VALUES, VOLATILITY AND VOTING: UNDERSTANDING VOTERS IN ENGLAND 2015-2019

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Please note: This paper is an early draft and may develop further before publication as new insights become available and modelling is refined. Comments are very welcome via p.surridge@bristol.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The EU referendum and subsequent general elections in the UK have renewed interest in the influence of values and identity on voting behaviour. This paper uses data from the British Election Study Internet Panel to study the influence of 'core' political values on voting behaviour in England at the 2015, 2017 and 2019 general elections. Using a two-dimensional model of political values, the paper shows that both the 'old' political values of left and right (associated with economics) and the 'new' political values (measured here as 'liberal-authoritarian' values) were important in vote choices at each of the three elections. Using the 'funnel of causality' model, it shows that values are a more important influence when voters have weaker attachments to political parties and that the interaction between the dimensions is critical for understanding voting patterns.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to 2016, the study of elections in the UK had largely turned away from values-based models with those based on the 'valence' effects of party identity, leadership and competence almost 'universally accepted' (Denver and Garnett, 2014). Whilst the EU Referendum (and subsequent general elections in 2017 and 2019) have renewed interest in values and identity as influences on political behaviour, it is a mistake to think of values divides as 'new' or as created by the EU referendum. These divides were evident in 2015 as well as in the two elections since the referendum. The paper will argue that while value divides are not 'new' they are critical for understanding voting patterns across general elections; and that the role of values becomes increasingly important as party identities weaken.

The paper uses data from the British Election Study Internet Panel (Fieldhouse et al, 2020) to analyse the influence of political 'core' values on voting behaviour at the last three general elections in England.[1] It argues that the focus of political science on 'valence' measures meant that the influence of changes in the relative salience of core values on vote choice has been neglected and the changing relationship between social structure and political behaviour ignored. These changes were as evident in 2015 as they were in the 2016 EU referendum and in subsequent general elections. The changes which led to the crumbling of the 'red wall' in 2019 were not the result of the short-term political conditions but rather of long-term changes in the value cleavages underpinning our political system and driving fragmentation within the electorate.

While survey after survey reveals that many people do not have well-worked out political ideologies (and why should they?) (Converse, 2006 (1964)), people nonetheless have clear ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, desirable and non-desirable outcomes. These 'conceptions' of the desirable are more generally the 'values' which people hold, which guide their choices across private and public spheres. These deeply held ideas of how society *should* be have come to play an increasing role in the political choices of the electorate as older group-based loyalties have lost their power and structural roots.

ELECTIONS IN THE 2010S

Expecting the unexpected has become the new norm in British electoral politics. First, the

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[1] The sample sizes do not allow for separate analyses of the nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales; therefore, the paper focuses on England only to ensure maximum comparability between elections.

unexpected majority for the Conservatives in 2015, accompanied by the collapse of the Liberal Democrats, the sweeping victory of the SNP in Scotland and the (slightly muted) rise of UKIP. This seemed to herald a fragmentation of British politics, as commentators pointed to 'revolts' on both the left and right (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Roberts, 2014) threatening the dominance of the two-party system. The 2016 EU referendum followed swiftly on the heels of this result, itself confounding expectations. Before the ink was dry on the commentary of these events, the 2017 general election was called and again commentators, and political science models, were caught off balance by a surprise result. The loss of the Conservative party majority, a dramatic shift in opinion during the 'short' campaign and the highest two-party share of the vote since 1970 (Curtice, 2017a) did not seem to be in-line with the expectations of political commentators or with the evidence of a fragmenting electorate seen in 2015. Approaching the 2019 election then British psephologists were perhaps right to be cautious; despite the clear lead of the Conservatives in the polls, most were not keen to take that for granted as the campaign developed. But this time there was to be no last-minute shock as the exit poll was revealed; the result a tantalising mix of fragmentation and a return to one half of the two-party politics of old.

Two types of voter dominated the narratives of the 2019 election; the 'Labour Leave' voters, especially those in the so-called 'red wall' seats which crossed the North of England and North Wales and the 'Tory Remain' voters, more likely to be found in seats in the South and who were expected to be uncomfortable with the newest iteration of their party led by Boris Johnson. In the end, it was the Labour Leavers who made all the headlines, as seat after seat which had only ever known a Labour MP fell to the Conservatives. The failure of the Conservative Remain vote to move en masse to the Liberal Democrats was also an important feature of the results and together the behaviour of these two groups proved devastating for the Labour party, who lost votes on all sides while the Conservatives were able to balance their moderate losses to the Liberal Democrats with gains from Labour (Cutts et al, 2020).

Political values are central for understanding both of these groups (and others); but expression of political values at the ballot box is constrained by the choices on offer and so 'a person's vote for party may depend on the available party choices, rather than fully representing the voter's political preferences' (Dalton, 2019, pg. 9). Each of the groups of voters identified above are out of step with the parties on offer to some degree. This paper explores how this connects to their political values and the relative importance of different types of values in the voting calculus.

VALUES AND THE 'FUNNEL OF CAUSALITY'

The funnel of causality is a widely used socio-psychological model of electoral behaviour which shows the connections between different influences on the voting decision (Dalton, 2013). Originally set out in 1960 in 'The American Voter' (Campbell et al, 1960), the underlying idea is that the 'funnel' narrows as 'causes' of voting decisions move from long-term structural influences to short-term influences and factors specific to each election. In the middle of the funnel, connecting the long-term to the short-term are value orientations and party attachment.
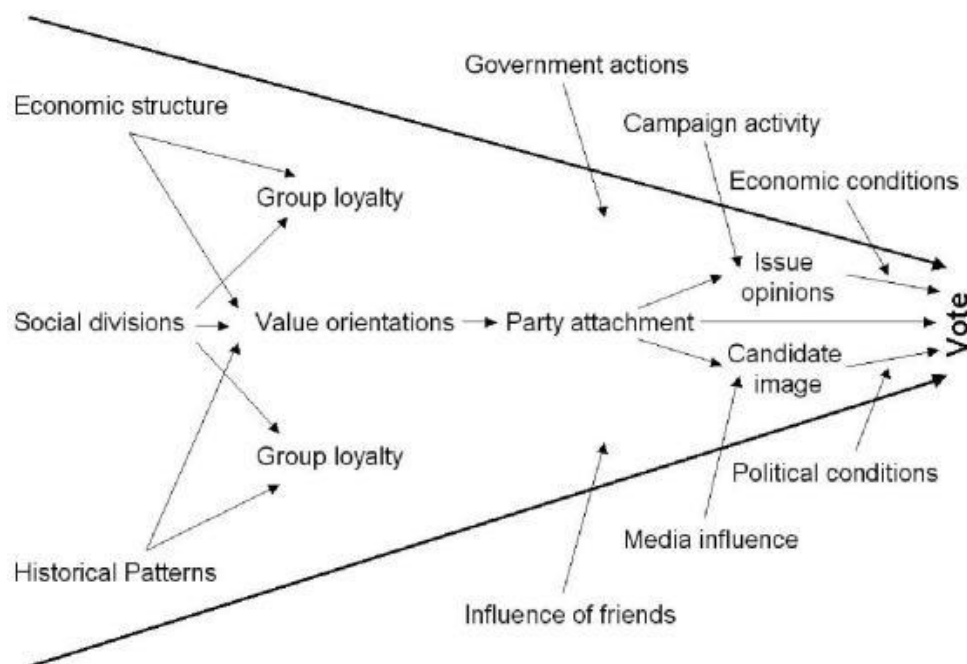

Image: Dalton (2013)

Over the last two decades, British electoral studies have increasingly focussed on the 'narrow' end of this model, the factors most proximate to the voting decision. Processes of class and partisan dealignment (Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983) eroded the links holding the electorate in place and in turn gave more 'space' for short-term influences on vote choice. Though the evidence that these influences have increased in importance is, at best, mixed, (Dassonville, 2016) the 'valence politics' model (Clarke et al, 2011) was widely accepted as the model of party choice. Focus on this narrower part of the model was fruitful in illuminating some aspects of voting behaviour that had previous been neglected, such as the role of party leaders, but also underplayed the persistent effects of identity and values. However, there are two reasons to think that the valence model may perform less well in elections since 2015 than it is perceived to have done between 2001 and 2010. First, there

had been a repolarisation of British politics around economic issues, particularly under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. While Inglehart (1997) wrote that nationalisation had become 'almost a forgotten cause', this was not the case in the British General Election of 2019. While perceptions of competence and leader images certainly were at play in 2019, it is less clear that the most important issues during the campaign were valence ones.

The second difficulty for the valence model is the introduction of a salient 'cross-cutting' divide into the political sphere. The EU referendum vote is a particularly difficult case for models of voting which rely on party identity as the issue cut across traditional party lines (Hobolt et al, 2020). Even those with a strong partisan attachment would be unable to use it effectively to reach a decision; party identity could not perform its function as a simplifying heuristic. Where the filtering effect of party attachment weakens (either because the issue cross-cuts it or because party identity itself is weakening) we would expect that the direct influence of value orientations on voting would increase, along with the influence of values on issue opinions and candidate images. Any weakening of party identity should enhance the role of values on voting. If we were to remove party attachment from this model entirely, then value orientations would sit in the centre of the model, acting as the hinge between voters' social structural locations, their long-term positions in society and the short-term evaluations and understandings of politics. In a world of weakening affective bonds with political parties, values can provide the emotional engagement with the political world.

Electoral studies in recent years have been too ready to focus attention at the 'narrow' end of the funnel of causality. Prior to the 2016 referendum the role of values and social identities had been increasingly neglected. In a rush to accommodate all into a parsimonious valence model, it is forgotten that partisanship is not an isolated property of individuals, it is rooted in social groups, social identities and social values.

WHAT ARE VALUES?

