes in left-right and liberal-authoritarian values by age and education over the 1987-2019 period. As a main purpose of this study is to assess how positions on these two-value scales have changed over the years, along with the relative impact of education in driving these changes, I also look for differences between political generations through a series of multilevel models. The data is thus viewed as having a two-level structure where individuals at level 1 are nested within generations at level 2. Effects are split into two components corresponding to the two levels in the data structure: group random effects and the individual random effects. I then extend the model to introduce a level 2 predictor: education. As I am interested in testing whether education has impacted values development differently for different cohorts, these models allow the slope of education to vary randomly across groups.

To test H3 and H4, namely whether values mediate the effect of education on vote-choice and whether values and education mediate the age-gap on vote-choice, I run a series of nested multinomial logistic regression models. This approach follows previous research by Stubager (2008, 2013) and Surridge (2016) into the link between liberalism, education, and voting. Both authors investigate this by using a series of regression models adding variables in a causal order, i.e. based on their occurrence in time. The first nested block therefore only includes demographic characteristics (age interacted with election year); the second block adds education; the third

block adds income; the fourth adds left-right values; the fifth and final block adds liberal-authoritarian values. If education has an allocative effect through income, we should expect the effect of education to significantly decrease as we control for income in Model 3. Similarly, if education has a socialising effect on value-development, we should expect the effect of education to significantly decrease or disappear altogether as we introduce the value scales in the analysis. Moreover, we should also expect the age-year interaction to decrease across models to account for these explanatory factors reducing the age gap on voting preferences. I examine whether the impact of education and of the two value scales on vote-choice has changed over the years. The natural-seeming way of doing so would be to run a random slope model as in the analysis above, thereby allowing the effect of values and education to vary by election years. However, as the outcome is now nominal, this would require a multinomial multilevel model that would be computationally challenging. A simpler way of doing this is to calculate the marginal effects of education and values on vote-choice for each election year and compare these to identify any overtime patterns.

To check results robustness and rule out the possibility that these effects derive from the nature of the multinomial model, which has the Conservative vote set as the reference category against which all other voting options are measured, I also run a series of logistic models with the party vote against all other options, rather than just Conservative voting, as outcome. A comparison of the coefficients between these multinomial and logistic models is reported in Appendix B.

Results

Education and values

Figure 1 plots the adjusted predictions of age on value positions for the period 1987-2019. On the left panel are left-right economic values, where (by convention) scores below 0 indicate positions on the left, while scores above 0 indicate positions on the right. On the right panel are liberal-authoritarian values, where scores below 0 indicate liberal positions and score above 0 indicate authoritarian positions.

Regarding left-right values, the graph shows that left-wing economic attitudes peaked in 1997 – the advent of the Blair governments – but moved back to the centre thereafter (see also Bartle et al. 2011). Both the young and middle-aged groups appear to have experienced another shift to

the left since 2010, but this is less pronounced than the 1997 shift. The over 60, on the other hand, maintain positions on the right across the period, but have also approached the centre in recent years. Shifts in liberal-authoritarian values, on the other hand, follow expectations. The younger groups are the most liberal, but all groups appear to have liberalised over the years, with the most dramatic change evidenced by the over 60, which lends some support to the notion that the age-gap on sociocultural values – while relatively stable in magnitude – displays a consistent trend towards more liberal position as younger, liberal cohorts replace older, authoritarian ones. That is, while there is still a gap between the sociocultural attitudes of the under 35 versus those of the over 60s, since the late 2010s both groups are located the liberal end of the spectrum and only appear to become *more liberal* with time. At the same time, the graph suggests that value-change is note solely a process brought about by generational replacement, as evidenced by the contraction of the gap between 1997 and 2010.

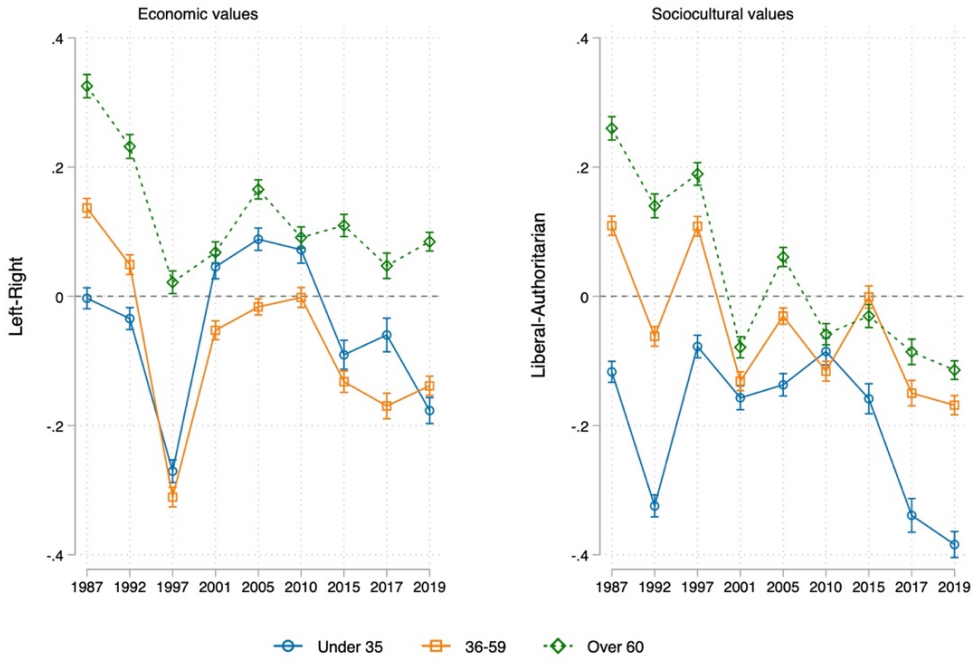


Figure 1 – Adjusted predictions of age on ideological dimensions (with demographic controls)

A similar contraction is evident on economic values, and coincides with the period of Labour governance under Blair's New Labour. These shifts suggest possible period effects whereby the ideological attitudes included in the two dimensions, were not politicised to the same extent as they were in the periods before and after New Labour. That is, as the Labour government moved to more centrist positions, value divides shrunk accordingly. Later analysis will show that the

impact the two value dimensions have on voting also shrunk in the same period, feeding into the notion that voting affects values more so than values affect voting. Therefore, the increasing liberalisation across all age groups raises questions over the extent to which the growing age-gap in party support can be attributed to value-change, as will be examined in more detail later.

Figure 2 displays the same information by educational levels. Regarding left-right values, in the earlier part of the period higher levels of education used to be associated with right-wing positions. However, these shifted to the left in 1997, coinciding with the rise of New Labour. Since then, differences on economic position by education became largely indistinguishable and remain around the centre.

Liberal-authoritarian values, on the other hand, display large and significant differences by education across the entirety of the period. People with a degree are significantly more likely to hold liberal positions than people with qualifications below the degree level. At the same time, the trend shows significant over time variation, suggesting that education is an important predictor of sociocultural values, but that this association might take different forms across cohorts.

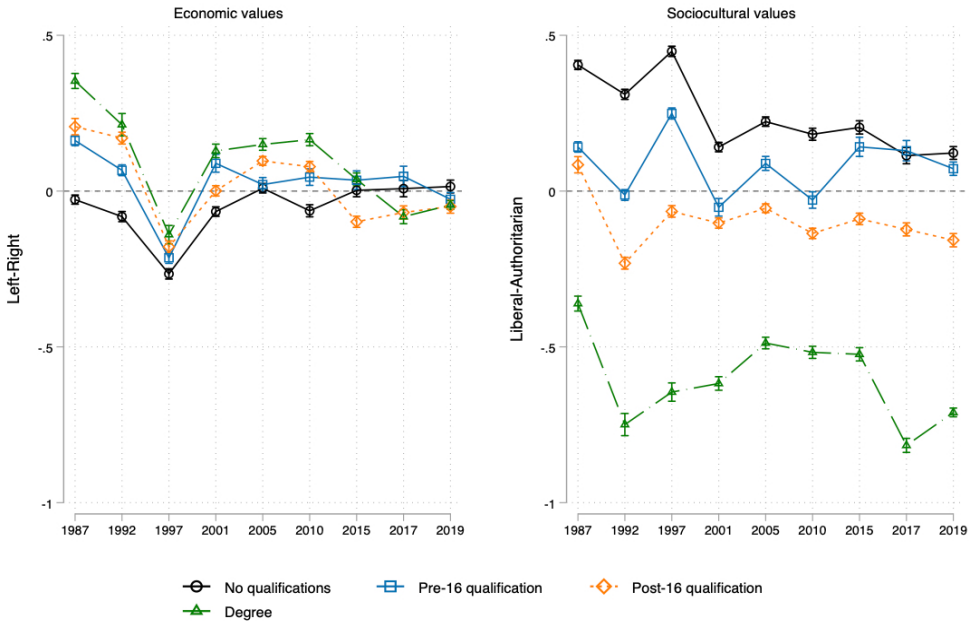
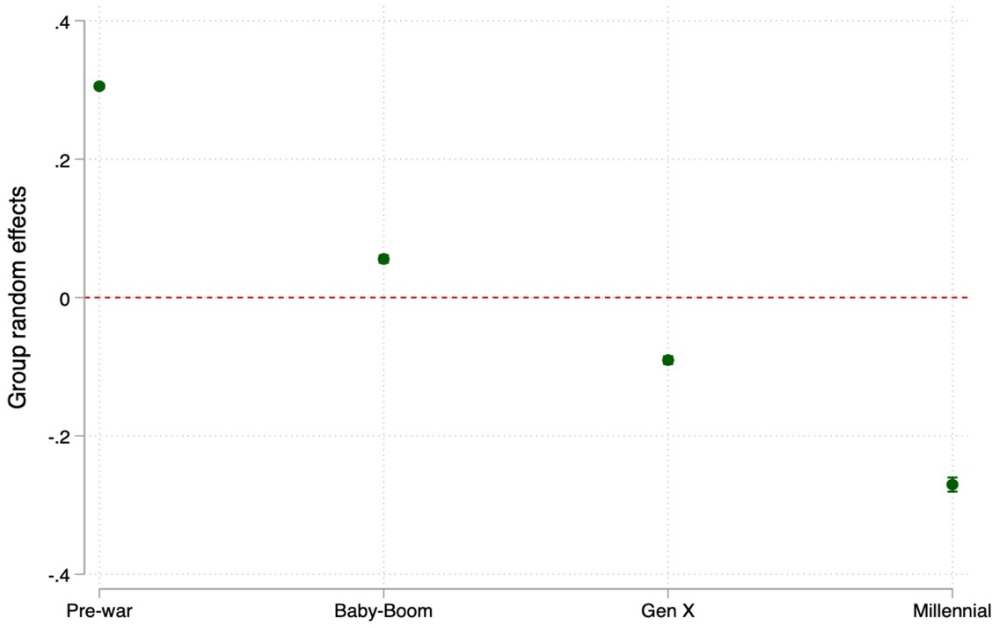


Figure 2 – Marginal effects of education on ideological dimensions (with demographic controls)

To examine cohort differences in a bit more detail, we now turn to the results from a series of multilevel models, where individuals at level 1 are nested within generations at level 2. Figure 3 displays random group effects in the mean of liberal-authoritarian values for the four political generations. The random effects represent generations' departure from the overall mean, so a generation whose confidence interval does not overlap the line at zero (which represents the mean liberal-authoritarian value across all generations) is significantly different from the average at the 5% level.

Recalling that negative values indicate liberal positions, the plot confirms that cohorts have become significantly more liberal over the years. The Pre-war and Baby-Boom generations have a mean value above average (more authoritarian); whereas Generation X and Millennials have a mean value below-average (more liberal). The next step is to examine how much of this change is a product of education.

Figure 3 – Caterpillar plot of cohort random effects and 95% confidence intervals for changes in liberal-authoritarian values

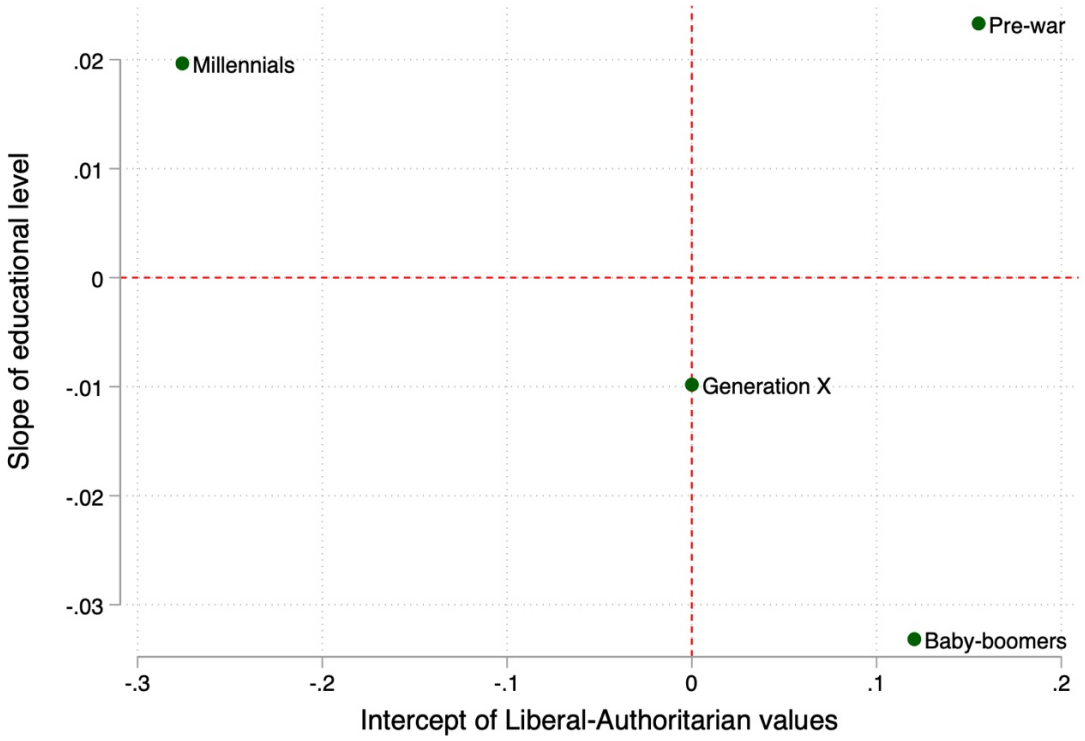


Note: unranked shrunken residuals from a multilevel regression model examining group effects in the mean of liberal-authoritarian values

Figure 4 plots the intercept and slope results from the random slope model where the effect of education on the development of liberal values is allowed to vary by generation. The negative

covariance (σ=–0.272) indicates that higher levels of education are associated with lower scores on the liberal-authoritarian value scale, and therefore with more liberal attitudes. But this relationship is not the same for every cohort, as documented by the intercept and slope residuals in the figure. Cohorts around the intersection have prediction lines close to the overall average, i.e. with an average liberal value score at mean education (the intercept) and average effect of education (the slope). At the bottom right of the plot, Baby Boomers have positive intercept but negative slope residuals, and they therefore have above-average intercept for liberal-authoritarian values (i.e. more authoritarian) but steeper-than-average negative slope for education (i.e. stronger liberalising effect of education). This means that this cohort is somewhat more authoritarian than average, but that there are pronounced differences by level of education.

Figure 4 – Random slope model for the relationship between liberal-authoritarian values and education

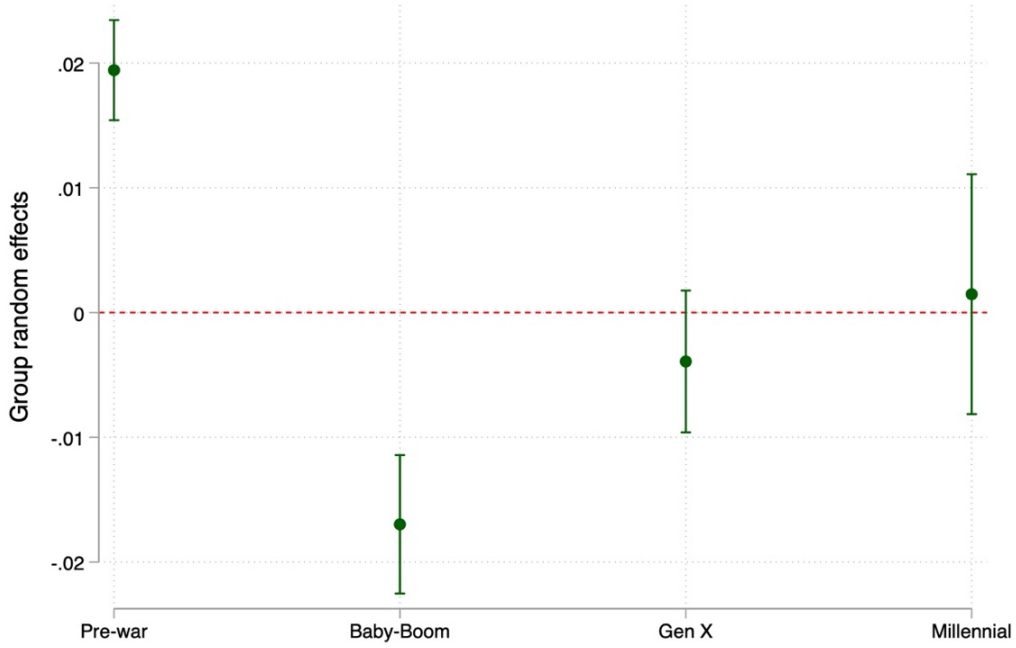


By contrast, the most recent cohort in the top left of the plot, Millennials, have below-average intercept and flatter-than-average negative effect of education, meaning that they are on average more liberal but this does not vary as much by level of education. This suggests that the liberalising effect of education has become weaker for cohorts who already have above-average liberal values, Millennials (whose rate of graduates is the highest), and was also weaker for the

Pre-War generation (whose rate of graduates is the lowest), while it was particularly strong for Generation X, and even more so for Baby Boomers.

The implication deriving form this is that education has become less important over time in terms of shaping values within cohorts, and with the expansion of higher education, education-based value differences have diminished rather than increased. Recent research has highlighted how university graduates have distinctive social identities, values and interests, so the dramatic expansion of higher education is thought to be driving an ongoing compositional shift in the electorate with the potential to create new cleavages and party alignments (e.g. Ford and Jennings, 2020). Yet the fact that the liberalising effect of education appears to have diminished for recent cohorts raises questions over the extent to which education will continue to represent the basis of a new cleavage in voting behaviour. As the most liberal generation to date, it may be that Millennials experience a ceiling effect on liberalism, resulting in education being somewhat irrelevant for value formation. Moreover, as hypothesised earlier, the weakening of the 'education effect' may be due to the expansion of higher education, which has become much more inclusive in terms of selection than it was for previous generations, resulting in decreased differences across graduates and non-graduates, as well as a reduction in the graduate-earning premium. In fact, while government figures reported that graduates continue to earn £10,000 more than non-graduates on average (Department for Education 2019), a study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies reported that this graduate premium varies greatly by socio-economic background, with people from poorer backgrounds and state schools still having comparatively lower earnings than wealthier and privately educated graduates (Crawford and Van der Erve 2015).

Figure 6 – Caterpillar plot of cohort random effects and 95% confidence intervals for changes in left-right values



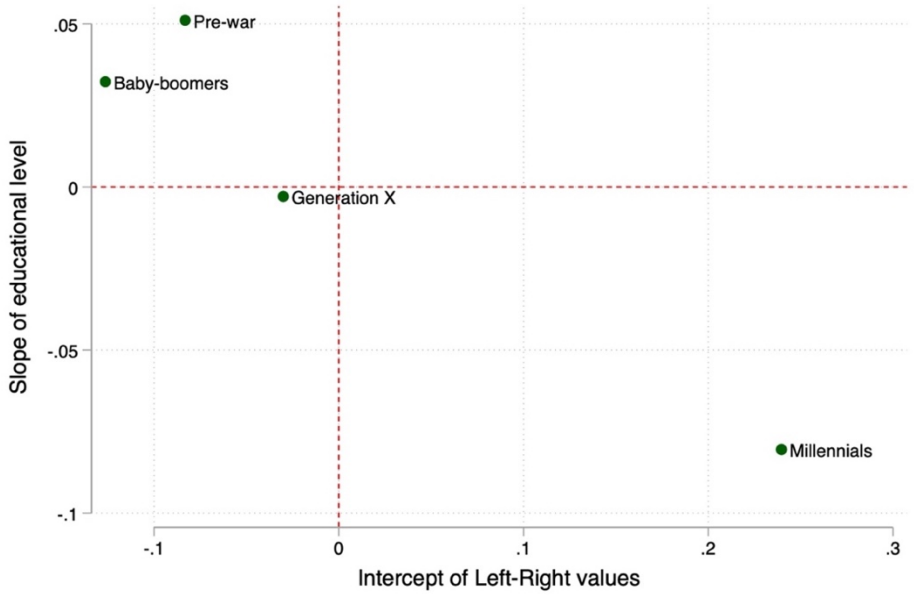
Note: unranked shrunken residuals from a multilevel regression model examining group differences in the mean of left-right values.

Results are rather different when looking at left-right economic values. Figure 6 plots cohort residuals for the economic attitudes scale. Here too random effects represent generations' departure from the overall mean, so a generation whose confidence interval does not overlap the line at zero (representing the mean left-right value across all cohorts) is said to differ significantly from the average at the 5% level. Generations do not seem to follow a linear path as with liberal-authoritarian values, and the Generation X and Millennials cohorts' intervals do not differ significantly from the mean. Therefore, contrary to liberal-authoritarian values, for left-right values there is little between-cohort variance, and there isn't a clear over time pattern in any direction.

What about the effect of education? Figure 7 plots the intercept and slope residuals from the random slope model for the relationship between left-right values and education, with the effect of education allowed to vary for each generation. The negative covariance (σ=–0.023) indicates that higher educational levels are associated with positions closer to the centre-left. But, as with sociocultural values, the intercept and slope residuals suggest this pattern is not uniform across generations. Education seems to have the strongest liberalising effect on economic attitudes (i.e.

more right-wing) for the two oldest generations – Pre-war and Baby-Boom – who displayed right-wing economic values at average education slightly below average (i.e. closer to the left), but for whom the positive slope of education is steeper than average.

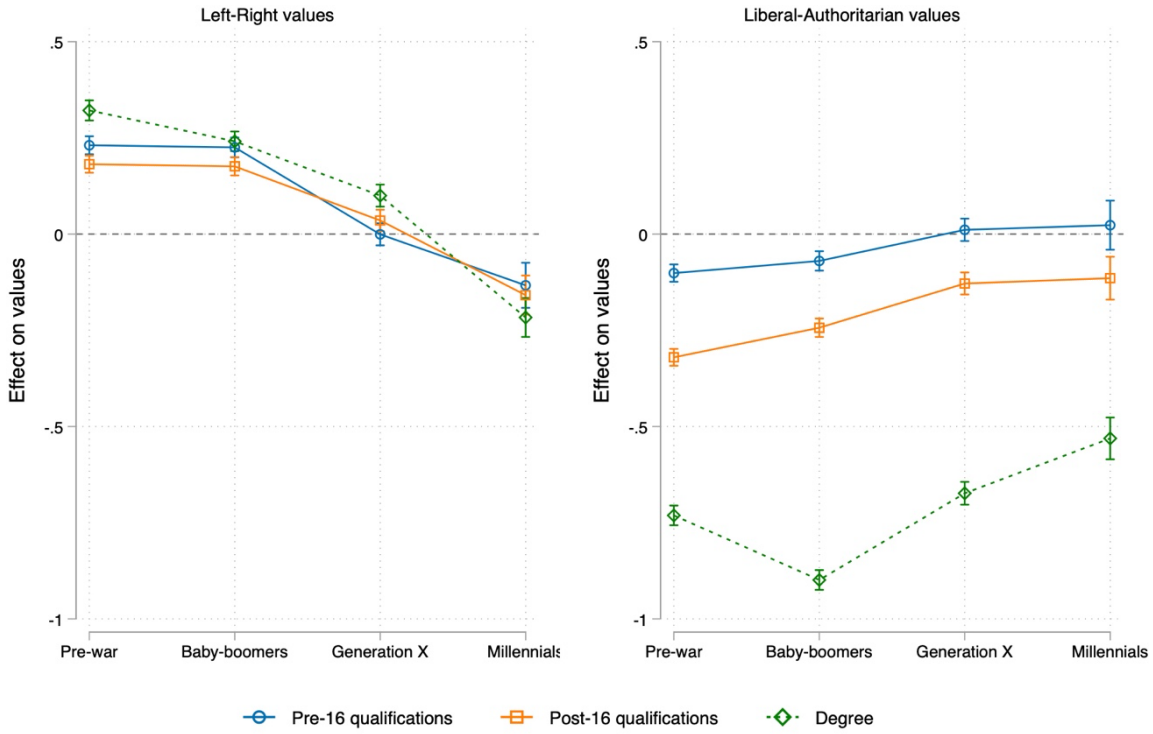
Figure 7 – Random slope model for the relationship between left-right values and education



Generation X follows the average trend on both measures. Millennials, on the other hand, are the cohort for whom education exerts the weakest effect (i.e., is associated with less economic liberalism), and they display average mean economic values at mean education much closer to the centre-right than the previous three generations.

Figure 7b summarises these findings. The plot on the left indicates that economic attitudes do not vary significantly across different education levels above 'no qualifications', but also that the positive effect of education on right-wing attitudes turns into a negative effect with Millennials. That is, controlling for education fixed-effects, Millennials who hold some educational qualifications are on average *more left-leaning* than previous generations with similar qualifications. Therefore, if on the one hand for previous generation, increased education would signify stronger right-wing economic attitudes, this association no longer seems to exist for Millennials – a finding that may be attributable to the unprecedented expansion of higher education which resulted in decreased graduate/non-graduate differences, as evidenced by the decreased economic returns that Millennials experience relative to previous generations with similar qualifications (Pew Research Centre 2018; Cribb 2019).

Figure 7b – Marginal effects of education on economic and sociocultural values



Sociocultural attitudes, on the other hand, display large graduate/non-graduate variation, yet here too the liberalising effect of education for Millennials is almost half the size it was for Baby-Boomers – whom, recall, experienced the strongest education effect on values. Therefore, as levels of education increase from one generation to the next, education-based value differences seem to *decrease*.

Recalling that the two hypotheses being tested in this first part of the analysis were:

H1 – *Young Britons are more likely to hold socially liberal and economically left-wing values than their older counterparts, but the gap is narrowing as new generations replace older ones.*

H2 – *Education is associated with value-change but the association is less strong for more recent generations.*

Results suggest that H1 is confirmed insofar as there is a gap on both dimension, with younger generations more socially liberal and more economically left-wing – although on this latter aspect the association is less stable. Moreover, while the gap on sociocultural values is associated with higher education, the one on economic values does not seem to depend on changing education levels. H2 is also confirmed insofar as the liberalising effect of education on both dimension is weakest for the most recent generations, suggesting that as the take-up of higher education increases, education-based difference decrease.

The following section assesses the implications this has for the age gap in voting behaviour.

The age gap in voting by education and values

The next part of the analysis tests the relative impact values and education have had on vote-choice over the 1987-2019 period and the extent to which they shape the magnitude of the political age gap between support for the Conservatives and Labour over time. As outlined in the Methods section, this is done through a series of nested multinomial logistic regression models with reported voting behaviour in the most recent general election as the dependent variable (where the Conservative vote is set as reference category), and age cohort, election year and an interaction between election year and age cohort as the main independent variables.

Model 1 tests the idea that the age gap in political support has increased since the 1980s, including just age cohort, election year and an interaction between age cohort and election year as the independent variables. Model 2 adds education levels to the covariates, thus testing the extent to which education explains age differences in partisanship. Model 3 adds income to test how much of the education effect is in fact an effect of the financial returns of education. Model 4 and 5 add the left-right and liberal-authoritarian value scales respectively to examine the extent to which these explain the education effect.

Table 1 – Multinomial logistic regression models explaining vote choice[4]

Conservative vote (reference)	Model 1 Age and years	Model 2 Education	Model 3 Income	Model 4 Left-right values	Model 5 Liberal-authoritarian values
Labour					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.557***	0.889***	1.170***	0.987***	0.821***
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	0.386***	0.417***	0.436***	0.402***	0.340***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.037)
1997	0.875***	0.915***	0.986***	0.841***	0.808***
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.037)
2001	0.953***	0.974***	1.120***	1.024***	0.874***
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.036)
2005	0.581***	0.650***	0.733***	0.688***	0.595***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.035)
2010	0.330***	0.472***	0.587***	0.461***	0.304***
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.037)
2015	-0.002	0.159***	0.298***	0.181***	0.033
	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.039)
2017	0.113**	0.314***	0.465***	0.253***	0.065
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.039)
2019	-0.289***	-0.066*	0.026	-0.182***	-0.371***
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	-0.420***	-0.432***	-0.484***	-0.481***	-0.543***
	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.050)	(0.051)
Under 35 x 1997	0.088	0.096	0.014	-0.017	0.016
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.054)
Under 35 x 2001	-0.348***	-0.359***	-0.534***	-0.357***	-0.234***
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.054)
Under 35 x 2005	-0.079	-0.114*	-0.235***	-0.081	-0.009
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.053)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.191***	-0.294***	-0.494***	-0.285***	-0.130*
	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.057)
Under 35 x 2015	0.547***	0.428***	0.228***	0.307***	0.421***
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Under 35 x 2017	0.861***	0.698***	0.519***	0.732***	0.823***
	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.064)
Under 35 x 2019	0.856***	0.675***	0.487***	0.581***	0.657***
	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.054)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.706***	-0.587***	-0.487***	-0.548***
		(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Post-16 qualifications		-0.684***	-0.497***	-0.375***	-0.505***
		(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Degree		-0.655***	-0.338***	-0.158***	-0.483***

[4] Results for choosing other parties are omitted from the table because they are not particularly informative. This category contains parties that are markedly at odds in both their policy offerings and platforms, such as the Green Party and UKIP, or parties with nationalist agendas, such as Plaid Cymru and the SNP. Moreover, because of the nature of the British electoral system, their electoral relevance is rather minor compared to that of larger parties, and thus not the focus of this research. However, a comparison of the coefficients from the multinomial models reported here and logistic models that include the 'Other party' option is reported in Appendix B.

		(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.254***	-0.163***	-0.158***
			(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
3rd quintile			-0.584***	-0.374***	-0.394***
			(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)
4th quintile			-0.717***	-0.405***	-0.451***
			(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
5th quintile			-0.996***	-0.509***	-0.601***
			(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)
Left-right values				-0.911***	-0.925***
				(0.007)	(0.007)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.449***
					(0.007)
_cons	-0.569***	-0.332***	-0.159***	-0.246***	0.044
	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.029)
Liberal Democrats					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.256***	0.233***	0.373***	0.195***	0.027
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	-0.508***	-0.458***	-0.446***	-0.501***	-0.574***
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.043)
1997	-0.099*	-0.059	-0.029	-0.186***	-0.227***
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.042)
2001	-0.186***	-0.214***	-0.155***	-0.293***	-0.450***
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)
2005	-0.054	-0.089*	-0.053	-0.163***	-0.259***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.038)
2010	-0.239***	-0.301***	-0.248***	-0.409***	-0.580***
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.040)
2015	-0.969***	-1.034***	-0.971***	-1.124***	-1.289***
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.048)
2017	-1.488***	-1.569***	-1.501***	-1.734***	-1.950***
	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.057)
2019	-0.732***	-0.882***	-0.846***	-1.071***	-1.281***
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	0.125*	0.122*	0.093	0.109	0.046
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Under 35 x 1997	0.340***	0.308***	0.270***	0.268***	0.304***
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Under 35 x 2001	0.302***	0.255***	0.178**	0.342***	0.460***
	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.063)
Under 35 x 2005	0.381***	0.336***	0.280***	0.434***	0.503***
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Under 35 x 2010	0.395***	0.346***	0.248***	0.439***	0.599***
	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Under 35 x 2015	-0.315**	-0.381***	-0.472***	-0.381***	-0.260**
	(0.096)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Under 35 x 2017	0.880***	0.806***	0.725***	0.919***	1.022***
	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.094)
Under 35 x 2019	0.247***	0.197**	0.106	0.208**	0.291***
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.065)	(0.066)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.062**	-0.011	0.075**	0.008
		(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Post-16 qualifications		0.043	0.124***	0.231***	0.094***

		(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)
Degree		0.503***	0.655***	0.814***	0.480***
		(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.114***	-0.031	-0.025
			(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
3rd quintile			-0.201***	-0.026	-0.045
			(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)
4th quintile			-0.308***	-0.055*	-0.103***
			(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.027)
5th quintile			-0.534***	-0.149***	-0.243***
			(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Left-right values				-0.683***	-0.691***
				(0.008)	(0.009)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.468***
					(0.008)
_cons	-0.682***	-0.750***	-0.668***	-0.633***	-0.329***
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.030)
Did not vote					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.665***	1.059***	1.430***	1.305***	1.259***
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	-0.034	-0.017	0.018	-0.024	-0.049
	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)
1997	0.478***	0.509***	0.623***	0.505***	0.491***
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.044)
2001	0.730***	0.774***	0.989***	0.880***	0.817***
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)
2005	0.579***	0.684***	0.802***	0.708***	0.670***
	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)
2010	0.323***	0.528***	0.697***	0.569***	0.499***
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)
2015	0.199***	0.429***	0.637***	0.531***	0.469***
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.044)
2017	-0.199***	0.089	0.311***	0.145**	0.063
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.048)
2019	0.069	0.417***	0.559***	0.398***	0.326***
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	-0.053	-0.065	-0.138*	-0.135*	-0.183**
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Under 35 x 1997	0.906***	0.942***	0.809***	0.799***	0.796***
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Under 35 x 2001	0.679***	0.719***	0.464***	0.576***	0.610***
	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.059)
Under 35 x 2005	0.976***	0.988***	0.818***	0.928***	0.941***
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Under 35 x 2010	0.743***	0.688***	0.414***	0.551***	0.602***
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)
Under 35 x 2015	1.415***	1.354***	1.073***	1.122***	1.151***
	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Under 35 x 2017	1.577***	1.475***	1.226***	1.343***	1.366***
	(0.067)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.070)
Under 35 x 2019	0.867***	0.745***	0.488***	0.551***	0.558***
	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.725***	-0.564***	-0.498***	-0.529***

		(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Post-16 qualifications		-0.845***	-0.596***	-0.519***	-0.573***
		(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Degree		-1.222***	-0.814***	-0.702***	-0.831***
		(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.458***	-0.400***	-0.403***
			(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
3rd quintile			-0.796***	-0.667***	-0.684***
			(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)
4th quintile			-1.018***	-0.833***	-0.864***
			(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)
5th quintile			-1.238***	-0.956***	-1.006***
			(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Left-right values				-0.490***	-0.496***
				(0.007)	(0.007)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.201***
					(0.008)
_cons	-1.170***	-0.886***	-0.650***	-0.578***	-0.435***
	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)
Log-likelihood	-287417.41	-283690.33	-281527.04	-270714.76	-267937.71
Pseudo R2	0.045	0.057	0.0641	0.1000	0.1093
N	201964	201964	201964	201964	201964

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data with missing values imputed with ICE (m=10)
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Starting with Labour, Model 1 shows that there has been a marked increase in the age-gap between Labour and Conservative support, particularly since 2015. The main coefficient for age corresponds to the baseline estimate of the age effect in 1987, and the coefficients for each of the interaction terms are the estimate of the election year increase (or decrease) in the magnitude of the age effect (see Evans and Tilley 2012 for a similar modelling approach for estimating the change in class voting in the UK). From the main effect of age we can see that the under 35 are significantly more likely to vote for Labour over the Conservative party. From the interaction effects we can see that in some of the years included in the analysis, individuals under 35 were significantly *less likely* to vote for Labour than the Conservative party than they were in the reference year of 1987. This was the case in 1992, 2001, and 2010, suggesting a relative decrease in popularity of the Labour party between the 1990s and early 2000s in the eyes of younger voters. This was reversed, however, since 2015, and the interaction coefficients were positive and particularly large in 2017 – reflecting the popularity of Jeremy Corbyn, Labour leader at the time, with voters aged under 35.

Model 2 controls for education. Overall – across the entire time period considered, all education levels above 'no qualifications' are associated with a decreased likelihood to vote Labour over Conservative. This may seem counter-intuitive, as the literature indicates that Labour have increasingly become the party of choice for graduates. Yet this is quite a recent phenomenon. And taken together, since 1987 graduates have tended to lean more to the Conservatives overall. However, given the changing nature of the relationship between education and vote choice, a better way to test the effect of education on the Labour vote would be to look at it across each election year, as will be done later.

Model 3 controls for income. As expected, people on higher incomes are significantly less likely than those on low incomes to vote Labour rather than Conservative. That is, the Conservative party is preferred by those on higher incomes. Although the magnitude of the age effects vary somewhat across Models 1 to 3, none of the differences are particularly pronounced. However, there is some evidence to suggest that controlling for income mediates some of the more recent age differences in political support. For example, we can see that the magnitude of the age interaction with 2019 decreases from b=0.675 in Model 2 to just b=0.487 in Model 3 when income is added to the analysis.

Models 4 and 5 control for left-right values and liberal-authoritarian values. From the main effects, as expected we can see that those on the right and those who hold authoritarian values are significantly less likely to vote Labour compared to Conservative. Controlling for these variables also reduces the magnitude of the main effect for age from b=1.170 in Model 3 to b=0.821 in Model 5. Thus part of the reason why young people in general are somewhat more likely than older people to vote Labour as opposed to Conservative is that they are more left-wing and more liberal; but this does not appear to explain change over time very well in a straightforward way. If it was simply the case that young people are more left wing and more liberal than previous generations, and nothing else had changed, then when these variables are included into the analysis age differences on the interaction terms should become less evident. However, this is not what we see. Somewhat against expectations, controlling for these values does little to explain the increased age-gap in political support over time, and the inclusion of these variables actually increases rather than decreases the interaction terms for age by election year since 2015 (cf model 5 to model 3).

