The Development of Political Attitudes and Identities in Scotland and Britain



Eilidh Macfarlane

Trinity College

University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of

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Abstract

This thesis assesses developments in political attitudes and identities in Scotland and Britain in the context of a changing and more volatile electorate. Using British Election Study data from 2014-2021, it contains four papers addressing different elements of changing political attitudes and identities over a period of turbulent politics. The thesis examines how identities are formed and the consequences of identities for the perception of politics.

The results find a relatively stable identity in the form of class identities in Britain – formed by the long-term influences of one's parents' class and party identities, class identities are shown to be strongly political identities in both their origins and their effects. The thesis also examines identities more malleable to political change – it finds that national identities in Scotland and England have been rocked by recent major political events, particularly the 2016 Brexit referendum. After that referendum Britishness declined in Scotland while Englishness and Britishness fell in England. Another seismic political event - the coronavirus pandemic – changed political attitudes in Scotland, with those who judged either the Scottish or UK Government to

have handled the issue well becoming more favourable to the governing party – though only if they previously liked the party and its leader.

Together, these papers delve into some of the ways in which political attitudes and identities have developed in Britain in recent years. They demonstrate that not all identities and attitudes respond to turbulent political times in similar ways, but individually and together they contribute to our understanding of how recent political developments have changed British politics.

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Introduction

The last decade has seen a huge amount of change in British politics – including two referendums, the UK's departure from the EU, the growth of Brexit identities in the electorate, a Scottish politics which is increasingly distinct from that of Westminster and, of course, a pandemic. These changes have seen changing political attitudes and new issues affecting old identities in new ways. Assessing how these major political events are impacting contemporary politics, and how old identities are changing in response to changed politics, forms the central investigation of my thesis.

These changes in British politics are apparent nowhere more than in Scotland, where an increasingly distinct political system and different salient identities have shaped a different set of political puzzles. As a result, the focus of half of the papers in my thesis is on developments in Scotland.

While recent political developments allow for a wide range of different questions and investigations, I have focused on a few which I believe are particularly interesting and topical around the development of political attitudes and identities. As a result, the thesis does not seek to answer one overarching question, but addresses a series of important questions and issues. These papers share a set of common themes: they address the formation and impact of political identities in Britain today, how events change political attitudes and identities and how and why British politics is changing. Using the articles format DPhil I dive into four different topics pertinent to the

understanding of modern British and Scottish politics, covering class identities, national identities and the coronavirus pandemic.

Class Identity

"Class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail" (Pulzer, 2009). While Pulzer may have written this assessment of British politics in the first edition of his book over fifty years ago, the significance of class to voting in Britain has remained worthy of much study – and any account of the development of identities in Britain would therefore be incomplete without considering class identity.

When Pulzer was writing in 1967 the significance of class to voting behaviour was well established. A few years later in 1969, Butler and Stokes (1974) wrote the first edition of their definitive account of British electoral behaviour, based on analysis of the first British Election Studies. Their research placed class at the heart of explaining voting in Britain. Yet class for them was not a purely occupational matter, it was a question of identity. They saw British voters as developing this class identity early in life alongside their party identity, with both of these influenced by their parents' class and party identities. Once formed, these co-existing class and party identities influenced an individual's vote choice in an election.

Contemporary research on the influence of class on voting behaviour in Britain has focused predominantly on occupation and on the decline of class voting, though some studies have also looked at the consequences of class identification for voting

behaviour (Evans and Mellon, 2016; Evans and Mellon, 2016). However, the research that has been done on class identity has shown that working class identity is still remarkably high in Britain compared to in other Western countries, with three in five identifying as working class (Evans and Tilley, 2017). That this number represents only a small decline from when Butler and Stokes were writing is remarkable given the decline in working class occupations over this time period.

In my first paper (published in Electoral Studies (Macfarlane, 2022)) I therefore look to the puzzle of high working class identification and reassess Butler and Stokes' theories of how these identities are formed using contemporary data. The results show that there continues to be intergenerational transmission of class and party identities in Britain, though today these are somewhat moderated by occupation. Significantly, my analyses show that parental partisanship has a substantial effect on the formation of class identities – so re-establishing the link between class identities and party political identities and thus demonstrating developments in the interlinked formations of political and social identities in contemporary Britain. The contribution of this paper is therefore in demonstrating that class identity remains very much a political identity in its formation as well as in its effects, and showing that while the process by which class and party identities are formed has developed to also be influenced by occupation, the role of parental socialisation is key to understanding these identities in modern Britain.

National Identities in England

My second paper turns to developments in national identities in England. As devolution transforms the UK, creating increasingly distinct political environments in the devolved nations, it is also important to understand developments in identities in the Union's dominant member – England. England has also faced a turbulent set of events in recent years – most notably Brexit, but also multiple changes of government in Westminster and a pandemic which, while it was handled by a single government, was seen to have been handled badly.

I test whether such highly salient political events can impact national identities. In England both Englishness and Britishness have declined since 2014, with the weakening of both identities driven by Remainers becoming less attached to their nation following the 2016 Brexit referendum.

The contribution of this second paper is to show a change in political identities in England, driven by a significant political event. The paper represents an additional contribution to the literature on the impacts of Brexit. Existing research has shown how Brexit has divided voters in Britain, who now strongly hold to identities based on the referendum (Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021). These new Brexit identities mimic the once strongly held party identities observed in Britain (Denver, Carman and Johns, 2012). The findings here add to this research with a depiction of an additional element of division along Brexit lines – the divergence of national

identities in England, with Remainers feeling less attached to both England and Britain.

National Identities in Scotland

Next, my third paper continues the focus on developments in national identities by turning to focus on Scotland,. National identities have become increasingly politicised in Scotland since the 1980s (Johns and Mitchell, 2016), and Scottish politics has become increasingly distinct from the rest of Britain – driven since the 1970s by the discovery of North Sea oil and the rise of the SNP and furthered since the foundation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. In the last decade, Scotland has faced a series of turbulent events which have impacted on political attitudes in the nation. In 2014 the Scottish independence referendum invigorated the country, and the close result following a high-turnout election divided Scotland along Yes or No lines. Divisions were further exacerbated by the 2016 Brexit referendum in which the majority of Scots voted to Remain, but the UK as a whole voted to Leave. These two referendums led to four distinct groups, or clans, of voters in Scotland (McMillan, 2021; Henderson *et al.*, 2022). Finally the coronavirus pandemic provided a further shock to politics in Scotland.

In my third paper I test whether this series of political events in Scotland had an impact not just on political attitudes, but also on identities. It tests whether such events can shift highly politicised national identities, as they can party identities (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). The findings demonstrate the remarkable stability of

national identities, even over a time period where they have become highly politicised – although voters with different constitutional preferences exhibit differences in the strength of their identification with Scottishness and Britishness throughout the time period studied (2014-2021). There has, however, been a decline in Britishness amongst Scottish voters – driven by Remainers' weakening affiliation with this identity since the 2016 referendum.

The paper's contribution is to show that increasing support for national sovereignty does not need to be based in growing nationalism. While many voters have moved to supporting the cause of Scottish independence since early 2014, there are only small fluctuations in Scottishness, which is perhaps unsurprising given Scottishness was already so high as to have hit a potential ceiling effect. Instead, it is Britishness that has declined – and that is driven by those voters alienated by the decision of the British public to leave the European Union rather than being a reflection on Scottish nationalism.

The Coronavirus Pandemic in Scotland

My final paper (published in the Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (Macfarlane, 2024)) looks at how a significant political event affected political attitudes in Scotland. The coronavirus pandemic dominated government agendas around the world when it emerged as a global threat in 2020. An event of such magnitude presented a new form of challenge to modern governments who had to make decisions to protect their own countries against an indiscriminate global threat.

The pandemic was a particular test to countries with multi-level governments, who had to coordinate their response across multiple levels of responsibility to a virus that politicians could not control.

In Scotland this led to responsibility for handling the pandemic being split between the Conservative British Government in London and the SNP-led Scottish Government in Edinburgh. This split of responsibilities on a high-stakes valence issue allowed for a unique study of how perceived government competence affects attitudes towards governing parties when the handling of a complex but significant issue is shared between two governments.