Values represent 'core conceptions of the desirable', they are not our beliefs about what is but rather our desires about what ought to be; not a diagnosis of society's ills but rather a picture of what a healthy society would look like (Rokeach, 1973). Values are 'fast' heuristics, as they are intimately bound up with our ideas of good and bad, right and wrong (Kuklinski, 2001). Values are 'enduring'; more permanent than attitudes, more akin to broad musical tastes than to a like or dislike of a particular piece of music. They are 'latent', they cannot be directly measured by simply asking people what values they hold. They are also

inherently evaluative, so that they act to 'guide…social actors[,]… select actions, evaluate people and events' (Schwartz, 1999).

These characteristics are true of the range of values which are often labelled 'human values' in the broader psychological literature. In this paper, the focus is specifically 'political' values. Values can be classified into domains or institutional spheres where they have influence (Rokeach, 1973). At the simplest level then, political values are merely the sub-set of human values that relate specifically to the political sphere. Three further characteristics of human values which are shared in the political sphere are identified by Schwartz (1994). Values transcend specific situations; our idea of what is a desirable goal does not depend on circumstances. In the political sphere it does not depend on the political conditions specific to a given election. Values 'guide the selection or evaluation of behaviour and events'; this is an important feature of values in the political sphere as it highlights that 'in lieu of ideology…values function as general standards for evaluating candidates, policies and other objects in the political universe' (Nelson and Garst, 2005). Finally, values are ordered according to relative importance, what in the study of public opinion might be termed 'salience'. Though all values represent desirable outcomes, they are not all equally important to a person. How these values are ordered, which values and end states are most important, may change over time, even if the values themselves are stable and enduring.

Thus, attitudes/issue positions are viewed as being more reactive to specific situations, contexts and political arguments, while values are not subject to these short-term influences (Jacoby, 2006). Value orientations in the funnel of causality model are causally prior to the 'short-term' influences that may be at play at specific elections. This does not mean there is no relationship between short-term influences and values. However, it does mean that short-term influences are not theorised as directly influencing value orientations. An important distinction can be drawn here between value orientations and value priorities. Value orientations relate to the positions people hold; what it is they view as a desirable outcome. Value priorities relate to which of these desirable outcomes they prioritise, or most desire, at a given time. Value orientations are theorised as relatively unchanging over the life-course and in relation to political events, with change at the societal level occurring primarily through generational replacement (Inglehart, 1977). Value priorities may well change in relation to political and life-course events.

WHY VALUES NOW?

The period from 2005 to 2019 saw unprecedented levels of volatility, as measured by vote

switching, among the British electorate. Only half of the electorate voted for the same party in 2010, 2015 and 2017 (Fieldhouse et al (2019)). In a party system where voters are anchored to political parties, party identity acts as stabilising force and functions as a core heuristic for voters. It does this in three ways: it creates the basis for a political identity, provides cues for evaluating candidates and issues and encourages participation in elections (Dalton, 2014). As the role of party attachment wanes, value orientations play a more prominent role in providing this stabilising influence. Values are enduring and can provide an element of political identity. Values are inherently evaluative and therefore can provide the basis for evaluating candidates and issues.

Values, like party identity, are 'fast heuristics'; drawing their power from their inherent desirability; there is no need for deep reflection to guide behaviour where values can do this emotional work (Longest et al, 2013). However, values are not uni-dimensional, and it is not clear which values will take priority when there is conflict between them. The political values identified may come into conflict for voters as they try to find a comfortable position in a party system with limited choices. How voters prioritise their competing desirable outcomes and resolve those conflicts will shape which of the values groups can be successfully joined. Parties are not passive actors in this process; they can shape the terms of the debate and seek to influence which outcomes voters see as desirable. But parties do not act in a vacuum, they have existing partisans and voters and an 'existing political base' that can be 'an impediment to innovation' (Dalton, 2019).

Despite a recent renaissance following the EU referendum vote and the rise of 'populist' parties and leaders (Norris and Inglehart, 2019), values have not been well integrated into the study of political behaviour, left to wither while the study of elections focussed on only proximate causes for vote choice. Had values been more central to accounts of voting many of the electoral events of the last 5 years would perhaps have been much less surprising, representing the discomfort of voters trying to satisfy their value sets in a limited political marketplace.

MEASURING POLITICAL VALUES IN THE BRITISH ELECTORATE

Although it remains commonplace to talk of the left and right of British politics as if this were a single dimension along which voters and parties can be aligned, the multi-dimensionality of political positions has been recognised for some time (Flanagan, 1982; Fleishman, 1988; Kerlinger, 1984). The emergent consensus is that two dimensions are needed to capture the political values of the electorates of Western Democracies (Dalton,

2019). This dimensionality is often conceived of as a contrast between the 'old' politics of class and the 'new' politics, which has variously been framed as 'liberal-authoritarian' (Evans et al, 1996), 'post-materialist' (Inglehart, 1977), 'gal-tan' (Hooghe et al, 2002), and 'cultural' (Bornschier, 2010); it is often further associated with xenophobic and nativist positions (Inglehart and Norris, 2017). As Marthaler (2020, pg. 114) notes, 'despite the variation in the terms used the essential distinction is between materialist and non-materialist value domains'. The need for this demarcation between 'economic' and 'social' liberalism was articulated by Lipset (1959) as essential for clarifying the 'relationship between class position and political behaviour'. This distinction has become even more central to our understandings of this relationship as 'new' issues have acquired greater salience among the public.

Too much focus has been placed on trying to adjudicate between the old and the new and the extent to which the later has replaced the former. Van Deth and Scarborough (1997) describe this process as a gradual one, where 'people adjust to new values without giving up every element in their previous orientations', while in fact there may be no necessity to move from one to the other but rather people hold values which may be in conflict. For understanding the shape of contemporary British electoral politics, it is the interaction between the 'old' and the 'new' politics that is critical. This interaction between the old and the new is important to grasp both at the level of the voters, and at the level of party positions. A person who holds broadly left-wing views on economic issues but is toward the authoritarian end of the new politics scale may well feel they lack representation in the party space. But this cannot be explained by reference to either one of their sets of core values. There are parties which represent left-wing politics and there are parties which represent the more 'authoritarian' end of the scale. However, there is not a party which represents both positions and it is the location of the voter in the value space defined by both old and new politics which leads to this disconnect.

While there is widespread agreement that values are 'latent', not directly observable, traits of individuals and that in the political sphere they are best summarised by two dimensions, there is much less congruence on exactly how to measure these values. The most common method is to measure a group of specific attitudes on the assumption that these are manifestations of the underlying latent value dimension. Drawing on work in the British context by Heath et al (1994), a selection of these measures is included on the British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP). The BESIP, began in 2014 and has collected data at key moments across the dramatic electoral period since then. There are, at the time of writing, nineteen waves of data in this study. These data are collected via an online panel, which affords a much greater sample size than traditional face-to-face methodologies. Each

wave of the panel has a sample size of around 25,000 respondents.

Following Evans et al (1996), the value measures on the BESIP capture an 'old' politics dimension concerned with economic justice, the distribution of resources and economic power, which is commonly called the 'left-right' dimension and a dimension concerned with 'personal and political freedom[,]… equality, tolerance of minorities' and criminal justice, which has most commonly been labelled the 'libertarian-authoritarian' dimension[2] (Flanagan, 1982). These two value dimensions are theoretically, and empirically (see Table 1), uncorrelated at the individual level. This means that it is not possible to predict where a voter is positioned on the 'liberal-authoritarian' dimension by knowing their position on the 'left-right' dimension; more simply just because someone supports renationalising the railways doesn't mean they will also be against the reintroduction of the death penalty.

The two value scales are measured using five statements for each; the respondents are asked whether they agree or disagree with each item on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For the analyses presented here, the items are coded so that the 'neither' option is the mid-point of the scale and set to zero with the scale taking values from -2 to 2 on either side of this. The mean of these items is taken to be the individual's position on each of the scales. For each scale, the theoretical, or notional, mid-point is the position of someone who answered 'neither agree nor disagree' to all items or someone who gave contradictory responses which cancel each other out. For the left-right scale, low (negative) values represent the most left-leaning positions; for the liberal-authoritarian scale, low values represent the most liberal positions.

Attitudinal items for the left-right scale are:

- Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off
- Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers
- Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth
- There is one law for the rich and one for the poor
- Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance

Attitudinal items for the liberal-authoritarian scale are:
- Young people don't have enough respect for traditional values

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[2] While the labelling of this scale is difficult, the original 'liberal-authoritarian' labelling has wide usage and understanding within the broader literature on political values and is kept here but should not be read as pertaining to 'authoritarianism' as a 'personality' type as found in some of the psychological literature.

- Censorship is necessary to uphold moral values
- For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence
- Schools should teach children to obey authority
- People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences

The models draw on data from the post campaign waves at the 2015, 2017 and 2019 elections (waves 6, 13 and 19 respectively). In each case the post-election wave is analysed (and weighted) as a stand-alone cross-sectional survey, however, in 2019, the values measures were not included on the post campaign wave and so they are instead taken from the pre-campaign wave. As values are considered enduring features of individuals, with a high cross-wave correlation, it is unlikely that this makes a measurable difference to the outcomes modelled here.

Scale means, standard deviations and alpha values for each election are shown in Table 1. Alphas for the scales indicate a high level of reliability for each scale at each election. As already stated, at the aggregate level the scales are uncorrelated. The scale means are relatively stable over the four-year period (as expected for measures of 'enduring' values). The means of the scales indicate that on average voters were to the left of the notional centre point of the left-right scale and to the 'authoritarian' end of the liberal-authoritarian scale. There is a slight move towards more liberal values between 2015 and 2019, this may reflect generational replacement over that period whereby more highly qualified groups have been joining the electorate.