Turning to the Liberal Democrats vote, Model 1 shows that people under 35 are more likely than those over 60 to vote Liberal rather than Conservative. In Model 5 the main effect for age decreases and is close to zero when the liberal-authoritarian value scale is added to the model, suggesting that one reason why young people in general are more likely than older people to vote Liberal rather than Conservative is because they hold more liberal values. However, here too the inclusion of these variables has little impact on the magnitude of the age by election year interactions, suggesting they are less well equipped to explain change over time. Education has large and positive effects on the Liberal Democrat vote, with individuals holding qualifications at the degree level significantly more likely to support the Liberal Democrats over the Conservatives than those lacking qualifications altogether. These effects remain relatively stable throughout the models, suggesting that the education effect on the Liberal Democrat vote is less dependent on economic returns and socio-cultural values than it is for other parties. This finding is not entirely surprising, as over the period examined the party's "sociological heartland" has been that of the educated middle classes (Sloman, 2020).

Lastly, turning to abstention, from Model 1 we can see that age has a significant and positive effect whereby the under 35 are more likely than the over 60 to abstain rather than to vote for the Conservative party. The interactions of age and the election years display large increases in magnitude compared to the reference category of 1987, suggesting that abstaining over voting Conservative has become increasingly likely for the under 35 over the years. These coefficients were particularly large at the 2015 and 2017 elections, and while these effects are partly suppressed by the introduction of education, income, and values, they remain large and significant across models.

Education has a large, negative effect for all levels above 'no qualifications', suggesting that higher educational levels are associated with a decreased likelihood to choose abstention over Conservative voting. However, the magnitude of these effects decreases across models, with the largest decrease triggered by the introduction of income in Model 3, indicating that allocation effects, rather than ideological attitudes, suppress some of the education effect on choosing the Conservative party over abstaining. Income has a negative effect for all levels above the first quintile, and this is largest for the higher quintiles. That is, individuals on higher incomes are

less likely to abstain than to vote Conservative, and this especially true for individuals on the highest incomes. The magnitude of this effect remains unchanged throughout the models for the lower quintiles, but is reduced by the introduction of the value scales for the higher incomes. This implies that income-based differences become less pronounced by values for those on higher incomes than lower ones. The left-right value scale has a negative effect, suggesting that higher right-wing values are associated with a decreased likelihood to abstain than vote Conservative. The effect is reinforced (from b=–0.490 to b=–0.496) by the introduction of liberal-authoritarian values – which also have a negative effect – indicating that economic attitudes remain an important predictor of Conservative voting even when accounting for liberal-authoritarian attitudes.

Overall, these findings have a number of important implications for understanding the education-gap (H3) and the age-gap in party support (H4). The changing association between education and values identified in earlier sections suggested that these two areas may be behind the widening partisan age-gap. A preliminary analysis was performed, which included only the age-year interaction, education, and the value scales. Surprisingly, results indicated the age-gap was largely unaffected by either education or values in the majority of election years, with coefficients remaining relatively stable across models. However, subsequent analyses added income to the covariates, which resulted in reductions (as well as some increases) of the age-year interactions in most election years. This suggests that the effects of education and values on the age-gap seem to be stemming from varying levels of affluence, as well as period effects. In this view, the age-gap may be driven by allocation effects to a larger extent than socialisation effects.

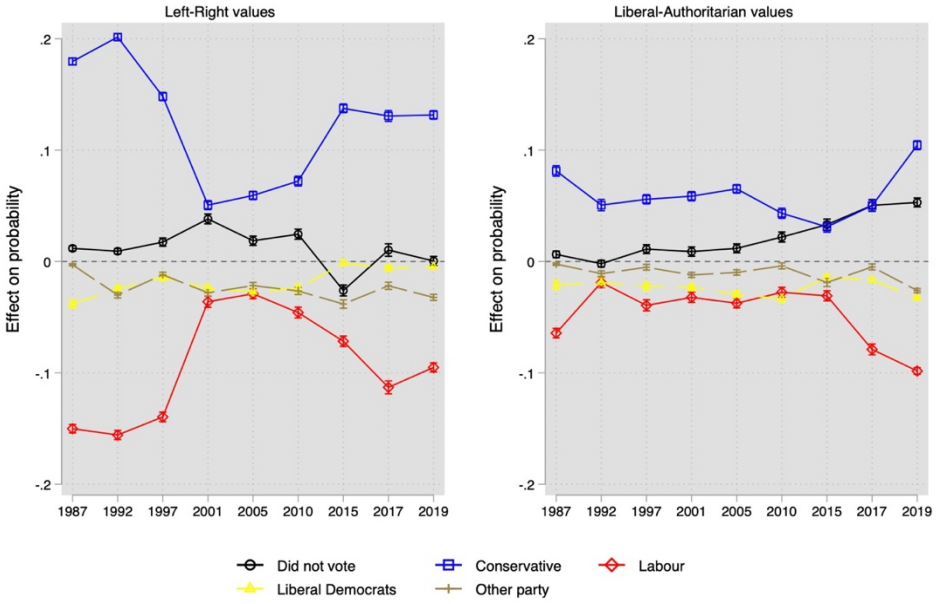
The modelling strategy employed so far essentially tested whether the increased political age divide is simply a consequence of compositional changes within the electorate, whereby young people have become more educated, liberal, and left-wing, with the effect of these variables on vote choice held constant. That is, liberals have always been more likely to vote Labour, and since young people are more liberal today than in previous cohorts – more of them vote for Labour. However, a crucial finding is that one couldn't attribute much of the over-time variation to compositional changes in the distribution of values across generations, as noted by the lack of significant changes in the magnitude of the interaction effects. What may have happened – and perhaps what is more important – is that the impact of these values on voting has changed. In

this view, the reason why young people vote Labour at a higher rate than before is not so much because they are more liberal. Rather, being liberal influences vote-choice much more than what it used to. The following section explores this possibility in more detail.

The changing influence of values on vote-choice

To account for over-time variation in the effect of values and education on voting, Figures 8 to 10 plot the changes in the marginal effects of the two value scales on the overall sample (Figures 8.1 and 8.2), as well as on the four political generations across the period (Figure 9), and for each education level (Figure 10).

Figure 8.1 – Marginal effects of values on vote-choice by election year

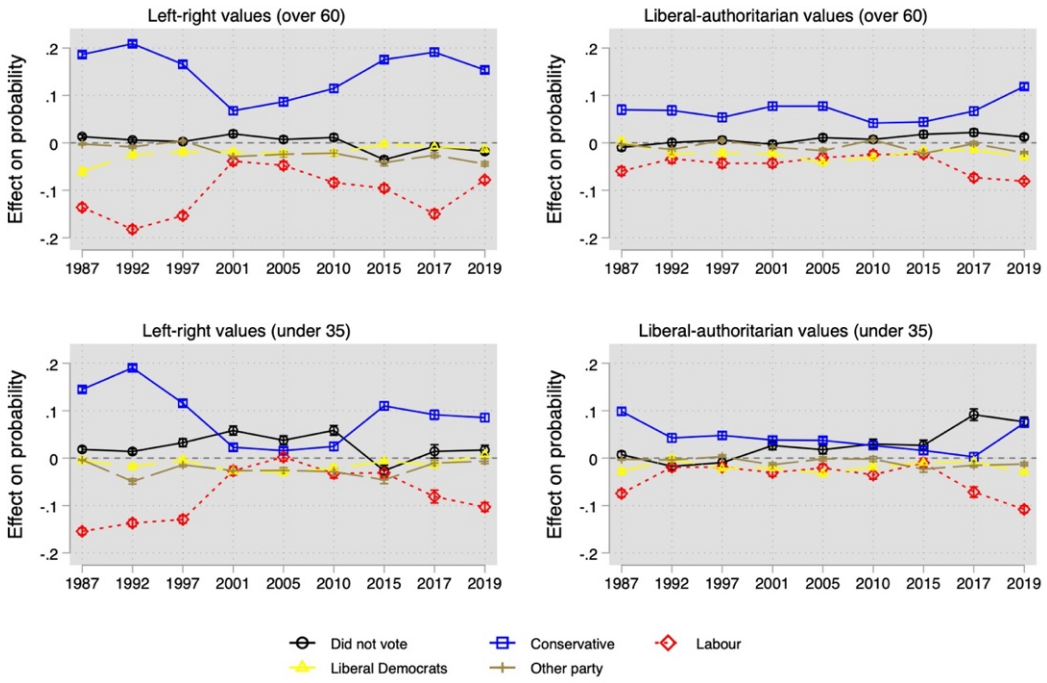


Note: average marginal effects of left-right and authoritarian-liberal values on vote-choice probabilities, from model 5 of table 1

Controlling for all covariates included in the final model of Table 1, the left-hand panel of Figure 8.1 shows that overall, the effect of left-right values decreased significantly during the Blair years but increased again thereafter, making the Labour-Conservative gap wider at every election since 2010. There is thus evidence that the impact of left-right values has changed over time, and varies somewhat from election to election (perhaps as a consequence of the party platforms of the day). By contrast, the right-hand panel shows that the effect of liberal values on the Labour vote is relatively stable across the period but has increased significantly in 2017 and 2019 – from a marginal impact of less than 5 percentage points on vote share in previous years to a marginal

impact of over 10% in 2019. Similarly, the effect of authoritarian values on the Conservative vote does not show much of a trend in the early period, but increases to a marginal impact of over 10% in 2019. Socio-cultural values have more than doubled their effect on voting for the two main parties since the beginning of the period examined, matching the effect of left-right economic values in the last general election. Moreover, stronger authoritarian attitudes are increasingly associated with both Conservative voting and abstention. There is thus some evidence that liberal-authoritarian values matter more for vote choice in recent elections than they did previously. Therefore, there haven't just been compositional changes within the electorate in terms of liberal-authoritarian values, but the electoral salience of these values has also increased.

Figure 8.2 – Marginal effects of values on vote-choice by election year



Note: average marginal effects of left-right and authoritarian-liberal values on vote-choice probabilities, from model 5 of table

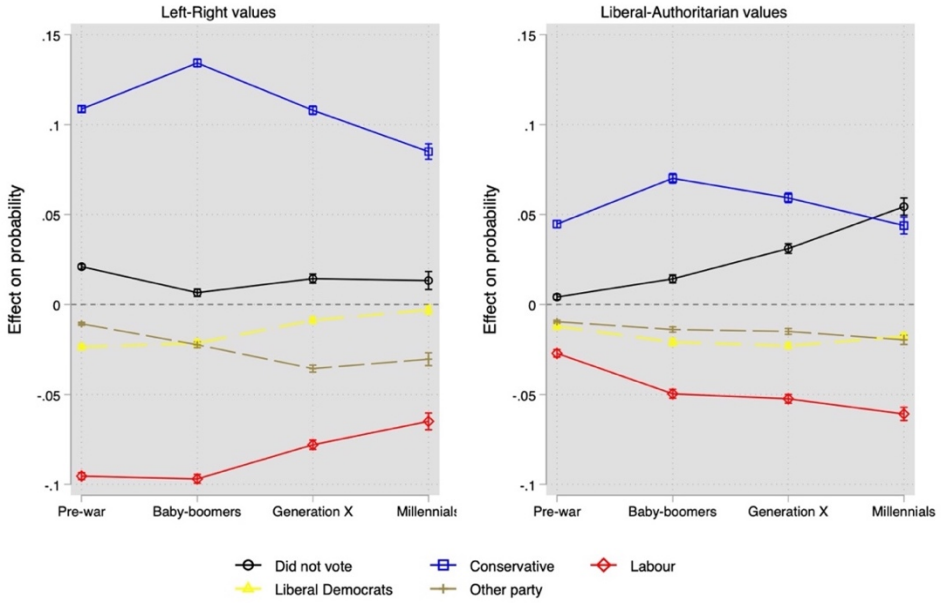
The two value sets have different implications for different age groups. This is displayed in Figure 8.2, which reports the same information of Figure 8.1, but for voters under 35 and over 60 respectively. On the left-hand panel, the figure shows that voters under 35 experienced a larger contraction of left-right values effects on vote-choice between 2001 and 2010 than voters over 60, and the increase that followed has been more modest for younger voters than older ones. Moreover, in that same period, younger voters with stronger right-wing attitudes were more likely to abstain than to vote for the Conservative party, with the opposite being true for voters over

60. On the other hand, the effect of left-wing values on the Labour vote appears to have increased for under 35 voters between 2017 and 2019, while it decreased for voters over 60 in the same period.

On the right-hand panel, liberal-authoritarian values display slightly smaller effects on the youth vote than on the vote of voters over 60. Moreover, here too younger voters with stronger authoritarian attitudes were more likely to abstain than to vote Conservative in 2017 and 2019, while the value scale has null effect on the abstention rates of voters over 60. This shows that for both younger and older voters, liberal-authoritarian values matter more for vote choice in recent elections than previously, though there is not much difference in terms of how much they matter between the two age groups.

To get a clearer sense of generational differences in the electoral salience of the values, Figure 9 examines how the influence of values on voting differs by generation. The figure shows that right-wing economic values exert a strong impact on the Conservative vote, although the effect decreases slightly across generations, going from a marginal effect of about 13% for the Baby-Boom generation to 7% for Millennials. The effect of left-wing economic values on the Labour vote has experienced a similar fall, going from 10% for the Pre-war and Baby-Boom generations, to just over 6% for Millennials. In both cases, therefore, economic values matter the least for the youngest generation. The effect of authoritarian values on the Conservative vote is smaller than that of economic values, and follows a more stable trend across generations, with a small increase (3%) for Baby-Boomers.

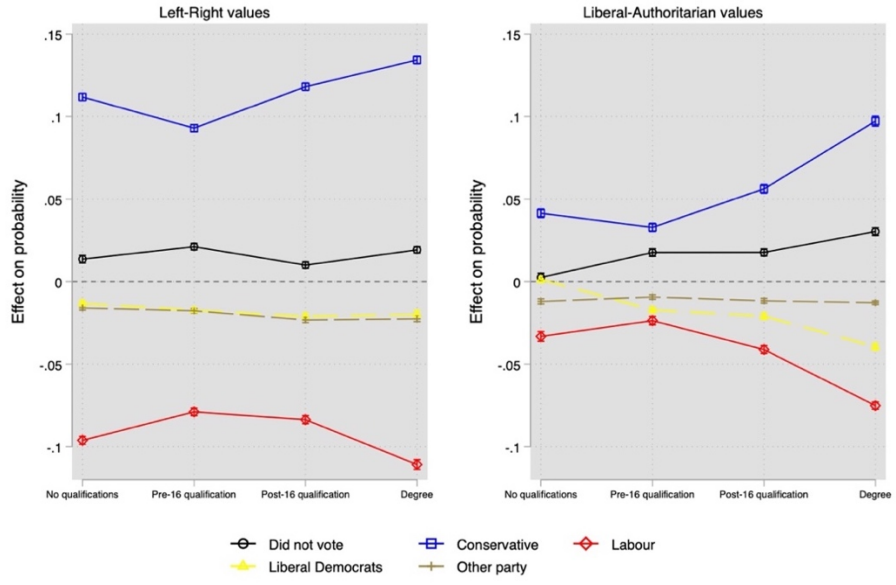
Figure 9 – Marginal effects of values on vote-choice by generations



Note: average marginal effects of left-right and authoritarian-liberal values on vote-choice probabilities, from model 4 of table 1

Interestingly, among Millennials those with stronger authoritarian values are just as likely to refrain from voting altogether. The effect of liberal values on the Labour vote, on the other hand, increases across generations, going from 3% for Pre-war to 6% for Millennials. The similar magnitude in the effect of the two value sets for the Millennial generation suggests that the recent trends identified earlier might be driven by this cohort.

Figure 10 – Marginal effects of values on vote-choice by education



Note: average marginal effects of left-right and authoritarian-liberal values on vote-choice probabilities, from model 4 of table 1

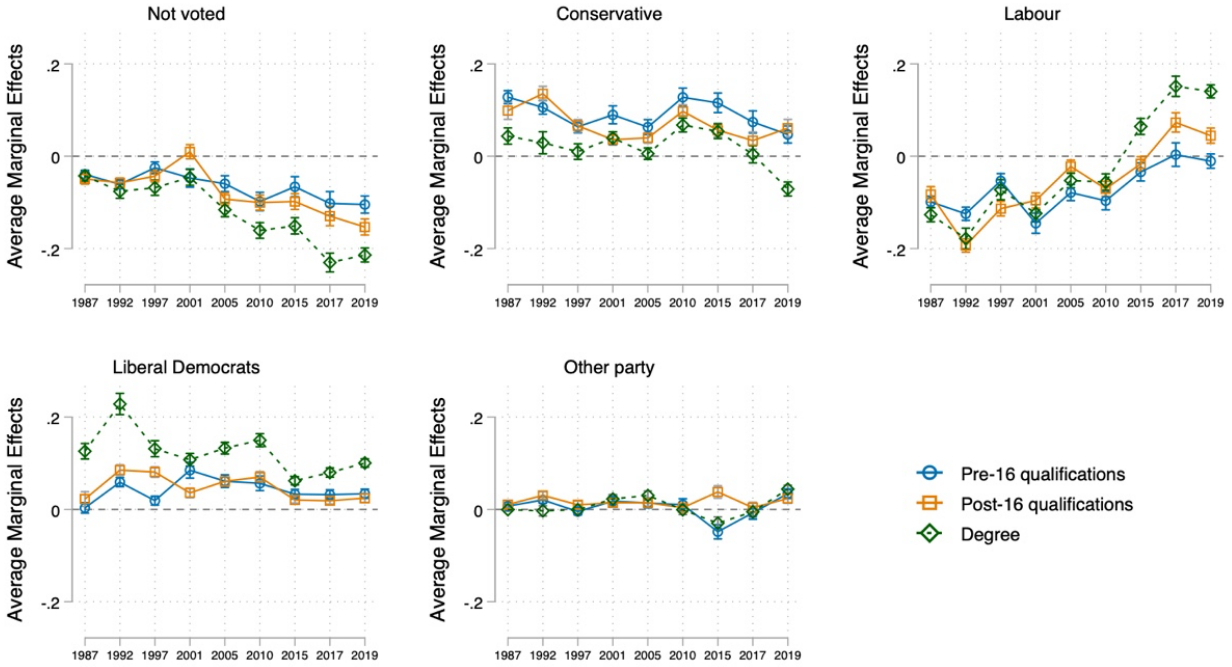
Figure 10 displays value effects on vote-choice by different educational qualifications. The effect of left-right economic values shows some variation across education levels and seems to exert the largest influence for those with degrees and the smallest for those with pre-16 qualifications. The effect of liberal-authoritarian values, on the other hand, varies greatly by education. Here too it is larger for both Labour and Conservative graduate voters than for those with qualifications below the degree level, going from about 4% for Conservative voters who do not hold a degree to 10% for those who do, and from 3% for Labour voters who do not hold a degree to 8% for those who do. Therefore, while education-based value differences may be decreasing, it appears that higher levels of education are associated with a greater effect of both value sets on voting. It thus appears that, while differences between graduates and others decreased as the number of graduates has grown bigger, differences within graduates themselves have increased. This is not surprising, as graduates today are a bigger and more heterogenous group than previously.

The changing influence of education on vote-choice

While the first part of the analysis noted that the education-based cleavage in values was becoming less significant for the most recent cohorts, it seems as though education still plays an important role in determining vote-choice. How this effect has changed over the years is displayed in Figure 11, which plots the marginal effects of different levels of education (relative to no qualifications) for the 1987-2019 period. The graph displays increasing educational differences in abstention – with those lacking qualifications over twice as likely to abstain than those with qualifications at the degree level – as well as a decreasing but persistent educational gap on the Liberal Democrats vote.

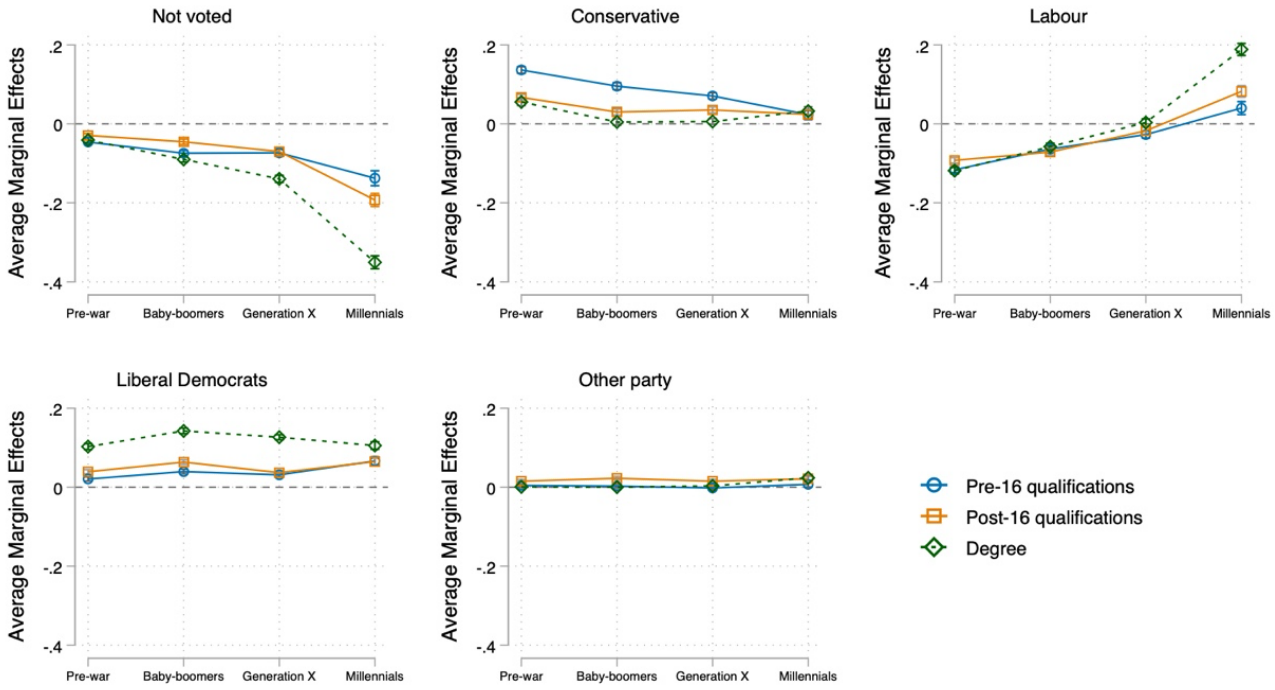
The Conservative vote-share does not vary much by education across the period, but support for the Labour party shows notable changes. While up until the early 2000s the party was predominantly chosen by individuals lacking qualifications, and support from other educational categories was largely indistinguishable, since 2010 higher levels of education began driving up the Labour vote while driving down the Conservative vote. Much of this shift could be attributed to generational replacement. In fact, figure 12 displays the marginal effects of education for the four political generations and denotes how education effects on vote-choice are stable across cohorts, except for the Labour electorate, where higher qualifications *decrease* the party's chances with older cohorts but *increase* them with Millennials.

Figure 11 - Marginal effects of education on vote-choice probabilities



Note: marginal effects from multinomial regression model with 95% confidence intervals (controlling for demographic characteristics)

Figure 12 – Marginal effects of education on vote-choice probabilities



Note: marginal effects from multinomial regression model with 95% confidence intervals and controlling for demographic characteristics.

Discussion

Recalling that the hypotheses to be tested by this study were:
H1 – Young Britons are more likely to hold socially liberal and economically left-wing values than their older counterparts, but the gap is narrowing as new generations replace older ones.
H2 – Education drives value-change but the association is less strong for more recent generations.
H3 – Values suppress the effect of education on vote-choice.
H4 – Values and education explain the age gap on vote-choice

Results lead to only partially accept H1. In fact, while there is a clear gap between the young and old on liberal-authoritarian values, there is no such gap for left-right values, and the youth does not display distinctive attitudes from middle aged groups. On the other hand, in line with what was hypothesised in H1 and H2, the gap in liberal-authoritarian values has narrowed over the years, possibly as a result of generational replacement but also of rising educational levels. This was further evidenced by looking at cohort effects for both sets of values. On left-right values, education appears to be associated with leaning right (except for Millennials) and to increase between-cohort differences rather than reduce them. Moreover, there is no clear generational pattern in any direction, but there are strong period effects, which indicates that left-right values are rather a product of someone's societal position as well as the wider economic context in the country at a given election. On liberal-authoritarian values, the liberalising effect of education was strongest for the older cohorts, Baby Boomers, who otherwise had low levels of social liberalism, while it was weaker for younger cohorts, Millennials, who display above-average liberalism levels regardless of education.

H3 is partly confirmed in that the regression models showed that the effect of education on voting displays some changes once controlling for income and values, except for the Liberal Democrats vote for whom education maintains a strong positive effect despite confounders. However, the most significant changes on the education coefficients seem to be triggered by the introduction of income more so than by the value scales, suggesting that allocative effects may be at play more so than socialising ones.

Finally, it appears as though values and education, rather than absorbing the effect of the age-gap (H4), rather make it more pronounced, and these differences depend heavily on income.

Moreover, the influence of the two value sets on voting has different implications for the two groups, with younger authoritarians just as likely to abstain than support the Conservative party, while older authoritarians maintain low abstention rates. At the same time, left-wing economic values appear to have an increasing effect on younger voters' Labour support, and a decreasing effect for older ones – yet this may well be a period effect stemming from the rather different economic context of 2019 compared to the one present today.

Conclusion

This paper set out to answer two questions. The first concerns the extent to which there is an age cleavage on ideological dimensions in the United Kingdom, what explains it, and whether it is a permanent or temporary feature. The second concerns the relative impact of ideological dimensions and education on the political age divide. In terms of economic values, this study did not find a distinctive age-gap in preferences, suggesting that views on these aspects are more likely to be the product of period effects than of how different generations are socialised. On the other hand, results confirmed the existence of an age cleavage on sociocultural values, with young voters more likely to have liberal views than older generations. Yet they also showed that this gap has narrowed significantly in recent years, lending support to the theory of generational replacement and therefore putting into question the extent to which such gap is to hold in the future. Looking at changes in the two value scales for different political generations further confirmed this. An analysis of cohort effects on value development showed that there were no between-cohort differences on economic values, while scores on liberal-authoritarian values varied greatly by cohort, with each generation becoming more liberal than the one preceding it.

One obvious candidate for the origin of these attitudes is education, which has traditionally been strongly correlated with both economic and sociocultural opinions. In fact, the analysis of education effects on value development for the four different political generations showed that higher levels of education were associated with stronger right-wing economic views, and stronger socially liberal views. While it might seem surprising that education would foster social solidarity but not economic solidarity, such pattern is well known in the literature. For example, in a study of how education affects attitudes on economically marginalised groups in the United States, Phelan et al. (1995) found that while education is associated with, for example, greater tolerance for the homeless, it is also associated with less support for economic aid to the homeless. The

authors thus concluded that education socialises citizens into the "the official culture", which in the developed world includes values of equal opportunity and respect, but not equal outcomes.

An important finding regarding the effect of education on the development of liberal attitudes is that this appears to be stronger in societies that were generally less liberal, such as those of Baby Boomers and Generation X, while it is weaker for the most recent generation, Millennials. A growing body of literature has focused on the emergence of the so-called "education cleavage" (e.g. Enyedi, 2008; Stubager 2010, 2013; Bovens and Wille, 2017; Ford and Jennings, 2020; Scott 2022; Simon 2021, 2022), whereby highly educated voters are thought to hold distinctive preferences because they have the technical skills and cognitive capacities to thrive in an integrated global economy, which in turns makes them less resistant to change and more tolerant of diversity. The fact that highly educated groups are increasingly large in number, and that the liberalising effect of education appears to have become weaker, raises questions over how likely this political education cleavage is to hold in the future – more so considering that authoritarian attitudes appear to exert an effect on Conservative-voting graduates that is as large as that of liberal attitudes on Labour-voting graduates (Figure 10). It must be noted, however, that the post-election survey used in this study lacked a number of increasingly salient items, such as views on gender and sexuality, immigration, and global integration, all aspects on which public opinion is increasingly polarised – especially along age and education lines. Their absence from the measure of liberal-authoritarian values constitutes an important limitation of the study that should be addressed by further research.

It is also important to note that higher education expanded significantly over the years. Going to university in the earlier period was a more dramatic change in life environment than it is today, and there is the possibility that if higher education were to contract dramatically, the coefficient of education would increase again even if current generations have greater liberal orientations. Moreover, while this analysis puts into question the extent to which future generations' levels of liberalism will continue to be associated with higher education, it does not negate that education continues to exert an important effect on voting outcomes. Labour in particular emerges as the party to have benefitted the most from these compositional changes in the electorate, evidenced by how the increasingly educated Millennials display disproportionate support for Labour compared to older groups with similar qualifications.

The implications for understanding the widening age-gap in political support are three-fold. First, it is too simplistic to simply assert that young people are more likely to vote Labour now because they are more left-wing and liberal than in previous generations. Although there have been compositional changes in the distribution of these values across generations, these compositional changes alone are not able to adequately account for why young people are some much more likely to vote Labour now than earlier (see Table 1). Rather, what appears to have happened is that the *electoral salience* of liberal-authoritarian values in particular has increased – and mattered more for vote choice in the last two elections than it did previously (Figure 8.1). These values matter more for both younger and older voters alike than they did previously (Figure 8.2) and there are therefore little generational differences in terms of how much these values influence voting behaviour (Figure 9). The increased salience of these liberal-authoritarian values therefore more likely reflects period effects than they do generational effects.

The consequence of this is that since liberal-authoritarian values influence voting to a greater extent than previously and there are greater generational differences on these values than there were before, age effects on voting behaviour have increased. But there is little to indicate that these effects will be permanent. If the salience of these values decline, compositional differences between generations will recede in importance. And on this note, it is worth remarking that new generations are also changing. On the one hand, the value differences between graduates and non-graduates are smaller than they were for previous generations; but on the other hand, the impact of values on vote choice is greater among graduates than it is among those with fewer qualifications. As the size of graduates increases, within-group political differences increase, and between-group differences decrease. It therefore cannot be assumed that current patterns of political behaviour will persist into the future.

Chapter 2
Delayed Maturation and Conservative Voting

Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis examined cohort differences and considered the expansion of higher education and its impact on value formation as the possible reason behind the widening age gap in voting. Today's youth is more socially liberal than previous cohorts, and the political activation of these values has increased their electoral salience and impact on voting. But the youth of today also differs from its predecessors in a more fundamental way: it stays "young" for longer. In 2019, the Pew Research Center reported that, compared with previous generations, Millennials in the United States are delaying marriage if not foregoing altogether. They are the most educated generation yet the one with the flattest earnings relative to their education. They are more likely to be living at home than any prior generation, and they are starting families much later than used to be the case. This is coupled with the widest generational divide in political attitudes and partisan affiliation there has ever been: Millennials are significantly more likely to associate themselves with the parties on the left and significantly more likely to hold distinctive views on specific issue areas, from discrimination and immigration to foreign policy and the role of government in society. Early benchmarks indicate that Generation Z is on track to intensify these shifts (Bialik and Fry 2019).

The sum-total of life-cycle events ever experienced only ever increases with age, but everyone experiences these events at different rates. In the 1960s, the average age of first-time buyers was 23. At that age, most first-time buyers had been in full-time employment for several years, were married (84%), and needed about 2 years to save for a deposit of £595 towards their home – equivalent to about £12,738 today (The Independent 2018). By contrast, at that same age, a large proportion of today's youth is still in full-time education. The average age of first-time buyers has risen to 33-years old. Only 27% of these buyers are married, and the average deposit (£20,622) requires 5 years of saving. Therefore, in some sense 25-year-olds in the UK are now "younger" than 25-year olds in the 1960s and 1970s because they have undergone fewer life-cycle events.

Within this context, a way to explain the role age plays on voting behaviour is to look at changes in the mechanisms operating behind life-cycle effects. Increased participation in higher

education resulted in the youth staying in school longer and being financially dependent on their parents for longer, as well as postponing their entrance into the labour market. Consequently, the average age of marriage and childbearing has also been postponed, effectively delaying the maturation of young adults into their adult roles. Things such as completing education, getting married, having a child, moving out of the parental residence, starting a full-time job, or buying a house inevitably impact individuals' structural position in society, potentially also driving changes in political attitudes. And as voters experience catalytic events later than they used to, it may be that the widening age gap in voting preferences is a by-product of this delay. This possibility has been previously explored for changes in turnout levels, as Smets (2016) finds that if "maturation" levels had remained stable over the years, today's youth turnout would be 12% higher.

Whether this could also apply to partisanship is yet to be explored, but there is reason to believe it could. Parenthood and familial responsibilities are known to affect citizens' political preferences – although the exact way in which they do so is contested (e.g. see Elder and Greene 2011, 2016; Teney et al. 2022; Oswald and Powdthavee 2010; Conley and Rauscher 2013). Moreover, as stakeholders, homeowners are more likely to be interested in property tax and mortgages. To those with full-time jobs, issues such as income tax become relevant (Flanagan et al., 2012). Party positions on these matters can therefore determine voting preferences.

Research questions and contribution

This paper focuses on the Conservative vote because it is the party for whom support varies most by age. Figure 1 displays how – controlling for gender, income, and education – today's youth is about 15% less likely to support the Conservative party than it was in the first half of the period, and the gap between young and old Conservative voters has widened with each of the last three general elections.

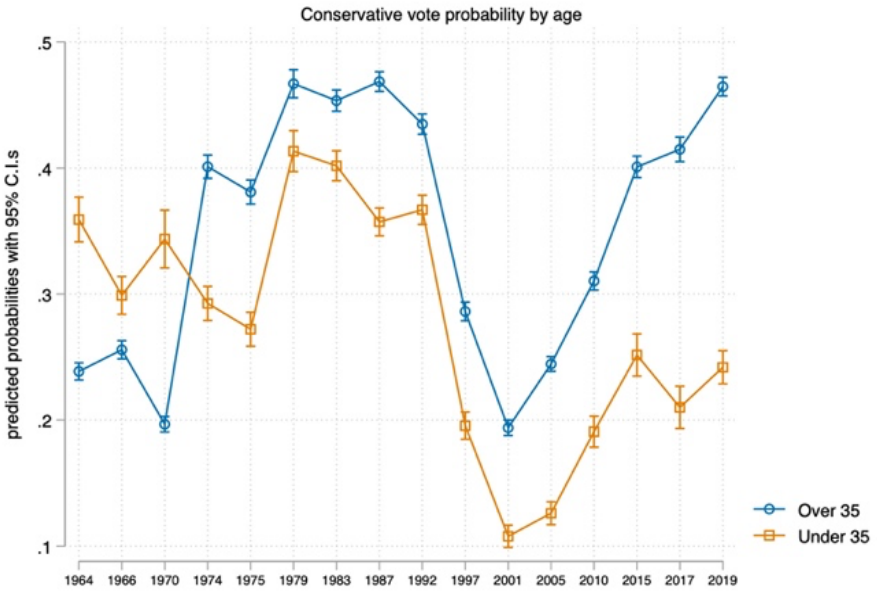


Figure 1 – Conservative vote probability by age, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

While an age gap on Labour support has emerged too in recent elections, it is the reverse of what we see for the Conservatives. Almost all younger adults are increasingly distancing themselves from the Conservative party following their more than ten years in power. A young Conservative councillor interviewed for an article by *PoliticsHome* in December 2022[5], acknowledged that his peers no longer feel a connection with the party, despite having a Millennial Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, who embraces modern fashion and technology. Yet, according to recent polling by YouGov for The Times[6], only 2 percent of individuals aged 18 to 24 and 15 percent of those between 25 and 49 years old express an intention to vote for the Conservative party in the upcoming general election, which – at the time of writing – is expected to take place before the end of 2024. In contrast, 59 percent and 60 percent of the same age groups respectively indicate their support for the Labour party. The article further reported interviews with Simon Clarke, 38, a Conservative MP who was recently appointed as the parliamentary advocate for Next Gen Tories, a new grassroots Conservative group created in December 2022 to shape policy decisions and prioritize intergenerational fairness within the party's agenda for the upcoming election. As reported in the piece, "*he believes the party needs to look to when in 10 to 15 years time current 30-somethings will enter midlife, and take measures now to ensure they feel like they have benefitted from Conservative policies along the way*" and that "*the current government should be tailoring measures for*

[5] *The Conservatives' Millennial Problem Could Cost Them The Next Election*, PoliticsHome, December 2022. Available at: https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/conservative-millennial-problem-polling-young-voters
[6] Available at: https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/ydbnsizj4r/TheTimes_VI_221207_W.pdf

aspirational younger people, specifically in the three key areas of childcare, the cost of living, and housing". This view is echoed by the Conservative Party's own vice-chair for youth, MP Sara Britcliffe, 27, who "*agrees that the party has a lot of work to do to re-engage with younger voters with their policy programme, and that work on the economy, childcare, housing will be crucial*".

Examining the role played by changes in the timing of life-cycle effects could thus provide useful insights into this growing gap. There is reason to believe that the delayed transition into adulthood may explain part of the decrease in the Conservative youth vote – and this paper explores this possibility by addressing the following questions:

- To what extent do modern generations experience formative events later than before?
- What impact does maturation have on Conservative party support across generations?

Theoretical background

The delayed transition into adulthood

In the 1970s, sociologists and social historians began considering the transition into adulthood as a process marked by a series of events. These denoted a move from roles that were typical of late adolescence and youth, to roles that were typical of adulthood (Elder 1975). Such events included completing education, entering the labour market, leaving the family home, getting married, and having children (Neugarten and Datan 1973). In this view, becoming an adult is conceived as an institutionalised passage of status in the life course, which involves several role changes that are guided by informal and legal norms (Buchmann 1989; Neugarten 1996; Leisering 2004). Each role marks the entry into a new domain of life and requires "transitioning" individuals to adapt. The outcome of this transition, however, does not depend solely on individual resources, but also on the structural opportunities and constraints available to them (Elder and Shanahan 2006).

With the expansion of educational systems, the median age for completing school has increased notably. For instance, cohorts born between the 1940s and early 1960s in the UK, Germany and Italy were estimated to complete school by the age of 16, but this increased to 17 for Britons and

Germans born after the 1970s, and to almost 20 for Italians (Schizzerotto and Lucchini 2004). The increased take-up of higher education brought this up even further. In the 1980s, only 15% of the British youth would go on to university. This rose to 25% in the 1990s, and since 2017, over 50% of people are estimated to have gone into tertiary education after leaving school (Coughlan 2019; Department for Education 2020). Within this context, recent generations find themselves entering the labour market later than used to be the case – a delay further prolonged by greater difficulties in finding a stable job (Bernardi et al. 2004).