My paper addresses how perceived competence in handling the pandemic impacted attitudes towards the two parties of government making decisions for Scotland. The findings show that people who perceived a certain government as handling the pandemic competently did come to like the governing party and its leader more and became more likely to say they would vote for the governing party. However, this switch in party allegiance was tempered by how much they previously liked the governing party. The paper also assesses whether people who viewed a government as competent changed their attitudes towards supporting their position on the most important constitutional issue in Scotland: independence. The results show that while some voters who judged the Scottish Government to have handled the pandemic well did come to be more favourable towards independence, this was only the case if they had liked the SNP before the pandemic.

The results represent an important contribution to our understanding of how perceived competence or incompetence in contexts of multi-level governance can still result in rewards or punishments for those governing parties, but also show that the extent of these consequences are heavily moderated by prior perceptions of the parties in power.

Together these four papers represent a set of important contributions to understanding the development of political attitudes and identities in Britain and Scotland over the last decade.

Literature Review

Ahead of exploring each of the thesis's key topics in the forthcoming papers, this literature review sets the developments considered in the thesis in broader context within the literature. It is not a substitute for the more detailed literature reviews included in each paper, which consider the literature around each topic in-depth, but rather a broad and brief introduction to the thinking on developments in British politics to provide context for the thesis as a whole.

As new cultural divides between a relatively authoritarian white working class and a liberal university educated middle class become increasingly significant to electoral behaviour (Curtice, 2017; Hobolt, 2018), politics in the 21st Century has become increasingly occupied with identity politics. This growing interest in identities comes alongside interest in polarisation across Western countries, a process where both voters and parties are seen to be moving away from the centre ground and towards more extreme ends of the political spectrum. As Fiorina and Abrams contest, judging whether an electorate is polarised is a somewhat subjective task, but observing trends of increasing polarisation is simpler (2008). When considering shifts in political identities then, we can look at trends to determine whether there is increasing polarisation between individuals who hold different identities – whether they are moving further apart in their attitudes on a certain metric. In this sense polarisation is a process, it is not something that is completed at a certain point, but instead can be said to be happening whenever there is movement. In an eventful political context, it may also be argued that identities are becoming increasingly politicised, representing

a stronger relationship between the identity and political behaviour. This too can be observed whenever this relationship strengthens, and indeed we may observe de-politicisation if the relationship weakens.

The influence of identities is not new. Social identity theory as founded by Tajfel (1974) holds that individuals categorize themselves as belonging to certain groups, and belonging to these groups distinguishes them from others who belong to different groups. This sense of belonging to these groups is significant to individuals as it contributes to their self-understanding, helping them identify, accept and find belonging in themselves through their place in society.

The UK is a particularly interesting place to look at the development of political attitudes and identities at this time. A great number of significant political events have occurred in a relatively short period of time, exposing voters to a series of shocks that have been shown to impact their party identities (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, the multilevel structure of governance in Britain allows us to assess perceptions of responses to certain shocks across different levels of government, such as the coronavirus pandemic. Scotland is a particularly interesting case study due to the strong pre-existing divides between voters on the constitutional issue and the fact that the pandemic was handled by two different governments with opposite views on this key question. This therefore makes Scotland an interesting case for study to examine the extent to which voters can be shifted by performance on a significant issue in a multi-level context.

The multi-level structure of the UK also makes it a prime place to study shifts in national identities in response to these shocks. Here I focus on Scotland because it has been subject to an additional shock in the form of the 2014 independence referendum and on England as the part of the UK which voted most strongly for Brexit, an outcome that existing research has linked to national identities (Henderson *et al.*, 2017; Heath and Richards, 2019).

Finally, the analysis of class identities in Britain here is a significant choice because it is interrogating a long-term trend in identification (the maintenance of high levels of working-class identity) which is particular to Britain. The case for choosing these cases in Britain, England and Scotland is also supported by the wealth of high-quality data available to enable research. Together these papers present an interesting set of analyses of shifts in political attitudes and identities for which Britain is a compelling case in which to conduct this research.

While class has historically been seen as the key determinant of voting behaviour in Britain and accounts of the strength of class voting are predominantly based on objective social class (that is social class based on occupation) subjective class (or class identities) have also been recognised to have important effects on partisanship and voting since the early British Election Studies (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Marshall *et al.*, 1988; Hayes, 1995). Since the late 1960s (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983) it has been claimed that these influences of class on voting behaviour have been declining, with academics also positing the 'death of class' as a social determinant more broadly (Clark and Lipset, 1991; Pakulski and Waters, 1996;

Savage, 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). However, while class voting is declining according to all measures of class voting (Clarke *et al.*, 2004) such radical claims do not fit with the data on the influence of class on politics in Britain. Objective class continues to have a stronger relationship with voting behaviour than any other social characteristic and even increased in 2015 due to UKIP (Clarke *et al.*, 2004; Evans and Tilley, 2017). It is however, undoubtedly true that the influence of traditional class cleavages is weakened by social change reducing in particular the size of the working class who have traditionally provided strong support for the Labour party (Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 1985, 2001; Heath *et al.*, 1991; Best, 2011).

Class and national identities are key to recent developments in British politics. Political developments have provided much working class voters might reject: the globalized world which has benefitted the highly educated but left the working classes behind, the Labour party's changing policies or a multicultural view of British identity encouraged by the left in the 1990s (Ward, 2006; Evans and Tilley, 2012a; Curtice, 2014; Kenny, 2014; Collier, 2018). These voters, in Britain and other Western societies, have in turn moved to reject immigration, oppose traditional political elites and lend their support to new nationalist parties, if only briefly (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Fukuyama, 2018; Sobolewska and Ford, 2020).

Identity divides in contemporary British politics are also closely related to new national divisions, with national identities now also forming voting cleavages (Heath and Smith, 2005; Fieldhouse and Prosser, 2016; Heath and Richards, 2019), and recent election results suggesting that politics in Scotland is increasingly becoming

separate from the rest of Great Britain (Curtice, Fisher and Ford, 2016; Curtice *et al.*, 2018). Curtice has even questioned whether these results are sufficiently distinct to signal the end of 'British' politics (2015a).

As political nationalism has grown in Britain, so has interest in national identities as the way individuals are attached to the nation. These represent distinct concepts, though each are debated. Nationalism is a political ideology which holds that nations should be the basis of states. Here states are taken to be a political organisation with a central authority and are able to make binding decisions on people within a given territory. In this sense the UK is a state. Nations however are 'self-defined collective communities' (Mitchell, 2014, p. 7). Anderson conceives of this through the idea of 'imagined communities' – even though members of a nation will never meet most of their fellow members, they each have an image of a common community (1983). He saw nations as formed through the modernisation of print capitalism which created more consistent shared language and culture amongst the members of the nation. An alternative understanding of nationalism comes from Smith who saw nations as based on earlier ethnic communities with the symbols of these communities strengthened through modernisation, thus creating nations based on historic territory, common culture and a common economic and legal system (1991). Gellner takes a different perspective, arguing that nationalism is a necessary consequence of the need for there to be a common culture in a modernised world with more technical work (1983). This work provides a context for different potential mechanisms by which nations and nation-states have been formed. However, the situation in Britain is complex, with multiple nations held within one state. Stepan et al (2011) contrast the idea of a

‘nation-state’ where there is alignment between cultural and national identities and the boundaries of the state and a ‘state-nation’, a country containing multiple groups which think of themselves as a nation and have leaders who strive for independence within one democratic community. The UK is in this sense a ‘state-nation’ rather than a ‘nation-state’ in Stepan et al’s terminology (2011). While this distinction represents the balance of national identities and state institutions in Britain today, it remains a politically contested topic whether a ‘state-nation’ is the right set up for the UK. Nationalists, particularly in Scotland, advocate for separatism in order to make their own nation a ‘nation-state’. Opponents of devolution may also disagree, and advocate that Britain should be a ‘nation-state’ and discourage the growth of sub-national identities. However, the reality is that most Brits hold multiple national identities, and feel some degree of attachment both to Britain and to the nation they live in. National identity is different from nationalism: a national identity is a sign of attachment to the nation but does not imply anything about what one believes the political set-up of the nation should be. While many people with strong national identities are political nationalists, this is not necessarily the case and it should not be assumed that one implies the other.