Table 1: Value scale descriptives

		2015	2017	2019
Left-right				
	Mean	-0.72	-0.71	-0.71
	St. dev	0.86	0.82	0.79
	Alpha	0.88	0.86	0.84
Liberal-Authoritarian				
	Mean	0.67	0.60	0.58
	St. dev	0.82	0.88	0.89
	Alpha	0.78	0.81	0.81
Correlation (Left-right and Liberal Authoritarian)		-0.051	0.028	0.057
N		20543	21141	16855

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The models presented below address three sets of questions:

1. Do values influence voting behaviour and has this changed over-time?

The focus here is on whether values have become more important since the 2016 referendum and whether the influence of the 'old' divide of left and right has declined relative to the 'new' politics in this period. This question is addressed using a multi-nomial logistic regression model including the two value scales and their interaction effect for each of the three elections.

2. Do values have a stronger influence on voting behaviour when party identity is weaker?

This is addressed by fitting separate models for those with Conservative party identity, Labour party identity and No party identity.

3. Is it all about Brexit?

Are there persistent effects of values beyond those captured in the way people voted in 2016? This is assessed by fitting models for Leave and Remain voters independently.

These can be summarised as four hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:   Values have been important at each of the three elections: 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Hypothesis 2:   The 'new' values represented by the liberal-authoritarian dimension have become more important since the 2016 referendum.

Hypothesis 3:   Values have a greater influence on voting when party identities are weak.

Hypothesis 4:   Values contribute to voting decisions, in addition to their influence on EU referendum vote.

In all models, the dependent variable is how the respondent voted in the relevant election. For consistency across the elections this is restricted to Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat[3]. Models were also fitted with a set of demographic control variables (gender, generation, ethnicity, education qualifications and household income). These did not
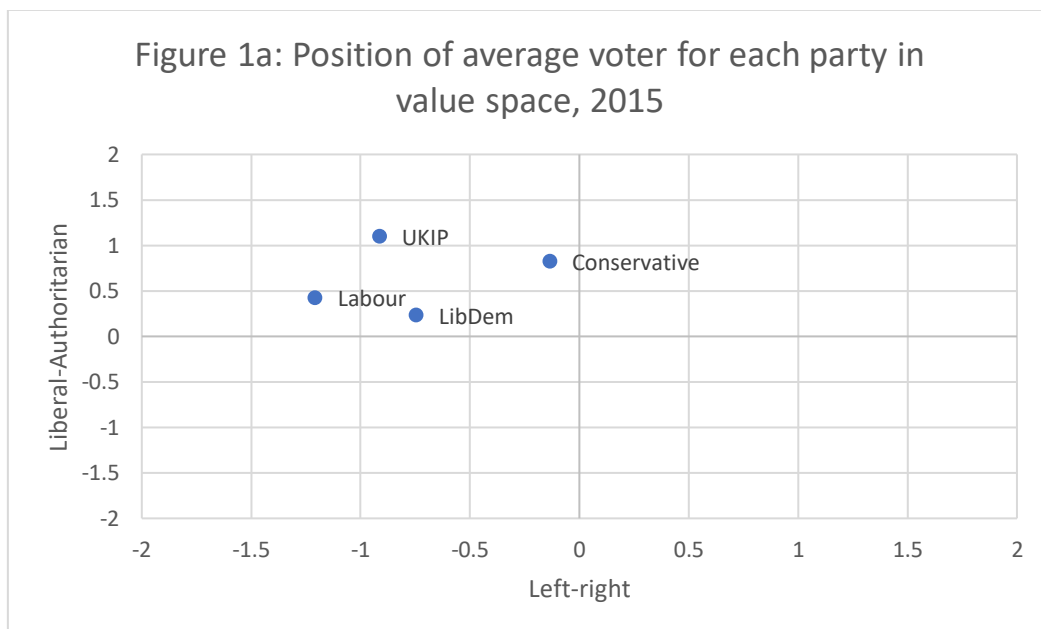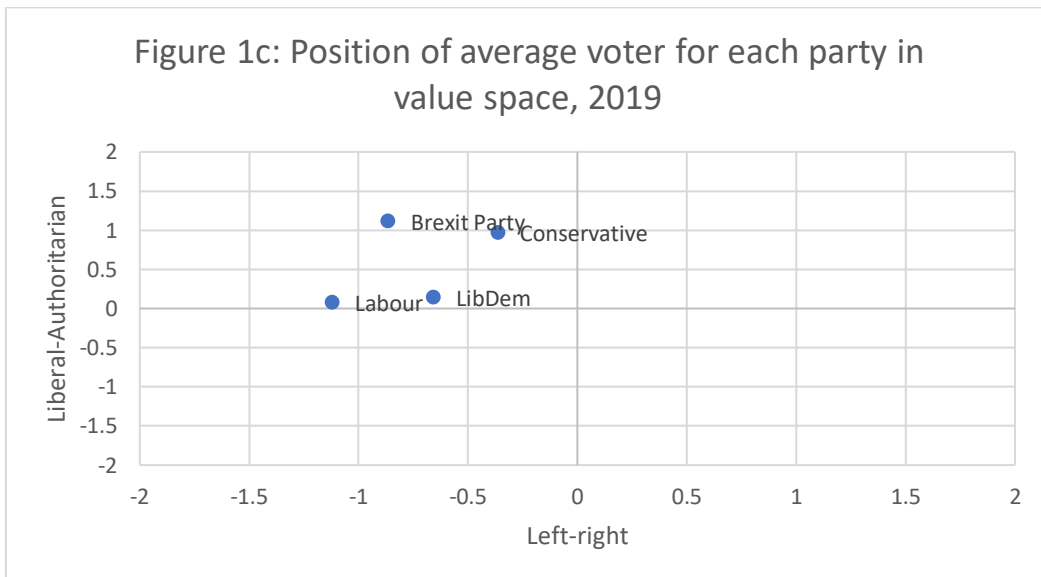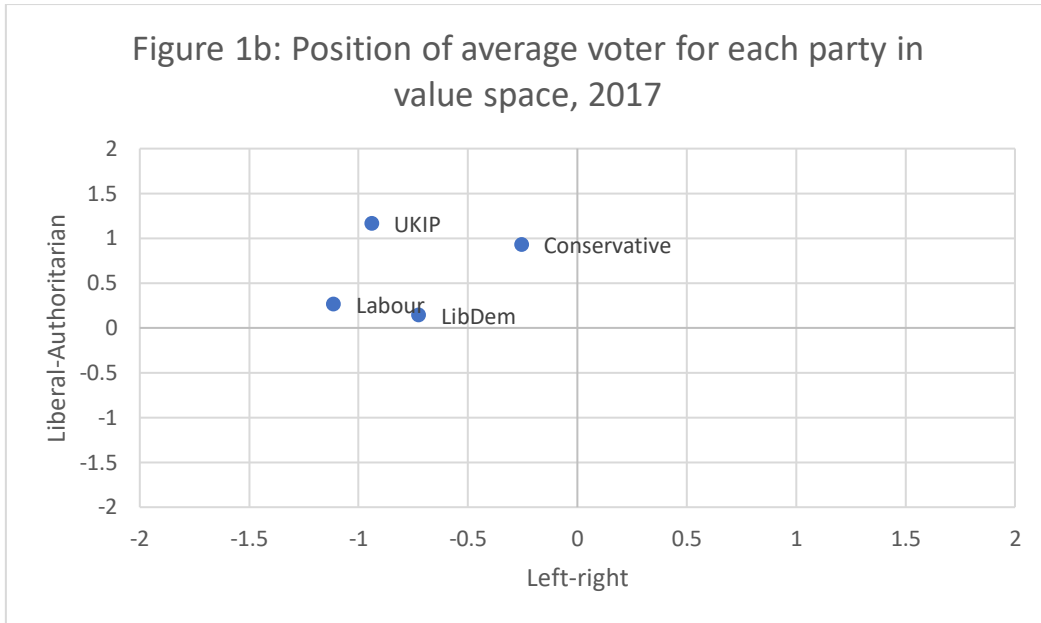
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[3] Models were fitted for both a five-category dependent variable (with the Green party and UKIP in 2015 and 2017 and Brexit Party in 2019 added) and as a binary Conservative/Labour choice. In all cases this makes only a non-substantive difference to the estimates from the models. The three category models were considered the most parsimonious for these analyses.

change the substantive findings and for ease of interpretation the models without the controls are presented throughout. The fitted models are not suitable for making strong claims about causality, rather the results are reviewed as to whether they are consistent with each of these hypotheses.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis I suggests that both sets of values have been important in the three elections. As a starting point, this is explored by looking at the average voter for each party and where they are positioned in the 'value space' defined by the two value scales. These are shown in Figure 1a-c. At each of the three elections there are clear differences in the position of the average voter for each party. Though it is worth noting that for all parties the average voter is in the 'left' and 'authoritarian' quadrant of the value space. At every election, the largest difference on the left-right dimension is between Labour and the Conservatives, while both UKIP/Brexit party and Liberal Democrat voters lay between the two parties on this scale. In 2019, the average Liberal Democrat voter was slightly closer to the Conservatives than Labour on left-right values.

Figure 1a: Position of average voter for each party in value space, 2015

Figure 1b: Position of average voter for each party in value space, 2017

(Scatter plot — y-axis: Liberal-Authoritarian, from -2 to 2; x-axis: Left-right, from -2 to 2)

- UKIP: approximately (-0.95, 1.15)
- Conservative: approximately (-0.25, 0.95)
- Labour: approximately (-1.1, 0.3)
- LibDem: approximately (-0.7, 0.15)

Figure 1c: Position of average voter for each party in value space, 2019

(Scatter plot — y-axis: Liberal-Authoritarian, from -2 to 2; x-axis: Left-right, from -2 to 2)

- Brexit Party: approximately (-0.85, 1.1)
- Conservative: approximately (-0.4, 0.95)
- Labour: approximately (-1.1, 0.05)
- LibDem: approximately (-0.65, 0.15)

In 2015 and 2017, the widest gap on the liberal-authoritarian scale was between UKIP and the Liberal Democrats; but in 2019 the average Labour voter was marginally more liberal than the average Liberal Democrat making the largest gap in 2019 between Labour and the Brexit Party. Comparing just the relative positions of Labour and the Conservatives, the gap on the left-right scale has narrowed over the three elections (though remaining substantial) and the gap on the liberal-authoritarian scale has widened. Jennings and Stoker (2017) have referred to this process as a 'tilting' of the 'cosmopolitan axis' and this is clear to see here. It would be wrong to argue that left-right values do not divide voters but there seems to be some evidence that liberal-authoritarian values had become equally important in 2019.