In the 1990s, Riley, Kahn and Foner (1994) introduced the concept of *structural lag* to designate the challenges faced by retirees, whose wishes and actions no longer complied with the expectations for their age group. Instead of terminating work and dedicating themselves to leisure, many people of retirement age would continue to work in other capacities or engage in volunteering. This structural lag was thus defined as "the mismatch between changing lives and changing social structures" (Hareven 1994). A similar structural lag was later identified in relation to beginning adulthood (Settersen 2005, Hamilton and Hamilton 2009). Lesthaeghe (2010) introduced the theory of a Second Demographic Transition characterised by the preference to postpone demographic choices, by independent living and unmarried cohabitation, as well as by increased tolerance for extra-marital child-baring. In fact, a life domain where researchers growingly observe postponement and foregoing is that of family formation (e.g. Billari 2004, Konietzka 2010). This has been attributed to a changed perception of partner relationships, which are increasingly seen as "pure relationships" entered for the sake of the satisfaction derived from living with another person, rather than for the social recognition gained by entering a partner relationship (Giddens 1991). This process has been further intensified by changes in employment patterns. While full-time work that could support a family used to be an option for high-school graduates, today these opportunities are scarce.

Billari and Liefbroer (2010) describe how the dominant trend of maturation patterns in the 1950s and 1960s could be defined as early, contracted, and simple. It was contracted in the sense that the period in which formative events occurred was relatively limited, and it was simple in the sense that only a handful of these events, usually in a clear order, occurred. The new dominant pattern, on the other hand, can be characterised as late, protracted, and complex. It is late because many events occur later than they used to, it is protracted because the period

between the start and the end of the transition has become increasingly diluted, and it is complex as many events no longer follow a linear trend and can even be repetitive.

The reluctance to form a family has been attributed to the emergence of a "risk society" characterised by a pervasive sense of uncertainty and individualisation (Beck 1995), a framework whereby the postponement of the events sanctioning the transition to adulthood is a rational answer to growing uncertainty. Scholars have therefore begun to consider the macro-level explanations that have influenced these changes. Institutions affect transitions by establishing opportunities and constraints, and comparative research suggests that there are three areas where institutional regulations have contributed to individualism and uncertainty: the welfare regime, the educational system, and labour market regulations (e.g. Breen and Buchmann 2002, Mayer 2001).

Esping-Andersen (1990) identified three types of welfare systems across industrialised countries: (1) liberal welfare regimes with limited social benefits; (2) conservative welfare regimes with benefits targeted at specific categories; (3) social democratic regimes which provide more generous and universalised support. The latter and, to an extent, conservative systems, consider the state (and not the parents) as mostly responsible for young adults' autonomy, and institute social policies such as scholarships, free transport and rent subsidies that make the pursuit of autonomy much easier, thereby fostering an earlier transition (Mulder et al. 2002). The liberal regime typical of Anglo-Saxon countries, on the other hand, is guided by a belief in the market and minimal state interference, which results in means-tested benefits that promote weak family ties and young people's self-reliance (Aassve et al. 2002).

Educational systems, on the other hand, can be characterised as *qualification spaces* and *organisational spaces* (Maurice et al. 1986). The former provide standardised vocational qualifications of immediate labour market value to employers – typical, for instance, in Germany. Organisational spaces, on the other hand, rely on general education of no immediate screening value for employers – a system prevalent in the United Kingdom. School leavers trained in these systems find themselves in unfavourable positions because, by definition, they lack previous work experience and are confronted with a labour market entry process that is less structured by education, less orderly, and subject to discretionary employer behaviour (Gangl 2003).

The impact of delayed maturation on political behaviour

The delay younger generations experience in entering adulthood has significant consequences for attitudes and behaviours. Flanagan et al. (2012), for example, note how modern generations are less likely to engage in civic activities due to a perceived lack of incentives. The protracted period of transition into adulthood has been coupled with a dearth of opportunities to practice civic skills and get recruited to civic life, which they find is especially the case for youth who do not attend university. This, in turn, contributes to a growing class divide in civic participation that ultimately increases inequality, and it is also believed to explain generational differences in turnout patterns.

Today's young adults are often more alienated and more disengaged from the political system than previous generations were at their age. As per the political life-cycle model, participation levels for young people are low because they have a lower attachment to civic life (Putnam, 2000). These rise as people experience important life events such as leaving the family home, buying a house, and getting married (e.g. Stoker and Jennings, 1995). Participation is believed to then fall again for the older age groups as they undergo health problems, retirement or declining incomes and become politically alienated (e.g. Martin et al, 1974). Therefore, changes in political participation throughout the lifespan do not occur merely because of getting older, rather they do so through the life experiences that come with age. Individuals who have not fully completed the transition into adulthood lack a stake in issues such as housing or taxation, and are therefore less likely to pay attention to, or be familiar with, party's positions on these matters. In turn, this decreases the likelihood that they would form party attachments or other forms of political engagement. A lack of certain life experiences could therefore cause young adults to form the habit of abstaining from politics. Smets (2016) examined this possibility and found that if maturation into adult roles had remained stable over the decades, the turnout levels of young adults in Britain could be 12-percentage points higher than current rates.

There is reason to believe that delayed maturation, besides having an impact on whether young adults vote, could further affect *who they vote for*. For example, the expansion of homeownership

rates in 1980s triggered widespread interest into its association with voting. Early research found that homeownership in Britain was associated with higher rates of voting for the Conservative Party in the 1979–1980 elections (McAllister 1984) and that those who purchased newly privatised council houses were more likely to vote Conservative in the late 1980s (Garrett 1992). Similarly, research conducted by Heath et al. (1991) suggests that council house purchasers became less supportive of income redistribution and less likely to vote for Labour – though not necessarily more likely to vote for the Conservative Party. Other studies have shown that homeowners are more likely to turn out to vote than renters (Pattie and Johnston 1998), and that renters who do vote are more likely to support Labour (Johnston and Pattie 1996). Homeownership has also been linked to increased social capital, a stronger attachment to local communities, and reduced support for social services spending relative to infrastructure (DiPasquale and Glaser 1999). More recently, research by Adler and Ansell (2019) found that after the 2008-2009 financial crisis, areas that have gained from house price inflation are far less likely to vote for populist causes or parties than areas that have been excluded from those gains.

As with home ownership, numerous studies have examined the role of wealth in shaping the preferences of citizens (e.g. Bartels 2008, Finseraas 2009, Gelman 2009). The specific impact of asset ownership on voters has been explored in a series of innovative studies conducted by Nadeau, Foucault, and Lewis-Beck. Their research suggests that owning assets affects the political party or candidate a voter is more likely to support. Individuals who own more assets are more likely to support right-leaning parties or candidates who tend to promote policies that encourage ownership and investment and favour preservation, such as deregulation and low tax rates (Foucault, Nadeau, and Lewis-Beck 2013; Lewis-Beck, Nadeau, and Foucault 2013; Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2011; Nadeau, Foucault, and Lewis-Beck 2010, 2019). Similarly, Marshall (2016) finds that extending the high-school leaving age by one year in 1947 was associated with increased support for the Conservative party from the cohorts that benefitted from this reform. As extended education increased incomes, it also increased support for conservative economic policies such as lower taxation and lower redistributive spending. Importantly, this increase in support was solely based on economic incentives, as respondents were not found to adopt Conservative positions on non-economic matters.

Marriage and parenthood further illustrate how life-cycle events can impact political preferences. Marriage is the biggest factors influencing how white women vote in the United States, where the country's marriage gap is larger than its gender gap (e.g. see Plutzer and McBurnett 1991; Gallup 2009; Struber 2010; Hawley 2017; Pew Research Center 2019). Other studies from the United States have examined the relationship between parenthood and political party affiliation, but the findings have been inconsistent. For example, some studies conducted during the 1990s presidential election campaigns found that parenthood increased support for the Republican party (e.g. Arnold and Weisberg 1996). However, more recent studies suggest that the effect of parenthood on political party affiliation varies significantly by gender, whereby mothers are more likely to be liberal, while fathers are more likely to be conservative (Elder and Greene 2011), which may reflect socialization into traditional gender roles associated with parenting (Elder and Greene 2016). Other studies suggest that the gender of children also plays a role, with having daughters associated with more liberalism and having sons associated with more conservatism (e.g., Oswald and Powdthavee 2010), though this is dependent on social status (Conley and Rauscher 2013).

As these events have demonstrable effects on political beliefs and party affiliation, and generally seem to engender stronger economically right-wing and socially conservative attitudes, the lack of these experiences may be contributing to steering younger voters towards the other end of the spectrum. To put it simply, young voters' growing reluctance to support the Conservative party could be due to the increased scarcity of economic and social incentives for doing so. This is illustrated by Figure 2. The left-hand panel shows that the level of Conservative support among the under-35s has steadily decreased from one generation to the next. While Conservative voting across the Pre-War youth averaged 35%, it went down to 13% for Millennials. The right-hand panel of the figure shows that the level of maturation into adult roles[7] also experienced a similar decrease. By the time they reached 35 years of age, young adults in the Pre-War generations had completed, on average, 75% of the life events sanctioning their passage into adulthood. For the Millennial generation, only 52% of "maturation" is achieved by 35 years of age.

[7] The maturation measure consists of a 6-point additive index that assigns a value of 1 for each of the following: having completed education, being married, having children, owning a home, being in full time employment.

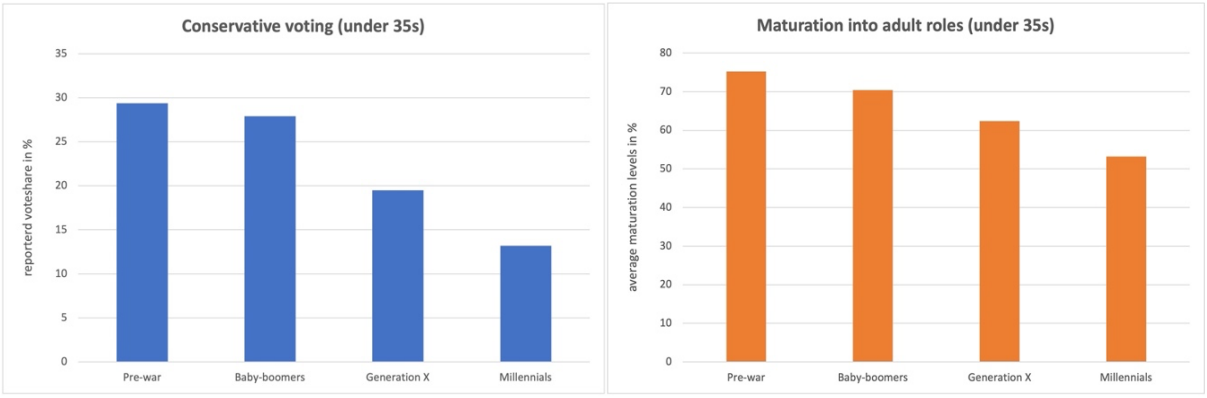


Figure 2 – Young adult Conservative voting and maturation levels, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

This context thus warrants further research into a possible association between these phenomena. Drawing from previous research, two hypotheses can be explored:

H1 – *Higher maturation levels are associated with an increase in the likelihood of voting for the Conservative party.*

H2 – *Changes in maturation levels partly explain recent generations decreased likelihood to support the Conservative party.*

Data and methods

The analysis to test these hypotheses follows Smets' approach in examining the relationship between later maturation and turnout decline (2016). The best-suited data to measure changes in the life-cycle and their impact on political participation would be longitudinal data, but in the UK this only becomes available in the late 1980s, and therefore does not cover a long enough period to accurately test over-time shifts in the maturation levels of different generations, and their implications for vote-choice. The best alternative is to use a combination of the British Election Study (BES) post-election surveys, available from 1964 to 2019. However, while BES data is used to test the extent to which changes in maturation explain changes in Conservative voting across generations, subsequent confirmatory analyses of the association between maturation and Conservative voting are performed with longitudinal data from the combined British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society, covering the period 1991 to 2020.

The delayed transition into adulthood is here also referred to as "later maturation". An individual or cohort is considered "mature" if they have completed most of the life events necessary to sanction the passage into adulthood. Scholars generally agree that the events marking the entry into adulthood include leaving school, leaving the parental home, starting full-time employment, getting married, and starting a family (Flanagan et al. 2012, Buchman and Kriesi 2011, Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Home ownership is also implicitly associated with adulthood. For most people, the costs associated with owning a home are only bearable whilst in full-time employment. In recent years, however, it has also come to require large amounts of savings. Therefore, home ownership rates across people aged under 35 have plummeted compared to previous years. According to ONS data (2020), home ownership among 25 to 34-year-olds has fallen from 51% in 1989, to 28% in 2019. As the Conservative party experienced a series of by-election losses in 2022, the Levelling-Up, Housing, and Communities Minister, Michael Gove, blamed decreasing home ownership rates for the result (The Independent 2022). While the degree to which home ownership is actually associated with Conservative support has been questioned (e.g. see Hadziabdic and Kohl 2022), the age disparity in home ownership rates suggests it is a good indicator of maturation into adult roles.

The BES does not contain questions on leaving the parental home, but all other aspects mentioned above are included in the 1964-2019 post-election survey data. These are: respondent's main activity (including options for 'full-time education' and 'full-time employment'); age respondent left school; respondent's housing tenure; respondent's marital status (ever married or living as married); respondent's number of children. The maturation indicator therefore includes: (1) marital status, (2) having children, (3) owning a home, (4) completing full-time education, (5) having a full-time job. These are all measured as dichotomous variables with a value of 1 if the respondent completed the transition, and of 0 if they didn't. They are then combined into a 6-point additive "maturation" index ranging from 0 to 5, where a higher score indicates a higher level of maturation.

The first part of the analysis describes the extent to which modern generations experience the events marking the transition into adulthood later than previous generations did. The cohorts to be used as unit of analysis are the Pre-War generation (individuals born before 1944); the

Baby-Boom generation (individuals born between 1945 and 1959); Generation X (individuals born between 1960 and 1979); Millennials (individuals born after 1980). These were chosen to reflect current popular understandings of the key social generations of our time as discussed in the media and by research institutes. In particular, the study builds on work undertaken by the Pew Research Center[8] on the emergence of these four distinctive generations through demographic and behavioural characteristics such as changes in education levels, personal wealth, partner relationships, and political attitudes – all of which are relevant to this research.

The second part of the analysis uses this information to determine the impact of maturation on Conservative voting, and whether this changes by generation. This is achieved by running five logistic regression models with reported Conservative voting as the dependent variable. The outcome takes a value of 1 if respondents reported voting for the Conservative party in the previous general election, and of 0 for all other options[9].

As the hypotheses being tested in this study concern changes in the voting patterns of young adults over time, the analysis is run on a subset of the full sample which only includes respondents aged under 35.

Descriptive statistics of all modelled variables are reported in Appendix C. To test the extent to which generational patterns on Conservative voting have changed, the first model only includes age and generational predictors. To determine the extent to which maturation is associated with Conservative voting, the second model adds the maturation index. To account for the differential impact of maturation on different generations' voting behaviour, the third model adds interactions of the maturation index and the four generations. The fourth model adds demographic controls gender, educational level, income, and trade union membership. Lastly, to account for partisanship as well as possible period effects, the final model adds controls for strength of party identification, perceived difference between parties, and electoral volatility

[8] An overview of the institute's work on age and generations can be found here: https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/generations-age/

[9] This includes abstention, but alternative analyses were performed excluding the 'Did not vote' option and results remained the same.

(measured as whether the respondent voted for a different party or not at all in the previous election). To further increase results' robustness, standard errors are clustered by election year[10].

Multiple imputation of missing data

Not all demographic questions forming the index were asked in every post-election survey (e.g. in the earlier years, these questions were asked to only a sub-set of the sample, the year 1966 lacks information on tenure, and the years 1974 and 1992 lack information on children altogether). Moreover, the younger generations have a much smaller sample size than older ones. An overview of the amount of missing data is presented in the Appendix. Because missing data and uneven sample sizes could affect the robustness of the results, missing data is replaced by multiple imputation. The method chosen to impute data is that described by Royston (2004, 2005), who proposed the use of iterative chained equations (ICE) to create a series of alternative datasets constructed with the information available. The analysis is run on a combination of these to then average parameters to single estimates. The number of datasets that need to be constructed depends on the amount of missing data. Here, the variable with the most missingness is that of income, with over 29% of data unavailable. In this instance, it is therefore recommended to impute at least 7 alternative datasets so as to achieve results that are at least 95% efficient (Rubin 1987).

Results

Figure 3 displays the average maturation scores of the four generations at four different points in their youth. There is a consistent gap between the oldest and youngest generations. At age 20, young adults in both the Baby-Boom and Generation X cohorts had already completed 45% of the events included in the maturation index. For Millennials, only 30% of events are completed by that age. Moreover, while the maturation levels of Millennials do increase as they age, by the time they turn 35 they have completed about 68% of the key events, in contrast with almost 80% for the Pre-War and Baby-Boom generations at the same age.

[10] An alternative analysis was performed adding election year-fixed effects to the models. Results are largely similar, except for a positive and significant effect of the interaction between maturation and Generation X. These results are presented and discussed in more detail in the Appendix.

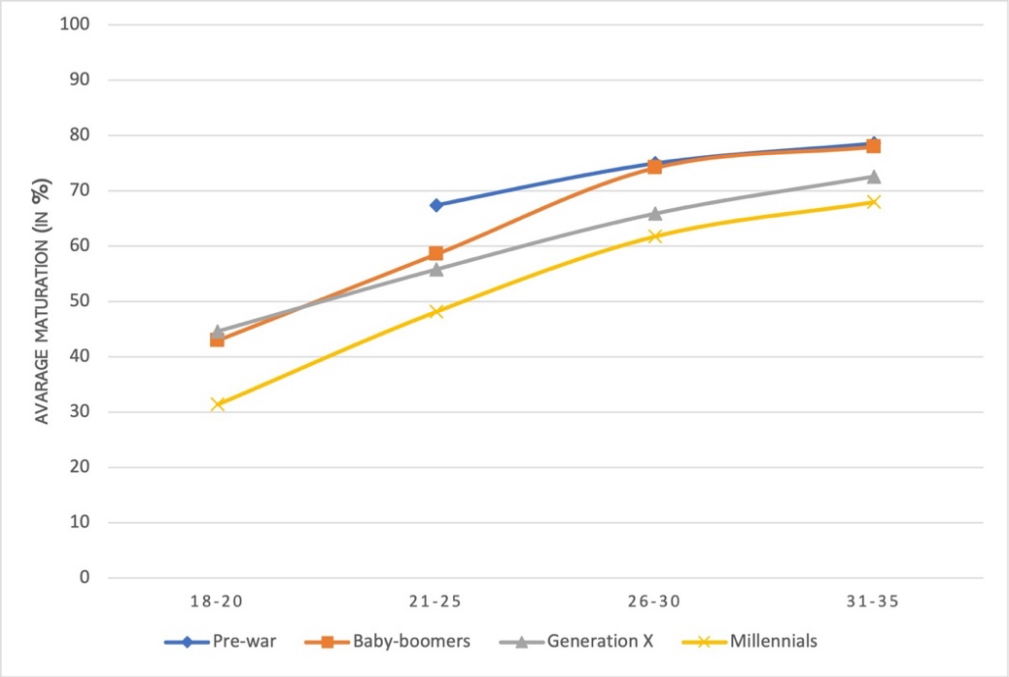


Figure 3 – Average Maturation scores by age-group and generation, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Figure 4 reports the average achievement of each of the life events for the four generations. As noted earlier, the completion of education has been consistently postponed for each generation. By the time they turned 35, all members of the Pre-War generation had completed full-time education. This is true for only 91% of young adults in Generation X, and for 85% of Millennials. Starting a family has undergone even more dramatic changes. While 85% of young adults were married in the Pre-War generation, this decreased to 76% for Baby-Boomers, 52% for Generation X, and just over 40% for Millennials. As to parenting, 70% of young adults in the Pre-War generation reported having children, as opposed to less than 40% of Millennials. The rate of having a full-time job underwent a more modest decrease across generations, in contrast with home ownership which stood at around 60% for the first three generations but decreases to 45% for Millennials. It thus appears that, while each generation experiences a delayed entry into adulthood compared to the one preceding it, this delay is especially pronounced for Millennials, who are increasingly less likely to have experienced most, if any, of the key stages marking their passage into adulthood by the time they turn 35.

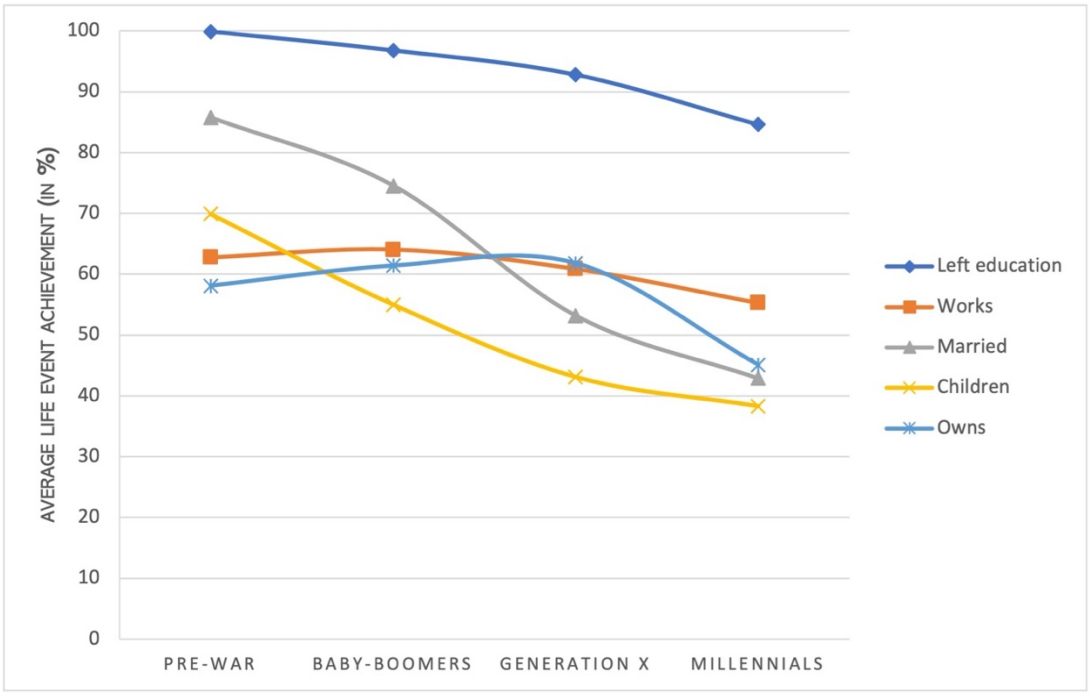


Figure 4 – Average life events achievement by generation at age 35, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

This pattern had also been described by Smets (2016) who identified similar shifts across the 1964-2010 period, and it appears to hold when including more recent data. This suggests that the delay in maturation levels is likely to be a permanent feature of contemporary societies, a process that can have important consequences for voting. If maturation affects not only the likelihood that someone would vote, but also who they would vote for, a delay in reaching certain developmental stages could have profound implications for the political behaviour of those affected by this delay. The models reported in Table 1 explore this possibility for voters aged under 35. Marginal effects from the model can be found in Table 4 of Appendix C.

Model 1 in Table 1 reports the effect of age and of the four political generations on Conservative vote likelihood. The Pre-War generation is the base category and therefore excluded from the model. As expected, all generations are less likely than the Pre-War cohort to vote for the Conservative party, but the effect is not significant for Baby-Boomers, while it is only loosely significant for young adults in Generation X. Millennials, on the other hand, display a large and significant negative effect. The extent to which this is attributable to decreased maturation is tested in Model 2. As expected, the effect of the maturation index is large and positive, suggesting that increases in maturation levels are associated with increased likelihood of voting for the Conservative party. The effect of maturation partly absorbs that of the generational predictors,

which decrease in magnitude. For example, the magnitude of the coefficient for Millennials decreases from -0.995 in Model 1 to -0.822 in Model 2, a reduction of nearly 20 percent.

The effect of maturation thus appears to be particularly important for Millennials. This is further evidenced by the introduction of interactions between the generations and the maturation index in Model 3. For all three generations, higher maturation levels have a positive effect on the Conservative vote. However, the maturation effect is significantly higher for Millennials (*b*=0.249) than it is for Baby-Boomers (*b*=0.190) or Generation X (*b*=0.071, though not statistically significant).

Model 4 adds the demographic controls that are normally considered good predictors of political participation and voting behaviour: education levels, income, trade union membership, and gender. Aside for gender, these all have a statistically significant effect on the Conservative vote. Higher incomes and higher educational levels are associated with increased support for the party, whereas trade union membership is associated with decreased support.

Moreover, while the maturation index is no longer significant in this model, its interaction with the Millennial generation maintains a large and significant effect. This pattern holds in the final model, which controls for three additional predictors of voting: strength of party identification (measured from high to low), perceived differences between parties (measured from high to low), and respondents' electoral volatility. Therefore, the effect of maturation on Conservative voting is particularly strong for Millennials, for whom early maturation is especially rare, while its impact on the voting preferences of previous generations is absorbed by traditional predictors of voting.

To rule out the possibility that maturation would behave in similar ways when voting for other parties, the same analysis was carried out switching the outcome to the Labour vote as well as to the Liberal Democrats vote. The effects from these models are reported in Figures 1 and 2 of Appendix C. Regarding voting for the Labour party, the maturation index is not significant in any of the models, and neither are its interactions with the three generations. Therefore, while maturation has a demonstrable impact on the Conservative vote, and especially so for the Millennial generation, it is not a significant predictor of Labour voting. Increased maturation

also does not appear to be significantly associated with the Liberal Democrats vote, re-confirming its unique influence on Conservative support.

It may also be that the maturation measure is endogenous with the characteristics associated with Conservative voting. For example, home ownership suggests a level of affluence that is traditionally associated with right-wing economic attitudes. This may be especially true for Millennial voters, for whom home ownership is particularly unusual and therefore indicative of wealthier socio-economic backgrounds. To test whether any of the indicators included in the index has a direct independent effect on Conservative support, the analysis was repeated with five alternative maturation indexes, each removing one of the indicators forming the index. Results are plotted in figure 3 of Appendix C. They show that for all generations, altering the maturation index does not significantly change its relationship with Conservative voting. Removing home ownership, rather than decreasing the effect of maturation, triggers an increase in its magnitude. On the other hand, there are two measures whose removal significantly alters the maturation effect: children and marital status. For all generations – Baby-Boom, Generation X, Millennials – the maturation index no longer has a significant positive effect on Conservative voting when excluding these measures. This suggests that, rather than affluence, the effect of maturation on voting may revolve around family values and familial responsibilities.

As the effects of childbearing and marital status are aspects that may also be affected by gender, further analyses were performed where gender (female) is interacted with the maturation index. While being female did not yield a significant effect in the main models presented in this chapter, adding the interaction with maturation turns the gender effect into a significant negative effect (b=–0.526), i.e. under-35 women are on average *less likely* to vote Conservative. The interaction effect, on the other hand, has a significant positive effect (b=0.163), i.e. under-35 women who score higher on the maturation index are *more likely* vote Conservative. Results from these models are reported in Table 7 in Appendix C. These results indicate that more research should be undertaken on the mechanisms behind how the maturation levels of different gender groups within generations affect their political behaviour. The linkage between parenthood and partisanship has been explored in the US but seems to have led to inconsistent results. For example, some studies found that the political activation of parenthood in the early 90s presidential election campaigns triggered a parenthood effect associated with higher Republican

support (e.g. Arnold and Weisberg 1996). More recent studies, however, found that this effect varies greatly by gender, with mothers more likely to be liberal and fathers more likely to be conservative (e.g. Elder and Greene 2011, see also Teney et al. 2022 for similar results in Germany) as well as being reflective of gendered socialisation into parenting roles (e.g. Elder and Greene 2016). Other studies found that this can also depend on the gender of children themselves, as having daughters seem to promote more liberalism and having sons more conservatism (e.g. Oswald and Powdthavee 2010) – although this may vary by social status (Conley and Rauscher 2013). This area appears to be understudied in the UK, where most research on parenthood effects relates to participation rather than partisanship. For example, recent studies have sought to unpack the link between parenthood and political engagement (Grechyna 2022) as well as political leadership (Smith 2017), but not partisanship. As marital status and children appear to have a distinct effect on Conservative voting, this may well be an area worth exploring further.

Table 1 – Young adult Conservative voting by maturation

	β (SE)				
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Age	0.005 (0.009)	-0.021* (0.011)	-0.022* (0.010)	-0.024* (0.010)	-0.044*** (0.011)
Baby-boom	-0.066 (0.110)	-0.038 (0.113)	-0.755* (0.294)	-0.487 (0.271)	-0.609 (0.332)
Generation X	-0.533* (0.269)	-0.446 (0.267)	-0.752* (0.376)	-0.639 (0.384)	-0.750* (0.365)
Millennials	-0.995*** (0.179)	-0.822*** (0.182)	-1.678*** (0.377)	-1.686*** (0.352)	-1.749*** (0.345)
Maturation index		0.263*** (0.033)	0.132* (0.065)	0.030 (0.070)	-0.007 (0.067)
Maturation X Baby-boom			0.190* (0.082)	0.156 (0.080)	0.164 (0.088)
Maturation X Gen x			0.071 (0.088)	0.043 (0.094)	0.081 (0.090)
Maturation X Millennials			0.249** (0.091)	0.230** (0.086)	0.265** (0.086)
Gender (female)				0.034 (0.055)	0.019 (0.060)
Education level				0.076** (0.029)	0.064* (0.033)
Income				0.302*** (0.038)	0.281*** (0.040)
Trade Union member				-0.483*** (0.084)	-0.571*** (0.086)
Strength of party id					-0.049 (0.040)
Perceived party differences					-0.343*** (0.064)
Volatility					-0.829*** (0.098)
constant	-1.013*** (0.306)	-1.255*** (0.287)	-0.728* (0.359)	-1.482*** (0.351)	0.489 (0.521)
Log-likelihood	-6768.436	-6692.305	-6683.019	-6502.861	-6250.985
Psuedo-R2	0.021	0.033	0.034	0.059	0.095
N	13285	13285	13285	13285	13285

British Election Studies (1964-2019), missing values imputed with ICE (m=7)
b coefficients from logit analyses with robust SEs clustered by election in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Panel data analysis

The analysis performed on BES cross-sectional data revealed that changes in generations' maturation levels partly explain why young adults are less likely to vote Conservative than previous generations were at the same age, finding that each increase on the maturation index is associated with increased Conservative-support likelihood. This is especially true for Millennials, suggesting that if certain life-stages were achieved earlier in life, the Conservative vote-share across Millennials would be significantly higher. Yet it might be that this effect is a product of *reverse-causality*. That is, it might be that Conservative-leaning people are more likely to "mature" earlier, e.g. by getting married and having children earlier. To test whether maturation affects party identification and not vice-versa, additional analyses were performed using longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey combined with its more recent version, Understanding Society, and thus covering a period that spans about 30 years, from 1991 to 2020.

The maturation items are the same that were used in the BES data analysis, i.e. leaving full-time education, having a permanent job, owning a home, having ever been married or cohabited, and having children. These items were included in a series of longitudinal regression models with party identification as the binary outcome. The analysis thus tests whether completing the transition on each of the items, is associated with increased support for each of the main British parties – Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrats – thereby establishing a possible causal association. Results of the effects of the individual items and of the combined maturation index are reported in Figures 5a and 5b (the full regression models are reported in Table 8 of Appendix C). These confirm that these life events make Conservative party identification more likely, while they do not have an effect on support for the other parties. Moreover, while the combination of the life-cycle events into the maturation index has a significant effect on Conservative party identification, looking at each item independently reveals that marital status (and, to a lesser extent, home ownership) are the two events driving the maturation effect – confirming earlier findings from the BES cross-sectional data. That means that choosing to get married or cohabit may have a direct causal effect on Conservative party identification, whereby *people who get married become more Conservative* than they were before.

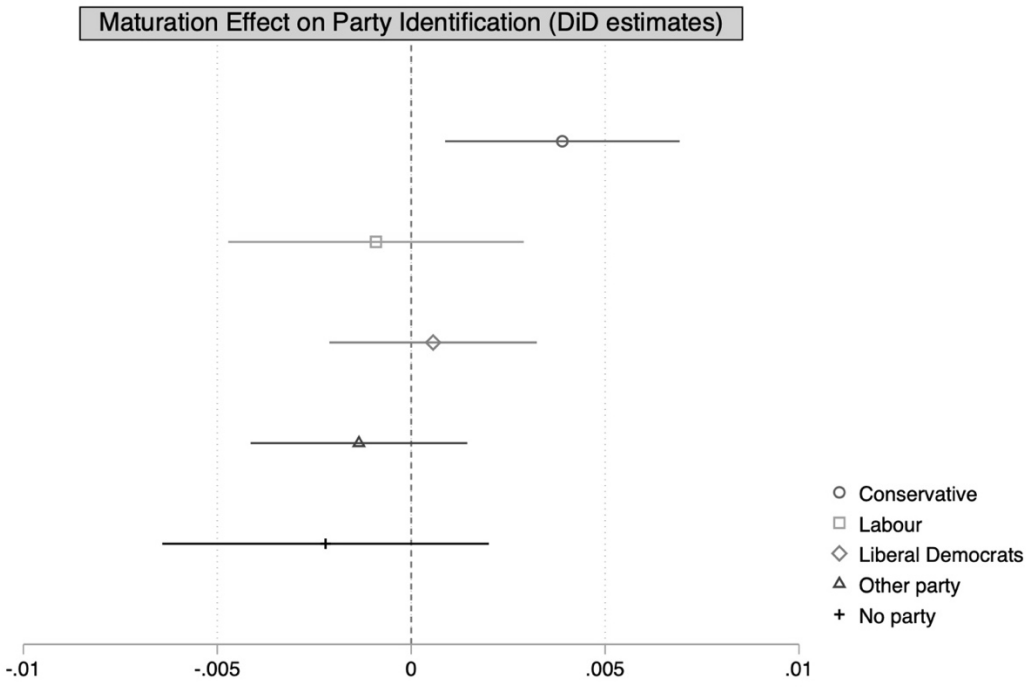


Figure 5a – Estimates from longitudianl regression models of party identification, BHPS and Understanding Society data (1991–2020)

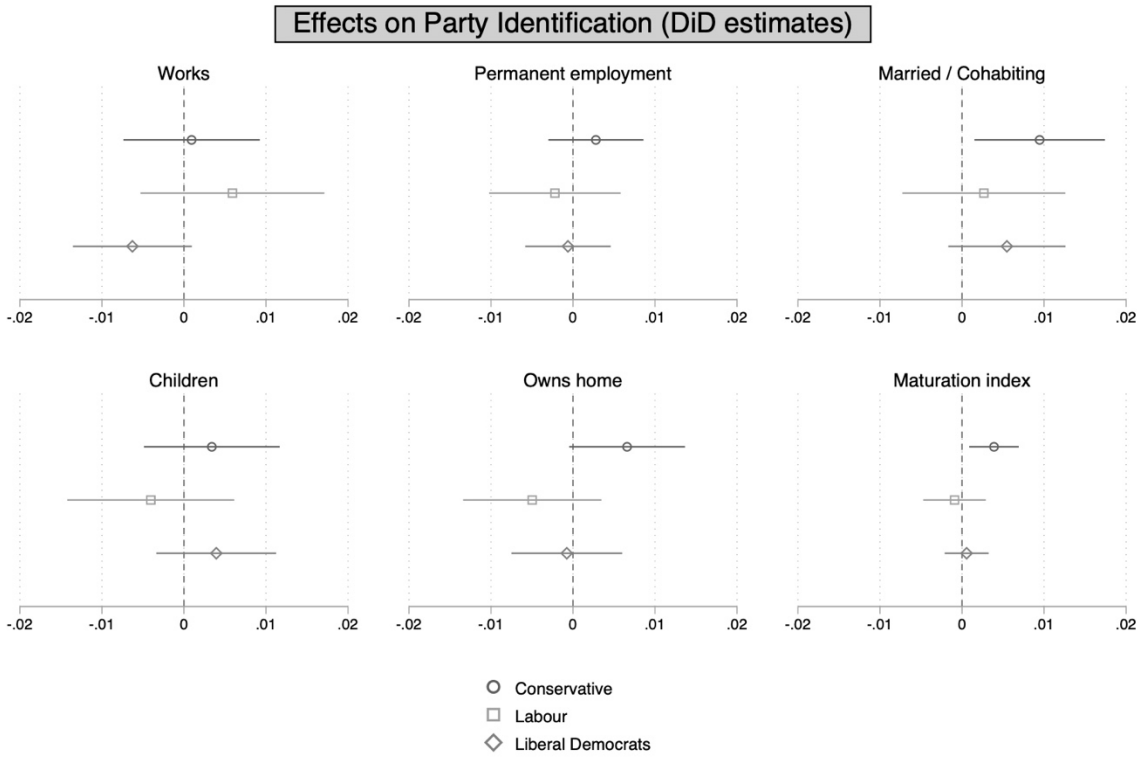


Figure 5b – Estimates from longitudinal regression models of party identification, BHPS and Understanding Society data (1991–2020)

Discussion

The effect of the maturation index and its interaction with the three generations are summarised in Figure 6, which plots the log-odd coefficients from the models reported in in Table 1.