McCrone identifies several key features of national identity: it is a comparative concept, defined in relation to an ‘other’; it is relatively stable; national identity relates to political behaviour and attitudes, but not in a straightforward way – we should think of ‘national identity as a frame for understanding, not as a determinant of how people vote’ (2020, pp. 25–26). National identities then are similar to other social identities as defined by Tajfel (1974) which are also defined by comparison

with an ‘other’. Many other social identities, such as class identities, are also stable over time and are associated with political behaviour and attitudes.

National identities in Britain are particularly complex due to the prevalence of identification with sub-national identities as well as with Britain. Britain meets Swenden’s definition of a plurinational state as one ‘marked by the presence of at least two territorially distinct communities’ where the different territories have a ‘shared *understanding* of being part of a separate *political community* with a distinctive *identity* separate from or in addition to that of the state as a whole’ (2013, p. 61). Plurinational states exist in different forms across the world, and in some countries such as Ecuador and Guatemala the formal recognition of the plurinational nature of the country has been a significant moment for indigenous communities (Huarcaya, 2019; Itzamná, 2022). However, formal recognition of plurinationality is sometimes complex, Moreno (2020) raises that the consequences of embracing this in Spain are not clear as there is not consensus on whether this is a fair representation. This is relevant as plurinationality may take on additional political significance in contexts of highly decentralised government or federal structures (Moreno, 2018).

While plurinational states represent one approach to recognise distinct and territorially based communities within a nation, there is further complication in cases where the territory of one community is split between different states. Häkli (2001) considers this issue in the context of Catalonia, examining the symbolism of the French-Spanish border there as a location of protest for Catalan independence, with symbolic protests against both nations taking place simultaneously.

Across different nations, national identities can change over time – they are not fixed but instead respond to political and cultural change. This thesis is interested in such changes in Britain, but there have also been shifts in identification in other countries. In Spain, the construction of asymmetric federalism via the 1978 Spanish Constitution has led to dual identities being common across different regions with different histories, including across both regions with strong separatist movements like Catalonia, and those which do not have such political movements (Moreno, Arriba and Serrano, 1998). These dual identities are further embedded by political power being devolved to regions. Guibernau's analysis (2006) of Canada, Spain and the UK that the devolution of power does bolster dual national identities but does so without necessarily weakening identification with the state level nation. She also argues that devolution of power does not foster secession but creates a sustainable balance of power between the state and regions.

In such contexts of multilevel governance, there are opportunities for nationalist politicians to emphasize territorial distinctiveness through institutional choices. However, Molina and Quiroga (2019) demonstrate that there are limits to top down nationalism in shifting national identities. In their study of Catalonia and the Basque country between 1980-2015, despite there being lots of institutional change following the recent introduction of the Spanish Constitution at the start of this time period, identities have been remarkably stable over this time period, with the majority of individuals still holding dual identities and only a small growth in substate only identities, despite the growing prevalence of indications of the substate in the public

sphere. While we may therefore expect political events to have some impact on national identification, this international research suggests there may be stability to these identities even over periods of great political change. This thesis will investigate further how national identities in Britain shift in response to political events.

Existing comparative research provides insights into why national and sub-national identities are stronger in some territories and weaker in others. As well as the historical and institutional position of the territory, research has shown that regional identities are stronger where there is a regional language and the area does not border the state capital - but also that these identities are stronger in areas which are economically developed and where voting behaviour is highly distinctive (Fitjar, 2010). Further evidence points to modernisation strengthening civic components of national identity as a nation develops, with GDP per capita being the strongest influence on this (Lazic and Pesic, 2016).

The extent of national identification also varies between different groups of people within a nation, as does the balance of identification with different levels in contexts of dual nationality. This is particularly the case for ethnic minorities, where there is often a complex relationship with national identity, with ethnic minorities often holding less strong national identities than majority groups. In a cross-national study, Wimmer (2017) finds that ethnic minority groups' level of identification is linked to their political representation, with minority groups which are strongly represented having higher levels of national pride than groups which are poorly represented. This

represents another way in which national identification can vary across different places and across groups.

Understanding the strength of national identities is therefore not merely about understanding the historical and institutional set-up of a nation, but also understanding the economic and political context and the attitudes of the people. The research conducted on national identity across different countries and territories all works to demonstrate that national identities are changeable and respond to changes in the wider context they are formed in. This therefore demonstrates the importance of understanding what changes national identities and how – as well as investigating amongst which groups in the population do changes in national identification take place. This task is one which this thesis will investigate for Britain.

As well as considering changes in national and sub-national identities, there are increasingly also supra-national identities to consider. Research has particularly considered this in the context of European identities, given the political integration across countries in the European Union. Luhmann (2017) studied European identity across Europe over time, finding that as well as integration, cognitive mobilisation and support for the EU were significant to forming European identity across countries. This again indicates that political influences are significant to the formation of these supra-national identities, as well as being so for national and sub-national identities.

As well as identities changing over time, nationalism in a certain region also does not always remain fixed, but instead can shift over time in strength and type response to broader social or political changes. Breton (1988) considers the case of Quebec, and charts the shift from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism seen in that province. He shows that nationalism in Quebec shifted from a 'French-Canadian' mindset to Québécois – moving to be more secular, more open to immigration (while expecting immigrants assimilate, particularly in terms of language) and more politically assertive type of nationalism.

National identities in Britain are particularly complex as the nature of different identities and their relationships with other identities differ across the different nations. However, this is not to say that these identities are less significant than other social identities. In fact, national identities were found to be relatively salient compared to other identities in both England and Scotland, though relatively more so in Scotland (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2008). As well as being weighed against other social identities, national identities are often weighed against each other. When asked to consider how they prioritise their national identities, in Scotland, Scottishness is the dominant identity, with more people expressing a predominantly Scottish identity than a predominantly British one, though a sizable minority identify as equally Scottish and British (McCrone, 2020; What Scotland Thinks, 2024). In England, most people identify as equally English and British, followed by predominantly English identity (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 41). However, despite these results suggesting that Britishness may be relatively more weakly held, a majority of people in both Scotland and England express pride at being British (Bechhofer and

McCrone, 2014b) and previous research has concluded that many people in both nations feel strongly attached to both substate and state identities (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2014; McCrone, 2020). People in England and Scotland also associate similar symbols with Britain, regardless of their own national identity (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2013). They also choose similar symbols to represent their own nation, with fair play/a sense of equality and landscape/countryside being chosen often by both English and Scots respondents (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2013).

However, Englishness and Scottishness differ in their associations with Britishness and with nationalism in Britain. In England, strongly English identifiers are British nationalists, who while they have a particular set of views about the future of England see it firmly within the UK (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021). While the constitutional preferences in England are similar between English and British identifiers, national identities are significant to explaining constitutional preferences in the devolved nations, including Scotland (Bond, 2009; Bond and Rosie, 2010). However, when looking beyond the set-up of the UK to how the English and Scots see their identities in the wider world, we see differences in adoption of European identity, with Scots much more likely than the English to say they are strongly European (McCrone, 2019). These different national identities therefore have different implications in terms of the nationalism they evoke – in England Englishness is associated with British nationalism, whereas in Scotland Scottishness is associated with Scottish nationalism. This is significant to consider when we look at the relationship between substate and state identities. Henderson et al (2020) map the relative strengths of British and substate identities in England, Scotland and

Wales, creating a measure of Relative Territorial Identity. Their findings demonstrate that there is little difference in the strength of national identities in England, with most people reporting feeling as strongly English as British. However in Scotland while many people feel equally strongly Scottish and British, the results skew towards stronger Scottish identity compared to British (Henderson *et al.*, 2020, pp. 1506–1507). This presents a differing image of the relationship between national identities in England and Scotland – in England these identities are closely related while in Scotland there is more of a trade-off and so identities are more zero-sum.