Figure 2: Gap between Conservative and Labour average voter 2015-2019
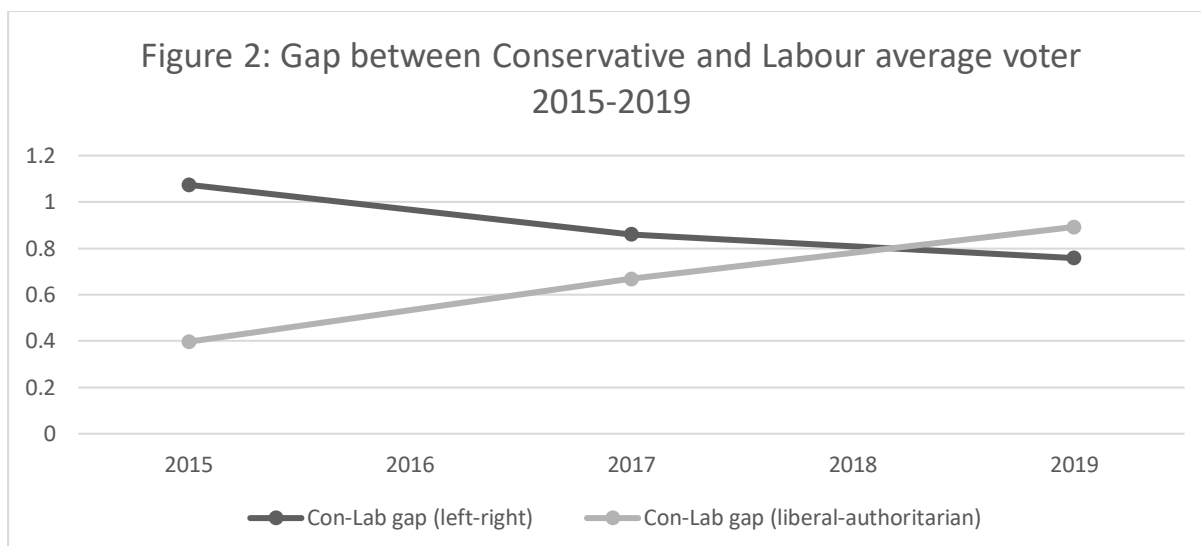
To begin to understand how the two value scales combine to modify and adapt the voting calculus for voters, multinomial logistic regression models were used to estimate the effects of the two dimensions and their interaction. Models were repeated with both Labour and Conservative as the 'reference' in the dependent variable in order to estimate a full set of contrasts between parties. These models allow us to see if the evidence is consistent with Hypothesis I, that values have been important at elections since 2015 and Hypothesis II, that the influence of the 'new' values divide has increased since the EU referendum.

Hypothesis I is considered by comparing the model fit at the three elections. While there are no control variables in these models, further models were estimated that included demographic controls. As these demographic factors are theoretically prior to value orientations in the funnel of causality we would expect their influence to operate primarily through the effect of value orientation[4]. The results are indicative of this. There was no substantive change in the coefficients for the value scales as a result of the addition of the demographic controls (generation, gender, ethnicity, education and household income), these can be seen in Tables A.1 and A.2).

For the three elections of 2015, 2017 and 2019 the Nagelkerke r-squared for multi-nomial models of vote choice with a three-category dependent variable is 0.45, 0.44 and 0.43 respectively. While these suggest moderately fitting models, there is no trend here to suggest that values are becoming *more* important over time as predictors of voting in England. The influence of values has not increased since the EU referendum, though the relative importance of the two dimensions may be changing within this.

The estimates from these models are included as Table A.1 in the Annex. However, it is

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[4] Further models to show the impact of demographics on value orientations are beyond the scope of this paper.

difficult to intuitively grasp the meaning of multinomial logit models when they are straightforward and almost impossible when including an interaction effect. To overcome this, predicted probabilities are computed for each 'pair' of choices in the models. These are computed at a series of fixed values for the left-right scale across the full range of values for the liberal-authoritarian scale, to illustrate how the two scales combine in vote choices. The resulting probabilities are presented as charts and can be interpreted in the following way: the further apart the lines are the greater is the influence of the left-right scale; the greater the gradient of the line the greater is the influence of the liberal-authoritarian scale and finally the closer to parallel the lines are the weaker is the influence of the interaction between the two scales on that binary vote choice comparison.

The key contrast between the two main parties is shown in Figure 3a-c. Focussing first on the 2019 pattern, it is clear that the left-right divide is important (as indicated by the space between the lines), the liberal authoritarian dimension is important (as indicated by the gradient of the lines) and that these also interact (as indicated by the variance in slopes between the lines). In short, 'it's complicated'.

Those in the most economically right-wing group shown in the chart, are more likely to be a Conservative than a Labour voter across all points on the liberal-authoritarian scale. This reaches more than a 90% chance while still clearly in the 'liberal' part of the chart. For those in the 'centre' of the left-right scale, whether they are most likely to be Labour or Conservative depends on their position on the liberal-authoritarian dimension. In each case for groups in the centre of this scale (centre-left, centre and centre-right) they become more likely to be a Conservative voter than a Labour voter while still in the 'liberal' part of this scale (represented by negative values). Critically for Labour's strategy to unite the economically left-wing vote, for the most left-wing group the line does not stay in the part of the chart where the voter is more likely to support Labour than the Conservatives. The 'tipping point' for this group of economically left-wing voters to be more likely to support the Conservatives is around 0.9 on the liberal-authoritarian scale.

Comparing the patterns for 2015 and 2017 shows a very similar picture overall, but in 2019 the slope of the line for those who are economically left-wing is notably steeper, resulting in the 'tipping point' from Labour to Conservative occurring at a more extreme position on the liberal-authoritarian scale. In 2015, this occurs at around 1.6 on the scale, in 2017 around 1.4, compared with 0.9 in 2019 this suggests that left-wing economic values have become increasingly likely to be countered where voters have views toward the authoritarian end of the liberal-authoritarian scale.