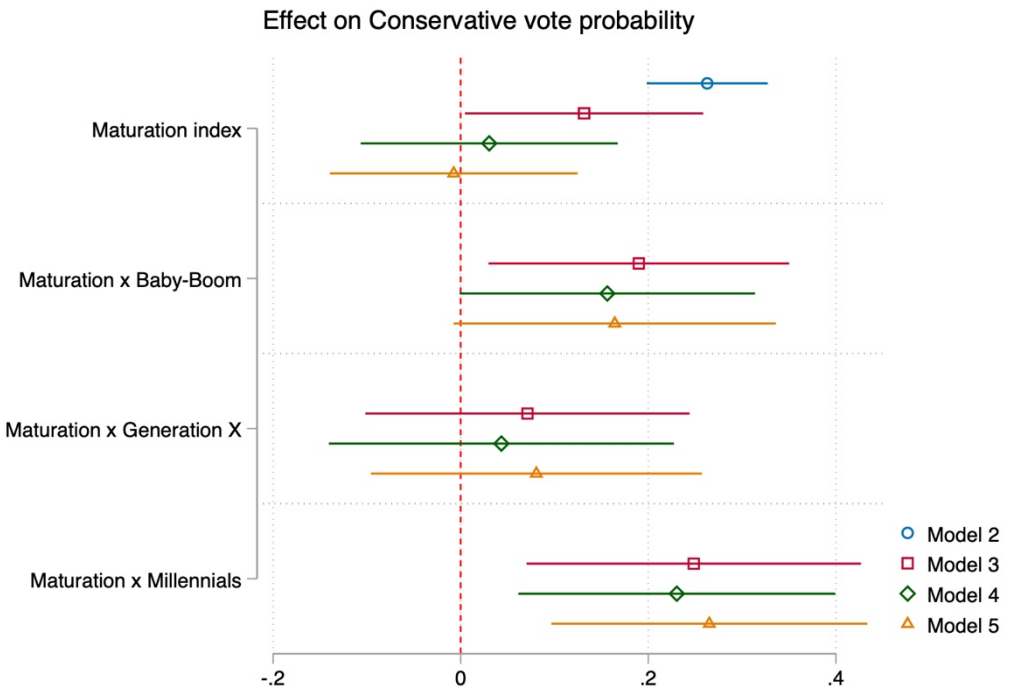


Figure 6 –Effects from the logistic regression models (log-odds), British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

What is striking from these results is that the maturation effect, while not significantly different between young adults in the Pre-War, Baby-Boom and Generation X cohorts, maintains a large and significant effect for Millennials across all models.

In fact, both Millennials' generational effects and their interaction with maturation increase in magnitude in the final model, suggesting that generational differences become even more pronounced when adding more predictors, and that higher maturation levels are especially relevant for Millennials. This means a "mature" Millennial is more likely to vote Conservative than "mature" Baby-Boomers or Generation Xers were at the same age. This finding could be attributable to the fact that the life events included in the maturation index are particularly rare across the Millennial population, and they therefore have a much larger impact for the voting choices of this cohort than they did for previous ones. Moreover, there may be chain effects at

play whereby the lack of certain experiences precludes others. For example, housing uncertainty has been linked with a slower transition to parenthood (Tocchioni et al. 2021).

The marginal effects for each predictor are reported in Appendix C. The Millennial generation has a marginal effect of -0.26, which indicates that these voters are 26 percentage-point *less likely* to support the Conservative party than the Pre-War generation was. The maturation effect for this group, on this other hand, has a marginal effect of 0.040, which indicates that for each increase on the maturation index, young Millennials' chances of voting for the Conservative party increase by 4%. Notably, this effect is as large as that of income – which stands at 0.043 and therefore indicates that each increase in income (here measured in quintiles) is associated with a 4.3% increase in the probability of voting Conservative. Considering that income is normally one of the strongest predictors of Conservative voting, the fact that maturation has a similar impact on Millennials is noteworthy.

Because maturation levels among young adults in the Millennial generation are generally very low, an increase on this index for a Millennial respondent constitutes a far more significant change that sets them apart from their peers much more than would have been the case before, effectively creating a distinctive subgroup. Today's young adults who have fully, or almost fully, completed the transition into adulthood would have different responsibilities as well as different lifestyles to most of their peers. The notion that certain lifestyles can have an effect on voting, and particularly on Conservative voting, has been suggested before. In a study examining the 1997 General Election result, Johnston et al. (2001) depart from theories that attribute party choice to voters' social locations within a compositional structure of social characteristics, and instead consider spatial locations – the contextual geographies within which political behaviour is socialised and mobilised. This idea follows the notion whereby electoral decision-making is influenced by information flows within voters' socio-spatial milieux, such as home neighbourhoods, workplaces, and formal and informal social organisations – many of which are spatially restricted – with the implicit process being "conversion by conversation". Analysing the spatial breakdown of the 1997 vote, Johnston et al. (2001) find that the differences between "life-style areas" were much more substantial than was the case with any occupational or educational

classifications. While the Conservatives were not the largest-supported party in any of the social locations covered, they were the leading party in three out of ten spatial locations they analyse[11].

These findings are consistent with Giddens' (1984) argument on structurisation: agents draw on structural resources in determining how to act, and structurisation occurs in interaction settings that are relatively elastic spatial locations where resources are sited. Most individuals occupy a variety of locales, such as trade unions, workplaces, educational institutions, or neighbourhood social networks, and they therefore draw on a mosaic of political structures to form their social and political identity. Localised networks are thus crucial components in the decision-making process, with people apparently influenced at least as much by the nature of the places they live in and the interactions with those in their surroundings, as by their positions in society. Within this framework, it may well be that young adults from the Millennial generation who display higher maturation levels than their peers do not share their peers' spatial locations, rather they find themselves closer to older age groups in both life-style and responsibilities, and possibly geographical neighbourhoods too. If that were the case, it would not be surprising that "mature" young adults behave more in line with older adults from previous generations than with their counterparts, effectively explaining why maturation has such a striking impact on generally "immature" Millennials.

These results further raise the question as to why Millennials in their late 30s and early 40s do not seem to replicate the levels of Conservative support shown by prior generations, despite going through a lot of maturation. A possible explanation here can be found in theories of political socialisation. The maturation delay implies that Millennials do not form a habit of voting Conservative early in life. Rather, they form the habit of abstaining or voting Labour. The persistence of these identification and behavioural patterns throughout the life-cycle may thus explain why Millennial vote-switching becomes less likely later in life, despite having reached full maturity. This is in line with previous research on the pervasive influence of the political behaviours developed in young adulthood. The formation of political attitudes, engagement, and

[11] The spatial locations are: *affluent achievers* (high-income families with matching life-styles), *thriving grays* (older than affluent achievers, possibly on early retirement), *settled suburbans* (families well-settled in suburban homes), *nest builders* ('thirtysomethings' who have recently started a family), *urban venturers* (cosmopolitan, multiracial groups), *country life* (rural communities), *senior citizens* (elderly groups living in small, sheltered accommodation), *producers* (more affluent blue-collar workers), *hard-pressed families* (living in council estates and without steady employment), *have-nots* (single-parent families, living in overcrowded flats and largely unemployed).

participation patterns is believed to be a process that starts at a young age and continues throughout a person's life (Hess and Torney 1967; Easton and Dennis 1969; Niemi and Jennings 1981; Rekker et al. 2017). Many researchers agree that the teenage and early adulthood years are especially significant in developing political attitudes and behaviours, as people at this age are more open to external influences such as personal, social, cultural, political, and historical experiences. This period is referred to as the "impressionable" or "formative" years, where individuals have not yet established set political attitudes and habits. The specific age range for the impressionable years is contested, but most studies suggest that the critical period for establishing behavioural patterns is between the ages of 17 and 25 (e.g. Niemi and Jennings 1981; Erikson et al. 2002; Ghitza and Gelman 2014).

One important implication of this strand of research is the belief that early experiences can shape a person's political attitudes for a long time. This idea is supported by studies which suggest that early voting experiences have a lasting impact on participation (e.g. Plutzer 2002; Franklin 2004; Dinas 2012) and vote choice (Tilley 2002). However, other scholars argue that citizens update their preferences and behaviours over their lifetime through important life events and government performance in various policy areas, suggesting lifelong plasticity (Marsh 1971; Alwin and Krosnick 1991; Fiorina 1981; Gerber and Green 1998; Achen 2002). To compare these two hypotheses, Bartels and Jackman (2014) developed a mathematical model that estimates opinion change as a result of both political shocks experienced over one's lifetime, and the weight given to these shocks as people age. Their estimates suggest that an individual's opinion at any given time is an average of past political experiences, and they find little evidence to support the idea that recent events or experiences in early adulthood have a disproportionately strong influence. This has important implications for Millennials' attitudes and behavioural patterns, as the lack of the experiences that promote Conservative voting, coupled with the development of other voting habits, suggests the impact of these experiences will be less significant if they are achieved later in life.

These findings raise a number of questions for the party. Generational replacement suggests that it is only a matter of time before the Conservatives could face an electoral wipe-out. If they are serious about regaining the trust of young voters, they should make concrete efforts to ease the

transition into adulthood. This includes making the housing market more accessible, but also incentivising childbearing with welfare measures aimed at relieving the financial pressure associated with childcare and education.

Chapter 3

The impact of party appeals on the age gap in voting preferences

Introduction

As evidenced in previous chapters, young people often hold distinctive political preferences and behaviours from other groups. Youth in advanced industrial democracies are today faced by a particularly tough environment: budget cuts have reduced public spending on services which young people were high users of, and the labour market has become hostile to new entrants, leading to high levels of youth unemployment. The chaos resulting from the global financial crisis revealed a lack of intergenerational solidarity, a shift in power supported by demographic trends and electoral turnout. At the same time, political structures contribute to the alienation of young voters. In Britain, for example, the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system provides little incentive for politicians to engage with young people, who notoriously vote in small numbers, and squeezes out third parties and emergent parties, who tend to be particularly popular among this cohort (e.g. Sloam 2014; Sloam and Henn 2018; Henn et al. 2017).

Young people thus often bear much of the burden stemming from socio-economic changes, from rising youth unemployment to precarious housing and education policies, but they are rarely involved in decision-making processes around these issues, further feeding into their alienation from politics. The fact that many of the major political parties in democratic polities have dedicated youth sections is also indicative of the need for policy directed at younger cohorts. Recent elections in the UK saw an increase in both the participation of, and the focus on, young voters. As noted in earlier chapters, the 2017 UK General Election signalled a change in youth participation. Whether young people turned out to vote at a much higher rate than previously is still the subject of debate (e.g. see Prosser et al. 2018), but what became undoubtedly apparent with that election was the renewed focus on this cohort, both in the way the Labour party directly campaigned to attract youth support, and in the Conservative party's *mea culpa* in the election's aftermath. In an official review of the results, former Tory chairman Sir Eric Pickles suggested re-establishing the party's youth wing as part of attempts to engage with younger voters, as well as to consider investing in bursaries and training colleges to give young Conservative supporters the political debating, speaking and writing skills necessary for a career in politics (*The Guardian*,

September 2017). The interest in appealing to younger voters was renewed during the Conservative leadership contest of 2019, when a study by centre-right think-tank Onward found that the age when people were most likely to vote Conservative had increased from 47 to 51 with the 2017 election. The report further noted that just 17 percent of Conservative voters were under the age of 45, and only 4 percent under the age of 25 (Tanner, O'Brien, Kanagasooriam 2019), leading the think-tank's director to state that the biggest threat to the Conservatives' future was the growing age gap in voting intention, and that the only way to retain a majority would be to focus on winning over a younger generation of voters or the party would risk being pushed to the sidelines and become unable to govern (Financial Times, 2019). Yet, despite efforts to appeal to younger voters, the age gap evidenced at every previous election persisted in 2019 (Sloam and Henn 2019). The Labour party underperformed across all ages compared to the previous election, but maintained a 30-percentage point advantage over the Conservatives across the under 30s. The Conservative party, on the other hand, increased their support-base among older age groups. Whilst the tipping point of vote-switching between the two main parties was reduced to 39, YouGov reported that "for every 10 years older a voter is, their chance of voting Tory increases by around nine points, and the chance of them voting Labour decreases by eight points" (YouGov 2019).

Research questions and contribution

Within the framework described above, it is unsurprising that the growing relevance of age as driver of political behaviour has been the object of much research in recent years. Yet most explanations of why certain age groups vote the way they do revolve around bottom-up, demand-side factors, and typically consider how certain voter characteristics influence political attitudes. These overlook the role played by parties themselves in shaping issues and attracting voters. Recent research by Thau (2018, 2019) explored the extent to which British political parties use group-based appeals and how these have changed over the years. Looking at electoral manifestos between 1964 and 2015, they find that both the frequency of appeals and range of groups targeted have increased over the years, and that these appeals are increasingly geared towards 'non-economic groups' such as the elderly, the youth, the ill, families, and parents. While their analysis is aimed at exploring the range and frequency of appeals, rather than their effect on voting, they do identify the young and old as part of the groups being targeted more frequently. Most of the other studies on the effects of group appeals in campaign rhetoric primarily focus

on traits such as gender, race, religion (e.g. Hersh & Schaffner 2013; Holman et al. 2015; Kam et al. 2017; Ostfeld 2019; Philpot 2007; Swigger, 2012; Weber & Thornton, 2012) or class (e.g. Robinson et al. 2020; Horn et al. 2020), but not age. A further limitation is that research on group appeals tends to only consider appeals that directly mention the groups involved (e.g. 'workers', 'business owners', 'single parents'), but previous chapters have highlighted how the issues championed by different age groups are not always obviously linked with group members themselves. For example, high levels of support for same-sex marriage are associated with the youth much more than with older cohorts (e.g. Fischer 2017), yet the issue of same-sex marriage *per se* does not have age connotations.

This chapter contributes to this debate by shifting the focus from voters to parties and assessing whether age-based group appeals have an impact on the age gap in party support. If voters are indeed responsive to the cultural and economic climate present in the run up to an election, it can be expected that policy offerings that are formulated along the age-divide will have an impact on this gap. This is tested through a survey experiment run on a representative sample of the British voting population, who is presented with group appeals adapted from the Labour and Conservative 2019 electoral manifestos. These age-based appeals are both symbolic and substantive in nature, and cover both economic and cultural issues. Importantly, while the first chapter of the thesis sought to examine how ideological dimensions affect the voting behaviour of different age groups and generations, this chapter examines instead how specific policy stances and proposals (which are in turn part of broader ideological dimensions) affect voting. It further seeks to establish whether appeals that are merely symbolic or more substantive in nature affect voting in different ways, and whether their partisan origin further mediates levels of support. Against expectations, results show that appeals directed at the youth do not trigger a decrease in support from older voters. This is the case even for appeals containing young citizens' cultural policy preferences. Moreover, while Labour has a clear advantage on youth support, the Conservative party is able to close this gap with proposals in line with the preferences of this cohort – especially around the issue of university tuition fees.

The chapter is organised so that the first section reviews the literature on group appeals and their effect on voting, the second section outlines the hypotheses stemming from this review, the third

section describes the experiment design, the fourth section presents the results of the experiment, and the final section discusses these results and their implications for electoral mobilisation.

Theoretical background

How the content of appeals affects behaviour: a review of the literature on spatial and group voting

The literature on the ways in which voters judge the policy stances of candidates converges along three theories. *Proximity theories* assume that voters prefer candidates whose proposals are closest to their own preferences (Downs 1957). *Discounting theories* hold that voters know candidates cannot fully deliver on their pledges, and therefore choose candidates who can best deliver on the most desirable outcomes (Grofman 1985; Fiorina 1992). *Directional theories* posit that voters perceive the political space as two-sided and would normally choose the candidate on the same side as themselves. If the candidates are all on the same side as the voter, they would choose the one who campaigns most intensively on the issue, whereas when all candidates are on the opposite side of the voter, they would choose the one that campaigns least intensively (Rabinowitz and McDonald 1989).

Besides closeness to one's personal preferences, the issues that matter most to voters are often tied with the *groups* these voters belong to. A group perspective on political behaviour takes collective factors such as the protection of shared interests as the basis for candidate support. Political cohesion may be especially likely when multiple identities converge (Huddy 2015). Roccas and Brewers (2002), for example, developed the concept of *identity overlap* and measured it as the degree to which groups share similar members or attributes, which is in turn expected to generate stronger or less complex identities (see also Bornschier et al. 2021). Cultural and socio-economic identities have converged in this way in recent years, generating stronger partisan identities that counteract the process of dealignment triggered by the decline of class conflict and class voting. In fact, despite this decline, there is abundant evidence that objective social structural location continues to matter for electoral preferences (as evidenced with maturation in Chapter 2). This supports the theory of electoral realignment rooted in evolving, rather than fixed, social structures. Left- and right-wing parties are located at opposing poles of a new divide that crystallised in the 80s and 90s throughout North America and Western Europe – a divide

centred heavily on issues such as cultural liberalism and immigration, the environment, but also redistributive preferences (cf Chapter 1). Ford and Jennings (2020) describe it as a new cleavage structure, and outline how interlocking and economic developments are transforming the composition of European electorates, creating conditions where new cleavages have emerged. These changes include the expansion of higher education and the emergence of graduates as a distinctive electorate; the growth of ethnic minority communities; the reactions to political marginalisation of socially conservative, ethnic majority voters with low levels of formal education; the growth in size of older cohorts due to increases in life expectancy; and the emergence of geographical cleavages reflecting the cosmopolitan-conservative divide. Against this background, social identities are important for explaining recent electoral outcomes. Subjective identities affect vote-choice both via informing programmatic policy demands and via non-programmatic mechanisms such as group norms (Bornschier et al, 2021).

While we know that age has come to constitute an increasingly important identity demarcation because of the socio-economic characteristics and cultural attitudes associated with different life stages and political generations, we still know very little about the ways in which political parties respond to this divide, and even less about how this response affects participation. Previous studies on group-appeals can guide research into the matter. Testing the *efficiency* of group-appeals, Hersh and Schaffner (2013) find that, against expectations, these have no effect on increasing support among group members, but they have a *negative effect* on the support of non-group members, thus warning against the possible consequences of mistargeting appeals.

The success of appeals in driving support can also depend on whether these are *symbolic*, i.e., they merely mention certain groups in society but do not put forward specific policies, or *substantive*, i.e., they identify group interests and offer clear policies that these groups could benefit from. Testing the effectiveness of class appeals in Denmark and the US, Robison et al. (2020) find that in both cases appeals to the working class increase support among members of this group, and that policy-based appeals have the same effect as symbolic appeals in mobilising working class support. Politicians may therefore choose symbolic appeals over policy-focused ones in an effort not to alienate voters with strong pre-existing policy preferences (e.g. see Dickson and Scheve 2006). The finding is echoed by Tomz and Van Houweling (2009), who also report that voters are as likely to support ambiguous candidates as they are to support candidates who offer more

specific proposals. Importantly, they find that ambiguity can increase support among those who do not have strong partisan affiliations, while it makes no difference for those who do. This is possibly because when voters know less about a candidate, they can project their own values and preferences upon them.

Besides the content of appeals, candidate traits can also influence support across different groups. For example, Han (2009) found that appeals disclosing some personal details on the person making the appeal are more effective in mobilising participation, although the extent to which *shared* demographic characteristics influence participation has been questioned more recently (e.g. see Brookman et al. 2022). McDonald and Deckman (2021) found that Generation Z (i.e. those born after 1996) have distinct candidate preferences from those of previous generations. For example, they are more likely to prefer women and ethnic minority candidates, who have been historically penalised by other cohorts. A further way in which candidate traits can affect support is by defying or complying with the expectations voters have of them. In this respect, Hayes (2005) found that candidates who display a trait not normally associated with the party they represent can have a positive effect on support. By testing the effect of candidate evaluations on vote-choice in seven US presidential elections, they find that voters are more likely to support a Democrat when they present themselves as unusually strong leaders, and Republicans when they come across as especially empathetic. The pattern persists even when broken down by the respondents' own party identification.

How political and socio-economic priorities affect behaviour: a review of the literature on generational attitudes and preferences

Due to the changing nature of socio-economic conditions over time, people from different generations emphasize different political values and priorities, and the generational political divide present today is unprecedented over at least the last half century. Across much of the Western world, the youngest generation of adults, Millennials, have developed distinct political leanings that are much closer to the parties on the left than before. For example, since entering the electorate in significant numbers in the early 2000s, across both the US and the UK Millennials have supported the parties on the left at a much higher rate than previous generations at their age did (Fisher 2017; Sloam and Henn 2018, 2019). The Millennial preference for liberal

parties is consistent with their ideological self-identification. In fact, in the US, Fisher (2017) finds that on policy issues such as gay marriage, defence spending, immigration, government services, global warming, aid to the poor, and abortion, Millennials are more liberal than the Silent or Pre-war Generation. The differences in some of these preferences is so large that generational replacement can be expected to change public policy. Similar changes have occurred in the UK, where voters under the age of 30 are twice as likely as their older counterparts to consider the environment the most important political issue and express feelings of anxiety in relation to climate change (YouGov 2019; ONS 2021), as well as to hold progressive views on sexual minority and transgender rights (YouGov 2020).

While young voters are associated with low engagement with politics, there have been instances where their participation was found to be uncharacteristically high. This was the case, for example, at the 2008 US presidential election, when Obama successfully mobilised young voters with a message of hope and change that responded to their disillusionment. The presidential campaigns of senator Sanders followed a similar approach and were effective in gathering youth support (e.g. see Wattenberg 2020). In the UK, the increase in the political activism of young voters has largely been attributed to former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (Sloam and Henn 2018), who dedicated a significant part of the 2017 electoral campaign to this cohort. As demonstrated by these events, when candidates address young people's issues and desires, we observe relatively high levels of youth engagement and participation. Rather than being inherently apathetic to the political arena, young voters have a cynical view of politics because the issues most important to them rarely make it onto a party's platform (e.g. Lawless and Fox 2015). For example, Haenschen and Jennings (2019) conducted an experiment to test the efficacy of targeted internet ads on Millennial turnout in a local election in Dallas. While ads were found to be effective in increasing turnout across the cohort, the increase was modest (0.52%), leading the authors to conclude that while exposure to information can have an impact, this is negligible if the information voters receive does not inspire them to participate. Therefore, it may well be that policy proposals oriented towards younger generations can provide a path for engaging these voters. In this respect, LaCombe and Juelich (2019) found that the inclusion of education policy reform and marijuana legalisation in ballot measures – two issues where US Millennials display the highest levels of support for – significantly increased turnout across of this cohort. The effect was large enough to cancel out any differences with older generations.

As theorised by Lipset (1959), one factor affecting turnout is how relevant government policies are to the individual. In this view, the previous chapter highlighted how voting preferences can largely depend on material conditions derived from life-cycle effects. But this can also be extended to group-voting. Groups that see a visible effect of policy on their well-being have a greater stake in government activity and participate at higher rates than would be expected of them. The elderly are a case in point because their socio-economic background, often characterised by low incomes and low education levels, would suggest low participation levels. Yet they are arguably the group that votes at the highest rates. Campbell (2002, 2003) identified their dependence on welfare as the reason behind their activism. She describes how in the United States, Social Security has stimulated and shaped senior citizens' political participation, which, in turn, has greatly influenced policy making for Social Security. Before Social Security, seniors participated equal to, or even less than, younger groups of Americans; afterwards they became the most active segment of the population. Moreover, Campbell's analysis of roll-call voting of conservative Republicans in Congress reveals seniors' political leverage. Despite their anti-government conservatism, these legislators vote in a more pro-Social Security direction as the proportion of elderly constituents in their state or district rises. Nygård and Jakobsson (2013) drew similar conclusions regarding elderly populations in Finland, who reported increased activism in both institutionalised and unconventional forms of participation around the time of the 2005 Finnish pension reform, as well as when they perceive negative attitudes towards their group.

The run-up to the 2019 UK General Election saw a significant surge in youth voter registration, with the Electoral Reform Society estimating that two-thirds of the three million people who registered in the month before the deadline were under 35 (The Times, 2019). Most parties devoted sections of their manifestos to policies geared towards the youth, and the Labour party even launched a dedicated "Youth Manifesto". Of all the policies proposed by the three main parties – which ranged from mental health provisions to university fees, environmental protection, employment, housing, sexual minority rights, broadband and transport – the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats presented the most detailed proposals, with clear aims and funding plans, while the Conservatives maintained a vaguer and more restrained approach. For instance, on LGBT and gender issues Labour promised a string of measures including the

establishment of a large Cultural Capital Fund, reforming the Gender Recognition Act of 2004, eliminating areas of discrimination in law, and reforming school curricula to include content on inclusive relationships and sex education. The Conservatives proposals on the matter, on the other hand, only included hosting an international LGBT conference. Similarly, on the issue of housing the Labour party proposed a new housebuilding programme, reforming the Help to Buy scheme to focus on first-time buyers, and introducing rent controls and binding minimum standards amongst other measures, while the Conservatives promised measures to reduce the cost of mortgage deposits and the abolition of no-fault evictions. In this context, it is unsurprising that the Labour-Conservative voting age-gap increased from the previous election.

Hypotheses

The studies discussed in the previous sections are helpful in defining some expectations on what effect age-based group-appeals could have on party support. For example, within the context of increasing antagonism between young and old voters, do these groups respond differently to symbolic and substantive appeals? Does appealing to one group hamper support across the other? And do candidates who defy the expectations voters have of them perform better compared with those who do not? Drawing from these studies, it seems plausible to assume that if there were greater policy offerings geared towards the issues most relevant to young voters, political parties would be able to attract increased youth support. How this would affect the support levels of other cohorts, however, is less clear. If on the one hand it could be expected that it would also have a positive impact, or no impact at all, it may well be that focusing on youth policies – especially the more controversial ones, such as those around gender and sexuality – could push older cohorts to retaliate.

Considering spatial theories of voting and the existing evidence on what drives youth turnout, the first hypothesis to be investigated postulates that:

H1 – Voters will display higher support for the party whose appeals are closest to the preferences of their age group, so that young voters will display higher support for a party championing young people's issues

Considering spatial theories of voting, as well as previous evidence on voters penalising parties who mistarget them (e.g. Hersh and Shaffner 2013), the second hypothesis postulates that:

H2 – Voters will penalise a party whose appeals are directed towards an age group they do not belong to, so that older voters will penalise a party championing young people's issues

Considering the mixed evidence on whether voters prefer parties who make policy proposals with clear aims and goals over vague appeals (e.g. Robinson et al. 2020; Tomz and Van Houweling 2009), two competing hypotheses can be investigated:

H3a – Substantive economic and cultural appeals will have a larger effect on support than symbolic appeals
H3b – Substantive economic and cultural appeals will have the same effect on support as symbolic appeals

Considering previous research in this thesis finding that, across all voters, economic values still exert a strong effect on voting relative to cultural attitudes, the fourth hypothesis postulates that:

H4 – Economic appeals will have the largest effect on support for both older and younger voters

Considering evidence that candidates holding traits not expected by voters can have a larger effect in swaying support (e.g. Hayes 2005), the final hypothesis postulates that:

H5 – Appeals not expected by a certain party (e.g. a Conservative candidate pledging to scrap tuition fees or to expand transgender people's rights) will have a larger effect on support than those from expected parties

Data and Methods

The extent to which appeals to certain age groups such as the ones outlined above do affect the voting behaviour of these groups can be best tested through a survey experiment. This is in line with most of the research previously carried out to examine how campaign rhetoric affects support and behaviour. In this case, the best type of experiment is a *priming* experiment in which participants consider a number of campaign appeals and policy proposals by a political candidate before being asked whether they would support that candidate in an election. These include both

substantive and *symbolic* appeals, and both economic appeals (such as proposals towards tuition fees) and cultural "postmaterialist" appeals (such as proposals on environmental and identity issues).

Experimental design

In the experiment, respondents are randomly assigned across a 2x5 design wherein they are asked to evaluate a candidate for the Westminster parliament. Voters rely on cognitive shortcuts to determine which politician deserves their vote, and chief among these is partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960). Moreover, the presence of a party cue here is crucial because it provides an anchor against which respondents can evaluate the candidate in the absence of an age-based appeal. As people are likely to already have some beliefs about the relationship between parties and age groups, the party cue also means that we can tell whether candidates from the two parties can both appeal to the same group, or if their existing reputations swamps such efforts. Therefore, the partisanship of the candidate is randomly assigned such that they are either from the Conservative Party or the Labour Party.

First, all respondents are asked demographic and political behaviour questions. Participants are then randomly assigned to five groups:

- Control group: generic electoral appeal with no age appeal
- Treatment group 1: symbolic appeal pitting the young vs the old
- Treatment group 2: substantive cultural/post-materialist appeal
- Treatment group 3: substantive economic (age-based) appeal
- Treatment group 4: substantive economic appeal (no age appeal)

The experiment was fielded by polling agency Survation in May 2022. The survey was answered by 1026 respondents, but the treatment assignment was repeated twice to reach the target of at least 400 respondents in each treatment group. This is well above the generally agreed minimum requirement of 100 respondents per treatment group (Mutz 2011), ensuring high power and ruling out the possibility of Type I and Type II errors – false positive or false negative results. The final experimental sample thus contains 2052 observations. Appendix D reports the

treatment distribution, as well as the sample distribution by age, gender, educational attainment, income and voting patterns.

The most important manipulation concerns the age-based appeal the candidate makes or does not make. To ensure the experiment is consistent with real-life conditions as much as possible, the appeals respondents are presented with are based on real campaign proposals from the 2019 General Election (iNews 2019). All respondents first see the following message:

Suppose that there was a candidate from the [Labour/Conservative] Party running to represent your constituency in the House of Commons.

Each treatment group then receives an extension of this message:

[Group 1 – generic appeal/control condition] *Suppose the candidate recently said: "If elected, I will do everything to fulfil the wishes of my constituents".*

[Group 2 – symbolic age-based appeal] *Suppose the candidate recently said: "A lot of attention has been given to the elderly in recent political debates. We in the [Conservative/Labour] Party believe it is time for politicians to prioritise the interests of the youth".*

[Group 3 – substantive cultural appeal: transgender rights] *Suppose the candidate recently said: "Gender identity is an important aspect of people's lives and should not cause undue suffering. We in the [Conservative/Labour] Party will make it easier to change one's legal gender, expand transgender people's rights and freedoms, and promote inclusive education in schools".*

[Group 4 – substantive economic appeal] *Suppose the candidate recently said: "Young people increasingly face economic hardship when pursuing further education and paying off education debt. We in the [Conservative/Labour] Party believe it is time to scrap tuition fees, reinstate maintenance grants, erase previous loans interest rate payments and make university more accessible to all".*

[Group 5 – substantive economic appeal with no age appeal] *Suppose the candidate recently said: "With rising inflation, Britons increasingly face economic hardship. We in the [Conservative/Labour] Party*

believe it is time to introduce a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour for all workers aged 16 and over and ban zero-hour contracts".

Finally, all respondents are asked:

On a scale of 0 to 10 – where 0 corresponds to "would not vote for this candidate" and 10 to "certain to vote for this candidate" – how likely are you to vote for this candidate?

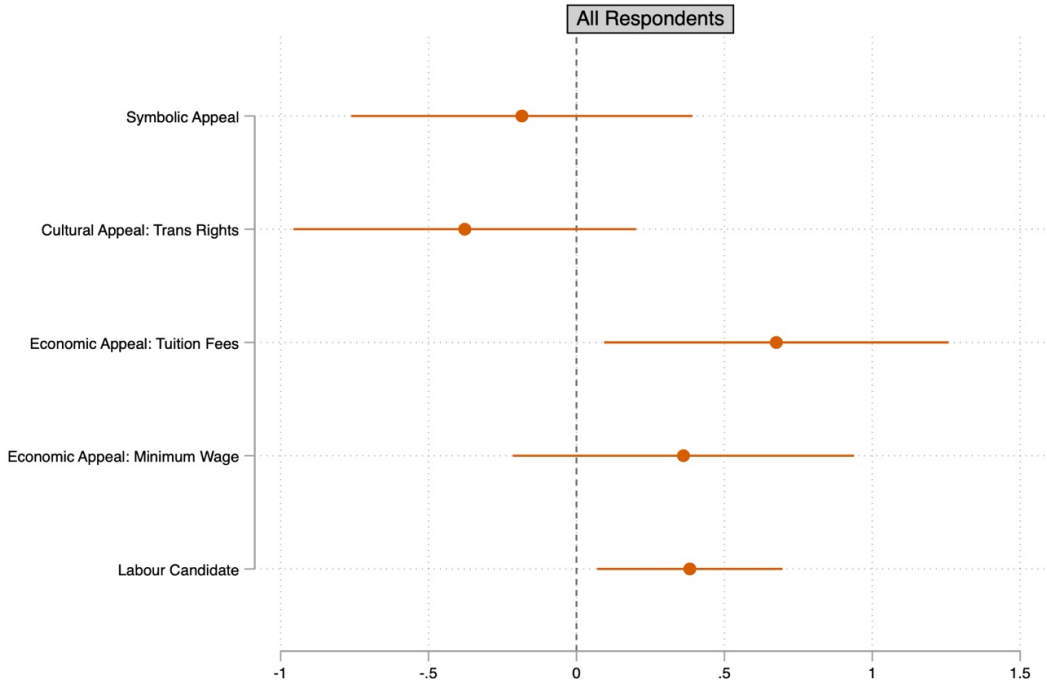
Results

Figure 1[12] reports the effects of each treatment condition on candidate support levels compared to the control group, for all respondents of the survey. To account for partisan effects, the analysis also controls for whether the appeals were made by a Labour candidate. Notably, only the appeal on tuition fees has a positive and significant effect, suggesting that the issue of higher education costs matters to most voters irrespective of their age group or partisanship.

Figure 2.1 reports the effect of the different treatment conditions on the support levels of voters under 35 and over 60, compared to the control group. As evidenced by the plot, for young voters most treatment conditions have a significant positive effect on candidate support, except for the cultural appeal concerning the rights that should be attributed to the trans community, which is positive but not significant. It thus appears that, for younger voters, economic and symbolic appeals exert a greater influence on candidate support than cultural statements. Wald tests on the coefficients confirm this, as for young voters the effect of the minimum wage appeal is significantly larger than the effect of the trans rights appeal (p=0.02).

[12] The regression models behind all figures presented in this chapter are reported in Appendix D.

Figure 1 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (0-10 scale)



Turning to older voters, none of the conditions appear to have a statistically significant effect on their support levels compared to the control condition. This suggests that older voters do not increase their support for candidates advocating youth-friendly policies, but neither do they penalise them for espousing a policy that does not pertain the interests of their age group, even in the case of symbolic appeals that go directly against their interests. For older voters too it seems that economic appeals have a larger effect than cultural ones, as Wald tests show that the effect of the tuition fees appeal is significantly larger than the effects of all other appeals (tuition fees v symbolic appeal p=0.01; tuition fees v trans rights p=0.03; tuition fees v minimum wage p=0.07).

Figure 2.2 reports the predictive margins on vote likelihood from the interaction between the two age groups and the party appeals. The figure confirms that the policy proposals have a larger effect on the support likelihood of respondents under 35, than on respondents over the age of 60. Importantly, none of the appeals has a negative effect. Therefore, while appeals are more likely to attract youth support, they do not seem to cause a backlash among older voters.

Figure 2.1 – Treatment effects on young and old voters

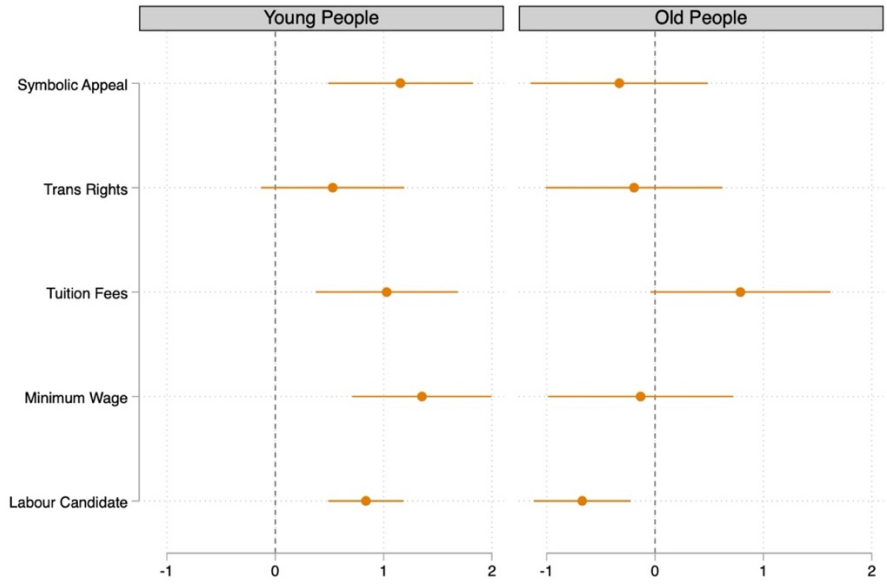


Figure 2.2 – Predictive margins of treatment effects

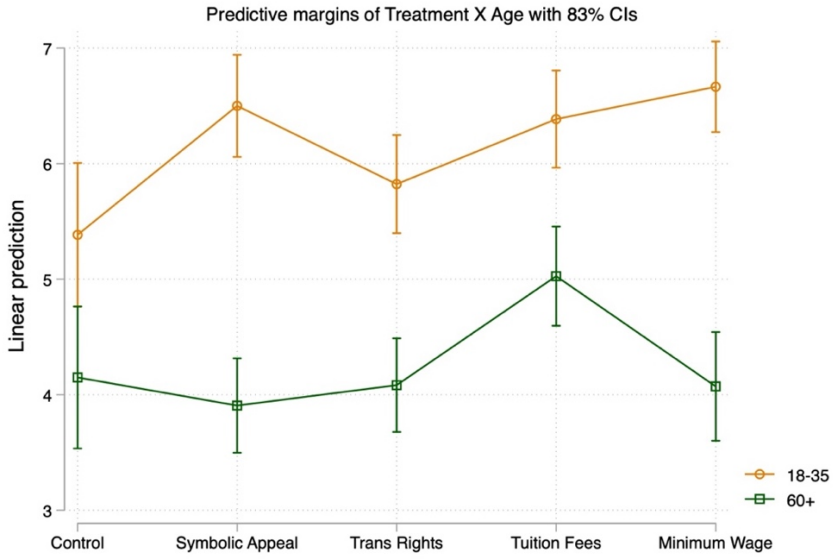


Figure 3.1 reports the predictive margins on vote likelihood, by whether the fictional candidate was from the Labour or Conservative party. In all cases but that of older voters, the Labour candidate has an advantage in the control condition. However, the appeals seem to close the partisan gap. This is the case even for younger voters who display the strongest pro-Labour support. On the issue of tuition fees in particular, the effect of the two appeals becomes indistinguishable for this cohort.

Even more striking is perhaps the effect of the appeal to increase the minimum wage on older respondents. For this group, a Conservative candidate making the appeal triggers an increase in support that is twice as large that of Labour. Moreover, none of the appeals that would traditionally not be associated with the Conservative party results in a *decrease* in support.