There are also some differences between national identities in England and Scotland in how accessible to newcomers they are. Nationalism can come in civic or ethnic forms, and these different varieties of nationalism provide different blueprints for the basis of national identity. Under a civic conception, national identity is about citizenship and so can be acquired, whereas under an ethnic view national identity is based in ancestry and so cannot be acquired. Empirically, there are differences between different ethnic minorities in whether and which British or substate national identifications they adopt. Bond (2017) finds differences between ethnic minorities in the adoption of substate national identities, with most ethnic minority groups being more likely, and often markedly so, to adopt a Scottish identity than an English or Welsh identity. Bechhofer and McCrone looked at whether Scots or English people would accept claims to national identity from different groups at two points in 2006 and 2008/9, finding that English and Scottish respondents giving similar answers on whether to accept or reject claims (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2010; Bechhofer and McCrone, 2014a).

While there are some similarities between national identities in Scotland and England, their distinct relationship with political attitudes makes them worthy of being studied separately here, as it is expected that the same political events could have different impacts on each of these identities. The sizeable political events we have seen in recent years in Britain have been shown to have the power to 'shock' voters, moving them away from long-held party identities (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). As such, assessing modern political identities requires a consideration of such events.

The independence and Brexit referendums have been particularly significant shocks to British politics in this time period. Referendums are particularly able to create political shocks because voters may behave differently to how they would in a parliamentary election. Referendums differ from other elections by removing, or at least reducing, party cues. For voters with a party attachment this provides them with a clear cue in most elections – to vote for the party they support unless swayed to support a different candidate due to factors such as specific issue opinions, campaign activities and economic conditions. In a referendum, the options on the ballot represent positions on a specific issue rather than groups that individuals may have long-term attachments to. Party cues may be significant in pushing a voter to support the option the party is advocating for, but as a voter may not have considered the issue before the start of the referendum campaign the information they consider on the specific issue is key. Hence Renwick, Palese and Sargeant (2020) argue that high quality information is essential for referendum campaigns.

LeDuc (2002, 2003) applied an earlier theory by Zaller (1992) to the study of referendums. Zaller argued that voters differ in the political information they receive, accept and sample when faced with a question. In a referendum context then, it matters which arguments a voter hears, which they believe to be accurate and so accept (hence cues from familiar political leaders can be significant in referendums), and also which messages are most widely spread and recently heard to stick with a voter when they decide how to vote. How and when voters decide to vote in a referendum therefore depends partly on the extent to which there are pre-existing cues on the issue, as well as on the information they process during the campaign.

Hobolt (2009) presents a slifghtly different model of referendum vote choice, though hers is also based in Zaller's work. She assumes that voters assess the utility of a given referendum proposal compared to their personal ideal position, but also consider wider political issues not related to the proposal on the ballot. As a voter acquires more information their decision making becomes more sophisticated (2005). This additional information influences how they weigh wider political issues vs the proposal's proximity to their ideal position, with better informed voters relying more on considering proximity on the referendum question being asked. A lack of information or uncertainty about the referendum question also lowers the expected utility of a certain referendum vote. Hobolt's model is also based on information as being key to forming opinions on referendum topics.

Dvořák (2013) objects to information being the sole influence of referendum voting behaviour, claiming that models based on Zaller's work and relying on information as

the key mechanism do not explain people changing their mind during referendum campaigns. Instead, he proposes a model which also incorporates shifts in how voters assess the value of different referendum proposals - which are possible however well-informed voters are.

While these models represent differing accounts of the role of information on referendum decision making, all agree it is a significant component. Referendums are often on topics which the average citizen has low knowledge about at the start of the campaign. As such referendum campaigns face a challenge to raise information – but also to raise interest. Part of raising interest is also considering the relevance of a topic to a voter, which has been found to impact referendum behaviour (Smith *et al.*, 2005). As a result of the differing cues available in referendums and, on many referendum issues, the lack of long-standing opinions about and identification with the arguments being made, the process by which referendums may move political identities is expected to be significant. In this way referendums may behave more like non-electoral events than like elections in how they shift identities. If voters are encountering new information during these events, whether via campaign mobilisation, the mainstream media or conversations within their social networks, this might result in cognitive dissonance and the formation of new opinions if this new information contradicts previously held beliefs. Indeed, even after a referendum when an individual has voted, further information may come to light that contradicts their referendum vote. Voters may therefore decide whether to accept or reject this new information, and so whether to shift their wider social or political attitudes in order to align with their referendum choice. Research from Ireland shows that after

the referendum on abortion, voters did update their perceived norms in the direction of the result, though evidence was inconsistent on whether voters changed their wider personal opinions about abortion (Jung and Tavits, 2021).Despite the limited evidence in this case, the mechanism remains plausible. This is particularly the case in a British context in which recent referendum identities are so strongly held (Hobolt and Tilley, 2019; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021; McMillan, 2021; Henderson *et al.*, 2022), this appears to be another possible mechanism for attitudinal change. In this sense then, behaviour may shift attitudes rather than the commonly accepted direction of influence from attitudes to behaviour. Such shifts may also change the salient and accepted information that voters refer to when considering their identities – and this may particularly be the case for national identities following a referendum about the nation's future.

An additional consideration is that referendums tend to favour the status quo, and as the campaign goes on more people tend towards supporting the established set up – however this is not always the case and about a third of the time voters move towards supporting change during the campaign (Renwick, 2019). This therefore gives referendum results the power to be a significant shock to the political system when they do go against the status quo option.

My thesis also considers the potential shock of the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the recency of this event, research is only just beginning to assess the political impacts of the coronavirus pandemic – which transformed politics across the world, leading to otherwise liberal governments imposing strongly authoritarian measures on their

populations to prevent the spread of the disease. This makes the pandemic a particularly significant political event, and one much in need of further research.

My thesis then considers how political attitudes and identities have developed in such a context of changeable but salient class and national identities, and of new but significant political events. The thesis contributes to our understanding of how such political identities are formed in modern Britain, and how major political events can then shift such attitudes and identities. It contributes then to explaining how political choices are made in Britain today, and how choices in Scotland are increasingly driven by different factors. Understanding these identities and attitudes which underpin voting behaviour is in turn essential to understanding elections – and so to understanding who holds political power in Britain and Scotland, and why.

The thesis may be diverse in topics, but it is united in the data and methods it uses. All four papers use data from the British Election Study, with the class identity paper using the post-election cross-sections collected following the General Elections of 2015 and 2017 (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2016, 2018), and the three other papers using the British Election Study Internet Panel, utilising waves from 2014-2021 (Fieldhouse, E., J. Green, G. Evans, J. Mellon & C. Prosser, J. Bailey, R. de Geus, 2021). This panel has the advantage of a large sample size, interviewing tens of thousands of respondents online in each wave. As such, this allows for a large enough sub-section of Scottish respondents for this data to be appropriate to answer questions regarding Scotland. The papers apply quantitative methods to analyse this high-quality social survey data, using a selection of regression models as appropriate. As a result, while

the thesis addresses a range of developments in British and Scottish politics, it does so with a common data source and methodological approach, contributing to the coherence of the thesis as a whole.

The thesis now progresses to the individual papers addressing different developments in political attitudes and identities in Scotland and Britain. Following the four papers there is a joint conclusion which considers in more detail the contributions of the thesis as a whole.

Like Parent, Like Child: The Impact of Parental Socialisation on Class Identity and Partisanship

The theoretical foundation of electoral behaviour research is the Michigan model which emphasizes socialisation and the development of partisan identities. In Britain, this was embellished to include class identity. Across Western societies, class voting, working class jobs and strength of party identities have been in decline, but identification as working class has remained high and relatively stable in Britain. This paper develops theoretical models of parental socialisation to identify effects on class and party identities. The empirical analysis reinforces previous findings about the intergenerational transmission of class identity and partisanship, but further shows that there are some moderating effects of occupation on this transmission. Most importantly, the paper finds that parental partisanship has a substantial effect on the formation of class identity. Therefore, it shows that class identity in contemporary Britain is a strong political identity in its origins as well as its effects.