Figure 3a: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)
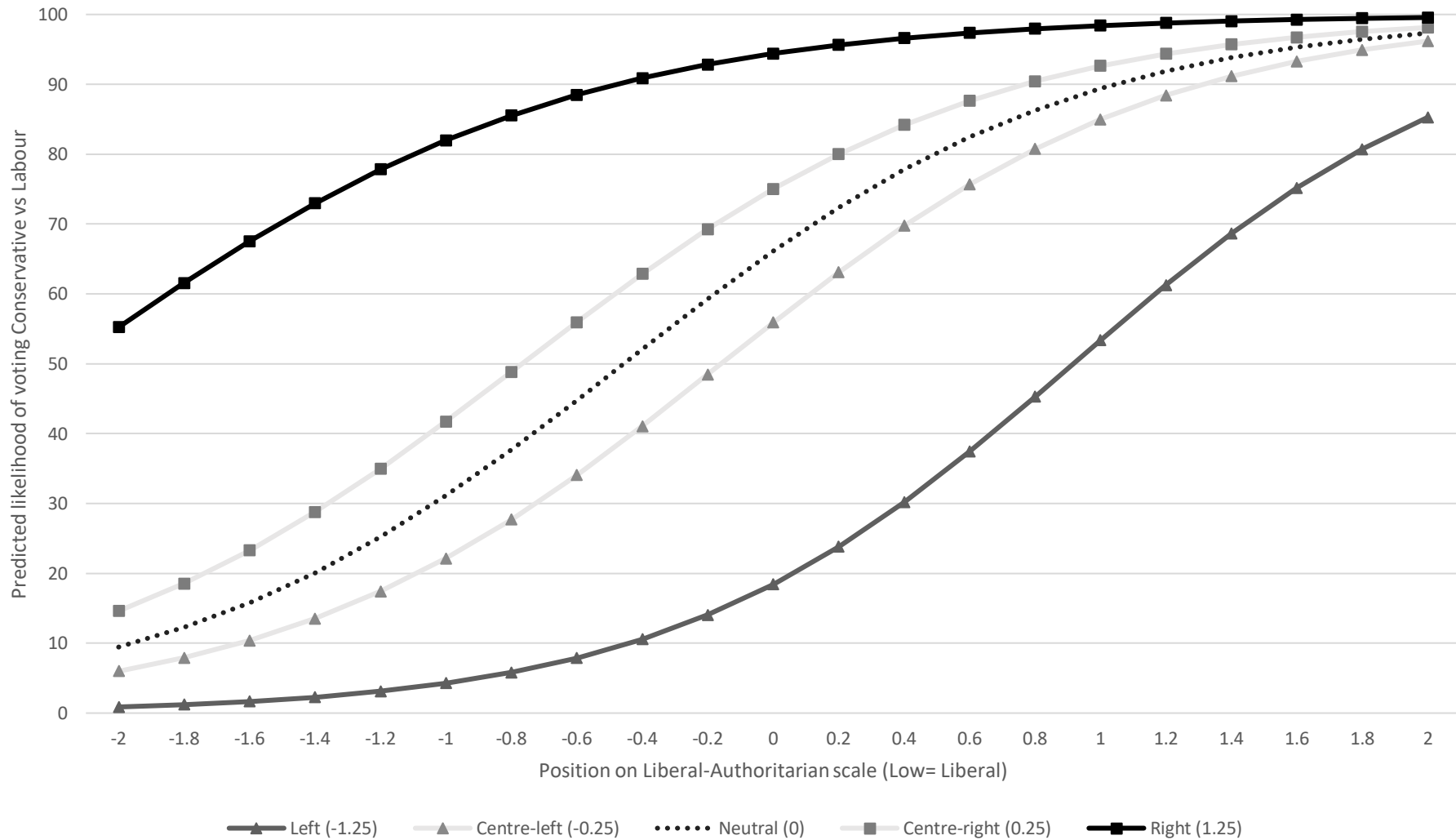
Figure 3b: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2017)
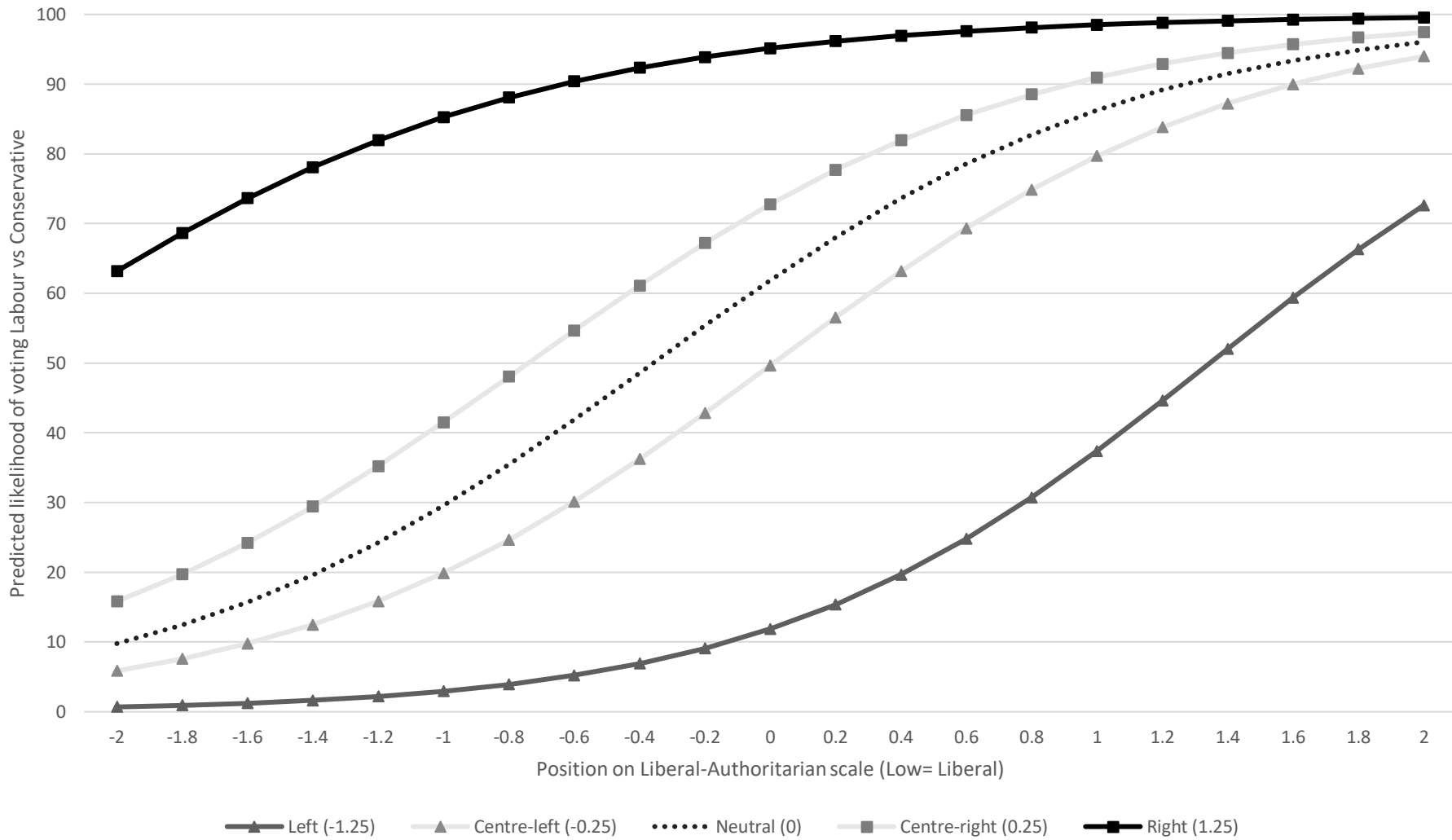
Figure 3c: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2015)
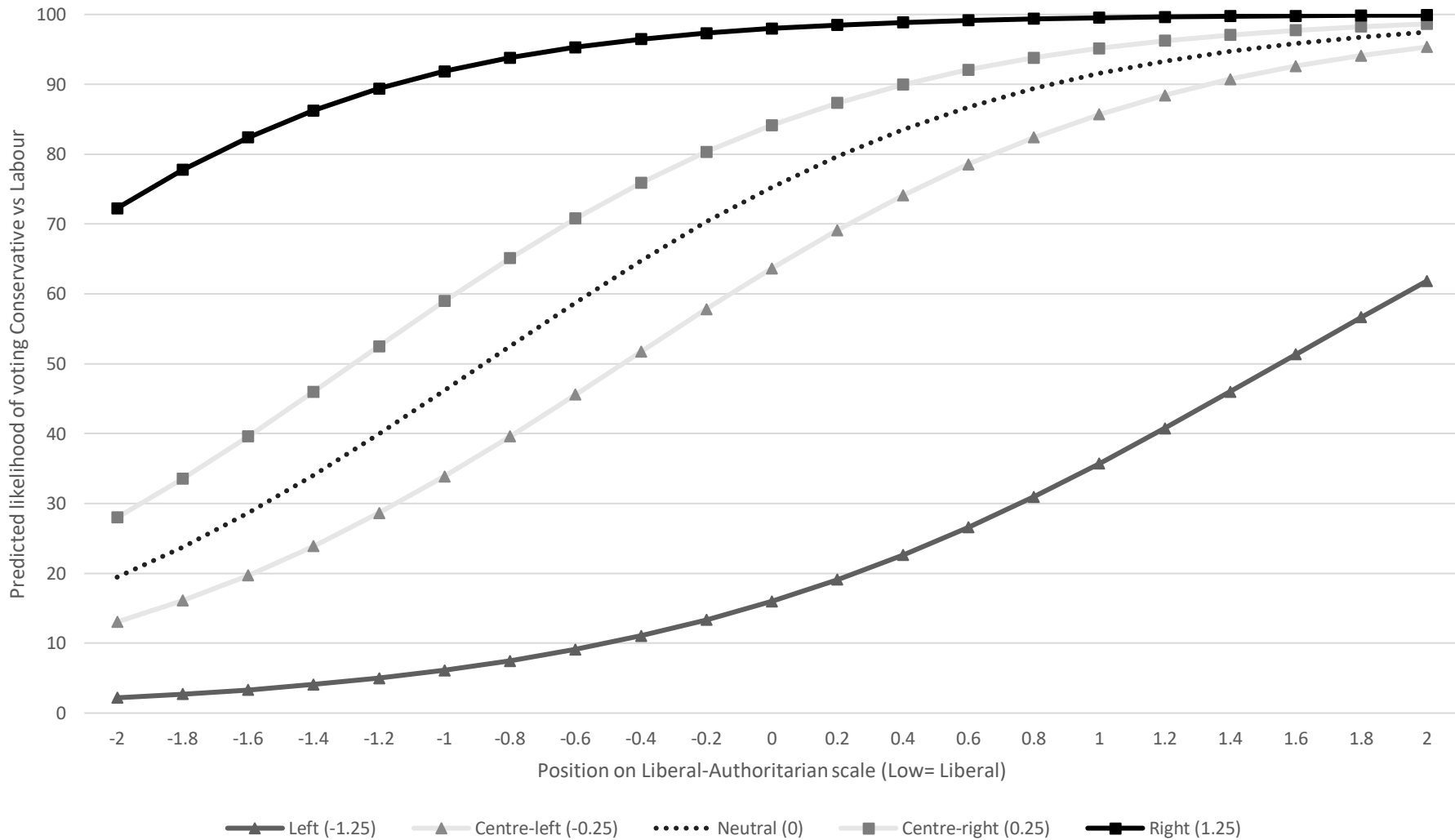
Figure 4a: Predicted likelihood of LibDem (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)
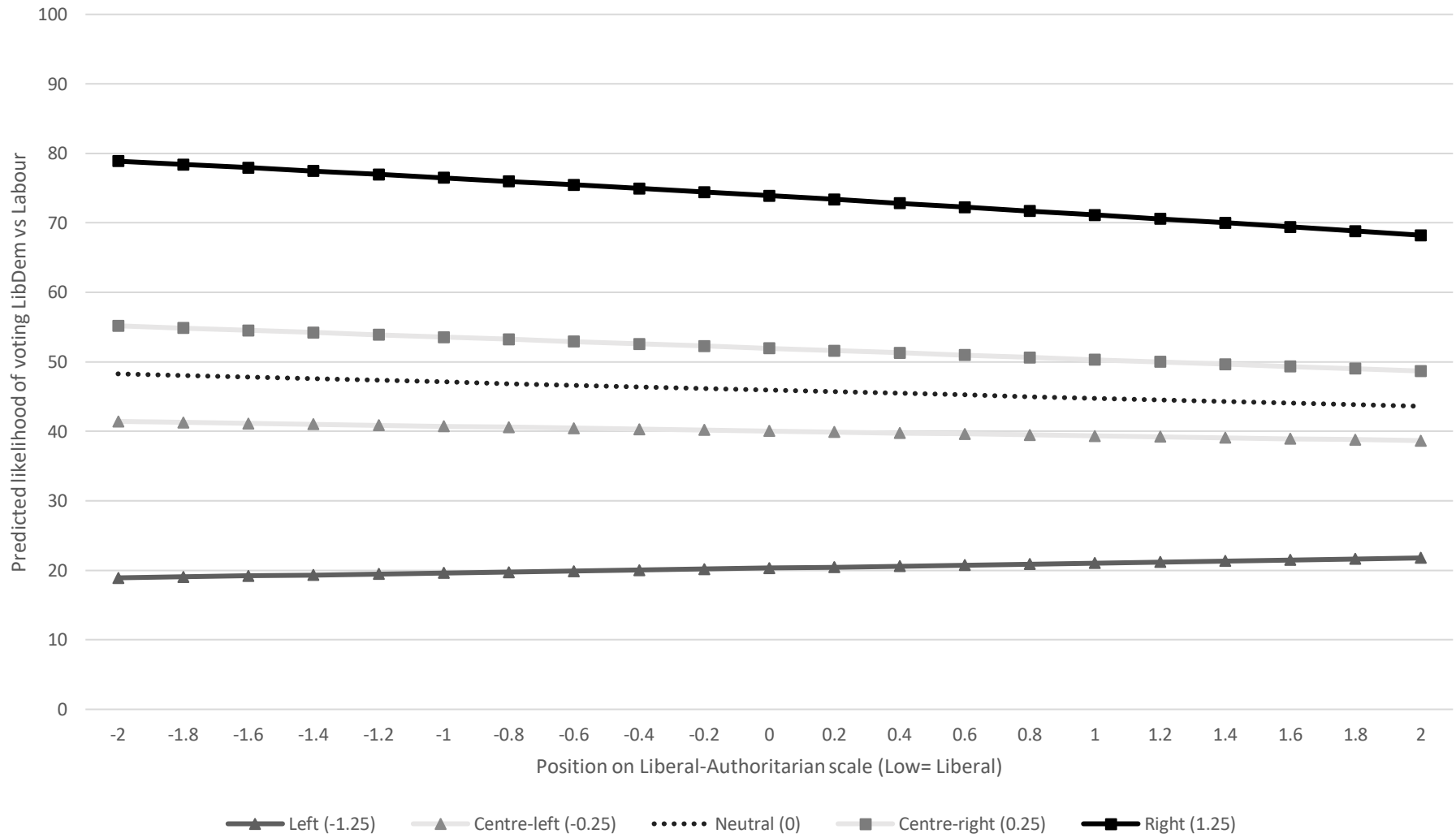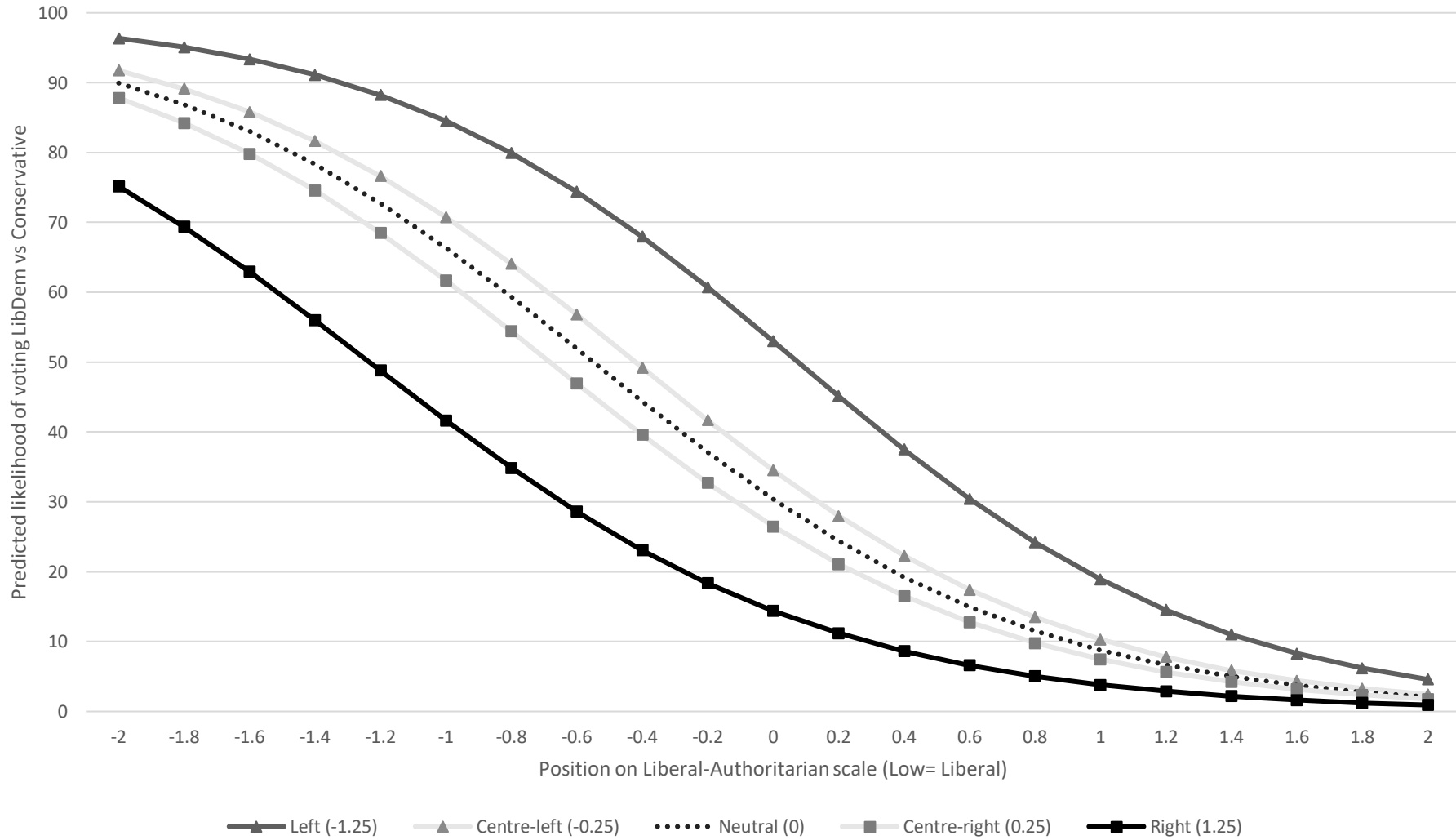
Figure 4b: Predicted likelihood of LibDem (vs Conservative) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)