Figure 3.1 – Effects of Labour and Conservative Appeals

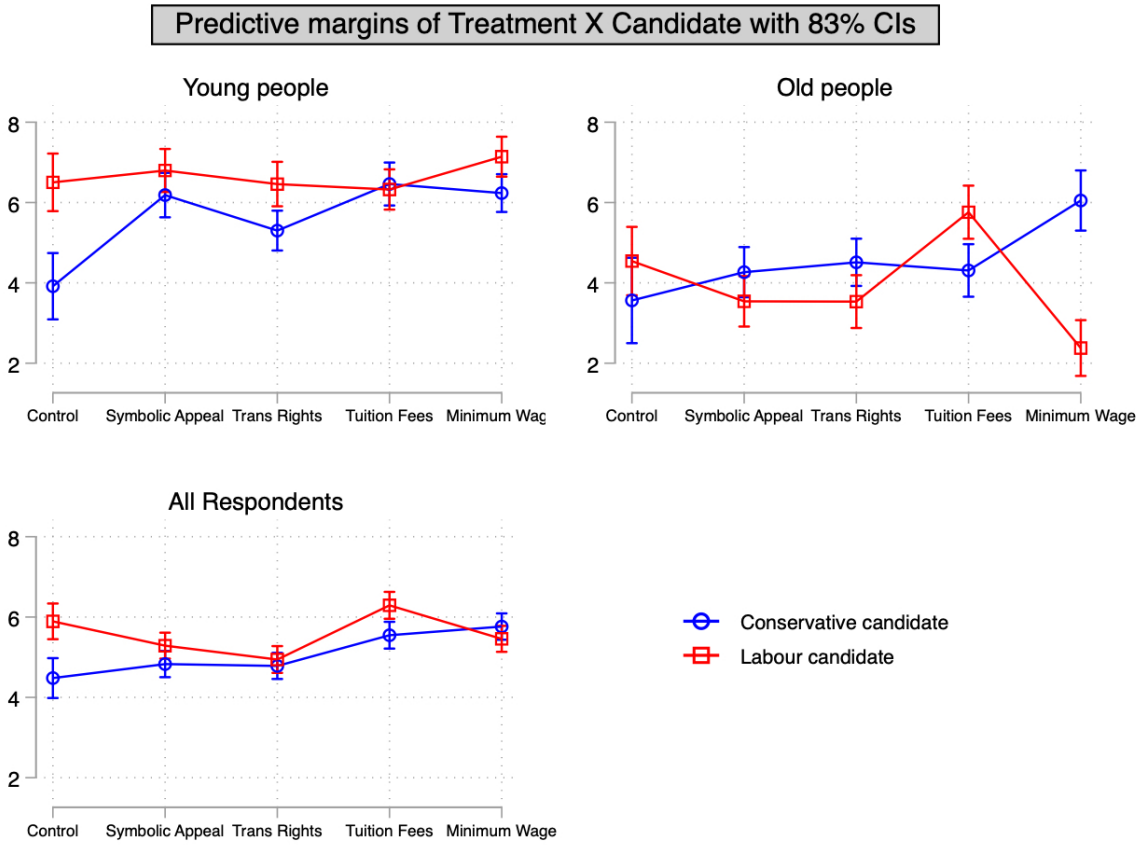
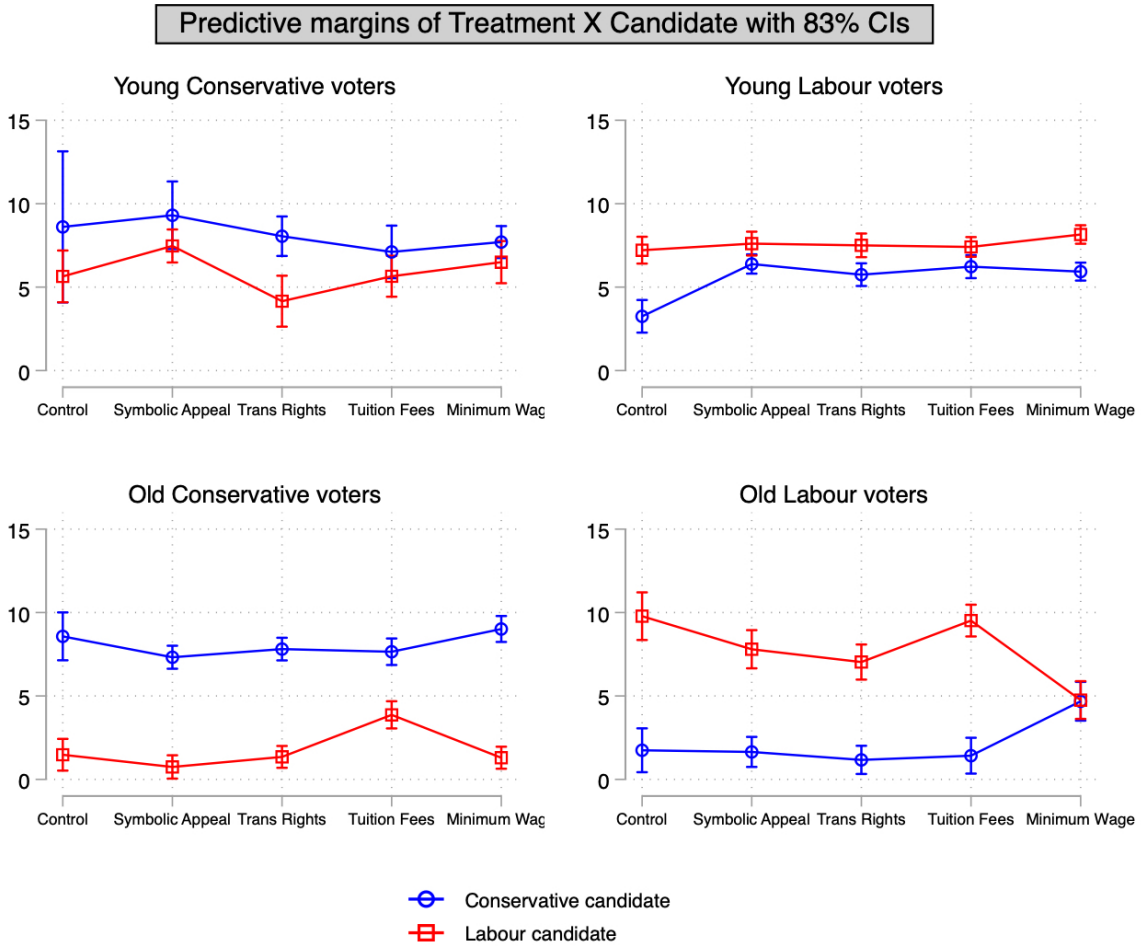


Figure 3.2 unpacks these effects further by considering whether respondents are Conservative or Labour supporters[13]. The top left panel displays the treatment effects on young Conservative voters. The large and overlapping confidence intervals of the control condition are probably due to the very small size of this group (only 11 Conservative respondents who were under 35 were randomly assigned to this group). However, there are not statistically significant differences on the other treatment conditions either (the difference in the effects of the trans rights appeal is significant at the 83% level but not at the 95% level). This suggests that it is not clear whether

[13] Partisanship is measured as vote intention at the next general election. This measure was chosen over past general election vote because 43% of under-35 respondents reportedly abstained in that election, whereas only 11% are reportedly undecided about their next general election vote intention.

appeals from the Labour party are able to close the gap with Conservatives for this group of voters, or whether this is due to the comparatively small size of the group (there are 106 under-35 Conservative voters in the sample, as opposed to 302 Labour voters from the same age group).

Figure 3.2 – Effects of Labour and Conservative Appeals



Looking at the treatment effects on young Labour voters in the top right panel, on the other hand, does seem to suggest that for this cohort appeals matter more than the partisanship of the candidate making them. The partisan gap evidenced in the control condition disappears when respondents are presented with the appeals, suggesting that a Conservative candidate advocating these policies can increase their voting likelihood to match that of a Labour candidate.

While youth-oriented policies enable the Conservative party to close the gap with Labour among young voters, these appeals do not seem to affect the support levels of older voters in either direction. For both Conservative-voting and Labour-voting over-60 respondents, the policy

appeals do not have effects that differ significantly from the control group, except in two cases: (1) older Conservative voters are significantly more likely to support a Labour candidate if presented with the appeal on tuition fees; (2) older Labour voters are significantly *less* likely to support the Labour party if presented with the appeal on raising the minimum wage, with the opposite being true if the candidate making the same appeal is from the Conservative party. In other words, for older Labour voters the effect of the minimum wage proposal on candidate support is smaller than that of other appeals if the candidate is Labour, but it is larger than that of other appeals if the candidate is Conservative. While this could seem counterintuitive, it could be explained by taking into account that the Labour party *owns* the issue of wage increases. Therefore, this appeal may seem less striking to a Labour voter if made by a Labour candidate, whereas it would have a more significant impact if made by a Conservative candidate. Moreover, the appeal mentions a wage increase that is barely above current wage levels for workers over 20 years of age, making it even less likely to sway older Labour voters support levels, while it contains significant benefits for younger voters, who are indeed more likely to support the party making these proposals.

Although the appeals do not seem to have a significant role in shifting the voting patterns of older voters, it is notable that they generally do not have a negative effect on support either. This means that a Conservative candidate advocating *non-Conservative* policies to its own elderly voter base does not seem to trigger a backlash from this cohort, reconfirming the notion that the Conservative party would benefit from adopting progressive youth-oriented policies without necessarily risking wider vote-share losses.

Table 1 – Summary of results and hypotheses evaluation

Hypotheses	All respondents	Young respondents	Old respondents
H1 – Voters will display higher support for the party whose appeals are closest to the preferences of their age group, so that young voters will display higher support for a party championing young people's issues	-	Correct	-
H2 – Voters will penalise a party whose appeals are directed towards an age group they do not belong to, so that older voters will penalise a party championing young people's issues	-	-	Incorrect (all treatments not significant)
H3a – Substantive economic and cultural appeals will have a larger effect on support than symbolic appeals	Correct but only for economic appeals	Incorrect, substantive economic and symbolic appeals have the same effect, and both are larger than cultural appeal	Correct for substantive economic appeal on tuition fees only
H3b – Substantive economic and cultural appeals will have the same effect on support as symbolic appeals	Incorrect	Correct	Correct for all treatments except economic appeal on tuition fees (which has larger positive effect)
H4 – Economic appeals will have the largest effect on support for both older and younger voters	-	Correct	Correct for appeal on tuition fees only
H5 – Appeals not expected by a certain party (e.g. a Conservative candidate pledging to scrap tuition fees or to expand transgender people's rights) will have a larger effect on support than those from expected parties	Correct, Conservative appeals are able to close the support gap, especially on minimum wage	Correct, Conservative appeals close the support gap and the appeal on tuition fees even has larger effect than Labour's equivalent	Correct, Conservative appeals have larger effects than Labour's, especially on minimum wage

Discussion

This research set out to answer two questions. The first pertains whether party appeals designed to attract the support of different age groups would have an effect on the age gap in partisanship. The second pertains whether certain appeals have a larger effect than others, and which groups are most affected by this. Results from the survey experiment are largely in line with prior expectations (see Table 1 for an assessment of the hypotheses). Young voters do display higher support for parties advocating policies close to the preferences of their age group. Importantly, this holds true regardless of partisanship. One of the expectations associated with this was that increased attention to the youth would be accompanied by a backlash from older voters, who might penalise a candidate that either expressively states they want to focus less on the elderly (as in the 'Symbolic' vignette), or espouses policies that have traditionally been preferred by younger voters (as in the 'Cultural' and 'Economic' vignettes). However, these proposals actually have no effect on the support likelihood of older voters. If anything, some of them seem to appeal to them too, such as proposals to scrap university tuition fees. This is not entirely surprising considering that the costs associated with higher education are a significant burden for students and parents alike.

In terms of the content of appeals, in general the ones tapping into economic issues seem to have a larger effect on swaying support than the ones pertaining cultural issues. This is true regardless of age. For younger voters, symbolic appeals too are effective in attracting support, and more so than cultural appeals, suggesting that candidates pledging to look after the interests of this cohort – *whatever these may be* – are as effective in mobilising these voters as candidates advocating for specific economic policies. This finding is particularly relevant in a context where young voters are increasingly associated with "wokeism" – that is, with being particularly attached to socially progressive issues. While these values probably still matter a great deal (this study only addressed one such issue, trans right) it seems as though, consistently with other groups, the economy is a top priority for the youth.

An aspect that this study was seeking to examine pertains age polarisation – that is, whether the age gap in partisanship also translates into political antagonism between the two groups. The fact that older voters do not seem to reject youth-friendly policies suggests otherwise. This implies that parties would benefit from an increased focus on the interests of younger cohorts, without

risking alienating older ones. This is the case even for the Conservative party, who has been less vocal in – and possibly more reluctant to – appealing to young voters. The results from this study show that the Conservatives could effectively close the gap with the Labour party on youth support by adopting policies that are closer to the preferences of this cohort.

Some considerations should be made relative to the nature of the appeals included in the study and the implications that the results have for campaigning and policymaking. The experimental set-up places unavoidable restrictions on the number of appeals that can be showcased to different treatment groups, which means that the study was limited in the extent to which it could compare a wider variety of economic and cultural policy appeals. In reality, elections are fought via dozens, if not hundreds, of policy proposals, and this study only considered two economic appeals (wages and tuition fees), one sociocultural appeal (transgender rights), and one symbolic appeal (prioritising young people's interests). Moreover, the partisan origins of the appeals were randomised so that the same statements came from both parties – another dynamic that is unlikely to occur in actual general election. However, the point of the experiment was precisely to test whether these policy proposals would be able of garnering support *despite* their partisan origin, and whether they would alienate certain groups within the population. Results demonstrate that the content matters over the partisanship, and that appeals are generally well received even if they may benefit certain groups over others. Therefore, while the effects identified here may not materialise to the same extent at an actual general election, these results do suggest that it is an avenue worth exploring – especially considering the increasingly low affection young adults have for the Conservative party, and what this could mean for the party's future. Two issues in particular stand out as especially attractive to voters: university tuition fees and wages. The Labour party typically "owns" these issues and is expected to campaign for scrapping tuition fees and raising individuals' wages. The Conservative party, on the other hand, has held more tentative positions on the matter. Recent Conservative governments raised tuition fees amid stagnating wages, and a change in attitude could yield particularly high electoral returns for the Conservatives, while having more modest effects on the Labour vote.

Conclusion

The Political Context

In October 2020, the Bennet Institute of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge released a report on *Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy*. Drawing from data on 4.8 million people in 160 countries over the period 1973-2020, results all point to the same direction: young people around the world are becoming less satisfied with democracy, not just in general, but also compared to how older people felt at their age. In developed democracies, one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction among young people is economic exclusion – higher levels of youth unemployment and wealth inequality are linked to increased dissatisfaction, both in absolute terms and relative to older generations (Foa et al. 2020).

Inequalities in financial and housing wealth have a direct impact on the life opportunities of young adults. Today's youth face higher rental costs early in life, experience more difficulty saving money, and a greater dependence on the support of parents and relatives. This last point highlights a broader injustice created by intergenerational wealth inequality: a society in which a person's chances of success or failure in life depend less on their own hard work and effort, and more on their inherited wealth and privilege. For example, in the United States, Millennials make up nearly 25% of the population, but they only own 3% of the nation's wealth. Comparatively, Baby-Boomers owned 21% of wealth at the same age (Emmons et al. 2018). Similar trends have been identified in the United Kingdom too. In 2019, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) reported that the trend of increasing household incomes for each generation since the 1930s has slowed down for people born in the 1980s, resulting in a *decline* in income for those in their 30s compared to those born in the previous decade. According to the IFS report, the wealth gap between those born in the early 1980s and the 1970s cohort is about 20%. This is not due to Millennials' spending habits (cue the infamous avocado toast), but rather a combination of factors such as lower average earnings, rising house prices, and lower rates of homeownership following the financial crisis (Cribb 2019).

Besides their democratic alienation, today's youth differ from older generations in systematic ways. They are more highly educated than any preceding generation, and they are also significantly more socially progressive. The combination of a challenging economic context and

increased education levels have had a two-fold impact on their voting behaviour: on the one hand, young people have become increasingly more likely to abstain from voting and choose alternative forms of political participation (e.g. see Giugni and Grasso 2019; Garcia-Albacete 2014; Pickard 2019). On the other hand, when they do vote, they increasingly choose the parties on the left to represent them (Sloam and Henn 2018; Pickard 2019). In contrast, older people have comparatively lower level of education and stronger conservative attitudes, and are more likely to support the parties on the right (e.g. see Norris and Inglehart 2019; Sobolewska and Ford 2020).

Within this context, the voting age-gap, a longstanding feature of British elections, has widened significantly in recent years, generating renewed interest in the political age divide. My doctoral thesis contributes to this growing interest by examining what it is about age-related characteristics that affects electoral choices, and how robust the link is. There are several studies that have attempted to partition the relative effects of age, periods, and cohorts on political behaviour. While this thesis does not aim to resolve the statistical age-period-cohort challenge and measure the relative impact of these variables on voting, it does set off from the widely agreed notion that age, period, and cohort effects are often at work simultaneously, and it examines what it is about age- and time-related characteristics that affects behaviour. Therefore, this project has sought to unpack these effects by examining the possible mechanisms at play behind age, generations, and periods. Each chapter contributes to a specific sub-area of this broader field of research:

- The first considers two potential mechanisms behind *cohort effects*: value change and its association with higher education;
- The second considers the delayed transition into adulthood as the mechanism behind *life-cycle effects*;
- The third paper considers political mobilisation as the mechanism behind *period effects*, and looks at the effect of party appeals developed along age-lines.

Cohort effects: cultural backlash

The shifts described above have been evidenced in most developed democracies as voting patterns tend to vary greatly by age in most countries. In Europe, the main difference is typically between voting for mainstream and fringe parties – whereby young people are generally less likely to vote for mainstream parties and more likely to support fringe (left-wing) parties. Great Britain's

majoritarian electoral system makes it an exception, as fringe left and right demands have been absorbed by the existing Labour and Conservative parties moving further to the left and right respectively (e.g. see Ford and Jennings 2020). Therefore, in the United Kingdom, the age divide has taken the form of a Labour-Conservative divide.

A growing body of research has come to understand this cleavage as an *education cleavage* (e.g. Enyedi, 2008; Stubager 2010, 2013; Bovens and Wille, 2017; Ford and Jennings, 2020; Scott 2022; Simon 2021, 2022), which refers to the idea that highly educated voters have unique preferences because they have the technical skills and cognitive abilities to succeed in a globalized economy. As a result, they are less resistant to change and more accepting of diversity. The logic behind this is association is therefore that (1) young adults are more highly educated than any previous cohort, (2) higher education has a well-established link with social liberalism, and (3) higher education hence explains young voters' preference for socially liberal parties.

This syllogism was the focus of the first chapter of this thesis, which sought to unpack the education-liberalism association for different generations, and the impact that both education and liberalism have on the voting age gap. Using data from the British Election Study (1987-2019), this chapter examined how the expansion of tertiary education and inter-generational shifts along liberal-authoritarian and left-right economic values motivate changes in electoral behaviour. Results show large cohort effects on liberal-authoritarian value change, with all cohorts becoming significantly more liberal over the years. On the other hand, there are little between-cohort differences on left-right economic values, and cohorts do not show any significant change in either direction. This is in line with recent research by O'Grady (2022), who finds that – contrary to popular understandings – young people across Europe are not more left-wing than their older counterparts, and if anything, they are more opposed to progressive taxation and wealth redistribution than previous generations.

One finding that makes the overall picture more complex is that the impact of education on the development of liberal attitudes seems to be stronger in societies that were less liberal to begin with, such as those of Baby Boomers and Generation X. However, it is weaker for the most recent generation, Millennials. Higher education thus appears to have become less important over time in terms of shaping values within cohorts, and with the expansion of education, education-based

value differences have diminished rather than increased. The fact that highly educated groups are becoming larger in number and that the liberalizing effect of education appears to have weakened raises questions about how likely the education-liberalism cleavage will remain in the future. However, it should be noted that the post-election surveys used in this study did not include a number of important items such as views on sexual and gender minority rights, same-sex relationships, immigration, and global integration, which are all areas where public opinion is increasingly polarized, particularly along age and education lines. The absence of these attitudes from the study's measure of liberal-authoritarian values is a significant limitation that should be addressed by further research. Yet while this analysis raises doubts about the relationship between future generations' levels of liberalism and higher education, it does not deny that education continues to have a significant effect on voting outcomes. The Labour party appears to have been the biggest beneficiary of these changes in the electorate, as demonstrated by the fact that the highly educated Millennial generation disproportionately supports Labour compared to older groups with similar qualifications.

There are three key implications for the widening age gap in political support. First, it is not accurate to simply say that young people are more likely to vote for Labour now because they are more left-wing and liberal than previous generations. While there have been changes in the distribution of these values across generations, these changes alone cannot fully explain why young people have become more likely to vote for Labour. Instead, it seems that the electoral significance of liberal-authoritarian values has increased and has played a bigger role in determining vote choice in the last two elections than it did previously. These values are now more important for both younger and older voters alike, and the increased importance of these attitudes is likely due to period effects rather than generational effects.

This means that since liberal-authoritarian values have a greater influence on voting than they did before, and since there are greater generational differences in these values, age effects on voting behaviour have increased. However, there is little evidence to suggest that these effects will be permanent. If the significance of these values declines, their impact on generational differences in voting behaviour will become less important. Moreover, new generations are also changing. On the one hand, the value differences between graduates and non-graduates are smaller than they were for previous generations. But on the other hand, the impact of values on

vote choice is greater among graduates than it is among those with fewer qualifications. In fact, results presented in this thesis highlighted how authoritarian attitudes seem to have as strong an effect on Conservative-voting graduates, as liberal attitudes do on Labour-voting graduates. Therefore, as the number of graduates increases, within-group political differences will grow, and between-group differences will decrease – suggesting it cannot be assumed that current patterns of political behaviour will continue into the future.

Ageing effects: economic backlash

Besides being more highly educated and socially liberal than older generations, today's youth is fundamentally different from its predecessors also because it takes a significantly longer time to reach the developmental stages that sanction the transition into adulthood. Changes in educational availability, as well as educational requirements, have resulted in young people taking longer to complete full-time education. Combined with employment uncertainty, this has implicated that they also take longer to find stable full-time work. The financial consequences of this delay vis-à-vis an increasingly hostile housing market mean that they are less likely to start a family early in life (ONS 2020, 2021). These are all important life-cycle effects that have a demonstrable impact on political participation (e.g. see van Ham and Smets 2014; Smets 2016) – yet the influence of ageing-associated characteristics on partisanship is often overlooked in the literature on intergenerational changes in political behaviour. Things like completing education, getting married, having a child, moving out of the parental home, starting a full-time job, or buying a house all have the potential to change an individual's position in society and drive changes in political attitudes. The number of life-cycle events experienced by an individual only increases with age, but everyone experiences these events at different rates. Therefore, the younger generation in the UK today, compared to those in the 1960s and 1970s, has less life experience and is more likely to vote based on different factors than their older counterparts. In this view, it is possible that the delay in maturation among young people in the UK could also be affecting their political party preferences. For example, as people become homeowners and enter the workforce, they may become more interested in issues such as property taxes and income taxes, and their partisan attachments may be influenced by the positions of different parties on these issues (e.g. see Hawley 2011).

In the UK, the age gap in support for the Conservative party has widened significantly in recent years. The importance of examining the reasons behind this shift has been recognised among party activists. According to research by a conservative think tank, only a small percentage of Conservative party voters in the UK are under the age of 45, and even fewer are under the age of 25 (Onward 2019), raising concerns on the party's electoral chances in the future.
If one explanation is that younger voters are simply more liberal and less authoritarian in their values, and therefore less likely to support the Conservative party, another plausible explanation is that younger voters do not see many economic benefits in supporting the Conservatives. The research presented in the second chapter of this thesis thus used data from the British Election Study (1964-2019) to test the hypothesis that the delay in maturation among young people in the UK is affecting their political party preferences by making them less likely to support the Conservative party than they would be *had they completed the transition into adulthood*.

The results of the study suggest that this is very much the case. As people experience important life events such as buying a house, getting married, and having children, they are more likely to vote for the Conservative party. This effect is particularly strong among the Millennial generation, where each increase in the "maturation index" results in a 4% increase in the likelihood of voting for the Conservative party. This suggests that if people were achieving certain life stages at an earlier age, the Conservatives' support base would include a much higher percentage of young voters.

It is noteworthy that Millennials are the generation for whom maturation matters the most. Because the Millennial generation has a low average level of maturation, an increase in the maturation index for a Millennial respondent is a significant change that sets them apart from their peers more than it would have for previous cohorts. This creates a distinctive subgroup of more mature Millennials who are more likely to vote for the Conservative party. Therefore, there may be something about the lifestyle held by 'mature' Millennials that explains their atypical voting behaviour. For example, a previous study looked at the 1997 General Election in the UK and found that the spatial locations where voters lived, rather than their social characteristics, were a key factor in determining their party preferences (Johnston et al 2001). This study suggests that spatial locations such as neighbourhoods and workplaces can influence people's political behaviour by providing them with information about different parties and their policies. This

process of "conversion by conversation" suggests that people are likely to be influenced by the political views of those around them. In the case of the 1997 General Election, the study found that the differences between different "life-style areas" were far greater than the differences between occupational or educational groups. These findings support the *theory of structurisation* (Giddens 1984), whereby people draw on the structural resources available in their spatial locations to determine how to act and form their social and political identities. Localized networks, such as neighbourhoods and workplaces, play a key role in this decision-making process, and people are apparently influenced just as much by the nature of the places they live in and the interactions they have with others in their surroundings, as by their social positions in society.

Therefore, it is possible that young adults from the Millennial generation who have higher maturation levels than their peers may not share the same spatial locations and lifestyles as their peers. Instead, they may be more similar to older age groups in terms of their responsibilities – and possibly even in the neighbourhoods they live in. If this is the case, it would not be surprising that "mature" young adults behave more like older adults from previous generations than their "immature" Millennial peers, and this could explain why maturation has such a strong effect on the voting behaviour of generally "immature" Millennials.

These results suggest that if the Conservative party wants to win back the support of young voters, it may need to take concrete steps to make the transition into adulthood easier for young people. This could include policies to make the housing market more affordable and measures to support families with children, such as providing increased financial assistance for childcare and education. If the Conservative party does not take action to address the concerns of younger voters, it could face the possibility of an electoral wipe-out in the not-so-distant future.

Period effects: political mobilization

Despite the pervasive awareness that the Conservative party needs to do more to engage younger voters, the most recent electoral campaigns have seen the party place very little attention on this cohort. In the run-up to the 2019 election, the three main parties proposed a range of policies close to the interests of the youth, such as those addressing mental health, university fees, the

environment, employment, housing, and LGBT rights. The Labour party and the Liberal Democrats provided the most detailed proposals with clear goals and funding plans, while the Conservatives took a more vague and restrained approach. For example, on LGBT and gender issues, Labour promised a range of measures, including the creation of a large Cultural Capital Fund, reforming the Gender Recognition Act of 2004, eliminating areas of discrimination in law, and revising school curricula to include content on inclusive relationships and sex education. In contrast, the Conservatives only promised to host "an international LGBT conference" (Pink News 2019). Similarly, on the issue of housing, Labour proposed a new housebuilding program, reforming the Help to Buy scheme to focus on first-time buyers, and introducing rent controls and minimum standards, while the Conservatives promised measures to reduce the cost of mortgage deposits and the abolition of no-fault evictions.

Unsurprisingly, the Conservative campaign did little to sway young voters. Most explanations of why certain age groups vote the way they do – including those proposed in the first two chapters of this thesis – focus on the factors that influence an individual's political attitudes, such as their personal characteristics. However, these explanations often overlook the role that political parties have in shaping the issues that attract voters. Parties play a significant role on how different age groups vote, as they can influence the issues that are important to voters and how these are presented. This top-down, supply-side approach to understanding voting is therefore key for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the political age divide. In this view, the final chapter of this thesis shifted the focus from individual voters to political parties by assessing the impact of appeals directed at younger voters on the age gap in party support.

The study used a specially designed survey experiment with group appeals adapted from the Labour and Conservative parties' 2019 electoral manifestos. Results suggested that young voters show higher support for parties advocating policies that align with the preferences of their age group. This finding wouldn't be surprising if not for the fact that this appears to hold true regardless of party affiliation. Moreover, contrary to expectations, appeals directed at young people did not seem to trigger a decrease in support from older voters. This was the case even for appeals that contained young people's cultural policy preferences. In fact, some of the "youth-friendly" proposal appealed to older voters too, such as calls to eliminate university tuition fees. In general, economic issues were found to have a greater impact on swaying support than cultural

issues – a particularly relevant finding in a context where young people are increasingly believed to prioritise sociocultural "woke" values. While these values may still be important to young voters, it appears that, like other age groups, the economy is a top priority for the youth.

One aspect that this study sought to examine was age polarization, or whether the age gap in party support also translates into political hostility between the two groups. The fact that older voters did not appear to reject youth-friendly policies suggests otherwise. This implies that parties can benefit from an increased focus on the interests of younger people without risking alienating older voters. Results showed that the Conservatives could effectively close the gap with the Labour party on youth support by adopting policies that align with the preferences of young people. While these effects may not be as pronounced in an actual general election, they suggest that it is worth exploring this approach. This is particularly relevant considering the low levels of support for the Conservative party among young adults, and what this could mean for the party's future.

Implications and avenues for further research

A commonly remarked upon feature of American politics is that political conservatism is closely tied to lifestyle choices. For example, marriage and motherhood are the biggest factors influencing how white women vote in the United States. The country's marriage gap is larger than its gender gap (e.g. see Plutzer and McBurnett 1991; Gallup 2009; Struber 2010; Hawley 2017; Pew Research Center 2019). Liberalism, on the other hand, with its focus on individuals and their unlimited potential, has long been associated with *singledom*. The philosophical founding fathers of liberalism – Locke, Mill, Spinoza, Bentham, Hume, and Smith – never had children. Rousseau had five, but abandoned them to orphanages. Liberalist principles such as gender equality becomes much less practical when children are involved. While in principle modern societies make it possible for both parents to work while caring for an infant and share the burden equally, this is neither easy nor inexpensive.

Within this framework, one reason British people may have become more liberal is because its society is *increasingly individualistic*. While people might be in more or less significant relationships, marriage rates have plummeted, and so have fertility rates. Census data from 2021 suggests that while non-UK born people make up 14.4% of the country's population, non-UK

born women account for almost a third of the country's new births (ONS 2022). The groups with the highest fertility rates are made of women born in South Asia and Eastern Europe – societies with stronger conservative attitudes around marriage and childbearing (World Value Survey and European Value Study 2005-2022). And while there has been a small increase in the fertility rate of British women, this is only the case for those aged over 35 (ONS 2022).

The growing reluctance to form a family has been partly attributed to increased housing uncertainty (e.g. see Tocchioni et al. 2021). In a context of employment and tenure insecurity, and lower attachment to family values, it's unsurprising that young adults are particularly resistant to conservative attitudes and become politically alienated. The Brexit referendum and the 2017 General Election signalled a possible awakening of the British youth's political engagement. Young voters reportedly flocked to movements supporting 'Remain' and the Labour party in particular – a shift that was paralleled by the opposite trend across older generations – triggering scholars and polling agencies alike to define age the most significant cleavage of modern politics. Yet while much of this cleavage has been attributed to opposing value sets, this thesis has shown that it has much more to do with changes in material conditions and people's structural positions in society. While there has been a consistent move toward liberal attitudes for all groups, and this is more pronounced for young people, the more convincing story behind the growing gap in political behaviour is one of economic backlash. Liberal attitudes are politicised and activated by parties and media outlets alike, but the stronger influence on voting is still played by individuals' socioeconomic backgrounds.

It is somewhat surprising, then, that most current discussions on why the British youth is so strikingly pro-Labour and anti-Tory seem to revolve around "culture wars" much more than economic insecurity. It is also surprising that while Conservatives are well aware of the threat posed by youth alienation, they are doing virtually nothing to address it. On 17 November 2022, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt recommitted to the pensions triple-lock and announced a £300 hand-out for pensioners – hardly a policy that would benefit or pique the interest of young voters. Shortly after, the government u-turned on the pledge to build 300,000 new homes because of a backbenchers' revolt. A recent piece in The New Statesman (2022) titled *Do the Tories understand how much young people hate them?* reported that many younger Conservative MPs said they are struggling to provide a compelling reason for young people to vote for the party. They believe

young people are not supporting the Conservatives because of a lack of affordable housing and childcare, as well as student debt. But while they have identified the root problem, they have not yet found a solution. According to the MPs interviewed for the article, the Conservative Party has struggled to implement necessary reforms because they have not had a strong majority or confidence in their ability to do so. This has been a longstanding issue for the party, which has been in power for twelve years but has rarely had the stability or courage to make significant changes. The fear of backlash from their core voters and backbench MPs has held them back from making necessary reforms. The article's author thus states:

> *This instability has made the Conservatives remarkably short-termist. They do not have the energy left to start worrying about what will happen in 20 years' time when today's 20-year-olds still do not want to vote for them, because they are too busy worrying about what happens in two years' time. Tory MPs often speak enviously of Tony Blair – and the fact that his target for 50 per cent of people to go to university has been met. This is not because they think this policy was good for the country (they do not), but rather because they view it as having contributed to creating a generation of Labour voters: graduates skew Labour, and that effect is still being felt now. In twelve years of government, it is hard to point to a single structural reform of this type that the Conservatives have made which might benefit them in a decade or more. They have been too busy panicking about the next six months. Faced with danger, they have chosen freezing over fight or flight.*
>
> (Charlotte Ivers, November 2022, *Do the Tories understand how much young people hate them?* The New Statesman)

But it isn't solely the Conservative party who seem to lack a solution to the age conundrum. The British academic debate has been relatively quiet on the possible association between influential determinants of Conservative voting (marriage, childbearing, home ownership, etc.) and the growing age gap in party support. While the United States – where similar changes have occurred – have seen a growing bulk of research on the association between home affordability, marriage rates, and Republican support (e.g. Hawley 2011, 2017), as well as between childbearing and partisanship (e.g. Elder and Greene 2011; Elder and Greene 2016; Oswald and Powdthavee 2010; Conley and Rauscher 2013), these are still largely unexplored themes in the British context[14]. This thesis has identified a large impact of *adulthood*-associated factors on Conservative voting, warranting further research in this area. Therefore, a closer examination of the structural

[14] Most research on parenthood effects relates to participation rather than partisanship. For example, recent studies have sought to unpack the link between parenthood and political engagement (Grechyna 2022) as well as political leadership (Smith 2017), but not partisanship.

reasons behind the growing age gap, and an increased focus on these in electoral debates, may be the solution to engaging younger citizens and possibly counter the "tide of history" threatening the future of the Conservative party in favour of illiberal new entrants – a pattern well underway in other European polities.

Within this framework, the impact and contribution of this thesis cuts across the areas of academia, policy-making, and political mobilisation strategies. Scholars of generational studies have long attempted to determine the factors contributing to intergenerational value change. The contribution of my research here is two-fold. First, while most studies on the education-attitudes linkage focus on social liberalism, my research also considers the association between education and economic attitudes. This is because while the education-social liberalism linkage is well-established, the one between education and economic liberalism sits in a more debated environment. Second, it examines the combined impact of education and (shifting) attitudes on voting. On the other hand, the impact of the research on delayed maturation and party appeals is particularly relevant for policymaking, as well as for parties' political mobilisation strategies. The delayed maturation paper demonstrates that the Conservative party should try to implement policies aimed at easing young voters transition into adulthood (e.g. especially through childcare and housing support) if they wanted to increase their vote-share across the youth. The party-appeals paper suggests that the Conservative party could benefit from adopting a policy platform with a stronger focus on the issues relevant to young voters, without risking a loss in support from older voters. Therefore, the combined findings of these papers provide useful guidance for party strategists and policymakers alike to mobilise a portion of the electorate that has traditionally been disengaged with politics on the one hand, and significantly more likely to support the Labour party on the other.