Introduction

Political socialisation remains the bedrock of many theories about partisanship and party choice. Those we grow up with and spend time around, most notably our families, define much of how we see the political world and guide our first political choices. The Michigan model, based on parental socialisation, was developed to explain American voting behaviour in the mid-20th Century (Campbell *et al.*, 1960). In Britain, Butler and Stokes (1974) elaborated the theory to also include the influence of class. They set out a model which saw people being socialised into partisan and class identities simultaneously. Socialisation was not an exclusive process by which parental class influences class identity and parental partisanship influences party identity.

Since this model was first developed in the 1960s, there have been notable declines in party identities in Britain (Denver, Carman and Johns, 2012), but little corresponding decline in class identity (Evans and Tilley, 2017). Working-class identity has remained relatively stable with three-fifths of Brits identifying as working class. This cannot be explained by an occupational account of class identity, as the proportion of people holding traditional working class jobs has fallen from more than half the labour force in the 1950s to little over a fifth today (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 7). The high level of working class identification stands in contrast to findings in other Western countries where as the proportion of working class jobs have declined the proportion identifying as middle class has increased (Hout, 2008; Haddon, 2014; Livingstone and Scholtz, 2016).

Given that there continues to be a high level of working-class identification in Britain (which is increasingly distinct from occupational class) (Evans and Tilley, 2017), the substantial decline in class voting observed over the latter half of the twentieth century becomes puzzling. Even more so when one considers that class identity relates to voting behaviour and political attitudes which differ even amongst those in the same occupational class (Heath, Curtice and Elgenius, 2009; Evans and Mellon, 2016). This suggests that the relationship between class, identity and voting behaviour in Britain is far from straightforward.

This influence of class identity on contemporary attitudes and behaviour makes understanding the process by which current class identities have been created, and how these relate to party identities, important to understanding voting behaviour in Britain today. This paper assesses whether the formation of these identities is still as simultaneously socialised as Butler and Stokes showed them to be. In doing this, the paper makes two substantial theoretical contributions which build on the work of Butler and Stokes. First, the paper develops an argument that parental partisanship will influence class identity above and beyond the effect of both parental social class and current occupation. Secondly, it theorises that as more people are now working in middle-class jobs this may have changed this socialisation process. I therefore introduce an additional model which incorporates interactions with occupational social class (operationalised here as a categorisation of occupation). This would show class identity to be a political and partisan as well as an economic and social identity.

This article therefore tests both a socialisation model assessing the overlapping effects of parental social class and partisanship and an additional model which incorporates factors such as occupation. My research questions for this article are:

1. How does parental partisanship and parental social class influence the formation of class and party identities in modern Britain?
2. And in what ways are those relationships affected by occupation?

Literature Review

The influence of parents on the formation of a wide range of attitudes and identities is well established. Butler and Stokes established that parents were crucial to forming the political attitudes of the British electorate. Since then the influence of parental partisanship on their children has been found to be significant in contemporary research and across countries, although the literature has mixed results for whether children share their parents' partisanship (Achen, 2002; Dinas, 2014; Boonen, 2019). Parents also influence political behaviour, with studies establishing the influence of parental socialisation on political participation and turnout (Quintelier, 2015; Gidengil, Wass and Valaste, 2016; Lahtinen, Erola and Wass, 2019). Additionally, parental socialisation contributes to the formation of place-based identities, such as an affinity with Europe or a region (Rico and Jennings, 2012; Quintelier, Verhaegen and Hooghe,

2014; Fox *et al.*, 2019), and to the formation of political views and attitudes on a range of topics (Jennings and Niemi, 1968; Meeusen, 2014; Fox and Pearce, 2018).

Rather than focusing on explaining the reasons for continuing high working-class identity in Britain, much research on the relationship between class and political behaviour in recent years has focused on the extent of and reasons for the decline of class voting which has been seen in many Western democracies (Evans, 1999; Clark and Evans, 2001; Clark and Lipset, 2001; De Graaf, Heath and Need, 2001; Evans and de Graaf, 2012). In the UK, class-vote dealignment has been observed since Butler and Stokes's second edition of their seminal text, and the continuation of this trend has been noted by their British Election Study successors (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Sarlvik and Crewe, 1983; Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 1985; Clarke *et al.*, 2004; Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). While class voting has declined, not only have high levels of class identity remained but class remains part of public debate and cultural reference. Even compared to other forms of social identities, the subjective importance of self-defined class to individuals has been found to be particularly strong (Surridge, 2007). Throughout this paper I will refer to class identities, but it should be notes that this is often called subjective class by some authors. Similarly I will refer to occupational class when others might refer to objective class, or simply to social class.

Class identities are also significant to political attitudes and behaviour. Evans and Mellon (2016) found that individuals who identified as working class were more likely to be authoritarian and less likely to be pro-immigration, across all occupational groups. While these contrasts in political preferences based on class identity are not new

(Marshall *et al.*, 1988; Hayes, 1995), they are especially pertinent in the context of the rising cultural divide observed in Britain between a relatively authoritarian white working class and a liberal university-educated middle class which has become increasingly significant to electoral behaviour (Curtice, 2017; Hobolt, 2018). This divide has been much referenced in debates on the role of class in the vote for Brexit: the vote to leave the European Union has been associated with working-class narratives of being 'left out' (Mckenzie, 2017), and attracting traditionally working-class voters in the North was key to the Conservatives' election strategy in the 2019 General Election (Mattinson, 2020).

Despite the political significance of such class identities, there is not a satisfactory explanation of how these identities are formed. Theories concerning the formation of class identity which may be successful in explaining the decline of working-class identities as observed in most Western countries do not apply to Britain since such declines have not been observed. While occupation remains the factor referred to more than any other explanation for an individual's social class (Heath, Curtice and Elgenius, 2009) and informs individuals' economic interests, any theory based on work or occupation faces a significant challenge in accounting for the persistence of working-class identity among an increasingly middle-class workforce in Britain. Similarly, theories based on income suggest that increasing affluence will lead to middle-class identity becoming the norm, which is not what is observed in Britain.

Beck's individualisation theory claims that class identities weaken as the sense of social or community identity which forged them declines. This theory maintains that

institutional changes in postmodern society have led to a process of individualisation, reducing the influence of class background and weakening the social identity that once came from class distinctions (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Qualitative research has supported this theory in Britain (Savage, 2000; Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst, 2001). However, while this research suggests class identity was weak in the cases and at the times studied, it does not contribute to explaining why levels of class identification have been so constant. By contrast, quantitative research by Surridge found class identity to be relatively highly ranked in comparison to other social identities, particularly for those who identified as working class (2007). Individualisation theories therefore do not provide grounds to dismiss the influence of class identity.

A more compelling explanation for the formation of class identities in Britain comes in there being a changing relationship between occupational class and class identity. As Evans and Tilley demonstrate, working class identity has been the 'constant and dominant' norm among those with working class jobs for more than fifty years (2017, p. 44). However, there are observable shifts among the class identities of the middle classes, with a growing proportion of each of their uniquely defined middle class groups identifying as working class over this time period (Evans and Tilley, 2017, pp. 44–46). Evans and Tilley's explanation for this shift comes from a shift in the relationship between education and class identity. They demonstrate that while people with the lowest level of education are strongly middle class and that this remains constant over the time period studied, those with medium and high levels of education have become increasingly working class in their identification, with working class

identity now exceeding middle class identity amongst those with medium levels of education (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 48). They find that this is not due to income changes, but rather that education 'simply appears to have become less consequential than it used to be for a person's sense of being middle class' (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 49).

Evans and Tilley also consider the importance of class background – they examine the proportion of individuals who identified as working class or middle class by their father's occupational class and find very stable effects, concluding that 'the effect of class background on class identity is remarkably constant across fifty years' (Evans and Tilley, 2017, pp. 46–47). The continued significance of background for an adult's class identification in Britain is they argue part of the explanation as to why working class identities have remained prevalent in Britain but declined in other countries – as they claim 'class identity reflects where someone comes from as well as where they end up, and many people in middle class jobs come from working class backgrounds' – a tendency which has been further increased as educational qualifications have become less influential in creating a middle class identity (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 56).