Given that this economic divide had long been the basis of party competition in Britain, we might expect to find that it is at its potent in the choice between Labour and Conservative, especially as the parties have been polarised on these issues since 2015. As the Liberal Democrat vote was small in 2015 and 2017, the charts are presented for 2019 only (full model details are in the Annex).

There are very striking differences between the chart which contrasts the binary choice between Liberal Democrat voting and Labour voting (Figure 4a) and the one which contrasts Liberal Democrat vote with Conservative vote (Figure 4b).

Turning first to the choice between Liberal Democrats and Labour, there remain very clear differences according to the left-right dimension, the further to the right a voter was on economic issues the more likely they were to choose the Liberal Democrats over Labour. Those who were on the economic right were more likely to choose the Liberal Democrats than Labour, regardless of their position on the liberal-authoritarian scale. While those on the economic left were more likely to choose Labour than the Liberal Democrats regardless of where they were positioned on the liberal-authoritarian scale. The lines here are almost flat across the liberal-authoritarian dimension for all groups, indicating that this set of values do not separate Labour and Liberal Democrat voters. A comparison of the model coefficients in Table A.2 indicates that these are relatively stable over the three elections. In other words, left-right values have been more important for separating Labour and Liberal Democrat voters at each of the last three elections, this is not a 'new' pattern that has arisen as a result of either the referendum or the Corbyn leadership.

The influence of values on the binary choice between Liberal Democrat and Conservative voting (Figure 4b) looks very different. There is a strong influence here of liberal-authoritarian positions but also some differences according to left-right position. The more left-wing economically a voter is then the more likely it is that they will be a Liberal Democrat voter rather than a Conservative, but this is strongly counter-balanced by their liberal-authoritarian position. For the most left-wing group in the chart it is around the notional mid-point of the scale that the 'tipping point' occurs, while for those on the economic right the point at which a voter becomes more likely to be a Conservative rather than a Liberal Democrat voter is around -1.2 on this scale, very much within the liberal part of the scale.

These models of voting behaviour suggest that there has not been any increase in the overall influence of values on voting over these three elections, rather the influence of values was strong in 2015 as well as 2019. There is some evidence of a slight shift in the relative importance of the scales towards the liberal-authoritarian dimension for both the Labour

and Conservative model and the Conservative and Liberal Democrat model, but not for the Labour and Liberal Democrat model. However, even with this slight shift there remain clear differences in all the models relating to the left-right dimension. It is certainly too soon to suggest that this divide is no longer helpful for understanding voting behaviour (see Surridge, 2018) for a longer-term perspective on this issue). Critically, these models also demonstrate that how these value scales combine is important for understanding vote choices. To focus only on one or the other of the value dimensions risks misunderstanding how voters might shuffle around the party choices while their core values remain unchanged. Here it is important to view both the 'old' and 'new' politics as values; positions on the 'left-right' dimension reflect 'conceptions of the desirable' in the economic sphere and are not a simple reflection of economic self-interest or of economic evaluations.

The funnel of causality model described above has the influence of value orientations running indirectly through party identity. Whether working with an affective model of partisanship or with the model of partisanship as a 'running tally' (Fiorina, 1981), which features in the valence model of electoral behaviour, the model suggests that value orientations work through their influence on this connection to parties. However, voters have become increasingly disconnected from parties over the last forty years (Fieldhouse et al, 2019; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). The model would suggest that where this is the case and party attachment no long performs this 'funnelling' role the influence of value orientations would be strong and more direct on vote choice.