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Appendix A – Introduction

Regression models of reported figures

Table 1 – Turnout by age (Figure 1)

	Voted at last GE
Age	0.077***
	(0.004)
Age²	-0.001***
	(0.000)
constant	-0.737***
	(0.083)
N	45758

British Election Study (1964-2019), *b* coefficients from logit analyses, standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 – Turnout of you and old groups (Figure 2)

	Voted at last GE
Young and Old age groups	
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	-0.535**
	(0.196)
Election years	
1964 (base level)	
1966	-0.368
	(0.198)
1970	-0.404*
	(0.205)
1974	-0.017
	(0.195)
1975	-0.118
	(0.194)
1979	-0.047
	(0.213)
1983	-0.420*
	(0.175)
1987	-0.159
	(0.178)
1992	-0.077
	(0.181)
1997	-0.298
	(0.175)
2001	-0.473**
	(0.174)
2005	-0.380*
	(0.169)
2010	-0.272

	(0.174)
2015	-0.302
	(0.174)
2017	-0.065
	(0.186)
2019	-0.353*
	(0.167)
Young and Old age groups X election years	
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	
Under 35 x 1966	-0.061
	(0.252)
Under 35 x 1970	0.055
	(0.279)
Under 35 x 1974	-0.006
	(0.251)
Under 35 x 1975	-0.219
	(0.247)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.267
	(0.265)
Under 35 x 1983	0.002
	(0.223)
Under 35 x 1987	0.048
	(0.229)
Under 35 x 1992	0.042
	(0.233)
Under 35 x 1997	-0.608**
	(0.224)
Under 35 x 2001	-0.943***
	(0.226)
Under 35 x 2005	-1.100***
	(0.220)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.868***
	(0.229)
Under 35 x 2015	-1.102***
	(0.228)
Under 35 x 2017	-0.959***
	(0.243)
Under 35 x 2019	-0.396
	(0.222)
constant	2.132***
	(0.151)
N	26978

British Election Study (1964-2019), *b* coefficients from logit analyses, standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3 – Vote-choice by age (Figure 3)

Did not vote (base level)	
Conservative	
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	-0.729***
	(0.212)
1964 (base level)	
1966	-0.416*
	(0.212)
1970	-0.288
	(0.217)
1974	-0.089
	(0.207)
1975	-0.206
	(0.207)
1979	0.015
	(0.225)
1983	-0.425*
	(0.186)
1987	-0.182
	(0.189)
1992	-0.165
	(0.193)
1997	-0.686***
	(0.188)
2001	-0.932***
	(0.189)
2005	-0.678***
	(0.183)
2010	-0.447*
	(0.186)
2015	-0.374*
	(0.185)
2017	0.015
	(0.196)
2019	-0.240
	(0.177)
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	
Under 35 x 1966	-0.154
	(0.278)
Under 35 x 1970	0.014
	(0.306)
Under 35 x 1974	-0.217
	(0.275)
Under 35 x 1975	-0.466
	(0.273)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.240
	(0.287)

Under 35 x 1983	0.065
	(0.244)
Under 35 x 1987	0.029
	(0.250)
Under 35 x 1992	0.091
	(0.254)
Under 35 x 1997	-0.850***
	(0.254)
Under 35 x 2001	-1.220***
	(0.267)
Under 35 x 2005	-1.478***
	(0.257)
Under 35 x 2010	-1.027***
	(0.260)
Under 35 x 2015	-1.402***
	(0.260)
Under 35 x 2017	-1.585***
	(0.279)
Under 35 x 2019	-0.912***
	(0.249)
_cons	1.376***
	(0.160)
Labour	
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	-0.395
	(0.210)
1964 (base level)	0.000
	(.)
1966	-0.289
	(0.212)
1970	-0.563*
	(0.223)
1974	-0.197
	(0.210)
1975	-0.246
	(0.209)
1979	-0.273
	(0.231)
1983	-0.821***
	(0.191)
1987	-0.680***
	(0.195)
1992	-0.271
	(0.195)
1997	-0.291
	(0.187)
2001	-0.393*
	(0.186)
2005	-0.577**
	(0.184)
2010	-0.663***
	(0.190)

2015	-0.888***
	(0.192)
2017	-0.371
	(0.201)
2019	-1.106***
	(0.184)
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	
Under 35 x 1966	-0.017
	(0.271)
Under 35 x 1970	0.179
	(0.306)
Under 35 x 1974	-0.063
	(0.272)
Under 35 x 1975	-0.227
	(0.268)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.338
	(0.290)
Under 35 x 1983	-0.133
	(0.247)
Under 35 x 1987	0.263
	(0.251)
Under 35 x 1992	-0.106
	(0.253)
Under 35 x 1997	-0.548*
	(0.242)
Under 35 x 2001	-1.028***
	(0.246)
Under 35 x 2005	-1.078***
	(0.243)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.873***
	(0.256)
Under 35 x 2015	-0.613*
	(0.254)
Under 35 x 2017	-0.469
	(0.264)
Under 35 x 2019	0.311
	(0.245)
_cons	1.296***
	(0.161)
Liberal Democrats	
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	-0.210
	(0.301)
1964 (base level)	0.000
	(.)
1966	-0.523
	(0.322)
1970	-0.337
	(0.323)
1974	0.573*
	(0.280)

1975	0.445
	(0.281)
1979	0.209
	(0.314)
1983	-0.255
	(0.269)
1987	0.970***
	(0.255)
1992	0.476
	(0.265)
1997	0.368
	(0.258)
2001	0.091
	(0.260)
2005	0.494*
	(0.251)
2010	0.458
	(0.256)
2015	-0.242
	(0.269)
2017	-0.369
	(0.295)
2019	0.126
	(0.251)
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	0.000
	(.)
Under 35 x 1966	-0.202
	(0.419)
Under 35 x 1970	-0.289
	(0.466)
Under 35 x 1974	0.227
	(0.362)
Under 35 x 1975	-0.074
	(0.362)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.079
	(0.395)
Under 35 x 1983	-0.553
	(0.356)
Under 35 x 1987	-0.235
	(0.334)
Under 35 x 1992	-0.038
	(0.346)
Under 35 x 1997	-0.775*
	(0.339)
Under 35 x 2001	-0.840*
	(0.347)
Under 35 x 2005	-1.107***
	(0.334)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.702*
	(0.343)
Under 35 x 2015	-2.012***
	(0.419)
Under 35 x 2017	-0.956*

	(0.415)
Under 35 x 2019	-0.869*
	(0.349)
_cons	-0.458*
	(0.229)
Other Party	
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	0.228
	(1.238)
1964 (base level)	
1966	-12.855
	(510.164)
1970	0.458
	(1.239)
1974	1.785
	(1.070)
1975	1.959
	(1.060)
1979	1.771
	(1.099)
1983	3.496***
	(1.018)
1987	1.244
	(1.067)
1992	2.670**
	(1.029)
1997	3.087**
	(1.020)
2001	2.823**
	(1.022)
2005	3.219**
	(1.018)
2010	3.450***
	(1.018)
2015	4.041***
	(1.016)
2017	3.370***
	(1.024)
2019	3.145**
	(1.017)
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	
Under 35 x 1966	12.613
	(510.165)
Under 35 x 1970	0.688
	(1.505)
Under 35 x 1974	0.323
	(1.305)
Under 35 x 1975	0.170
	(1.293)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.830

	(1.356)
Under 35 x 1983	-0.196
	(1.248)
Under 35 x 1987	-0.621
	(1.322)
Under 35 x 1992	0.143
	(1.261)
Under 35 x 1997	-1.249
	(1.255)
Under 35 x 2001	-1.372
	(1.260)
Under 35 x 2005	-1.823
	(1.254)
Under 35 x 2010	-1.748
	(1.258)
Under 35 x 2015	-1.781
	(1.250)
Under 35 x 2017	-1.987
	(1.274)
Under 35 x 2019	-0.927
	(1.252)
_cons	-3.892***
	(1.010)
N	26187

British Election Study (1964-2019), *b* coefficients from mlogit analyses, standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 4 – Labour vs Conservative vote

	Voted Labour (1) over Conservative (0)
Over 60 (base level)	
Under 35	0.334*
	(0.151)
1964 (base level)	0.000
	(.)
1966	0.127
	(0.145)
1970	-0.275
	(0.155)
1974	-0.108
	(0.138)
1975	-0.041
	(0.139)
1979	-0.288
	(0.151)
1983	-0.396**
	(0.132)
1987	-0.498***
	(0.132)
1992	-0.106
	(0.129)

1997	0.395**
	(0.128)
2001	0.540***
	(0.131)
2005	0.101
	(0.126)
2010	-0.216
	(0.129)
2015	-0.513***
	(0.132)
2017	-0.386**
	(0.132)
2019	-0.866***
	(0.125)
Under 35 x 1964 (base level)	
Under 35 x 1966	0.136
	(0.207)
Under 35 x 1970	0.166
	(0.238)
Under 35 x 1974	0.154
	(0.201)
Under 35 x 1975	0.239
	(0.203)
Under 35 x 1979	-0.098
	(0.212)
Under 35 x 1983	-0.198
	(0.186)
Under 35 x 1987	0.234
	(0.186)
Under 35 x 1992	-0.197
	(0.185)
Under 35 x 1997	0.302
	(0.194)
Under 35 x 2001	0.193
	(0.218)
Under 35 x 2005	0.400
	(0.208)
Under 35 x 2010	0.154
	(0.213)
Under 35 x 2015	0.789***
	(0.214)
Under 35 x 2017	1.115***
	(0.221)
Under 35 x 2019	1.223***
	(0.196)
_cons	-0.080
	(0.104)
N	16118

British Election Study (1964-2019), *b* coefficients from logit analyses, standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix B – Chapter 1

Missing values and descriptive statistics

Table 1 – Missing values of modelled variables, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Variable	Missing	Total	Percent Missing
Vote	6,917	51,746	13.37
Age	3,981	51,746	7.69
Gender	3,546	51,746	6.85
Education level	686	51,746	1.33
Income	15,316	51,746	29.60
Death penalty support	22,529	51,746	43.54
Stiff sentences support	20,141	51,746	38.92
Young people respect for values	26,048	51,746	50.34
Censorship necessary	26,132	51,746	50.50
Different law for the reach and poor	25,888	51,746	50.03
Ordinary people get fair share	26,099	51,746	50.44
Redistribution	17,685	51,746	34.18

Table 2 – Descriptive statistics (before imputation), British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	31,898	49.78262	18.13785	17	97
Year	32,305	-	-	1987	2019
Generations	31,898	-	-	1	4
Gender	32,260	-	-	0	1
Education level	32,003	2.39565	1.138223	1	4
Income	26,299	2.981216	1.407809	1	5
Left-right values[15]	24,942	-3.40e-09	1	-1.679889	2.907128
Liberal-authoritarian values[16]	22,148	-4.56e-09	1	-3.499731	1.808529
Vote-choice	29,284	-	-	0	4

[15] Cronbach's alpha 0.58
[16] Cronbach's alpha 0.60

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics (after imputation), British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Age	31,898	49.78262	18.13785	17	97
Year	32,305	-	-	1987	2019
Generations	31,898	-	-	1	4
Gender	32,260	-	-	0	1
Education level	32,003	2.39565	1.138223	1	4
Income	26,299	2.981216	1.407809	1	5
Left-right values	32,305	-.0004865	1.103641	-1.967005	3.398091
Liberal-authoritarian values	32,305	-.0920946	1.144043	-4.482333	2.139472
Vote-choice	29,284	-	-	0	4

Factor Analysis for value scales

Liberal-Authoritarian Values

Principal Component Factor of (1) views on death penalty; (2) views on criminal sentences; (3) views on young people's respect for traditional values; (4) views on censorship to uphold moral standards.

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	1.84433	0.96475	0.4611	0.4611
Factor 2	0.87959	0.21439	0.2199	0.6810
Factor 3	0.66520	0.05431	0.1663	0.8473
Factor 4	0.61088		0.1527	1.0000

Chi-Square (6) = 2.2e+05 $p < 0.001$

Factor loadings and unique variances

Variable	Factor 1	Uniqueness
Death Penalty	0.6686	0.5530
Criminal Sentences	0.7388	0.4541
Traditional Values	0.7126	0.4922
Censorship	0.5863	0.6563

Left-Right Values

Principal Component Factor of (1) different law for the rich and poor; (2) ordinary people get fair share of the country's wealth; (3) country's wealth should be redistributed.

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	1.63510	0.87600	0.5450	0.5450
Factor 2	0.75910	0.15330	0.2530	0.7981
Factor 3	0.60580		0.2019	1.0000

Chi-Square (3) = 1.5e+05 $p < 0.001$

Factor loadings and unique variances

Variable	Factor 1	Uniqueness
Different Law	-0.7811	0.3898
Fair share	0.7546	0.4306
Redistribution	0.6749	0.5445

Models from non-imputed data

The models below replicate the analysis presented in Table 1 of Chapter 1, using non-imputed data

Table 5 – Multinomial logistic regression models explaining vote choice (*b* coefficients in log-odds), non-imputed data

	Block 1 Age and years	Block 2 Education	Block 3 Income	Block 4 Left-right values	Block 5 Liberal-authoritarian values
Did not vote					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.719***	1.072***	1.613***	1.422***	1.363***
	(0.160)	(0.166)	(0.172)	(0.178)	(0.180)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	-0.056	-0.046	-0.005	-0.067	-0.111
	(0.184)	(0.185)	(0.187)	(0.193)	(0.193)
1997	0.509**	0.537**	0.712***	0.568**	0.539**
	(0.178)	(0.180)	(0.183)	(0.188)	(0.189)
2001	0.504*	0.584**	0.930***	0.787***	0.667**
	(0.221)	(0.223)	(0.227)	(0.232)	(0.234)
2005	0.514**	0.640***	0.813***	0.679***	0.609***
	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.172)	(0.176)	(0.177)
2010	0.259	0.505**	0.727***	0.544**	0.417*
	(0.189)	(0.192)	(0.196)	(0.200)	(0.202)
2017	-0.221	0.090	0.403*	0.118	-0.024
	(0.189)	(0.193)	(0.197)	(0.202)	(0.203)
2019	0.055	0.442**	0.602***	0.354*	0.229
	(0.160)	(0.164)	(0.167)	(0.172)	(0.174)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	-0.088	-0.093	-0.187	-0.191	-0.249
	(0.234)	(0.236)	(0.239)	(0.246)	(0.247)
Under 35 x 1997	0.947***	0.993***	0.805***	0.796**	0.804**
	(0.234)	(0.236)	(0.240)	(0.247)	(0.249)
Under 35 x 2001	1.401***	1.471***	1.126***	1.247***	1.280***
	(0.317)	(0.319)	(0.324)	(0.330)	(0.333)
Under 35 x 2005	1.230***	1.286***	1.072***	1.207***	1.207***
	(0.242)	(0.244)	(0.248)	(0.254)	(0.255)
Under 35 x 2010	0.918**	0.863**	0.510	0.666*	0.731*
	(0.297)	(0.300)	(0.305)	(0.311)	(0.314)
Under 35 x 2017	1.461***	1.383***	1.041***	1.247***	1.298***
	(0.270)	(0.273)	(0.277)	(0.285)	(0.286)
Under 35 x 2019	0.869***	0.758**	0.464*	0.594*	0.594*
	(0.226)	(0.231)	(0.235)	(0.242)	(0.244)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.658***	-0.436***	-0.352***	-0.405***
		(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.098)	(0.099)
Post-16 qualifications		-0.791***	-0.466***	-0.333***	-0.408***
		(0.089)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.096)
Degree		-1.243***	-0.706***	-0.538***	-0.719***
		(0.102)	(0.109)	(0.112)	(0.115)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.642***	-0.583***	-0.590***
			(0.094)	(0.097)	(0.097)

3rd quintile			-1.095***	-0.926***	-0.963***
			(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.105)
4th quintile			-1.383***	-1.136***	-1.201***
			(0.108)	(0.111)	(0.112)
5th quintile			-1.642***	-1.249***	-1.356***
			(0.119)	(0.123)	(0.125)
Left-right values				-0.677***	-0.692***
				(0.036)	(0.037)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.312***
					(0.039)
_cons	-1.348***	-1.060***	-0.758***	-0.637***	-0.378**
	(0.125)	(0.129)	(0.133)	(0.138)	(0.142)
Labour					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.596***	0.890***	1.320***	1.072***	0.822***
	(0.127)	(0.132)	(0.137)	(0.152)	(0.156)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	0.415**	0.447***	0.468***	0.424**	0.310*
	(0.131)	(0.132)	(0.134)	(0.150)	(0.152)
1997	0.854***	0.898***	1.011***	0.865***	0.783***
	(0.134)	(0.135)	(0.137)	(0.153)	(0.155)
2001	1.248***	1.307***	1.543***	1.487***	1.213***
	(0.156)	(0.158)	(0.162)	(0.176)	(0.179)
2005	0.595***	0.691***	0.818***	0.798***	0.629***
	(0.129)	(0.131)	(0.133)	(0.145)	(0.147)
2010	0.218	0.401**	0.546***	0.427**	0.148
	(0.147)	(0.150)	(0.153)	(0.166)	(0.168)
2017	0.085	0.315*	0.534***	0.189	-0.137
	(0.136)	(0.139)	(0.143)	(0.158)	(0.162)
2019	-0.305*	-0.074	0.026	-0.268	-0.592***
	(0.129)	(0.132)	(0.135)	(0.149)	(0.152)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	-0.447*	-0.440*	-0.508**	-0.521**	-0.570**
	(0.177)	(0.178)	(0.181)	(0.201)	(0.204)
Under 35 x 1997	0.152	0.179	0.060	0.020	0.108
	(0.193)	(0.195)	(0.198)	(0.216)	(0.220)
Under 35 x 2001	-0.139	-0.138	-0.371	-0.184	-0.053
	(0.273)	(0.274)	(0.278)	(0.294)	(0.299)
Under 35 x 2005	0.085	0.070	-0.086	0.095	0.176
	(0.217)	(0.218)	(0.221)	(0.236)	(0.239)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.181	-0.282	-0.545	-0.315	-0.127
	(0.286)	(0.288)	(0.291)	(0.307)	(0.313)
Under 35 x 2017	0.866***	0.718**	0.465*	0.803**	0.998***
	(0.223)	(0.226)	(0.229)	(0.249)	(0.254)
Under 35 x 2019	0.842***	0.677***	0.449*	0.621**	0.756***
	(0.195)	(0.197)	(0.200)	(0.219)	(0.224)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.625***	-0.459***	-0.338***	-0.429***
		(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.087)	(0.088)
Post-16 qualifications		-0.726***	-0.477***	-0.286***	-0.453***
		(0.075)	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.086)
Degree		-0.616***	-0.181*	0.060	-0.402***
		(0.081)	(0.087)	(0.095)	(0.100)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.378***	-0.303***	-0.286**
			(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.087)
3rd quintile			-0.842***	-0.603***	-0.636***
			(0.087)	(0.093)	(0.095)

4th quintile			-0.994***	-0.626***	-0.698***
			(0.092)	(0.100)	(0.102)
5th quintile			-1.399***	-0.810***	-0.971***
			(0.103)	(0.112)	(0.115)
Left-right values				-1.151***	-1.180***
				(0.034)	(0.035)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.645***
					(0.035)
_cons	-0.606***	-0.368***	-0.136	-0.233*	0.259*
	(0.096)	(0.099)	(0.104)	(0.116)	(0.121)
Liberal Democrats					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.223	0.193	0.431**	0.190	-0.024
	(0.132)	(0.137)	(0.142)	(0.150)	(0.154)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	-0.613***	-0.550***	-0.529***	-0.610***	-0.722***
	(0.156)	(0.156)	(0.157)	(0.164)	(0.166)
1997	-0.192	-0.143	-0.073	-0.252	-0.336*
	(0.156)	(0.157)	(0.158)	(0.165)	(0.168)
2001	-0.102	-0.138	-0.017	-0.181	-0.435*
	(0.196)	(0.198)	(0.201)	(0.207)	(0.209)
2005	-0.167	-0.212	-0.142	-0.292	-0.445**
	(0.142)	(0.145)	(0.146)	(0.152)	(0.154)
2010	-0.222	-0.302	-0.214	-0.426*	-0.693***
	(0.159)	(0.162)	(0.163)	(0.170)	(0.173)
2017	-1.658***	-1.751***	-1.627***	-1.986***	-2.318***
	(0.211)	(0.214)	(0.216)	(0.223)	(0.227)
2019	-0.854***	-1.057***	-1.004***	-1.325***	-1.628***
	(0.141)	(0.146)	(0.148)	(0.155)	(0.160)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	0.124	0.126	0.083	0.098	0.048
	(0.210)	(0.211)	(0.212)	(0.221)	(0.224)
Under 35 x 1997	0.445	0.406	0.328	0.338	0.411
	(0.228)	(0.229)	(0.230)	(0.240)	(0.243)
Under 35 x 2001	0.845**	0.762*	0.637*	0.810*	0.916**
	(0.318)	(0.319)	(0.321)	(0.330)	(0.334)
Under 35 x 2005	0.660**	0.580*	0.494*	0.673**	0.731**
	(0.240)	(0.242)	(0.243)	(0.251)	(0.254)
Under 35 x 2010	0.721*	0.667*	0.513	0.716*	0.893**
	(0.289)	(0.291)	(0.293)	(0.302)	(0.307)
Under 35 x 2017	0.908**	0.819*	0.679	0.967**	1.153**
	(0.351)	(0.353)	(0.354)	(0.362)	(0.366)
Under 35 x 2019	0.207	0.158	0.024	0.208	0.313
	(0.248)	(0.251)	(0.253)	(0.261)	(0.266)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.057	0.032	0.134	0.045
		(0.101)	(0.103)	(0.107)	(0.108)
Post-16 qualifications		0.013	0.144	0.301**	0.149
		(0.098)	(0.101)	(0.105)	(0.106)
Degree		0.586***	0.820***	1.030***	0.629***
		(0.098)	(0.105)	(0.110)	(0.115)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.286**	-0.208	-0.194
			(0.104)	(0.107)	(0.109)
3rd quintile			-0.424***	-0.226*	-0.257*
			(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.113)
4th quintile			-0.512***	-0.221	-0.288*

			(0.113)	(0.118)	(0.119)
5th quintile			-0.822***	-0.366**	-0.511***
			(0.124)	(0.130)	(0.132)
Left-right values				-0.807***	-0.828***
				(0.037)	(0.038)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.598***
					(0.039)
_cons	-0.571***	-0.658***	-0.498***	-0.399***	0.064
	(0.095)	(0.103)	(0.110)	(0.116)	(0.121)
Other party					
Age (ref over 60)					
Under 35	0.197	0.273	0.591	0.350	0.195
	(0.524)	(0.527)	(0.529)	(0.533)	(0.534)
Year (ref 1987)					
1992	1.513***	1.523***	1.547***	1.480***	1.401**
	(0.429)	(0.429)	(0.430)	(0.434)	(0.435)
1997	2.263***	2.277***	2.360***	2.194***	2.137***
	(0.416)	(0.416)	(0.418)	(0.422)	(0.423)
2001	2.315***	2.355***	2.501***	2.400***	2.198***
	(0.447)	(0.447)	(0.450)	(0.455)	(0.456)
2005	2.391***	2.447***	2.536***	2.454***	2.332***
	(0.406)	(0.407)	(0.407)	(0.411)	(0.412)
2010	2.362***	2.447***	2.555***	2.393***	2.186***
	(0.415)	(0.416)	(0.418)	(0.423)	(0.424)
2017	1.759***	1.856***	2.016***	1.669***	1.432***
	(0.419)	(0.422)	(0.423)	(0.429)	(0.430)
2019	1.821***	1.909***	1.987***	1.681***	1.466***
	(0.404)	(0.407)	(0.408)	(0.413)	(0.414)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)					
Under 35 x 1992	0.688	0.701	0.644	0.645	0.589
	(0.575)	(0.575)	(0.575)	(0.581)	(0.582)
Under 35 x 1997	0.417	0.440	0.351	0.333	0.376
	(0.578)	(0.578)	(0.579)	(0.585)	(0.586)
Under 35 x 2001	0.478	0.496	0.358	0.540	0.623
	(0.657)	(0.658)	(0.660)	(0.666)	(0.668)
Under 35 x 2005	0.296	0.305	0.201	0.389	0.426
	(0.589)	(0.590)	(0.591)	(0.595)	(0.596)
Under 35 x 2010	0.179	0.159	-0.032	0.191	0.316
	(0.636)	(0.637)	(0.638)	(0.645)	(0.646)
Under 35 x 2017	0.618	0.595	0.418	0.730	0.854
	(0.617)	(0.619)	(0.620)	(0.627)	(0.628)
Under 35 x 2019	0.770	0.749	0.594	0.775	0.834
	(0.570)	(0.572)	(0.574)	(0.580)	(0.581)
Education (ref no qualifications)					
Pre-16 qualifications		-0.124	-0.013	0.090	0.022
		(0.142)	(0.144)	(0.148)	(0.149)
Post-16 qualifications		-0.281*	-0.111	0.053	-0.059
		(0.132)	(0.136)	(0.139)	(0.141)
Degree		-0.244	0.064	0.269	-0.034
		(0.144)	(0.152)	(0.157)	(0.164)
Income (ref 1st quintile)					
2nd quintile			-0.290*	-0.223	-0.216
			(0.140)	(0.143)	(0.144)
3rd quintile			-0.495***	-0.290	-0.318*
			(0.148)	(0.152)	(0.153)
4th quintile			-0.784***	-0.456**	-0.517**
			(0.160)	(0.165)	(0.166)
5th quintile			-1.004***	-0.478**	-0.603**

			(0.180)	(0.185)	(0.187)
Left-right values				-1.019***	-1.043***
				(0.057)	(0.057)
Liberal-authoritarian values					-0.474***
					(0.054)
_cons	-3.784***	-3.704***	-3.527***	-3.515***	-3.137***
	(0.382)	(0.385)	(0.388)	(0.391)	(0.393)
Log-likelihood	-14024.51	-13833.727	-13661.903	-12874.612	-12656.548
Pseudo R2	0.0459	0.0589	0.0706	0.1242	0.1390
N	9964	9964	9964	9964	9964

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Robustness tests

Table 6 – Robustness tests: comparing marginal effects from the multinomial and logistic models

	Model 5a Multinomial models	Model 5b Logistic models
Labour		
Age (ref over 60)		
Under 35	0.821***	0.404***
	(0.038)	(0.032)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	0.340***	0.457***
	(0.037)	(0.032)
1997	0.808***	0.638***
	(0.037)	(0.031)
2001	0.874***	0.663***
	(0.036)	(0.030)
2005	0.595***	0.372***
	(0.035)	(0.029)
2010	0.304***	0.183***
	(0.037)	(0.031)
2015	0.033	-0.102**
	(0.039)	(0.033)
2017	0.065	0.297***
	(0.039)	(0.034)
2019	-0.371***	-0.279***
	(0.036)	(0.031)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)		
Under 35 x 1992	-0.543***	-0.525***
	(0.051)	(0.043)
Under 35 x 1997	0.016	-0.467***
	(0.054)	(0.042)
Under 35 x 2001	-0.234***	-0.737***
	(0.054)	(0.042)
Under 35 x 2005	-0.009	-0.632***
	(0.053)	(0.042)
Under 35 x 2010	-0.130*	-0.528***
	(0.057)	(0.046)
Under 35 x 2015	0.421***	-0.193***
	(0.062)	(0.049)
Under 35 x 2017	0.823***	0.083
	(0.064)	(0.049)
Under 35 x 2019	0.657***	0.324***
	(0.054)	(0.044)
Education (ref no qualifications)		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.548***	-0.368***
	(0.020)	(0.016)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.505***	-0.336***
	(0.018)	(0.015)

Degree	-0.483***	-0.312***
	(0.021)	(0.017)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.158***	0.004
	(0.019)	(0.015)
3rd quintile	-0.394***	-0.118***
	(0.020)	(0.016)
4th quintile	-0.451***	-0.076***
	(0.021)	(0.017)
5th quintile	-0.601***	-0.133***
	(0.024)	(0.019)
Left-right values	-0.925***	-0.542***
	(0.007)	(0.006)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.449***	-0.229***
	(0.007)	(0.005)
_cons	0.044	-0.982***
	(0.029)	(0.024)
Liberal Democrats		
Age (ref over 60)		
Under 35	0.027	-0.505***
	(0.039)	(0.034)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	-0.574***	-0.691***
	(0.043)	(0.039)
1997	-0.227***	-0.666***
	(0.042)	(0.037)
2001	-0.450***	-0.957***
	(0.042)	(0.037)
2005	-0.259***	-0.624***
	(0.038)	(0.033)
2010	-0.580***	-0.815***
	(0.040)	(0.036)
2015	-1.289***	-1.542***
	(0.048)	(0.044)
2017	-1.950***	-2.009***
	(0.057)	(0.054)
2019	-1.281***	-1.257***
	(0.039)	(0.035)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)		
Under 35 x 1992	0.046	0.245***
	(0.058)	(0.052)
Under 35 x 1997	0.304***	-0.048
	(0.062)	(0.052)
Under 35 x 2001	0.460***	0.225***
	(0.063)	(0.053)
Under 35 x 2005	0.503***	0.075
	(0.058)	(0.048)
Under 35 x 2010	0.599***	0.399***
	(0.061)	(0.052)
Under 35 x 2015	-0.260**	-0.829***
	(0.098)	(0.090)

Under 35 x 2017	1.022***	0.261**
	(0.094)	(0.085)
Under 35 x 2019	0.291***	-0.157**
	(0.066)	(0.057)
Education (ref no qualifications)		
Pre-16 qualifications	0.008	0.320***
	(0.025)	(0.022)
Post-16 qualifications	0.094***	0.394***
	(0.024)	(0.021)
Degree	0.480***	0.828***
	(0.026)	(0.023)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.025	0.137***
	(0.025)	(0.022)
3rd quintile	-0.045	0.275***
	(0.026)	(0.022)
4th quintile	-0.103***	0.296***
	(0.027)	(0.023)
5th quintile	-0.243***	0.253***
	(0.029)	(0.025)
Left-right values	-0.691***	-0.209***
	(0.009)	(0.007)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.468***	-0.216***
	(0.008)	(0.007)
_cons	-0.329***	-1.536***
	(0.030)	(0.026)
Other party		
Age (ref over 60)		
Under 35	0.211	-0.334**
	(0.131)	(0.129)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	1.177***	1.180***
	(0.107)	(0.105)
1997	2.023***	1.702***
	(0.101)	(0.099)
2001	1.977***	1.606***
	(0.101)	(0.099)
2005	2.144***	1.902***
	(0.098)	(0.096)
2010	2.114***	2.044***
	(0.099)	(0.097)
2015	2.675***	2.773***
	(0.098)	(0.095)
2017	1.525***	1.739***
	(0.103)	(0.101)
2019	1.581***	1.825***
	(0.098)	(0.096)
Age x Year (ref over 60 x 1987)		
Under 35 x 1992	0.696***	0.938***
	(0.146)	(0.143)
Under 35 x 1997	0.341*	0.012
	(0.145)	(0.140)

Under 35 x 2001	0.487***	0.253
	(0.145)	(0.140)
Under 35 x 2005	0.360*	-0.081
	(0.142)	(0.138)
Under 35 x 2010	0.174	-0.084
	(0.145)	(0.140)
Under 35 x 2015	0.399**	-0.210
	(0.143)	(0.137)
Under 35 x 2017	0.527***	-0.293
	(0.159)	(0.153)
Under 35 x 2019	0.646***	0.222
	(0.142)	(0.138)
Education (ref no qualifications)		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.210***	0.093**
	(0.032)	(0.030)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.121***	0.172***
	(0.028)	(0.025)
Degree	-0.225***	0.051
	(0.034)	(0.031)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.076*	0.098***
	(0.030)	(0.027)
3rd quintile	-0.211***	0.111***
	(0.032)	(0.029)
4th quintile	-0.379***	0.015
	(0.034)	(0.031)
5th quintile	-0.458***	0.041
	(0.038)	(0.035)
Left-right values	-0.925***	-0.417***
	(0.012)	(0.011)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.411***	-0.130***
	(0.011)	(0.009)
_cons	-3.172***	-4.577***
	(0.094)	(0.092)
N	201964	202267

Model 5a: Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with 'Conservative vote' set as reference category
Model 5b: Log-odds from nested logistic regression models with 'any other party + abstention' set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data with missing values imputed with ICE (m=10)
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Regression models of reported figures

The tables below report the log-odd coefficients from the multinomial regression analyses behind the marginal effects reported in Figures 8 to 12 of Chapter 1. Across all tables, the Conservative party is set as reference category.

Table 7 – Effects of left-right values on vote-choice by election year (Figure 8.1)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.047***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.514***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.831***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-1.079***
	(0.018)
5th quintile	-1.306***
	(0.019)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.566***
	(0.016)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.527***
	(0.015)
Degree	-0.613***
	(0.018)
Left-Right values	-0.586***
	(0.016)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	0.015
	(0.025)
1997	1.083***
	(0.025)
2001	1.273***
	(0.024)
2005	1.246***
	(0.022)
2010	0.932***
	(0.024)
2015	1.250***
	(0.025)
2017	0.983***
	(0.027)
2019	0.689***
	(0.023)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.167***
	(0.025)
1997 x Left-Right values	-0.122***
	(0.024)

2001 x Left-Right values	0.493***
	(0.023)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.375***
	(0.022)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.400***
	(0.023)
2015 x Left-Right values	-0.159***
	(0.024)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.077**
	(0.026)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.113***
	(0.022)
constant	2.414***
	(0.028)
Labour	
Age	-0.024***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.221***
	(0.016)
3rd quintile	-0.465***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-0.565***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-0.721***
	(0.018)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.512***
	(0.015)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.391***
	(0.014)
Degree	-0.064***
	(0.016)
Left-Right values	-1.368***
	(0.016)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	0.242***
	(0.023)
1997	0.973***
	(0.023)
2001	0.985***
	(0.022)
2005	0.780***
	(0.021)
2010	0.464***
	(0.022)
2015	0.434***
	(0.024)
2017	0.671***
	(0.025)
2019	0.069**
	(0.022)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)	

1992 x Left-Right values	-0.112***
	(0.024)
1997 x Left-Right values	0.110***
	(0.024)
2001 x Left-Right values	1.006***
	(0.022)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.982***
	(0.022)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.895***
	(0.023)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.417***
	(0.024)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.460***
	(0.025)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.479***
	(0.022)
constant	1.414***
	(0.026)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.012***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.113***
	(0.021)
3rd quintile	-0.096***
	(0.021)
4th quintile	-0.199***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.229***
	(0.022)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	0.080***
	(0.019)
Post-16 qualifications	0.275***
	(0.018)
Degree	0.924***
	(0.019)
Left-Right values	-0.836***
	(0.014)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	-0.289***
	(0.024)
1997	0.020
	(0.025)
2001	-0.139***
	(0.024)
2005	-0.035
	(0.022)
2010	-0.199***
	(0.023)
2015	-1.171***
	(0.031)
2017	-1.360***

	(0.035)
2019	-1.001***
	(0.025)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.134***
	(0.023)
1997 x Left-Right values	-0.044
	(0.025)
2001 x Left-Right values	0.386***
	(0.025)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.368***
	(0.022)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.384***
	(0.023)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.218***
	(0.031)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.184***
	(0.036)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.347***
	(0.023)
constant	0.122***
	(0.031)
Other party	
Age	-0.018***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.116***
	(0.024)
3rd quintile	-0.372***
	(0.025)
4th quintile	-0.422***
	(0.025)
5th quintile	-0.602***
	(0.028)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.151***
	(0.024)
Post-16 qualifications	0.075***
	(0.021)
Degree	0.197***
	(0.025)
Left-Right values	-0.925***
	(0.045)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	1.461***
	(0.053)
1997	2.024***
	(0.053)
2001	1.937***
	(0.052)
2005	2.098***
	(0.050)
2010	1.907***

	(0.051)
2015	2.630***
	(0.051)
2017	1.722***
	(0.055)
2019	1.647***
	(0.051)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.493***
	(0.054)
1997 x Left-Right values	-0.084
	(0.053)
2001 x Left-Right values	0.213***
	(0.053)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.340***
	(0.051)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.272***
	(0.052)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.011
	(0.050)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.021
	(0.056)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.018
	(0.051)
constant	-1.953***
	(0.056)
N	339036

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8 – Effects of liberal-authoritarian values on vote-choice by election year (Figure 8.1)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.049***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.576***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.965***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-1.280***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-1.636***
	(0.019)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.655***
	(0.016)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.641***
	(0.015)
Degree	-0.820***
	(0.018)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.198***
	(0.017)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	-0.045
	(0.024)
1997	1.262***
	(0.024)
2001	1.514***
	(0.023)
2005	1.497***
	(0.022)
2010	1.151***
	(0.023)
2015	1.397***
	(0.024)
2017	1.168***
	(0.026)
2019	0.896***
	(0.023)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.027
	(0.025)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.037
	(0.025)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.062**
	(0.024)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.073**
	(0.023)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.129***
	(0.024)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.200***

	(0.024)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.222***
	(0.025)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.099***
	(0.023)
constant	2.512***
	(0.027)
Labour	
Age	-0.025***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.314***
	(0.015)
3rd quintile	-0.684***
	(0.016)
4th quintile	-0.925***
	(0.016)
5th quintile	-1.320***
	(0.017)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.642***
	(0.014)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.605***
	(0.014)
Degree	-0.541***
	(0.016)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.494***
	(0.014)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	0.131***
	(0.019)
1997	1.122***
	(0.020)
2001	0.965***
	(0.020)
2005	0.774***
	(0.019)
2010	0.433***
	(0.020)
2015	0.379***
	(0.022)
2017	0.623***
	(0.022)
2019	-0.059**
	(0.021)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.282***
	(0.019)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.104***
	(0.021)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.105***
	(0.020)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.048*

	(0.020)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.222***
	(0.020)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.247***
	(0.021)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.066**
	(0.020)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.324***
	(0.019)
constant	1.896***
	(0.024)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.013***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.185***
	(0.021)
3rd quintile	-0.283***
	(0.020)
4th quintile	-0.496***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.732***
	(0.021)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.048*
	(0.019)
Post-16 qualifications	0.066***
	(0.018)
Degree	0.441***
	(0.020)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.326***
	(0.015)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	-0.382***
	(0.022)
1997	0.222***
	(0.024)
2001	0.055*
	(0.024)
2005	0.177***
	(0.021)
2010	-0.036
	(0.023)
2015	-1.098***
	(0.032)
2017	-1.354***
	(0.039)
2019	-1.003***
	(0.026)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.063**
	(0.022)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.110***

	(0.024)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.145***
	(0.023)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.188***
	(0.022)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.064**
	(0.022)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.064*
	(0.029)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.233***
	(0.030)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.467***
	(0.022)
constant	0.333***
	(0.030)
Other party	
Age	-0.019***
	(0.000)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.210***
	(0.024)
3rd quintile	-0.584***
	(0.025)
4th quintile	-0.769***
	(0.025)
5th quintile	-1.184***
	(0.027)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.277***
	(0.024)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.138***
	(0.021)
Degree	-0.260***
	(0.025)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.422***
	(0.044)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	1.508***
	(0.050)
1997	2.256***
	(0.050)
2001	2.179***
	(0.050)
2005	2.317***
	(0.049)
2010	2.124***
	(0.050)
2015	2.778***
	(0.049)
2017	1.947***
	(0.053)
2019	1.811***
	(0.050)

Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)	
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.093
	(0.050)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.051
	(0.050)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.068
	(0.050)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.029
	(0.049)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.205***
	(0.049)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.170***
	(0.048)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.160**
	(0.050)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.294***
	(0.048)
constant	-1.689***
	(0.054)
N	336878

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 9 – Effects of left-right values on vote-choice by election year (Figure 8.2 – Over 60 and Under 35)

	β (SE)	
	Over 60	**Under 35**
Did not vote		
Left-right values	-0.529***	-0.575***
	(0.029)	(0.026)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	-0.004	-0.176***
	(0.048)	(0.042)
1997	0.438***	1.353***
	(0.046)	(0.045)
2001	0.594***	1.199***
	(0.043)	(0.043)
2005	0.462***	1.373***
	(0.041)	(0.042)
2010	0.303***	0.852***
	(0.044)	(0.044)
2015	0.303***	1.730***
	(0.046)	(0.054)
2017	-0.082	1.458***
	(0.049)	(0.058)
2019	0.163***	0.801***
	(0.041)	(0.045)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.206***	-0.204***
	(0.046)	(0.042)
1997 x Left-Right values	-0.184***	-0.223***
	(0.045)	(0.043)
2001 x Left-Right values	0.388***	0.585***
	(0.041)	(0.041)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.265***	0.559***
	(0.041)	(0.041)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.232***	0.621***
	(0.042)	(0.042)
2015 x Left-Right values	-0.338***	-0.351***
	(0.044)	(0.053)
2017 x Left-Right values	-0.115*	-0.072
	(0.049)	(0.057)
2019 x Left-Right values	-0.005	0.180***
	(0.038)	(0.043)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.684***	-0.465***
	(0.031)	(0.036)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.570***	-0.571***
	(0.026)	(0.036)
Degree	-0.725***	-0.893***
	(0.033)	(0.040)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.442***	-0.384***
	(0.025)	(0.041)
3rd quintile	-0.569***	-0.895***