In contrast to class identities, partisan identities have clearly declined and weakened in Britain over the last fifty years. This decline is especially striking for very strong partisan identifiers, a group which has fallen from 43% of the electorate in 1964 to just 13% in 2010 (Denver, Carman and Johns, 2012, p. 70). However, the overall proportion stating a party identification has remained more constant than this suggests, falling by

only 10 percentage points from 92% in 1964 to 82% in 2010. (ibid, p. 70). Further, recent research shows that partisan identification continues to decline with lower levels amongst new cohorts entering the electorate (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). This suggests an overall picture of weakening partisan identity, but not a fundamental decline, therefore I test influences on the strength of party identity throughout.

Parties also have an effect in shaping party identity and the level of class voting. In Britain the two main parties are seen to represent the two main classes and each has historically sought to appeal to class interests. However, the Labour party's modernization in the 1990s, with its move towards the centre ground and social and policy appeals to the middle classes, resulted in declining working class support for Labour (Evans, 1999; Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 2001; Evans and Tilley, 2012c, 2012a, 2012b; Heath, 2015). This decline in support has also occurred for working-class identifying individuals (Heath, Curtice and Elgenius, 2009), showing a relationship between identity and political behaviour.

Party politics can also contribute to shaping class identities. Heath, Curtice and Elgenius show a decline in the relationship between class identity and Labour partisanship in the time of New Labour. They claim that "Class identities are forged in the crucible of political debate as well as the everyday experience of social life" (2009, p. 38). This idea of class identity as inherently political also has roots in Marx's claim that the realisation of class interests leads to conflict (Elster, 1986). This paper reassesses such claims regarding the political nature of class identity and goes beyond Heath, Curtice and Elgenius's identification of a contemporary period effect by testing

the longer-term influence of partisan socialisation. Previous research has not assessed whether the political debate one is exposed to growing up, through one's parents' political attitudes, also influences the formation of class identities. That therefore brings me to adapting the Michigan model to develop a theory that can explain political identities in contemporary Britain.

This paper considers the combined influence of different factors on identity formation, assessing both parental partisanship and parental social class as potential influences on an individual's class and party identities. However, while in some cases these identities may align to push in the same direction, in others they will not, creating cross-pressures. Cross-pressures arise when different factors push potential voters in different directions, creating uncertainty for the voter about which candidate or cause to support. Lazarsfeld identified three main types of cross-pressure while studying US elections in the 1940s (1944). In the first, the voter's social cleavages have different influences, in his example such a case would be a wealthier Catholic – while wealthier people were more likely to vote Republican, Catholics generally supported the Democrats (Lazarsfeld, 1944, pp. 328–329). Secondly, Lazarsfeld pointed to the influence of family – while some people would find their family to be in agreement on how to vote, others would have conflicting influences from different family members supporting different candidates, or from some family members having decided how to vote and others being uncertain. Thirdly, Lazarsfeld argued a cross-pressure emerges when a voter intends to vote for a party it does not wholly agree with (1944). Early research found that such cross-pressured voters were less likely to turn out to vote, and were also slower to decide who to vote for, often changing their mind during the course of

an election campaign (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954). These findings on the significance of cross-pressures for political behaviour have been supported by more recent literature (Powell, 1976; Zuckerman, Valentino and Zuckerman, 1994; Mutz, 2002; He, 2016; Endres and Panagopoulos, 2019; Dassonneville, 2022). This paper therefore represents an analysis of a sort of a cross-pressured situation in line with the second of Lazarsfeld's categories – by assessing the consequences for identity formation of disagreements between different parental identities, the paper considers not just the consequences of conflicts between the individuals a voter grows up around but also the `conflict of unaligned parental attributes.

Existing research has therefore established the importance of parental influences on contemporary politics, with parental partisanship influencing their children's current partisanship. Furthermore, parental social class will define a young person's first set of economic and social interests, which I expect will contribute to the formation of their class identity – and despite the political importance of class identities, other existing theories do not adequately explain the maintenance of high levels of working-class identification in Britain. This paper's contribution is in going beyond previous research to establish that parental partisanship, as well as parental social class, has a direct influence on class identities in Britain. The paper also considers the formation of partisan identities and sees this as part of the same process driven by parental class and partisanship. Further, I expect that the influence of occupational experiences will have some role in explaining this phenomenon – as current circumstances may reinforce the effects of early life socialisation.

Theoretical Models

This paper builds on traditional twin track theories of the formation of class identity and partisanship (figure 1). The paper's first new theoretical model assesses the extent to which parental socialisation continues to directly influence class and partisan identities, as in figure 2. However, as this model is expected to be too simple in today's world given the decline in the number of working-class jobs and the growth in higher education a second model which contains such factors will also be assessed, as in figure 3.

These models both challenge twin track theories which see parental class leading to class identity and parental partisanship to party identities (figure 1.1). The socialisation model of vote choice advocated by Butler and Stokes is often portrayed as such a twin track theory, for example in Denver et al (2012, p. 25). However, while all such models are simplifications of the detailed discussions in the original text, twin track theories of this kind do not appreciate the interactions between these factors and the central role of class identity that Butler and Stokes identified. My first theoretical model (figure 1.2) therefore makes three major changes to this representation: firstly by including the partisan effects on class identity; second by showing that parental class effects on party identity are not only mediated by respondent class; and finally in differentiating between class identity and occupational class. This first model therefore represents a test of a more complex set of relationships between parental socialisation and respondent class and party identities, in line with Butler and Stokes' analysis. However,

as this is expected to be too simple due to the exclusion of factors expected to be significant to class identities today, this paper goes beyond their analysis to test the moderating effect of occupational class on the relationship between parental socialisation and class and party identities.