To test this hypothesis, models equivalent to those presented above are estimated for different groups of party identifiers: Conservative identifiers, Labour identifiers and, crucially, those without a party identity. The expectation is that for those with party identity there will be only a weak (if any) effect of values on voting while for those without a party identity this will be a stronger influence. To keep the analyses manageable only data from 2019 is presented.

The first step in assessing whether values are more important for those with no party identity is to compare how well a model with only values predicts voting in each group. We would expect model fit here to be lower as the influence of values should be weak once party identity is controlled for. For those with a Conservative party identity the Nagelkerke r-squared was just 0.13 and for Labour party identifiers 0.18 but for those with no party identity this was notably higher at 0.30[5]. This suggests the expectation that value orientations have a greater effect when party identity is weaker is supported and has important implications for voting models. As the proportion of the electorate who are not

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[5] Full details of these models can be found in Table A.4 in the annex.

attached to parties grows, not only will voters be more volatile, but it is likely that they will be more influenced by their value orientations and also possible that these value orientations also have influences on their evaluations of parties, leaders and policies that would perhaps in the past have been guided by partisanship.

Figure 5 shows the influence of values on the choice between Labour and the Conservatives for those with no party identity. The broad shape of the chart is similar to that for all voters but the 'tipping points' are in more liberal positions than for all voters (where those on the left among the electorate as a whole are more likely to also have Labour party identity which boosts their likelihood of voting Labour). The lines are both further apart and steeper for those without a party identity, indicating the stronger influence of values where party identity is not connecting voters with parties.

Figure 5: No Party identity: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)
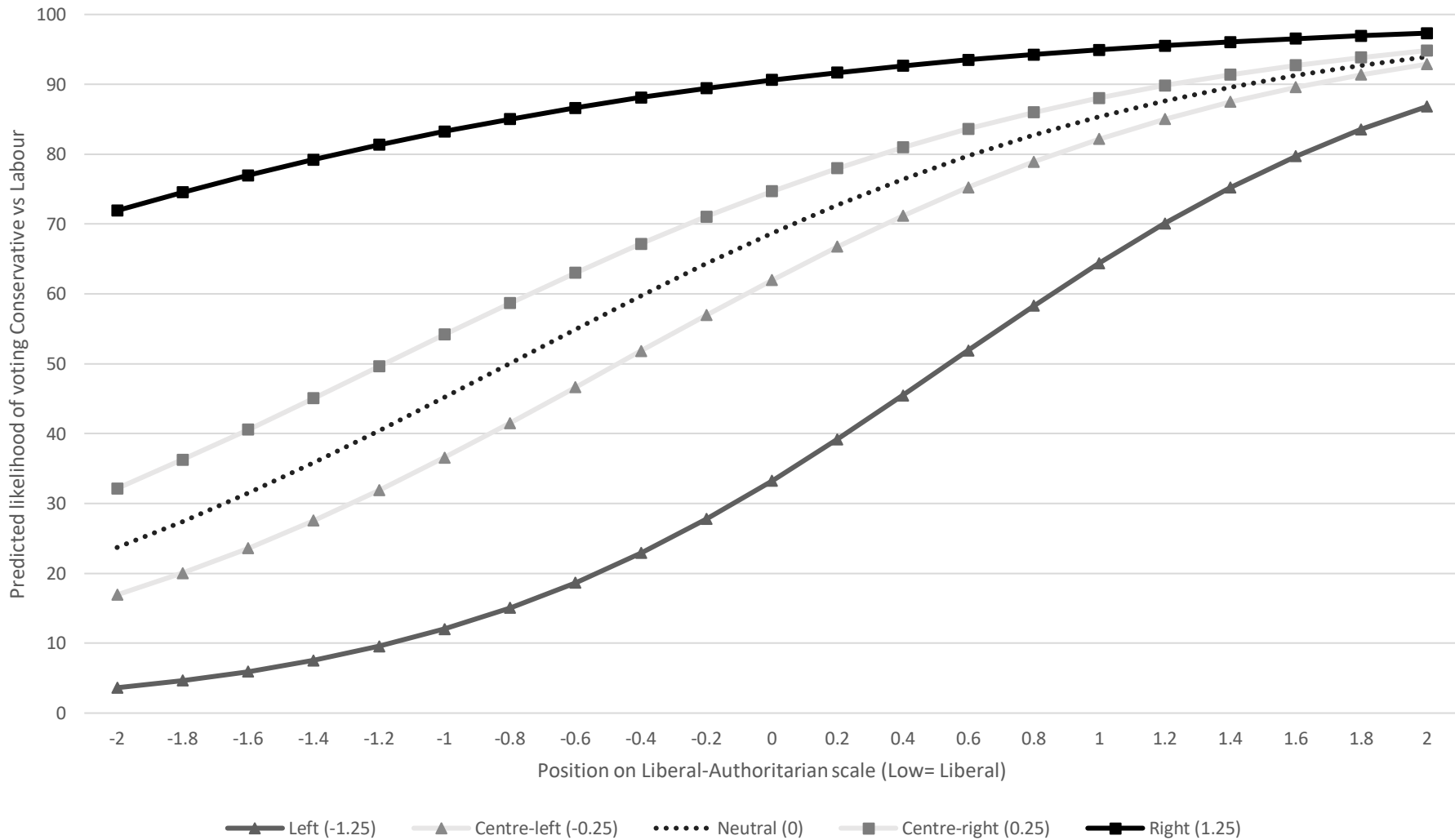
Figure 6a: Remain voters: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)
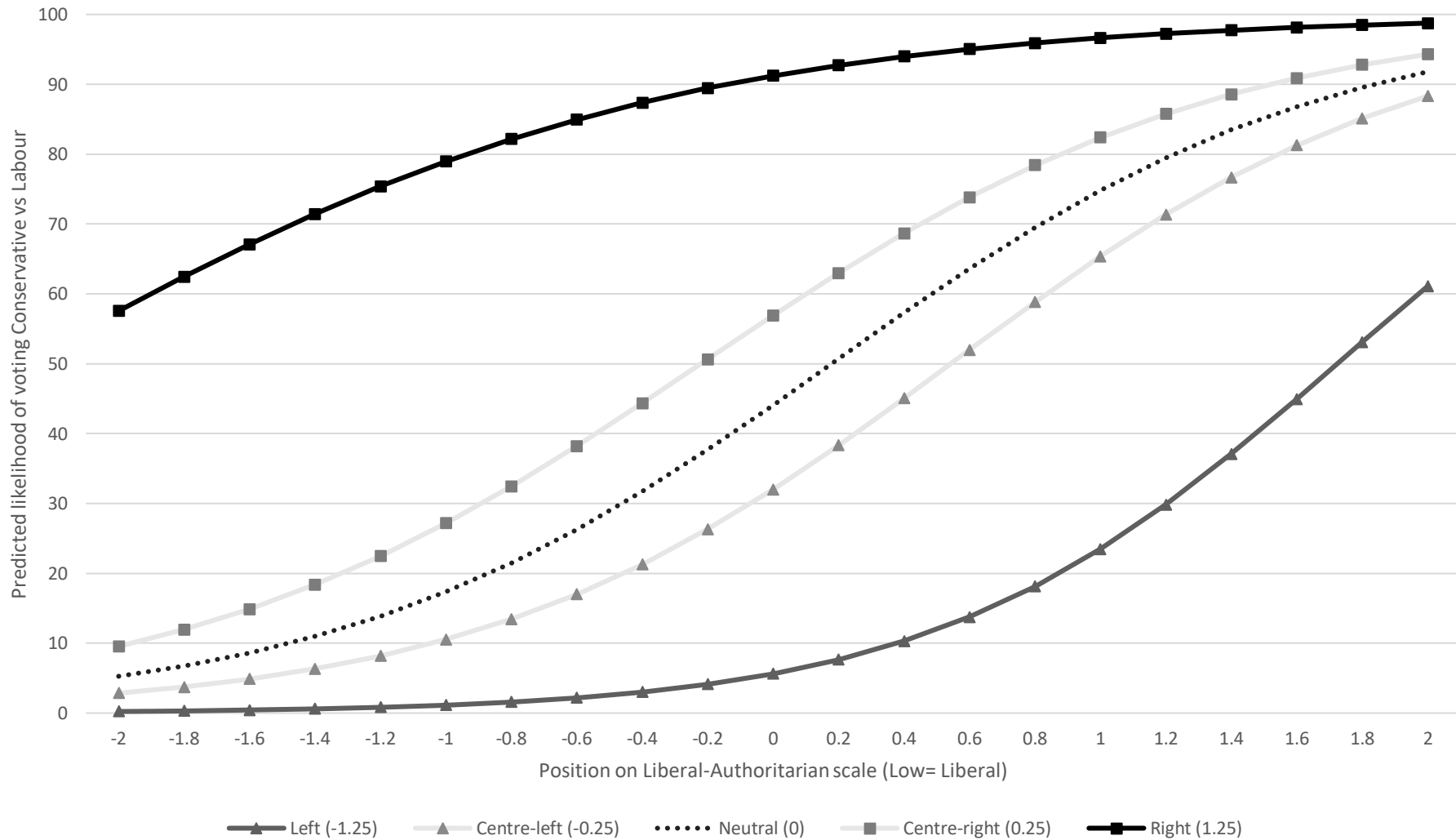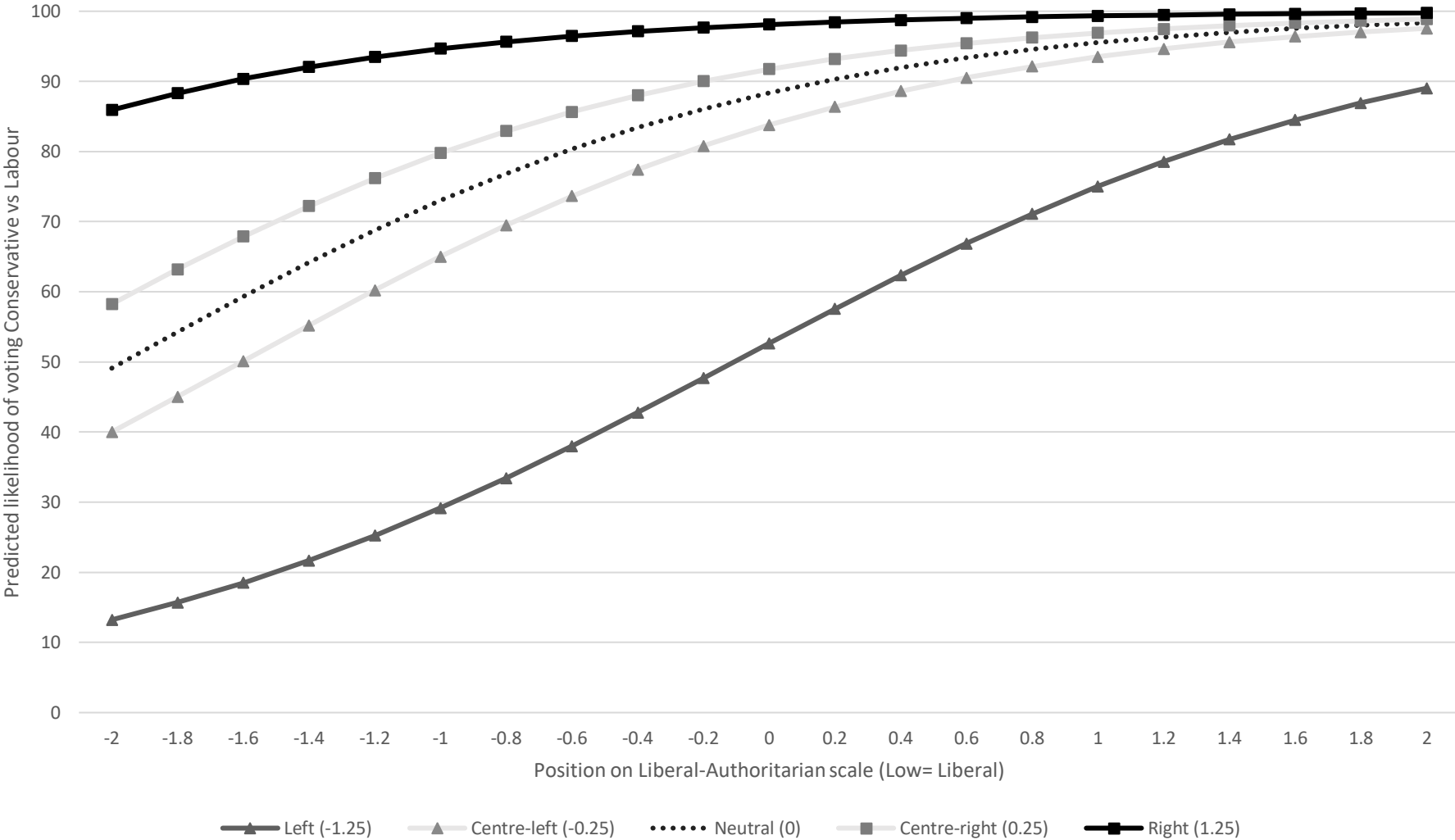
Figure 6b: Leave voters: Predicted likelihood of Conservative (vs Labour) vote by position on left-right and liberal-authoritarian scales (2019)