	(0.029)	(0.038)
4th quintile	-0.618***	-1.136***
	(0.033)	(0.038)
5th quintile	-0.448***	-1.357***
	(0.039)	(0.039)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.193***	-0.205***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
constant	-0.368***	1.062***
	(0.035)	(0.046)
Labour		
Left-right values	-1.402***	-1.288***
	(0.032)	(0.028)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	0.377***	-0.125**
	(0.044)	(0.040)
1997	0.868***	0.927***
	(0.043)	(0.045)
2001	0.935***	0.549***
	(0.040)	(0.043)
2005	0.644***	0.451***
	(0.039)	(0.043)
2010	0.366***	0.080
	(0.041)	(0.046)
2015	0.119**	0.725***
	(0.044)	(0.056)
2017	0.120**	1.025***
	(0.044)	(0.058)
2019	-0.258***	0.315***
	(0.041)	(0.045)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.147**	-0.193***
	(0.046)	(0.043)
1997 x Left-Right values	0.142**	-0.075
	(0.044)	(0.046)
2001 x Left-Right values	1.029***	1.032***
	(0.040)	(0.044)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.921***	1.180***
	(0.040)	(0.044)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.688***	1.009***
	(0.042)	(0.046)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.298***	0.291***
	(0.044)	(0.056)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.220***	0.363***
	(0.046)	(0.058)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.538***	0.485***
	(0.040)	(0.045)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.670***	-0.406***
	(0.027)	(0.038)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.526***	-0.417***
	(0.023)	(0.037)
Degree	-0.499***	-0.452***
	(0.027)	(0.041)

Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.166***	-0.127**
	(0.022)	(0.043)
3rd quintile	-0.435***	-0.436***
	(0.025)	(0.040)
4th quintile	-0.460***	-0.566***
	(0.029)	(0.039)
5th quintile	-0.496***	-0.769***
	(0.034)	(0.041)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.461***	-0.446***
	(0.009)	(0.012)
constant	-0.028	0.821***
	(0.034)	(0.048)
Liberal Democrats		
Left-right values	-0.943***	-0.704***
	(0.027)	(0.026)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	-0.544***	-0.465***
	(0.045)	(0.043)
1997	-0.277***	0.127*
	(0.044)	(0.050)
2001	-0.635***	-0.258***
	(0.043)	(0.049)
2005	-0.415***	-0.039
	(0.039)	(0.046)
2010	-0.712***	-0.254***
	(0.042)	(0.049)
2015	-1.340***	-1.516***
	(0.050)	(0.092)
2017	-2.001***	-1.003***
	(0.059)	(0.082)
2019	-1.344***	-1.118***
	(0.041)	(0.056)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.051	-0.311***
	(0.045)	(0.043)
1997 x Left-Right values	0.073	-0.250***
	(0.044)	(0.050)
2001 x Left-Right values	0.503***	0.295***
	(0.044)	(0.050)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.476***	0.359***
	(0.040)	(0.047)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.394***	0.409***
	(0.041)	(0.049)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.314***	-0.444***
	(0.048)	(0.098)
2017 x Left-Right values	0.181**	-0.318***
	(0.060)	(0.087)
2019 x Left-Right values	0.365***	0.380***
	(0.038)	(0.054)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.008	0.104*
	(0.032)	(0.049)

Post-16 qualifications	0.064*	0.207***
	(0.029)	(0.049)
Degree	0.402***	0.606***
	(0.032)	(0.052)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	0.048	-0.196***
	(0.029)	(0.053)
3rd quintile	0.066*	-0.332***
	(0.031)	(0.048)
4th quintile	0.004	-0.396***
	(0.035)	(0.047)
5th quintile	-0.084*	-0.575***
	(0.041)	(0.048)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.470***	-0.474***
	(0.011)	(0.014)
constant	-0.289***	-0.066
	(0.033)	(0.058)
Other party		
Left-right values	-0.927***	-1.124***
	(0.092)	(0.101)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	1.185***	1.730***
	(0.112)	(0.113)
1997	2.039***	2.465***
	(0.105)	(0.116)
2001	1.693***	2.207***
	(0.106)	(0.115)
2005	1.933***	2.244***
	(0.102)	(0.114)
2010	1.952***	2.039***
	(0.103)	(0.116)
2015	2.590***	3.137***
	(0.101)	(0.118)
2017	1.400***	2.046***
	(0.108)	(0.133)
2019	1.315***	2.197***
	(0.104)	(0.114)
Year x Left-Right values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Left-Right values	-0.149	-0.595***
	(0.111)	(0.113)
1997 x Left-Right values	0.285**	-0.104
	(0.102)	(0.116)
2001 x Left-Right values	0.144	0.493***
	(0.104)	(0.116)
2005 x Left-Right values	0.276**	0.535***
	(0.101)	(0.115)
2010 x Left-Right values	0.277**	0.521***
	(0.100)	(0.117)
2015 x Left-Right values	0.028	-0.209
	(0.097)	(0.118)
2017 x Left-Right values	-0.113	0.133
	(0.106)	(0.137)
2019 x Left-Right values	-0.195*	0.574***

	(0.099)	(0.113)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')		
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.109**	-0.456***
	(0.040)	(0.059)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.075*	-0.297***
	(0.033)	(0.056)
Degree	-0.220***	-0.385***
	(0.042)	(0.063)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.107**	-0.028
	(0.034)	(0.062)
3rd quintile	-0.196***	-0.336***
	(0.038)	(0.060)
4th quintile	-0.309***	-0.554***
	(0.043)	(0.059)
5th quintile	-0.411***	-0.594***
	(0.053)	(0.062)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.396***	-0.431***
	(0.013)	(0.017)
constant	-3.055***	-2.649***
	(0.098)	(0.117)
N	113628	88336

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 10 – Effects of liberal-authoritarian values on vote-choice by election year (Figure 8.2 – Over 60 and Under 35)

	β (SE)	
	Over 60	**Under 35**
Did not vote		
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.309***	-0.398***
	(0.037)	(0.031)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	-0.092	-0.291***
	(0.053)	(0.041)
1997	0.417***	1.295***
	(0.052)	(0.041)
2001	0.727***	1.449***
	(0.047)	(0.042)
2005	0.567***	1.631***
	(0.045)	(0.041)
2010	0.358***	1.120***
	(0.047)	(0.043)
2015	0.299***	1.683***
	(0.048)	(0.049)
2017	-0.112*	1.606***
	(0.052)	(0.056)
2019	0.195***	0.922***
	(0.044)	(0.044)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.100	0.127**
	(0.054)	(0.044)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.138**	0.019
	(0.052)	(0.047)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.029	0.190***
	(0.049)	(0.044)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.081	0.148***
	(0.048)	(0.044)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.215***	0.330***
	(0.048)	(0.045)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.279***	0.340***
	(0.048)	(0.048)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.283***	0.621***
	(0.050)	(0.053)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.050	0.244***
	(0.044)	(0.045)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	-0.672***	-0.479***
Pre-16 qualifications	(0.031)	(0.036)
	-0.558***	-0.599***
Post-16 qualifications	(0.026)	(0.036)
	-0.680***	-0.900***
Degree	(0.033)	(0.040)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.448***	-0.377***
	(0.025)	(0.041)

3rd quintile	-0.577***	-0.876***
	(0.029)	(0.038)
4th quintile	-0.614***	-1.122***
	(0.033)	(0.037)
5th quintile	-0.454***	-1.347***
	(0.038)	(0.039)
Left-Right values	-0.521***	-0.473***
	(0.010)	(0.011)
constant	-0.397***	1.002***
	(0.038)	(0.046)
Labour		
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.503***	-0.717***
	(0.031)	(0.028)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	0.288***	-0.138***
	(0.042)	(0.037)
1997	0.751***	0.865***
	(0.042)	(0.040)
2001	0.862***	0.692***
	(0.040)	(0.042)
2005	0.572***	0.644***
	(0.039)	(0.042)
2010	0.268***	0.214***
	(0.040)	(0.045)
2015	-0.007	0.585***
	(0.042)	(0.051)
2017	0.030	1.003***
	(0.042)	(0.057)
2019	-0.470***	0.125**
	(0.040)	(0.046)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.159***	0.481***
	(0.043)	(0.039)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.150***	0.300***
	(0.042)	(0.045)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.040	0.315***
	(0.041)	(0.043)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.073	0.327***
	(0.040)	(0.044)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.258***	0.402***
	(0.040)	(0.045)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.239***	0.549***
	(0.041)	(0.049)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.032	0.476***
	(0.039)	(0.050)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.334***	-0.127**
	(0.037)	(0.043)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	-0.640***	-0.412***
Pre-16 qualifications	(0.026)	(0.037)
	-0.506***	-0.432***
Post-16 qualifications	(0.022)	(0.037)
	-0.500***	-0.461***

Degree	(0.028)	(0.041)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.178***	-0.125**
	(0.022)	(0.043)
3rd quintile	-0.445***	-0.433***
	(0.025)	(0.040)
4th quintile	-0.459***	-0.567***
	(0.028)	(0.039)
5th quintile	-0.501***	-0.777***
	(0.034)	(0.040)
Left-Right values	-0.948***	-0.885***
	(0.009)	(0.012)
constant	0.075*	0.864***
	(0.033)	(0.046)
Liberal Democrats		
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.218***	-0.582***
	(0.031)	(0.029)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	-0.512***	-0.464***
	(0.047)	(0.042)
1997	-0.191***	0.037
	(0.046)	(0.048)
2001	-0.366***	-0.041
	(0.045)	(0.050)
2005	-0.163***	0.154**
	(0.041)	(0.048)
2010	-0.514***	-0.005
	(0.043)	(0.050)
2015	-1.227***	-1.712***
	(0.051)	(0.104)
2017	-1.913***	-0.868***
	(0.063)	(0.090)
2019	-1.196***	-1.477***
	(0.043)	(0.072)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.161***	0.407***
	(0.048)	(0.044)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.149**	0.049
	(0.047)	(0.052)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.311***	0.111*
	(0.046)	(0.048)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.374***	0.027
	(0.043)	(0.048)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.167***	0.289***
	(0.043)	(0.048)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.172***	0.059
	(0.048)	(0.081)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.310***	0.367***
	(0.051)	(0.072)
2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.484***	-0.449***
	(0.039)	(0.055)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	0.006	0.111*

Pre-16 qualifications	(0.032)	(0.049)
	0.068*	0.223***
Post-16 qualifications	(0.029)	(0.049)
	0.390***	0.619***
Degree	(0.032)	(0.052)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	0.048	-0.212***
	(0.029)	(0.053)
3rd quintile	0.064*	-0.337***
	(0.031)	(0.048)
4th quintile	0.010	-0.411***
	(0.035)	(0.047)
5th quintile	-0.082*	-0.596***
	(0.041)	(0.048)
Left-Right values	-0.700***	-0.670***
	(0.011)	(0.014)
constant	-0.464***	-0.110
	(0.035)	(0.057)
Other party		
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.475***	-0.730***
	(0.097)	(0.087)
Year (ref 1987)		
1992	1.165***	1.955***
	(0.113)	(0.106)
1997	1.875***	2.436***
	(0.109)	(0.109)
2001	1.959***	2.457***
	(0.107)	(0.112)
2005	2.123***	2.600***
	(0.104)	(0.110)
2010	2.056***	2.374***
	(0.105)	(0.112)
2015	2.617***	3.109***
	(0.103)	(0.113)
2017	1.506***	1.901***
	(0.108)	(0.145)
2019	1.509***	2.192***
	(0.104)	(0.113)
Year x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 1987)		
1992 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.113	0.507***
	(0.112)	(0.097)
1997 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.336**	0.428***
	(0.108)	(0.102)
2001 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.019	0.181
	(0.106)	(0.099)
2005 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.072	0.392***
	(0.104)	(0.100)
2010 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.396***	0.530***
	(0.103)	(0.102)
2015 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.178	0.377***
	(0.101)	(0.099)
2017 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.243*	0.217
	(0.104)	(0.113)

2019 x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.219*	0.074
	(0.101)	(0.098)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	-0.074	-0.478***
Pre-16 qualifications	(0.040)	(0.059)
	-0.067*	-0.317***
Post-16 qualifications	(0.033)	(0.056)
	-0.215***	-0.416***
Degree	(0.042)	(0.063)
Income (ref 1st quintile)		
2nd quintile	-0.110**	-0.026
	(0.034)	(0.062)
3rd quintile	-0.200***	-0.330***
	(0.038)	(0.059)
4th quintile	-0.312***	-0.545***
	(0.044)	(0.059)
5th quintile	-0.413***	-0.591***
	(0.053)	(0.062)
Left-Right values	-0.869***	-1.013***
	(0.015)	(0.020)
constant	-3.154***	-2.754***
	(0.100)	(0.112)
N	113628	88336

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 11 – Effect of left-right values on vote-choice by generation (Figure 9)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.019***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.144***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.333***
	(0.014)
3rd quintile	-0.531***
	(0.014)
4th quintile	-0.805***
	(0.014)
5th quintile	-1.034***
	(0.015)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.449***
	(0.012)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.533***
	(0.013)
Degree	-0.661***
	(0.015)
Left-Right values	-0.198***
	(0.007)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.408***
	(0.013)
Generation X	1.034***
	(0.014)
Millennial	1.502***
	(0.022)
Generations x Left-Right values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Left-Right values	-0.267***
	(0.011)
Generation X x Left-Right values	-0.220***
	(0.011)
Millennial x Left-Right values	-0.199***
	(0.018)
constant	0.911***
	(0.026)
Labour	
Age	-0.017***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.091***
	(0.008)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.056***
	(0.012)
3rd quintile	-0.173***
	(0.013)
4th quintile	-0.266***

	(0.013)
5th quintile	-0.521***
	(0.014)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.226***
	(0.011)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.474***
	(0.011)
Degree	-0.180***
	(0.013)
Left-Right values	-0.660***
	(0.006)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	-0.125***
	(0.011)
Generation X	0.091***
	(0.013)
Millennial	0.289***
	(0.021)
Generations x Left-Right values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Left-Right values	-0.223***
	(0.010)
Generation X x Left-Right values	-0.118***
	(0.011)
Millennial x Left-Right values	-0.027
	(0.019)
constant	1.278***
	(0.023)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.015***
	(0.000)
Gender	-0.044***
	(0.010)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.077***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.020
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-0.142***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-0.172***
	(0.017)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.060***
	(0.015)
Post-16 qualifications	0.115***
	(0.015)
Degree	0.695***
	(0.016)
Left-Right values	-0.543***
	(0.007)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.128***

	(0.013)
Generation X	0.001
	(0.016)
Millennial	-0.227***
	(0.027)
Generations x Left-Right values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Left-Right values	-0.118***
	(0.012)
Generation X x Left-Right values	-0.015
	(0.013)
Millennial x Left-Right values	0.067**
	(0.025)
constant	-0.187***
	(0.029)
Other party	
Age	0.001
	(0.001)
Gender	0.268***
	(0.013)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	0.091***
	(0.020)
3rd quintile	-0.168***
	(0.021)
4th quintile	-0.249***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.439***
	(0.023)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.482***
	(0.019)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.011
	(0.018)
Degree	0.095***
	(0.021)
Left-Right values	-0.634***
	(0.011)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.780***
	(0.018)
Generation X	1.008***
	(0.022)
Millennial	1.232***
	(0.033)
Generations x Left-Right values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Left-Right values	-0.164***
	(0.017)
Generation X x Left-Right values	-0.278***
	(0.018)
Millennial x Left-Right values	-0.166***
	(0.029)
constant	-1.970***
	(0.039)

N	497704

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 12 – Effect of liberal-authoritarian values on vote-choice by generation (Figure 9)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.020***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.147***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.368***
	(0.014)
3rd quintile	-0.615***
	(0.014)
4th quintile	-0.938***
	(0.014)
5th quintile	-1.251***
	(0.015)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.487***
	(0.012)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.590***
	(0.013)
Degree	-0.804***
	(0.015)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.109***
	(0.007)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.365***
	(0.013)
Generation X	0.997***
	(0.014)
Millennial	1.470***
	(0.021)
Generations x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.047***
	(0.012)
Generation X x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.012
	(0.012)
Millennial x Liberal-Authoritarian values	0.058***
	(0.017)
constant	1.061***
	(0.026)
Labour	
Age	-0.019***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.103***

	(0.008)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.122***
	(0.012)
3rd quintile	-0.341***
	(0.012)
4th quintile	-0.554***
	(0.012)
5th quintile	-0.996***
	(0.013)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.309***
	(0.010)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.630***
	(0.011)
Degree	-0.574***
	(0.013)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.219***
	(0.006)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	-0.118***
	(0.010)
Generation X	0.044***
	(0.012)
Millennial	0.147***
	(0.021)
Generations x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.199***
	(0.010)
Generation X x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.218***
	(0.010)
Millennial x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.233***
	(0.017)
constant	1.646***
	(0.022)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.015***
	(0.000)
Gender	-0.037***
	(0.010)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.130***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.161***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-0.379***
	(0.016)
5th quintile	-0.566***
	(0.017)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.138***
	(0.015)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.022

	(0.015)
Degree	0.326***
	(0.017)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.226***
	(0.007)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.093***
	(0.013)
Generation X	-0.086***
	(0.016)
Millennial	-0.410***
	(0.030)
Generations x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.163***
	(0.012)
Generation X x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.252***
	(0.013)
Millennial x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.279***
	(0.022)
constant	0.108***
	(0.029)
Other party	
Age	-0.000
	(0.001)
Gender	0.273***
	(0.013)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	0.018
	(0.020)
3rd quintile	-0.343***
	(0.021)
4th quintile	-0.548***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.937***
	(0.023)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.570***
	(0.019)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.182***
	(0.018)
Degree	-0.319***
	(0.021)
Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.368***
	(0.011)
Generations (ref 'Pre-war')	
Baby-Boom	0.764***
	(0.018)
Generation X	1.025***
	(0.021)
Millennial	1.135***
	(0.034)
Generations x Liberal-Authoritarian values (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.042**

	(0.016)
Generation X x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.046**
	(0.016)
Millennial x Liberal-Authoritarian values	-0.084***
	(0.025)
constant	-1.596***
	(0.039)
N	495546

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 13 – Effect of left-right values on vote-choice by education (Figure 10)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.039***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.135***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.379***
	(0.014)
3rd quintile	-0.579***
	(0.014)
4th quintile	-0.853***
	(0.014)
5th quintile	-1.090***
	(0.015)
Year	0.023***
	(0.000)
Left-right values	-0.403***
	(0.009)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.350***
	(0.012)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.479***
	(0.013)
Degree	-0.547***
	(0.016)
Education x Left-Right values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.188***
	(0.012)
Post-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.051***
	(0.012)
Degree x Left-Right values	-0.013
	(0.014)
constant	-43.416***
	(0.586)
Labour	
Age	-0.019***

	(0.000)
Gender	0.090***
	(0.008)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.071***
	(0.013)
3rd quintile	-0.198***
	(0.013)
4th quintile	-0.291***
	(0.013)
5th quintile	-0.549***
	(0.014)
Year	0.001***
	(0.000)
Left-right values	-0.769***
	(0.008)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.210***
	(0.011)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.468***
	(0.012)
Degree	-0.121***
	(0.014)
Education x Left-Right values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.190***
	(0.011)
Post-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.032**
	(0.012)
Degree x Left-Right values	-0.196***
	(0.013)
constant	-1.224*
	(0.510)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.013***
	(0.000)
Gender	-0.036***
	(0.010)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.075***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.013
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-0.140***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-0.168***
	(0.017)
Year	-0.001
	(0.000)
Left-right values	-0.604***
	(0.011)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.098***
	(0.015)

Post-16 qualifications	0.107***
	(0.015)
Degree	0.740***
	(0.017)
Education x Left-Right values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.109***
	(0.015)
Post-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.039*
	(0.015)
Degree x Left-Right values	-0.062***
	(0.016)
constant	1.007
	(0.655)
Other party	
Age	-0.019***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.276***
	(0.013)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	0.039
	(0.021)
3rd quintile	-0.189***
	(0.021)
4th quintile	-0.276***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.447***
	(0.023)
Year	0.029***
	(0.000)
Left-right values	-0.752***
	(0.014)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.360***
	(0.021)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.005
	(0.019)
Degree	0.092***
	(0.022)
Education x Left-Right values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.064**
	(0.021)
Post-16 qual x Left-Right values	0.016
	(0.019)
Degree x Left-Right values	-0.186***
	(0.021)
constant	-57.772***
	(0.898)
N	497704

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 14 – Effect of liberal-authoritarian values on vote-choice by education (Figure 10 in Chapter 1)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.040***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.138***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.419***
	(0.014)
3rd quintile	-0.668***
	(0.014)
4th quintile	-0.983***
	(0.014)
5th quintile	-1.292***
	(0.015)
Year	0.023***
	(0.000)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.162***
	(0.010)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.401***
	(0.013)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.561***
	(0.013)
Degree	-0.755***
	(0.015)
Education x Liberal-authoritarian values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.146***
	(0.013)
Post-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.086***
	(0.013)
Degree x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.062***
	(0.014)
constant	-43.420***
	(0.584)
Labour	
Age	-0.019***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.103***
	(0.008)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.139***
	(0.012)
3rd quintile	-0.369***
	(0.012)
4th quintile	-0.573***
	(0.012)
5th quintile	-1.028***
	(0.013)
Year	0.000

	(0.000)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.264***
	(0.008)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.309***
	(0.011)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.616***
	(0.011)
Degree	-0.689***
	(0.014)
Education x Liberal-authoritarian values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.084***
	(0.011)
Post-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.068***
	(0.012)
Degree x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.355***
	(0.012)
constant	1.607**
	(0.499)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.013***
	(0.000)
Gender	-0.028**
	(0.010)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.129***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.155***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-0.375***
	(0.016)
5th quintile	-0.564***
	(0.017)
Year	-0.002***
	(0.000)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.151***
	(0.012)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.126***
	(0.016)
Post-16 qualifications	0.011
	(0.016)
Degree	0.281***
	(0.018)
Education x Liberal-authoritarian values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.121***
	(0.016)
Post-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.183***
	(0.016)
Degree x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.389***
	(0.016)
constant	3.341***
	(0.654)

Other party	
Age	-0.020***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.284***
	(0.013)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.035
	(0.020)
3rd quintile	-0.363***
	(0.021)
4th quintile	-0.569***
	(0.021)
5th quintile	-0.943***
	(0.023)
Year	0.027***
	(0.000)
Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.365***
	(0.014)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.425***
	(0.020)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.154***
	(0.018)
Degree	-0.400***
	(0.023)
Education x Liberal-authoritarian values (ref 'no qual')	
Pre-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.075***
	(0.020)
Post-16 qual x Liberal-authoritarian values	0.031
	(0.018)
Degree x Liberal-authoritarian values	-0.168***
	(0.019)
constant	-54.624***
	(0.896)
N	495546

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 15 – Effect of education on vote-choice by year (Figure 11)

	β (SE)
Did not vote	
Age	-0.050***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.173***
	(0.011)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.584***
	(0.017)
3rd quintile	-0.974***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-1.290***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-1.631***
	(0.019)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.665***
	(0.037)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.737***
	(0.053)
Degree	-0.540***
	(0.051)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	0.144***
	(0.037)
1997	1.149***
	(0.038)
2001	1.399***
	(0.036)
2005	1.450***
	(0.034)
2010	1.378***
	(0.039)
2015	1.468***
	(0.040)
2017	1.311***
	(0.046)
2019	0.932***
	(0.038)
Education x year (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x 1992	-0.147**
	(0.056)
Pre-16 qualifications x 1997	0.266***
	(0.055)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2001	0.026
	(0.063)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2005	0.090
	(0.056)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2010	-0.240***
	(0.062)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2015	0.013

	(0.064)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2017	0.018
	(0.072)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2019	0.099
	(0.057)
Post-16 qualification x 1992	-0.145*
	(0.069)
Post-16 qualification x 1997	0.182**
	(0.068)
Post-16 qualification x 2001	0.493***
	(0.064)
Post-16 qualification x 2005	0.219***
	(0.062)
Post-16 qualification x 2010	-0.035
	(0.066)
Post-16 qualification x 2015	0.139*
	(0.067)
Post-16 qualification x 2017	0.122
	(0.073)
Post-16 qualification x 2019	-0.007
	(0.069)
Degree x 1992	-0.363***
	(0.096)
Degree x 1997	0.051
	(0.079)
Degree x 2001	0.160*
	(0.067)
Degree x 2005	0.049
	(0.064)
Degree x 2010	-0.474***
	(0.068)
Degree x 2015	-0.318***
	(0.068)
Degree x 2017	-0.614***
	(0.076)
Degree x 2019	-0.226***
	(0.064)
constant	2.412***
	(0.032)
Labour	
Age	-0.028***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.088***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.318***
	(0.015)
3rd quintile	-0.668***
	(0.016)
4th quintile	-0.878***
	(0.016)

5th quintile	-1.193***
	(0.017)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.731***
	(0.031)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.618***
	(0.041)
Degree	-0.701***
	(0.042)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	0.321***
	(0.029)
1997	1.007***
	(0.031)
2001	0.992***
	(0.030)
2005	0.640***
	(0.030)
2010	0.593***
	(0.034)
2015	0.239***
	(0.038)
2017	0.284***
	(0.042)
2019	-0.460***
	(0.037)
Education x year (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x 1992	0.007
	(0.044)
Pre-16 qualifications x 1997	0.300***
	(0.046)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2001	-0.051
	(0.057)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2005	0.147**
	(0.051)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2010	-0.134*
	(0.057)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2015	0.134*
	(0.063)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2017	0.414***
	(0.065)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2019	0.468***
	(0.055)
Post-16 qualification x 1992	-0.494***
	(0.054)
Post-16 qualification x 1997	-0.032
	(0.055)
Post-16 qualification x 2001	0.144**
	(0.053)
Post-16 qualification x 2005	0.330***
	(0.051)
Post-16 qualification x 2010	-0.064

	(0.056)
Post-16 qualification x 2015	0.273***
	(0.059)
Post-16 qualification x 2017	0.645***
	(0.062)
Post-16 qualification x 2019	0.632***
	(0.060)
Degree x 1992	-0.123
	(0.071)
Degree x 1997	0.395***
	(0.065)
Degree x 2001	0.176**
	(0.057)
Degree x 2005	0.419***
	(0.055)
Degree x 2010	0.103
	(0.058)
Degree x 2015	0.625***
	(0.060)
Degree x 2017	0.967***
	(0.063)
Degree x 2019	1.356***
	(0.056)
constant	1.893***
	(0.027)
Liberal Democrats	
Age	-0.015***
	(0.000)
Gender	-0.019
	(0.012)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.182***
	(0.020)
3rd quintile	-0.258***
	(0.020)
4th quintile	-0.437***
	(0.020)
5th quintile	-0.609***
	(0.021)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.325***
	(0.034)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.176***
	(0.045)
Degree	0.348***
	(0.039)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	-0.681***
	(0.041)
1997	-0.009
	(0.042)
2001	-0.050

	(0.040)
2005	-0.057
	(0.038)
2010	-0.075
	(0.045)
2015	-1.320***
	(0.070)
2017	-1.770***
	(0.096)
2019	-1.279***
	(0.057)
Education x year (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x 1992	0.539***
	(0.056)
Pre-16 qualifications x 1997	0.211***
	(0.060)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2001	0.554***
	(0.069)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2005	0.476***
	(0.061)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2010	0.261***
	(0.068)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2015	0.632***
	(0.102)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2017	0.934***
	(0.128)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2019	0.658***
	(0.077)
Post-16 qualification x 1992	0.474***
	(0.063)
Post-16 qualification x 1997	0.473***
	(0.065)
Post-16 qualification x 2001	0.351***
	(0.063)
Post-16 qualification x 2005	0.479***
	(0.059)
Post-16 qualification x 2010	0.312***
	(0.065)
Post-16 qualification x 2015	0.444***
	(0.092)
Post-16 qualification x 2017	0.601***
	(0.120)
Post-16 qualification x 2019	0.458***
	(0.083)
Degree x 1992	0.784***
	(0.069)
Degree x 1997	0.433***
	(0.070)
Degree x 2001	0.261***
	(0.062)
Degree x 2005	0.442***

	(0.057)
Degree x 2010	0.235***
	(0.061)
Degree x 2015	0.507***
	(0.087)
Degree x 2017	1.059***
	(0.110)
Degree x 2019	0.927***
	(0.069)
constant	0.452***
	(0.033)
Other party	
Age	-0.022***
	(0.000)
Gender	0.344***
	(0.015)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.252***
	(0.024)
3rd quintile	-0.619***
	(0.025)
4th quintile	-0.790***
	(0.025)
5th quintile	-1.153***
	(0.027)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	0.158
	(0.104)
Post-16 qualifications	0.387**
	(0.128)
Degree	-0.304
	(0.162)
Year (ref 1987)	
1992	1.685***
	(0.088)
1997	2.543***
	(0.087)
2001	2.411***
	(0.087)
2005	2.447***
	(0.086)
2010	2.600***
	(0.089)
2015	3.244***
	(0.086)
2017	2.350***
	(0.097)
2019	1.737***
	(0.092)
Education x year (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x 1992	-0.144
	(0.119)
Pre-16 qualifications x 1997	-0.533***

	(0.120)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2001	-0.279*
	(0.130)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2005	-0.262*
	(0.122)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2010	-0.566***
	(0.126)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2015	-0.987***
	(0.125)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2017	-0.565***
	(0.141)
Pre-16 qualifications x 2019	0.149
	(0.124)
Post-16 qualification x 1992	-0.319*
	(0.141)
Post-16 qualification x 1997	-0.584***
	(0.141)
Post-16 qualification x 2001	-0.344*
	(0.140)
Post-16 qualification x 2005	-0.343*
	(0.137)
Post-16 qualification x 2010	-0.726***
	(0.140)
Post-16 qualification x 2015	-0.444**
	(0.136)
Post-16 qualification x 2017	-0.515***
	(0.148)
Post-16 qualification x 2019	-0.205
	(0.145)
Degree x 1992	0.028
	(0.195)
Degree x 1997	0.175
	(0.182)
Degree x 2001	0.482**
	(0.173)
Degree x 2005	0.654***
	(0.170)
Degree x 2010	0.031
	(0.172)
Degree x 2015	-0.212
	(0.170)
Degree x 2017	0.115
	(0.179)
Degree x 2019	1.053***
	(0.171)
constant	-2.048***
	(0.083)
N	342927

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 16 – Effect of education on vote-choice by generation (Figure 12)

	β(SE)
Did not vote	
Gender	0.152***
	(0.010)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.480***
	(0.016)
3rd quintile	-0.789***
	(0.017)
4th quintile	-1.140***
	(0.017)
5th quintile	-1.444***
	(0.018)
Year	-0.053***
	(0.002)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.750***
	(0.031)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.424***
	(0.027)
Degree	-0.512***
	(0.036)
Generations (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom	0.763***
	(0.022)
Generation X	1.731***
	(0.027)
Millennial	2.676***
	(0.051)
Education x Generation (ref 'No qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.014
	(0.042)
Pre-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.182***
	(0.042)
Pre-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.288***
	(0.069)
Post-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.076*
	(0.038)
Post-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.022
	(0.039)
Post-16 qualifications x Millennial	-0.175**
	(0.061)
Degree x Baby-Boom	-0.051
	(0.047)
Degree x Generation X	-0.016
	(0.046)
Degree x Millennial	-0.663***
	(0.066)
constant	-0.053**

	(0.017)
Labour	
Gender	0.067***
	(0.009)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.207***
	(0.015)
3rd quintile	-0.500***
	(0.015)
4th quintile	-0.739***
	(0.015)
5th quintile	-1.039***
	(0.016)
Year	-0.080***
	(0.002)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.775***
	(0.023)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.510***
	(0.021)
Degree	-0.600***
	(0.027)
Generations (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom	0.317***
	(0.020)
Generation X	0.684***
	(0.026)
Millennial	0.771***
	(0.056)
Education x Generation (ref 'No qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.251***
	(0.034)
Pre-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.345***
	(0.037)
Pre-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.756***
	(0.073)
Post-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.159***
	(0.031)
Post-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.267***
	(0.035)
Post-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.639***
	(0.065)
Degree x Baby-Boom	0.386***
	(0.036)
Degree x Generation X	0.569***
	(0.039)
Degree x Millennial	0.969***
	(0.066)
constant	0.737***
	(0.015)
Liberal Democrats	

Gender	-0.036**
	(0.012)
Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.148***
	(0.020)
3rd quintile	-0.178***
	(0.020)
4th quintile	-0.369***
	(0.020)
5th quintile	-0.555***
	(0.021)
Year	-0.155***
	(0.003)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.149***
	(0.028)
Post-16 qualifications	0.146***
	(0.026)
Degree	0.551***
	(0.029)
Generations (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom	0.187***
	(0.028)
Generation X	0.337***
	(0.039)
Millennial	0.162
	(0.102)
Education x Generation (ref 'No qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.199***
	(0.043)
Pre-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.187***
	(0.051)
Pre-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.990***
	(0.118)
Post-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.271***
	(0.040)
Post-16 qualifications x Generation X	0.097*
	(0.049)
Post-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.675***
	(0.110)
Degree x Baby-Boom	0.370***
	(0.042)
Degree x Generation X	0.457***
	(0.049)
Degree x Millennial	0.548***
	(0.110)
constant	-0.288***
	(0.020)
Other party	
Gender	0.313***
	(0.015)

Income (ref 1st quintile)	
2nd quintile	-0.123***
	(0.023)
3rd quintile	-0.483***
	(0.024)
4th quintile	-0.688***
	(0.024)
5th quintile	-1.008***
	(0.026)
Year	0.069***
	(0.003)
Education (ref 'no qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.255***
	(0.041)
Post-16 qualifications	0.059
	(0.035)
Degree	-0.141**
	(0.045)
Generations (ref 'Pre-War')	
Baby-Boom	0.521***
	(0.033)
Generation X	0.898***
	(0.040)
Millennial	0.765***
	(0.084)
Education x Generation (ref 'No qualifications')	
Pre-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	-0.019
	(0.057)
Pre-16 qualifications x Generation X	-0.111
	(0.060)
Pre-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.235*
	(0.111)
Post-16 qualifications x Baby-Boom	0.102*
	(0.049)
Post-16 qualifications x Generation X	-0.043
	(0.054)
Post-16 qualifications x Millennial	0.190*
	(0.096)
Degree x Baby-Boom	0.108
	(0.059)
Degree x Generation X	0.134*
	(0.062)
Degree x Millennial	0.360***
	(0.099)
constant	-1.910***
	(0.027)
N	342927

Log-odds from nested multinomial regression models with Conservative vote set as reference category
BES 1987-2019 data
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix C – Chapter 2

Missing values and descriptive statistics

Table 1 – Missing values of modelled variables, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Variable	Missing	Total	Percent missing
Vote choice	0	51,746	0.00
Age	3,981	51,746	7.69
Completed education	440	51,746	0.85
Marital status	3,656	51,746	7.07
Children	8,478	51,746	16.38
Home ownership	6,024	51,746	11.64
Working status	6,885	51,746	13.31
Gender	3,546	51,746	6.85
Educational level	686	51,746	1.33
Income	15,316	51,746	29.60
Party id strength	9,407	51,746	18.18
Perceived party differences	9,894	51,746	19.12
Electoral volatility	8,337	51,746	16.11

Table 2 – Descriptive statistics (before imputation), British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019, respondents aged under 35

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	13,285	27.409	5.014	16	35

Conservative vote

	Frequency	Percent
Other party	10428	78.49
Conservative party	2857	21.51
Total	13285	100.00

Left full-time education

	Frequency	Percent
No	944	7.13
Yes	12292	92.87
Total	13236	100.00

Ever Married / Cohabited

	Frequency	Percent
No	5224	39.38
Yes	8041	60.62
Total	13265	100.00

Has children

	Frequency	Percent
No	5291	48.05
Yes	5720	51.95
Total	11011	100.00

Owns home

	Frequency	Percent
No	5385	43.04
Yes	7126	56.96
Total	12511	100.00

Works full-time

	Frequency	Percent
No	4769	38.76
Yes	7536	61.24
Total	12305	100.00

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	6231	46.92
Female	7049	53.08

Total	13280	100.00

Education level

	Frequency	Percent
No qualifications	1815	13.79
Pre-16 qualifications	4625	35.14
Post-16 qualifications	4114	31.26
Degree	2607	19.81
Total	13161	100.00

Income (quintiles)

	Frequency	Percent
First quintile	1438	14.28
Second quintile	1599	15.88
Third quintile	2191	21.76
Fourth quintile	2751	27.76
Fifth quintile	2091	20.76
Total	10070	100.00

Trade union member

	Frequency	Percent
No	8791	74.20
Yes	3056	25.80
Total	11847	100.00

Strength of party identification

	Frequency	Percent
Very strong	1605	14.39
Fairly strong	5122	45.91
Not very strong	4430	39.71
Total	11157	100.00

Perceived difference between parties

	Frequency	Percent
Great difference	5191	46.69
Some difference	3876	34.86
Not much difference	2051	18.45
Total	11118	100.00

Electoral volatility (voted for different party at previous election)

	Frequency	Percent
No	4444	36.95
Yes	7583	63.05
Total	12027	100.00

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics (after imputation), British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	92,995	27.409	5.014	16	35

Conservative vote

	Frequency	Percent
Other party	72996	78.49
Conservative party	19999	21.51
Total	92995	100.00

Left full-time education

	Frequency	Percent
No	6623	7.13
Yes	86323	92.87
Total	92946	100.00

Ever Married / Cohabited

	Frequency	Percent
No	36612	39.38
Yes	56363	60.62
Total	92975	100.00

Has children

	Frequency	Percent
No	46208	50.93
Yes	44513	49.07
Total	90721	100.00

Owns home

	Frequency	Percent
No	39396	42.72
Yes	52825	57.28
Total	92221	100.00

Works full-time

	Frequency	Percent
No	36125	39.26
Yes	55890	60.74
Total	92015	100.00

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	43628	46.92

Female	49362	53.08
Total	92990	100.00

Education level

	Frequency	Percent
No qualifications	12825	13.81
Pre-16 qualifications	32644	35.15
Post-16 qualifications	29027	31.26
Degree	18375	19.79
Total	92871	100.00