Figure 1.1: Twin Track Model

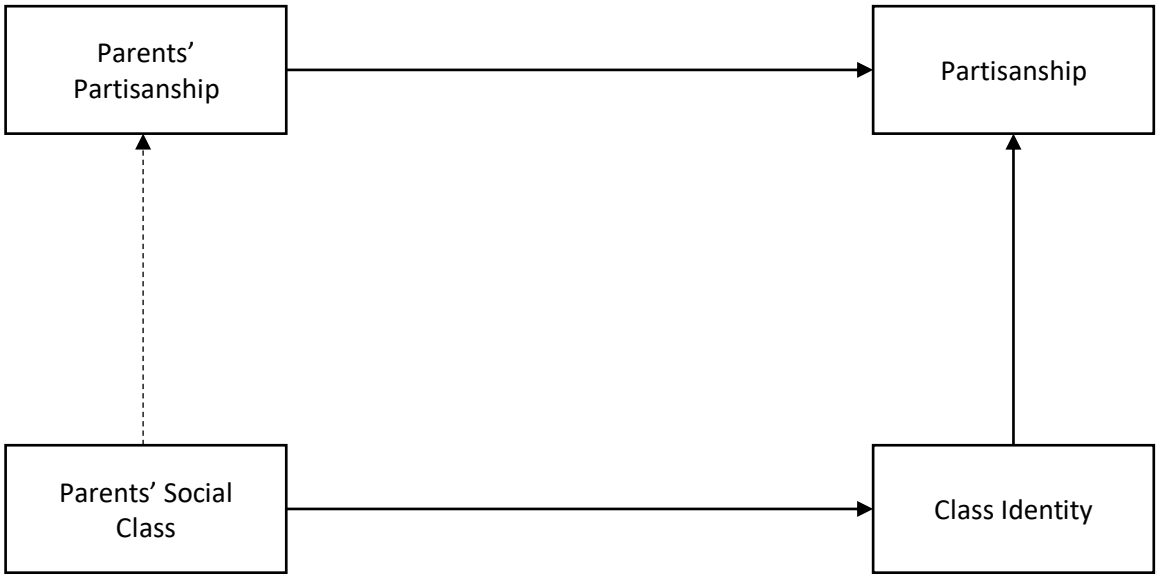


Figure 1.2: Cross Socialisation Model

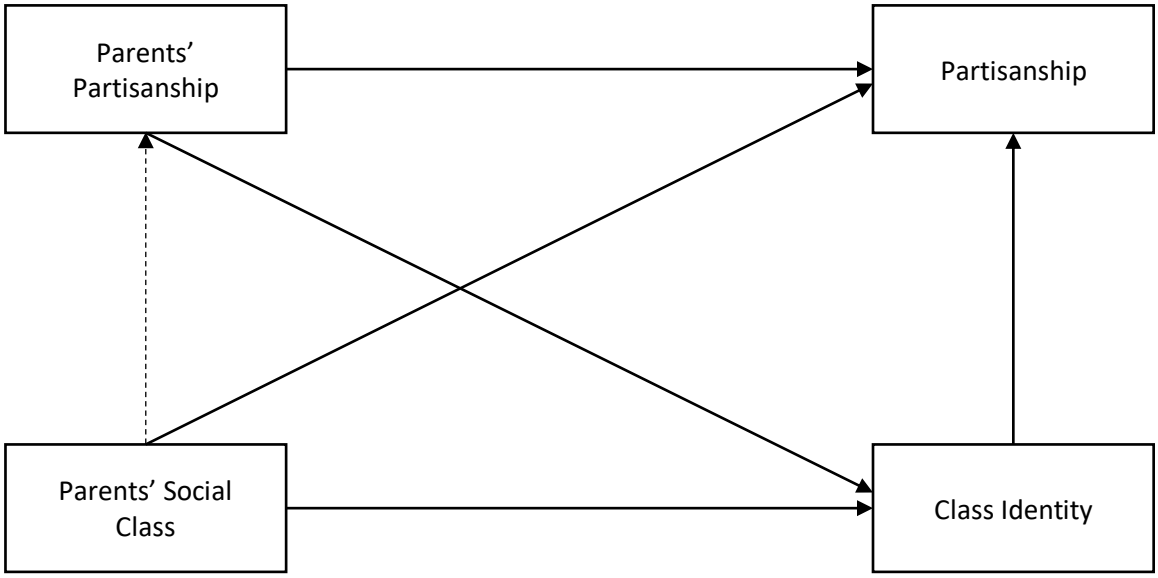
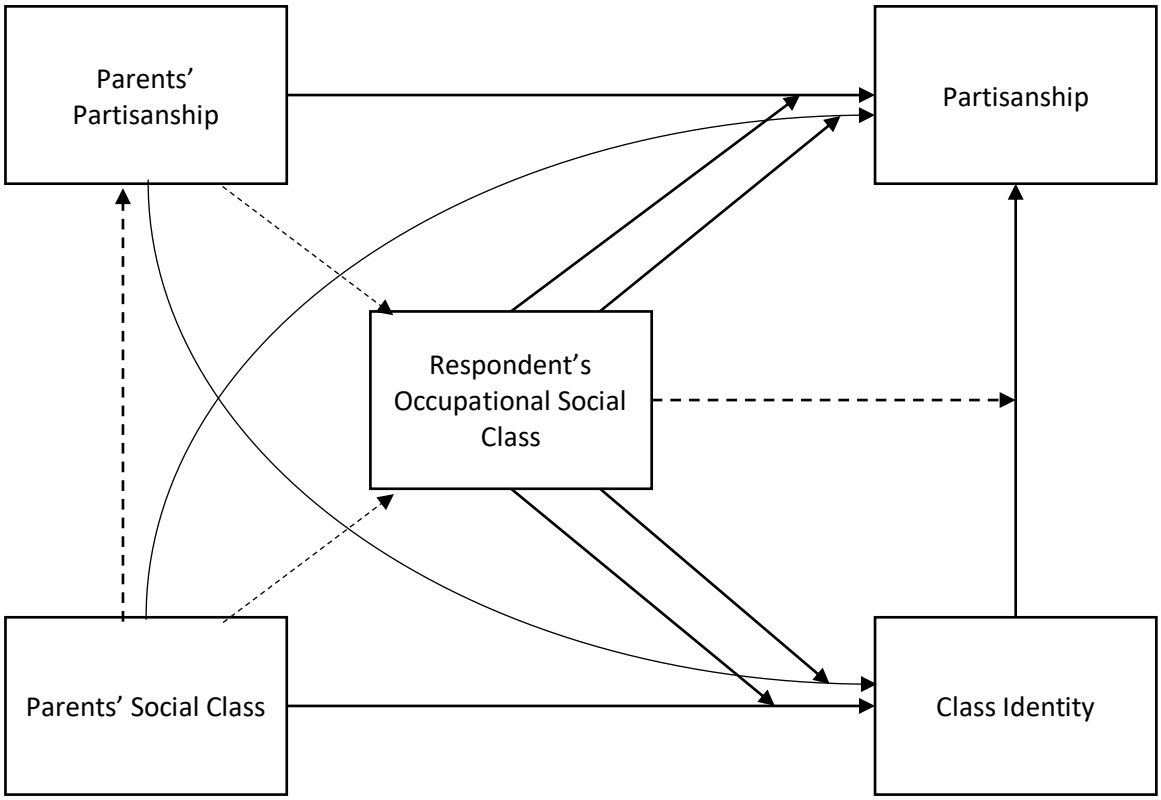


Figure 1.3: Cross Socialisation Model with Interactions with Occupational Social Class



The dotted lines in figure 1.3 correspond to relationships which are believed to be present in the theoretical model, but which are not explicitly tested in the empirical modelling.

The theoretical models outlined above lead to me forming the following hypotheses:

H1: Parental social class and partisanship influence a respondent's class identity.

Parental social class will define a young person's first set of economic and social interests, which could be expected to draw them towards the party best seen to represent these interests. This represents identity formation rather than status transmission due to the relationship being between parental class to a child's class identity investigated

here; traditional status transmission would be a relationship from parents' occupational class to their child's occupational class. Further, political debate and the political perspectives one grows up being exposed to may also play a role in forming the class identities of individuals; Butler and Stokes (1974) suggested that political culture matters to social position and that partisanship can be seen as reflective of wider social attitudes which may influence an individual's outlook.

Additionally, research on the desirability of social identities suggests that class identities might be formed by social influences regardless of occupational class. If certain social identities are seen as particularly desirable, and can be used to maximise positive distinctiveness from others, there may be a reason for individuals to maintain identities which do not fit with their current position, or to attempt to move to a group which would fit with their desired identity (Tajfel, 1974). If this is the case for working-class identity in Britain, this would provide a possible explanation for its maintenance here while declining in other countries. Support for this theory comes from Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst's findings (2001) that working class identity was used by people to display an image of ordinariness. Likewise, Young's findings that a substantial minority of young people in the West of Scotland adopted a 'Ned' identity ('the Scottish equivalent of the English term "chav"' (2012, p. 1140)) across different socioeconomic backgrounds suggests that individuals may positively select the class identity of a lower social class. If these social pressures to identify as working class do exist, we would expect them to be stronger for the children of Labour partisans, due to the historic relationship between Labour partisanship and working class identity (Heath, Curtice and Elgenius, 2009). Similarly, we would expect those from

Conservative families to be more resistant to these social desirability norms of working-class identification due to the aspirational nature of working class Conservatism.

H2: Parental social class and partisanship along with the respondent's own class identity influence a respondent's party identity.

The influence of parental social class on partisanship is demonstrated in Butler and Stokes's finding that many of those individuals who come from working-class families but have middle-class jobs came from Conservative-supporting families (1974). They suggest that the partisanship of the individual's family may have been important in providing these young people with an aspirational attitude which results in these groups being disproportionately socially mobile. This effect of political culture may therefore be expected to influence not just current social class, but the aspirations and identities one develops.

Parents' partisanship is expected to have a direct effect on their children by creating a norm of supporting a certain party and on the strength of partisanship depending on the strength of parental partisanship. Recent research by Martin and Mellon found this to be particularly significant in explaining higher partisanship among young ethnic minorities in Britain (2018). The importance of parental socialisation on partisanship is echoed in recent British qualitative research – to quote one voter, "when I was coming up to voting age my mum said to me, 'Vote Labour, your dad's a miner and Labour are for the working class'" (Mattinson, 2020, p. 91). While we would generally

expect children from working-class backgrounds to be influenced by their parents to vote Labour in this way, the historical presence of working-class Conservative parents must not be forgotten – but the transmission of these political identities is expected to be weaker when party identities do not align with the class they are traditionally seen to support.

I also investigate the role of respondents' class identities on forming their party identities. Class identities have been shown to influence political behaviour and attitudes, with individuals who identify as working class being more likely to be authoritarian and less likely to be pro-immigration (Evans and Mellon, 2016).