Since the EU referendum it has been suggested that 'Brexit identity' has replaced party identity as the key division in British electoral politics (Hobolt et al 2020). If this is the case then the model of the funnel of causality might already have broken down, with voters now channelled to parties solely based on their EU referendum vote rather than through party attachment. Whilst it is clear that there must be more to it than this when there are more than two options to choose from (particularly on the 'Remain' side of the divide), it isn't obvious whether values have any role to play beyond that already exerted in the referendum vote (Curtice, 2017b).

To assess this, the same modelling strategy is applied as for party identity, but for Leave voters and Remain voters separately. Again, comparing the model fit, we find that for Leave voters the Nagelkerke r-squared is 0.236, while for Remain voters this was 0.372. To be clear, these are not strongly fitting models but do indicate that values played a role in vote choices in 2019 that went beyond the influence they had already exerted on vote choice in the EU referendum. That this is higher for Remain voters, may reflect the wider range of options (of the three parties in the models only the Conservatives unambiguously committed to 'getting Brexit done' without the need for a further referendum).

Focussing on the Labour vs. Conservative contrast from these models, reveals again the complexity of the influences of values on voting. For those who had voted Remain in the referendum there is a clear influence of left-right values, but this varies dramatically according to positions on the liberal-authoritarian scale. For those with groups in the centre of the left-right divide (centre-left, centre and centre-right) there is and 90 percent chance to be a Labour voter where they are at the most liberal position and the same likelihood of being a Conservative voter where they at the most authoritarian position. In contrast the key difference among Leave voters is between the most economically left wing and the other groups shown. Here the economically left-wing appear very similar to those Remain voters in the centre of the left-right scale; where their values are liberal they are very likely to be a Labour voter, but if they are positioned towards the authoritarian end of the scale they are more likely to be a Conservative voter (despite their economic values). While for Leave voters who are not positioned on the left of the economic dimension there is a greater than 50 per cent chance of being a Conservative voter across all values of the liberal-authoritarian scale.

CONCLUSIONS

The analyses presented here suggest that value orientations are an important component of voting choices in British elections, and that this predates the Brexit referendum and the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn and Boris Johnson. That values have a greater influence when party identity is weaker has implications for how we approach the study of electoral behaviour. More than one in four voters do not identify with a political party, and many do so only weakly. While this may lead to increased volatility it may not be due to voters being unanchored and free floating but rather because they hold complex sets of values which are hard to realise in an electoral system that offers a limited range of choices. Pathways between parties may exist along each of these values dimensions, and which are taken will depend on the priorities of voters at each election.

Reaching for 'new' divides to explain unexpected election and referendum outcomes, commentators were quick to bury the 'old' politics of economics represented by the left-right divide. At the same time, the 'new' divides are really not new at all and an account which treats both the old and new as value dimensions and captures the complexity of the value space is overdue. This task may be becoming more urgent as voters become more detached from political parties. If we are to understand how voters choose parties, how they evaluate leaders and how they receive policy, the integration of values into our models of electoral behaviour is critical.

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ANNEX

Table A.1: Multi-nomial logistic regression model coefficients

	2015						2017						2019					
	Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Conservative		Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Conservative		Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Conservative	
	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err
Constant	1.115	0.043	-0.325	0.053	-1.44	0.045	0.485	0.036	-0.668	0.043	-1.153	0.041	0.668	0.043	-0.163	0.047	-0.831	0.042
Left-right	2.219	0.048	0.955	0.046	-1.264	0.049	1.992	0.043	0.842	0.04	-1.15	0.047	1.724	0.047	0.963	0.043	-0.761	0.046
Liberal-Authoritarian	1.268	0.052	-0.072	0.065	-1.339	0.056	1.354	0.043	-0.098	0.054	-1.452	0.052	1.464	0.052	-0.047	0.058	-1.511	0.052
Interaction	0.158	0.045	0.078	0.05	-0.079	0.049	-0.109	0.038	0.048	0.044	0.156	0.047	-0.126	0.044	-0.073	0.047	0.053	0.046
Nagelkerke R^2	0.474						0.439						0.433					
N	13179						17106						15041					

Table A.2: Multi-nomial logistic regression model coefficients

(including demographic controls)

	2015				2017				2019			
	Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour		Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour		Conservative vs Labour		Liberal Democrat vs Labour	
	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err
Constant	1.206	0.11	-0.53	0.146	0.819	0.085	-0.761	0.118	1.333	0.115	-0.267	0.145
Left-right	2.304	0.072	1.023	0.067	2.013	0.056	0.814	0.051	1.722	0.067	0.915	0.063
Liberal-Authoritarian	1.341	0.079	0.011	0.097	1.304	0.057	-0.059	0.071	1.383	0.077	0.055	0.086
Interaction	0.167	0.066	0.004	0.072	-0.124	0.049	-0.007	0.055	-0.141	0.063	-0.103	0.067
Nagelkerke R^2	0.505				0.468				0.467			
N	7486				10950				6866			

* includes controls for gender, generation, ethnicity, education and household income (not shown)

Table A.3: Multi-nomial logistic regression model coefficients

(within party identity groups)

| | Conservative identity | | Labour identity | | | | No identity | | | |
| | Conservative vs Labour | | Conservative vs Labour | | Liberal Democrat vs Labour | | Conservative vs Labour | | Liberal Democrat vs Labour | |
	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err	B	St. err
Constant	-2.966	0.142	1.651	0.11	-0.293	0.148	-0.785	0.091	-0.711	0.084
Left-right	-1.246	0.174	-1.132	0.109	-0.777	0.135	-1.183	0.094	-0.299	0.093
Liberal-Authoritarian	-1.652	0.179	-1.051	0.11	-1.105	0.159	-0.977	0.108	-1.302	0.102
Interaction	0.216	0.186	0.281	0.086	0.294	0.12	0.251	0.096	-0.129	0.093
Nagelkerke R^2	0.131		0.178				0.302			
N	4493		3737				2405			

Table A.4: Multi-nomial logistic regression model coefficients (within EU referendum vote)

| | Remain voters | | Leave Voters | |
| | Conservative vs Labour | | Conservative vs Labour | |
	B	St. err	B	St. err
Constant	-0.237	0.064	2.026	0.097
Left-right	2.063	0.078	1.536	0.09
Liberal-Authoritarian	1.326	0.081	1.031	0.103
Interaction	-0.246	0.072	0.03	0.08
Nagelkerke R^2	0.372		0.236	
N	5294		5917	