Income (quintiles)

	Frequency	Percent
First quintile	13986	15.58
Second quintile	14957	16.66
Third quintile	19330	21.53
Fourth quintile	23513	26.19
Fifth quintile	17994	20.04
Total	89780	100.00

Trade union member

	Frequency	Percent
No	68278	74.57
Yes	23279	25.43
Total	91557	100.00

Strength of party identification

	Frequency	Percent
Very strong	13057	14.37
Fairly strong	41062	45.19
Not very strong	36748	40.44
Total	90867	100.00

Perceived difference between parties

	Frequency	Percent
Great difference	41362	45.54
Some difference	31892	35.11
Not much difference	17574	19.35
Total	90828	100.00

Electoral volatility (voted for different party at previous election)

	Frequency	Percent
No	33857	36.91
Yes	57880	63.09
Total	91737	100.00

Average marginal effects from logistic models reported in Table 1

Table 4 – Young adult Conservative voting by maturation (under 35s), average marginal effects

	Average Marginal Effects				
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Age	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Baby-boom	-0.011 (0.018)	-0.007 (0.018)	-0.123** (0.040)	-0.078* (0.033)	-0.094* (0.042)
Generation X	-0.088* (0.039)	-0.075* (0.038)	-0.120* (0.055)	-0.104* (0.053)	-0.118* (0.048)
Millennials	-0.164*** (0.028)	-0.133*** (0.027)	-0.268*** (0.055)	-0.264*** (0.049)	-0.264*** (0.045)
Maturation index		0.043*** (0.006)	0.022* (0.009)	0.005 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.008)
Maturation X Baby-boom			0.031** (0.011)	0.025* (0.010)	0.025* (0.011)
Maturation X Gen x			0.010 (0.013)	0.007 (0.013)	0.013 (0.012)
Maturation X Millennials			0.039** (0.014)	0.036** (0.012)	0.040*** (0.012)
Gender				0.006 (0.009)	0.013 (0.009)
Education level				0.012* (0.005)	0.009 (0.005)
Income				0.048*** (0.006)	0.043*** (0.006)
Trade Union member				-0.077*** (0.015)	-0.089*** (0.014)
Strength of party id					-0.006 (0.006)
Perceived party differences					-0.051*** (0.010)
Volatility					-0.127*** (0.015)
N	92995	89230	89230	86607	84649

British Election Studies (1964-2019), missing values imputed with ICE (m=7)
AMEs from logit analyses with robust SEs clustered by election in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 – Young adult Conservative voting by maturation (non-imputed data)

	β (SE)				
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Age	0.005 (0.009)	-0.027* (0.013)	-0.027* (0.012)	-0.019 (0.019)	-0.041* (0.016)
Baby-boom	-0.066 (0.110)	-0.100 (0.103)	-0.712 (0.451)	-0.892 (0.469)	-1.305** (0.494)
Generation X	-0.533* (0.269)	-0.633** (0.216)	-0.597 (0.583)	-1.337* (0.648)	-1.795** (0.610)
Millennials	-0.995*** (0.179)	-0.813*** (0.137)	-1.391** (0.514)	-1.740** (0.614)	-1.956** (0.608)
Maturation index		0.283*** (0.025)	0.207 (0.106)	0.025 (0.102)	-0.044 (0.085)
Maturation X Baby-boom			0.159 (0.107)	0.199 (0.105)	0.241* (0.098)
Maturation X Gen x			-0.024 (0.126)	0.109 (0.123)	0.234* (0.111)
Maturation X Millennials			0.170 (0.125)	0.222 (0.124)	0.296* (0.120)
Gender				0.070 (0.079)	0.060 (0.103)
Education level				0.047 (0.048)	-0.027 (0.047)
Income				0.370*** (0.046)	0.381*** (0.058)
Trade Union member				-0.612*** (0.121)	-0.819*** (0.115)
Strength of party id					0.114 (0.067)
Perceived party differences					-0.180 (0.107)
Volatility					-0.899*** (0.149)
constant	-1.013*** (0.306)	-1.066** (0.413)	-0.775 (0.555)	-1.585* (0.760)	0.229 (0.835)
Log-likelihood	-6768.436	-4717.490	-4709.998	-2905.651	-2178.253
Psuedo-R2	0.021	0.036	0.038	0.074	0.106
N	13285	9520	9520	6406	4533

British Election Studies (1964-2019); *b* coefficients from logit analyses with robust SEs clustered by election in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6 – Young adult Conservative voting by maturation (with year fixed effects)

	β (SE)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Election year (ref 1992)					
1964	0.146 (0.206)	0.029 (0.208)	-0.022 (0.209)	-0.052 (0.213)	0.032 (0.215)
1966	-0.063 (0.199)	-0.202 (0.201)	-0.234 (0.202)	-0.367 (0.207)	-0.363 (0.211)
1970	0.232 (0.218)	0.110 (0.220)	0.105 (0.220)	-0.158 (0.226)	-0.102 (0.229)
1974	-0.198 (0.150)	-0.245 (0.151)	-0.258 (0.153)	-0.309* (0.156)	-0.225 (0.158)
1975	-0.279 (0.149)	-0.366* (0.150)	-0.355* (0.151)	-0.414** (0.155)	-0.435** (0.156)
1979	0.361** (0.134)	0.286* (0.135)	0.292* (0.135)	0.361** (0.139)	0.420** (0.140)
1983	0.278** (0.103)	0.222* (0.104)	0.232* (0.105)	0.413*** (0.110)	0.380*** (0.112)
1987	0.062 (0.098)	0.006 (0.099)	0.014 (0.100)	0.001 (0.102)	-0.069 (0.103)
1997	-0.914*** (0.117)	-0.915*** (0.118)	-0.926*** (0.118)	-1.024*** (0.121)	-0.958*** (0.122)
2001	-1.605*** (0.144)	-1.576*** (0.145)	-1.589*** (0.146)	-1.738*** (0.149)	-1.682*** (0.150)
2005	-1.383*** (0.140)	-1.379*** (0.141)	-1.400*** (0.143)	-1.565*** (0.146)	-1.464*** (0.148)
2010	-0.817*** (0.162)	-0.817*** (0.163)	-0.844*** (0.165)	-1.020*** (0.170)	-0.906*** (0.171)
2015	-0.334 (0.217)	-0.305 (0.218)	-0.334 (0.219)	-0.568* (0.225)	-0.396 (0.227)
2017	-0.548* (0.226)	-0.538* (0.228)	-0.569* (0.229)	-0.879*** (0.235)	-0.814*** (0.236)
2019	-0.422* (0.205)	-0.386 (0.206)	-0.413* (0.207)	-0.645** (0.214)	-0.586** (0.215)
Age	0.021*** (0.006)	-0.004 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.007)	-0.016* (0.007)
Baby-boom	-0.093 (0.132)	-0.124 (0.133)	-0.717* (0.351)	-0.521 (0.353)	-0.576 (0.355)
Generation X	0.169 (0.179)	0.127 (0.180)	-0.636 (0.346)	-0.632 (0.347)	-0.668 (0.352)
Millennials	-0.074 (0.264)	-0.076 (0.265)	-0.751 (0.407)	-0.698 (0.418)	-0.825 (0.422)

Maturation index		0.221*** (0.024)	0.065 (0.071)	-0.015 (0.074)	-0.028 (0.075)
Maturation X Baby-boom			0.147 (0.087)	0.099 (0.087)	0.107 (0.087)
Maturation X Gen x			0.200* (0.079)	0.194* (0.079)	0.198* (0.080)
Maturation X Millennials			0.182* (0.084)	0.164 (0.085)	0.181* (0.085)
Gender				-0.002 (0.048)	-0.007 (0.049)
Education level				0.090** (0.029)	0.083** (0.029)
Income				0.282*** (0.027)	0.279*** (0.027)
Trade Union member				-0.724*** (0.063)	-0.748*** (0.064)
Strength of party id					0.034 (0.041)
Perceived party differences					-0.169*** (0.041)
Volatility					-0.356*** (0.053)
constant	-1.193*** (0.305)	-1.184*** (0.308)	-0.532 (0.409)	-1.240** (0.418)	-0.465 (0.432)
N	9720	9720	9720	9720	9720

British Election Studies (1964-2019), missing values imputed with ICE (m=7)
b coefficients from logit analyses
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Alternative Analysis with year fixed effects

An alternative analysis of the maturation effect on the Conservative vote was performed including year fixed effects in the models. Results are displayed in Table 6 of this Appendix. Compared to the analysis presented in Chapter 2, adding election-year fixed effects, results in:
(1) a significant maturation effect for Generation X, and
(2) a reduction in the magnitude and significance level of the effect for Millennials

Figures 1 and 2 compare the average marginal effects of the maturation index for each political generation across Model 5 of Table 1 in Chapter 2 (no year fixed effects), and Model 5 of Table 6 in this Appendix (including year fixed effects).

The marginal effects denote how, controlling for election year (figure 2), the effect of maturation on the Conservative vote of individuals aged under 35 becomes somewhat linear across generations. This is different from the effects presented in figure 1, which do not include election year fixed effects, and where the maturation effect for Generation X is smaller than that for Baby-Boomers and Millennials. Therefore, the effect of maturation for Generation X seems to vary by election-specific period effects, while the maturation effects of the other generations are less dependent on these.

This divergence could be explained on the grounds that the transition into adulthood of individuals belonging to Generation X (here coded as those born between 1960 and 1979) coincided with the period where maturation levels experienced the most significant change: the 1990s-2000s. Over this period, housing prices increased substantially, while fertility and marriage rates decreased sharply. In the same period, the Blair governments implemented policies instigating the expansion of higher education, which resulted in an increased proportion of young adults staying in education for longer. Therefore, the conflicting trends identified for Generation X may depend on the unusual environment in place when this generation transitioned into adulthood, which affected people from this cohort less uniformly than the socio-economic context present when individuals from the other generations transitioned into adult roles.

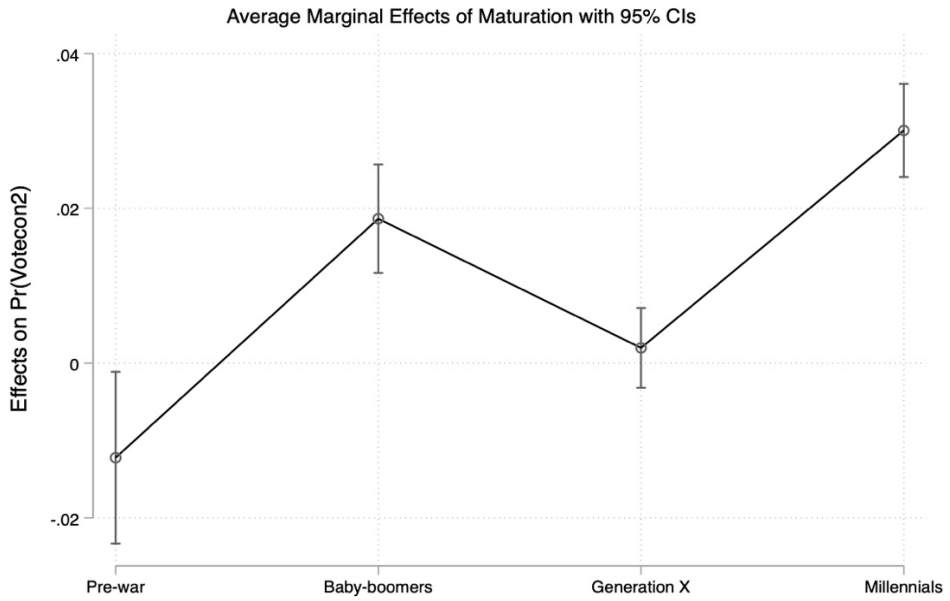

Figure 1 – Average Marginal Effects of Maturation
(from Model 5 in Table 1 of Chapter 2)

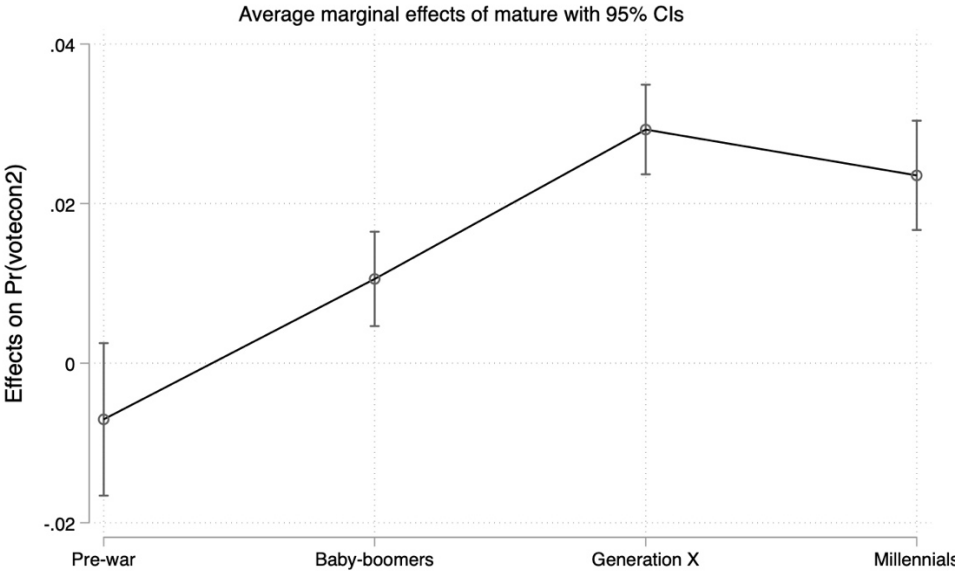

Figure 2 – Average Marginal Effects of Maturation
(from Model 5 of Table 6 in this Appendix)

Robustness tests

The coefficients displayed in figures 3 and 4 report the results of the robustness tests carried out to validate the maturation effect on the Conservative vote. As evidenced by these plots, maturation does not appear to have a significant effect for any generations on the Labour vote, and has negative effect on for Millennials on the Liberal Democrat vote.

Figure 5 reports the maturation effect on the Conservative vote, removing each of the items included in the maturation index from the measure. As evidenced by the plot, only the removal of 'children' and 'marital status' significantly changes the maturation effect for each generation.

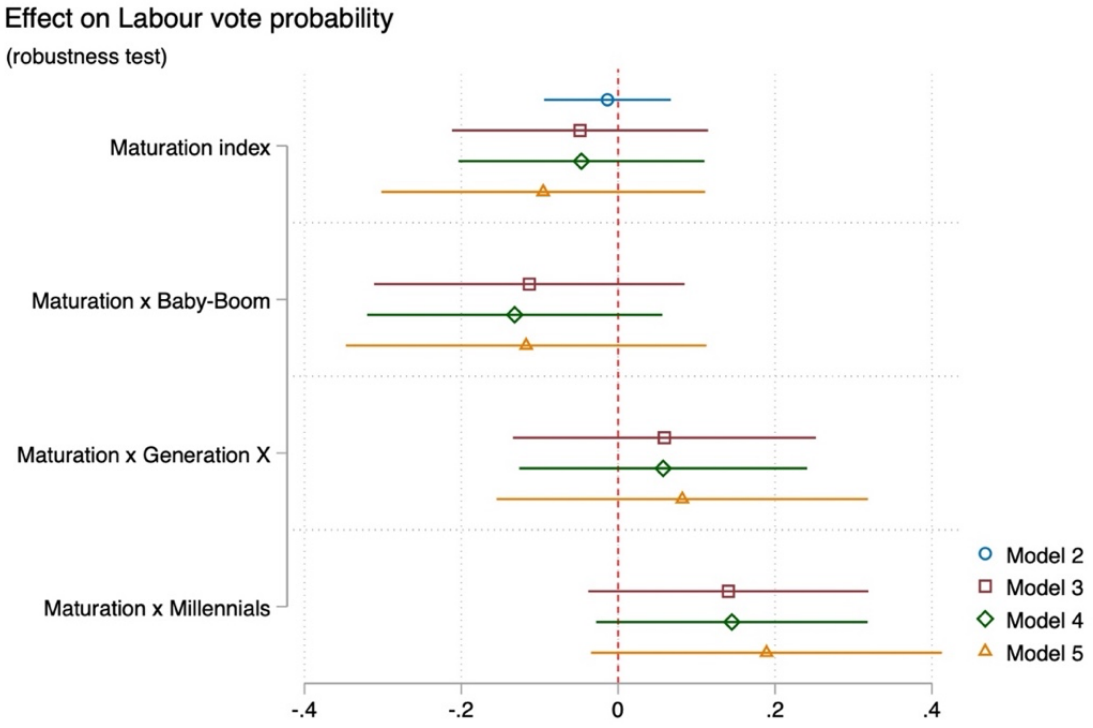

Figure 3 – Log-odd coefficients on Labour vote probability

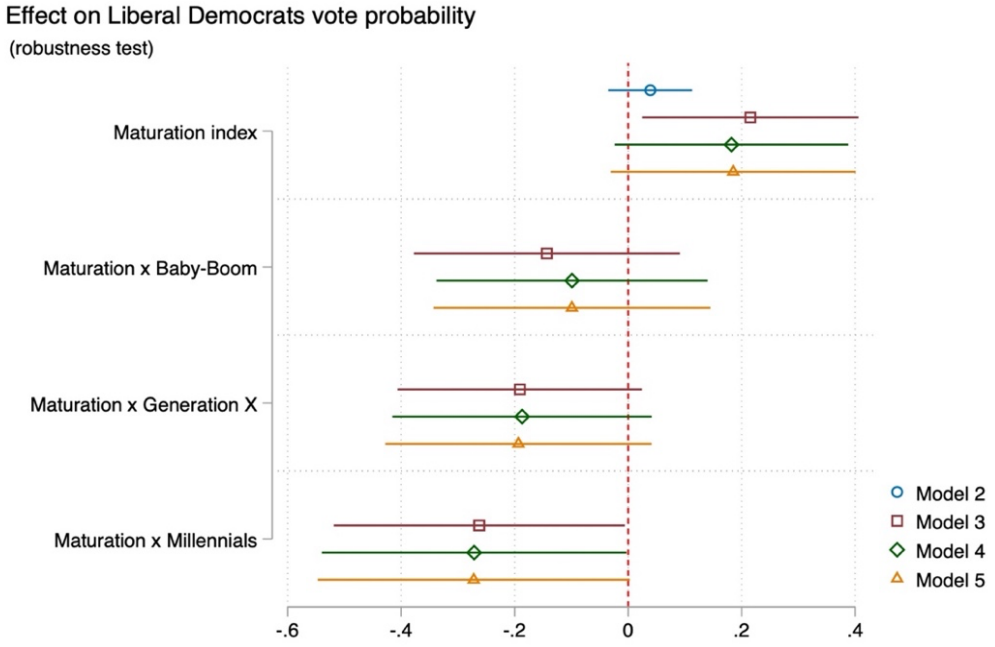

Figure 4 – Log-odd coefficients on Liberal Democrats vote probability

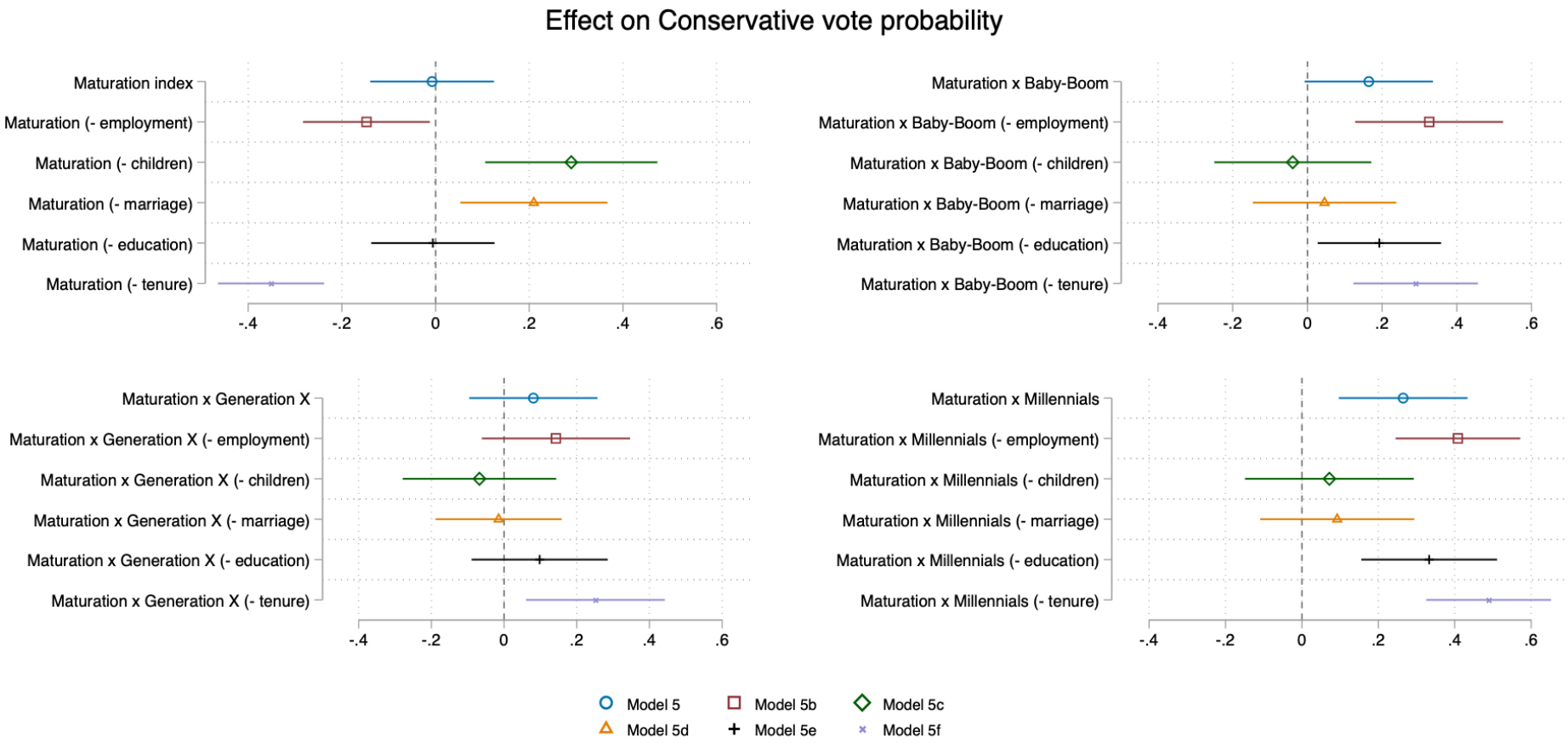

Figure 5 – Log-odds coefficients on Conservative vote probability, British Election Study (BES) 1964-2019

Table 7 – Young adult Conservative voting by maturation (with Maturation x Gender interaction)

	β (SE)				
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Age	0.005 (0.009)	-0.021* (0.011)	-0.022* (0.010)	-0.023* (0.010)	-0.043*** (0.011)
Baby-boom	-0.066 (0.110)	-0.038 (0.113)	-0.755* (0.294)	-0.504 (0.264)	-0.622 (0.334)
Generation X	-0.533* (0.269)	-0.446 (0.267)	-0.752* (0.376)	-0.599 (0.388)	-0.703 (0.374)
Millennials	-0.995*** (0.179)	-0.822*** (0.182)	-1.678*** (0.377)	-1.607*** (0.360)	-1.662*** (0.359)
Maturation index		0.263*** (0.033)	0.132* (0.065)	-0.030 (0.067)	-0.070 (0.064)
Maturation X Baby-boom			0.190* (0.082)	0.159* (0.078)	0.166 (0.086)
Maturation X Gen x			0.071 (0.088)	0.031 (0.093)	0.066 (0.090)
Maturation X Millennials			0.249** (0.091)	0.207* (0.088)	0.239** (0.089)
Female gender				-0.526*** (0.155)	-0.571*** (0.150)
Maturation X Female gender				0.163*** (0.047)	0.172*** (0.044)
Education level				0.076** (0.029)	0.064* (0.032)
Income				0.296*** (0.038)	0.275*** (0.040)
Trade Union member				-0.474*** (0.085)	-0.562*** (0.087)
Strength of party id					-0.050 (0.040)
Perceived party differences					-0.343*** (0.065)
Volatility					-0.831*** (0.096)
constant	-1.013*** (0.306)	-1.255*** (0.287)	-0.728* (0.359)	-1.267*** (0.367)	0.712 (0.528)
Log-likelihood	-6768.436	-6692.305	-6683.019	-6502.861	-6250.985
Psuedo-R2	0.021	0.033	0.034	0.059	0.095
N	13285	13285	13285	13285	13285

British Election Studies (1964-2019), missing values imputed with ICE (m=7)
b coefficients from logit analyses with robust SEs clustered by election in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8 – Longitudinal regression models of young adults' party identification

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal Democrats		Other party		No party	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Maturation index	0.004*	(0.002)	-0.001	(0.002)	0.001	(0.001)	-0.001	(0.001)	-0.002	(0.002)
Education (ref. no qualifications)										
Other qualifications	0.012	(0.017)	0.015	(0.024)	0.000	(0.011)	0.027	(0.016)	-0.055*	(0.028)
Pre-16 qualifications	-0.018	(0.017)	-0.014	(0.023)	0.012	(0.011)	0.026	(0.017)	-0.006	(0.026)
Post-16 qualifications	-0.011	(0.017)	-0.001	(0.024)	0.032**	(0.011)	0.030	(0.017)	-0.051	(0.026)
Degree	-0.014	(0.018)	0.019	(0.024)	0.033**	(0.012)	0.036*	(0.018)	-0.075**	(0.027)
Occupation – NS-SEC (ref. "Large employers & higher management")										
Higher professional	-0.014	(0.011)	-0.003	(0.011)	-0.001	(0.009)	0.005	(0.006)	0.013	(0.012)
Lower management & professional	0.005	(0.009)	-0.006	(0.009)	0.002	(0.008)	-0.001	(0.005)	-0.000	(0.010)
Intermediate	-0.002	(0.010)	-0.000	(0.010)	0.002	(0.008)	-0.001	(0.006)	0.001	(0.011)
Small employers & own account	-0.007	(0.012)	-0.009	(0.012)	0.006	(0.009)	0.004	(0.008)	0.007	(0.014)
Lower supervisory & technical	-0.001	(0.010)	0.002	(0.010)	0.001	(0.009)	0.003	(0.007)	-0.007	(0.012)
Semi-routine	-0.001	(0.010)	-0.005	(0.010)	0.000	(0.008)	0.003	(0.006)	0.003	(0.012)
Routine	-0.006	(0.010)	-0.003	(0.011)	-0.001	(0.009)	-0.002	(0.007)	0.011	(0.012)
Gender (female)	0.005	(0.057)	0.065	(0.102)	-0.007	(0.007)	-0.021	(0.071)	-0.043	(0.124)
Year										
1992	0.030***	(0.008)	0.036***	(0.008)	0.010	(0.007)	-0.042***	(0.006)	-0.033***	(0.006)
1993	-0.053***	(0.009)	0.018*	(0.009)	0.058***	(0.008)	-0.034***	(0.007)	0.011	(0.008)
1994	-0.120***	(0.010)	0.090***	(0.010)	0.027**	(0.009)	-0.029***	(0.007)	0.033***	(0.009)

1995	-0.129***	(0.010)	0.115***	(0.011)	0.015	(0.009)	-0.043***	(0.007)	0.042***	(0.009)
1996	-0.113***	(0.010)	0.092***	(0.011)	0.009	(0.009)	-0.037***	(0.007)	0.049***	(0.009)
1997	-0.149***	(0.011)	0.176***	(0.012)	0.016	(0.009)	-0.049***	(0.007)	0.007	(0.009)
1998	-0.145***	(0.011)	0.117***	(0.012)	0.021*	(0.009)	-0.033***	(0.008)	0.040***	(0.010)
1999	-0.144***	(0.011)	0.085***	(0.012)	0.010	(0.009)	-0.021*	(0.008)	0.069***	(0.010)
2000	-0.121***	(0.012)	0.038**	(0.012)	0.026**	(0.010)	-0.038***	(0.008)	0.095***	(0.011)
2001	-0.160***	(0.012)	0.104***	(0.013)	0.019	(0.010)	-0.043***	(0.009)	0.080***	(0.011)
2002	-0.157***	(0.012)	0.056***	(0.013)	0.023*	(0.010)	-0.039***	(0.009)	0.116***	(0.012)
2003	-0.152***	(0.012)	-0.007	(0.013)	0.049***	(0.011)	-0.036***	(0.009)	0.145***	(0.012)
2004	-0.156***	(0.013)	0.003	(0.013)	0.038***	(0.011)	-0.020*	(0.010)	0.134***	(0.012)
2005	-0.144***	(0.013)	0.034*	(0.014)	0.040***	(0.011)	-0.036***	(0.010)	0.106***	(0.013)
2006	-0.123***	(0.013)	-0.005	(0.014)	0.023*	(0.011)	-0.027**	(0.010)	0.132***	(0.013)
2007	-0.116***	(0.013)	0.014	(0.014)	-0.003	(0.011)	-0.012	(0.010)	0.116***	(0.014)
2008	-0.087***	(0.014)	-0.026	(0.015)	-0.015	(0.011)	-0.014	(0.011)	0.142***	(0.014)
2009	-0.168***	(0.014)	-0.112***	(0.015)	-0.039***	(0.012)	-0.126***	(0.011)	0.445***	(0.016)
2010	-0.158***	(0.014)	-0.084***	(0.015)	-0.039***	(0.011)	-0.129***	(0.011)	0.409***	(0.016)
2011	-0.170***	(0.014)	-0.073***	(0.015)	-0.063***	(0.012)	-0.131***	(0.011)	0.437***	(0.016)
2012	-0.176***	(0.014)	-0.080***	(0.015)	-0.078***	(0.012)	-0.130***	(0.011)	0.464***	(0.016)
2013	-0.177***	(0.014)	-0.089***	(0.015)	-0.082***	(0.012)	-0.117***	(0.012)	0.465***	(0.016)
2014	-0.155***	(0.014)	-0.088***	(0.016)	-0.088***	(0.012)	-0.093***	(0.012)	0.424***	(0.017)
2015	-0.134***	(0.014)	-0.062***	(0.016)	-0.089***	(0.012)	-0.088***	(0.012)	0.373***	(0.017)
2016	-0.047	(0.047)	0.283***	(0.070)	-0.091***	(0.019)	-0.145***	(0.031)	-0.001	(0.069)
2017	-0.150***	(0.015)	0.018	(0.017)	-0.086***	(0.012)	-0.104***	(0.012)	0.322***	(0.018)
2018	-0.146***	(0.017)	-0.036	(0.019)	-0.051***	(0.013)	-0.079***	(0.014)	0.312***	(0.022)
2019	-0.141***	(0.016)	-0.026	(0.017)	-0.067***	(0.013)	-0.077***	(0.013)	0.312***	(0.019)
2020	-0.145***	(0.016)	-0.025	(0.017)	-0.077***	(0.013)	-0.067***	(0.013)	0.315***	(0.019)
constant	0.288***	(0.036)	0.243***	(0.059)	0.079***	(0.015)	0.165***	(0.041)	0.224**	(0.071)
N	117564		117564		117564		117564		117564	

BHPS / Understanding Society (1991-2020); *b* coefficients from panel logit analyses;
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix D – Chapter 3

Survey experiment sample distribution

Treatment condition	Obs.	Percent
Control	216	10.77
Symbolic Appeal	445	22.18
Cultural Appeal: Trans Rights	456	22.73
Economic Appeal: Tuition Fees	430	21.44
Economic Appeal: Minimum Wage	459	22.88
Total	2,006	100.00

Age groups	Obs.	Percent
18-35	680	33.14
36-59	918	44.74
60-92	454	22.12
Total	2,052	100.00

Gender	Obs.	Percent
Female	1106	53.90
Male	946	46.10
Total	2,052	100.00

Highest educational qualification	Obs.	Percent
Level 2 / Apprenticeship / Other	476	23.20
Level 3	372	18.13
Level 4+	826	40.25
No qualifications / Level 1	378	18.42
Total	2052	100.00

Income	Obs.	Percent
£0 - £19,999	716	34.89
£20,000 - £39,000	822	40.06
£40,000	514	25.05
Total	2,052	100.00

2016 EU Referendum vote	Obs.	Percent
Did not vote	662	32.26
Leave	714	34.80
Refused	10	0.49
Remain	666	32.46
Total	2052	100.00

2019 General Election vote	Obs.	Percent
Brexit Party	20	0.97
Conservative	640	31.19
Did not vote	606	29.53
Green Party	54	2.63
Labour	520	25.34
Liberal Democrats	92	4.48
Other	36	1.75
Plaid Cymru	14	0.68
Refused	10	0.49
Scottish National Party	60	2.92
Total	2052	100.00

General Election vote intention	Obs.	Percent
Conservative	524	27.67
Labour	726	38.33
Liberal Democrats	148	7.81
Green	64	3.38
SNP	70	3.70
Plaid Cymru	16	0.84
Reform UK	38	2.01
UKIP	20	1.06
Other	50	2.64
Undecided	228	12.04
Refused	10	0.53
Total	1894	100.00

Regression models of reported figures

Table 1 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (Figure 1)

	β (SE)
Control group (base level)	
Symbolic appeal	-0.184
	(0.294)
Cultural appeal: trans rights	-0.377
	(0.296)
Economic appeal: tuition fees	0.676*
	(0.297)
Economic appeal: minimum wage	0.362
	(0.294)
Labour candidate	0.383*
	(0.160)
constant	5.051***
	(0.257)
N	1995

b coefficients from OLS regression analyses
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (Figure 2.1)

	β (SE)	
	Respondents under 35	**Respondents over 60**
Control group (base level)		
Symbolic appeal	1.156*	-0.330
	(0.485)	(0.595)
Cultural appeal: trans rights	0.531	-0.193
	(0.480)	(0.595)
Economic appeal: tuition fees	1.029*	0.788
	(0.477)	(0.604)
Economic appeal: minimum wage	1.354**	-0.133
	(0.468)	(0.623)
Labour candidate	0.837***	-0.671*
	(0.253)	(0.326)
constant	4.914***	4.569***
	(0.421)	(0.533)
N	590	572

b coefficients from OLS regression analyses
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (Figure 2.2)

	β (SE)
Control group (base level)	
Symbolic appeal	1.116*
	(0.555)
Cultural appeal: trans rights	0.439
	(0.549)
Economic appeal: tuition fees	1.001
	(0.546)
Economic appeal: minimum wage	1.282*
	(0.536)
Age 18-35 (base level)	
Age 60+	-1.235
	(0.636)
Age 18-35 x Control (base level)	
Symbolic appeal x Age 60+	-1.359
	(0.773)
Cultural appeal: trans rights x Age 60+	-0.505
	(0.766)
Economic appeal: tuition fees x Age 60+	-0.124
	(0.772)
Economic appeal: minimum wage x Age 60+	-1.359
	(0.777)
Labour candidate	0.095
	(0.207)
constant	5.336***
	(0.468)
N	1163

b coefficients from OLS regression analyses
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (Figure 3.1)

	β (SE)		
	All respondents	**Respondents 18-35**	**Respondents 60+**
Control group (base level)			
Symbolic appeal	0.349	2.269**	0.704
	(0.433)	(0.723)	(0.897)
Cultural appeal: trans rights	0.302	1.384*	0.949
	(0.432)	(0.701)	(0.884)
Economic appeal: tuition fees	1.067*	2.544***	0.746
	(0.435)	(0.716)	(0.909)
Economic appeal: minimum wage	1.283**	2.318***	2.487**
	(0.433)	(0.691)	(0.947)
Conservative candidate (base level)			
Labour candidate	1.412**	2.586**	0.980
	(0.485)	(0.796)	(0.991)
Control x Conservative candidate (base level)			
Symbolic appeal x Labour candidate	-0.954	-1.974*	-1.706
	(0.589)	(0.973)	(1.182)
Cultural appeal x Labour candidate	-1.252*	-1.427	-1.957
	(0.592)	(0.962)	(1.181)
Tuition fees x Labour candidate	-0.668	-2.722**	0.471
	(0.595)	(0.958)	(1.200)
Minimum wage x Labour candidate	-1.719**	-1.680	-4.652***
	(0.590)	(0.939)	(1.239)
constant	4.481***	3.917***	3.563***
	(0.361)	(0.601)	(0.774)
N	1995	590	572

b coefficients from OLS regression analyses
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 – Treatment effects on likelihood to support candidate (Figure 3.2)

	β (SE)			
	Young Conservatives	**Young Labour**	**Old Conservatives**	**Old Labour**
Control group (base level)				
Symbolic appeal	0.697	3.135***	-1.253	-0.099
	(3.580)	(0.825)	(1.156)	(1.155)
Cultural appeal: trans rights	-0.560	2.497**	-0.763	-0.576
	(3.378)	(0.866)	(1.152)	(1.132)
Economic appeal: tuition fees	-1.500	2.976***	-0.923	-0.326
	(3.460)	(0.869)	(1.191)	(1.230)
Economic appeal: minimum wage	-0.909	2.680**	0.442	2.937*
	(3.340)	(0.811)	(1.185)	(1.272)
Conservative candidate (base level)				
Labour candidate	-2.969	3.965***	-7.097***	8.037***
	(3.455)	(0.920)	(1.250)	(1.406)
Control x Conservative candidate (base level)				
Symbolic appeal x Labour candidate	1.128	-2.741*	0.522	-1.883
	(3.819)	(1.136)	(1.439)	(1.758)
Cultural appeal x Labour candidate	-0.925	-2.208	0.635	-2.173
	(3.726)	(1.164)	(1.425)	(1.713)
Tuition fees x Labour candidate	1.508	-2.782*	3.315*	0.062
	(3.743)	(1.131)	(1.498)	(1.749)
Minimum wage x Labour candidate	1.765	-1.740	-0.620	-7.964***
	(3.639)	(1.077)	(1.453)	(1.833)
constant	8.610*	3.249***	8.572***	1.744
	(3.268)	(0.711)	(1.042)	(0.953)
N	87	263	229	150

b coefficients from OLS regression analyses
Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$