H3: When a respondent's occupational social class conflicts with parental class or partisanship, the relationship between parental characteristics and respondent class identity or partisanship will be weaker; when a respondent's occupational social class aligns with parental class or partisanship, the relationship between parental characteristics and respondent class identity or partisanship will be stronger.

Occupational social class is expected to directly influence partisanship. The work that individuals do provides them with a broad set of economic interests, which extend beyond simply monetary remuneration for the work undertaken. As a result this creates incentives for individuals to support parties which represent their broader economic interests, leading to for example the working classes being likely to support socialist and interventionist policies as a result of their lack of employment security or control over their own working conditions (Heath, Jowell and Curtice, 1985). Further,

particularly when respondents' current occupational class is controlled for in the relationship between parental class and respondents' class identity this represents a test of a theory of identity formation, not status transmission.

As class is not simply about income but represents a more complicated set of interests and identities, I expect that this will not sit neatly alongside parental socialisation and that these different identities will interact, particularly when class interests conflict with those identities socialised into individuals in childhood. Conflict occurs when one's current occupation differs to that of their parents or of the natural party of their parent's class. So there is conflict when an individual holds a middle class job yet grew up with working class or Labour voting parents, or when an individual holds a working class job but grew up with middle class or Conservative voting parents. When occupational class interests clash with socialisation the awkwardness of these conflicting identities will dampen the strength of the influence of parental socialisation. However, when occupational class interests do align with parental socialisation I expect the sum of these influence to be greater than its parts. That is, when an individual has a working class job and grew up with working class parents or Labour voting parents, or when an individual has a middle class job and had parents who were also middle class or who voted Conservative. In such cases I expect these identities will strongly reinforce each other to form an individual's class identity or strengthen their partisanship.

This hypothesis therefore posits that there is a series of interaction effects between a respondent's occupation and each parental socialisation factor (figure 1.3). It does so for a series of three dependent variables (respondent's class identity, strength of

respondent's Labour partisan identity and strength of respondent's Conservative partisan identity), each with three explanatory variables (parents were working class, parents were Conservative and parents were Labour) for which I assess their interaction with occupation. The theoretical expectation is that these interaction effects will be negative – when current occupation conflicts with parental class or partisanship, the relationship between parental characteristics and respondent class identity or partisanship will be weaker. Once fitted the interaction terms for occupational class and parental class produce a mirror effect. As occupations are only classed as either working class or middle class, there is no neutral position. Either current occupation matches with parental class and so I expect the effect to be stronger, or they clash, in which case I expect that the effect will be weaker. However, it should be noted that there is a neutral position when we consider interactions between occupational class and parental partisanship. While occupational class can only be either working class or middle class, parental partisanship can be at least one parent Labour (and neither Conservative), at least one parent Conservative (and neither Labour) or neutral representing cases of split partisanship or where parents supported other parties. In this case therefore, I also hypothesize that in cases of alignment between occupational class and parental partisanship the effect will be stronger, and in cases where there is a clash between occupational class and parental partisanship the interaction effect will weaken the effect.

Given the complicated mix of different influences between connecting parents' and children's class and party identities which are identified by Butler and Stokes (1974), I hypothesize that there will be interaction effects of current social class on the

relationship between parental partisanship and parental social class and a voter's class and party identities. Individuals may compare themselves to those around them and their backgrounds in order to assess how to identify. Runciman's study of social inequality in 20th-Century Britain led him to conclude that middle-class identifications by manual workers are determined not purely by their current occupation, but by where they live, their earnings and their father's job – and that these factors might distinguish some individuals in their own mind from other manual workers (1966). When class and parental socialisation push in opposite directions the effect of parental socialisation on current identities is expected to be weaker, whereas when these different factors align they are expected to strengthen each other and therefore have a larger effect than the sum of their parts.

This paper therefore hypothesizes that occupational social class will modify the relationship between parental socialisation and political identities. By modification I mean "whether the effect of a single treatment varies as a function of baseline covariate or covariates" (Keele and Stevenson, 2021, p. 641). Here I expect that the effect of one variable (either parental class or partisanship) depends on another (occupational class). Therefore, the models test all possible interaction effects between these terms. The inclusion of political, as well as social, socialisation tests the extent to which political and social identities are mutually formed.

In these models I control for other possibly confounding factors which may affect the relationships between parental socialisation, class and party identities. As well as controlling for education in the later models, which is thought to be significant to

explaining class identities by Evans and Tilley, I will also control in all models for gender, age and ethnicity, categories for which the effects of socialisation are expected to differ between these groups based on the findings of previous research (Tilley, 2003; Heath *et al.*, 2011, 2013; Shorrocks, 2016; Evans and Tilley, 2017).

Methods

Data

In order to understand the formation of class and party identities in modern Britain, I will test my hypotheses using data from the British Election Study (BES) 2015 and 2017 (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2016, 2018).The British Election Study is carried out after each General Election through face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative random probability sample of eligible voters. Class identity questions and sociodemographic data, including occupation, are present in all years of the BES. However, the family socialisation questions are not available in all years. The 2015 and 2017 studies asked respondents about the class they believed their family to be when growing up and about how both their mother and father voted. I will therefore use the BES data from these years, providing a total sample size of over 5,000 observations.

While it would be ideal to use a cohort or long-term household panel study for this research, as far as I know there is no other suitable data source in Britain this century with which to conduct this research. While such data was available in the British Household Panel Survey, this would not allow us to analyse political identities in

Britain today given this panel was incorporated into Understanding Society in 2008. Unfortunately, while Understanding Society contains questions about a respondent's class and partisanship, it does not include the necessary questions relating to family socialisation and especially parental partisanship. Due to the nature of such long-term studies, even if questions were now included it would not be possible to get such data on the contemporary electorate for many years.

Variables

The BES asks respondents two questions on class identity (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2018). There is an initial, unprompted question on whether the individual sees themselves as belonging to any particular class:

> *Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular class?*
> *IF YES: Which class is that?*

This is followed by a squeeze question for those who do not give one of these identities in response to the first question which specifically asks if the respondent sees themselves as working or middle class:

> *Most people say they belong either to the middle class or to the working class. If you had to make a choice, would you call yourself middle class or working class?*

I combine these variables to create a simple binary variable for class identity, denoting whether the respondent identifies as middle class or working class.

To measure partisanship, the BES asks a similar series of questions, first asking respondents which party they see themselves as:

> *Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, (Scottish National/Plaid Cymru) [in Scotland/Wales] or what?*

This is followed by a squeeze question asking which party they feel closest to for those who give no identification:

> *Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others?*
> *IF YES: Which party is that?*

All respondents are then also asked to rate how strongly they feel this identification:

> *Would you call yourself very strong [party], fairly strong or not very strong?*

Using this data, I created ordinal variables for identifying as Labour or Conservative, running from very strong supporters of the party to non-supporters.

I create explanatory variables from questions on parental party support, family class and the respondent's occupational social class. The BES includes questions on how both the respondent's mother and father voted when they were growing up:

> *Thinking back to when you were growing up. Do you know what party your mother usually voted for if she voted?*
>
> *And what about your father? What party did your father vote for if he voted?*

Here I created a categorical variable to allow for comparisons between respondents who had at least one parent voting Labour (and neither voting Conservative) or at least one parent voting Conservative (and neither voting Labour). The base category of respondents included those who had one Labour and one Conservative parent, those who had parents who supported neither party, and those who did not know whom their parents voted for. For most respondents with at least one parent voting for either the Conservatives or Labour, both their parents voted this way. Interestingly, while over 40% of respondents are categorized as having at least one Labour parent, less than a quarter of respondents have at least one Conservative parent. These results match with proportions found in previous years of the BES and BSA, with Conservative parents being relatively underrepresented. It may be that Conservative parents are less politically vocal and so their children are less likely to know their parents' political views. This is therefore a phenomenon worthy of further research. In addition, the fact that a relatively high proportion of respondents did not know their parents' partisanship matches with findings from other research outside of the UK (Wass, 2007).

Family class is measured by a subjective question in the BES:

> *When you were growing up would you say your family was middle class or working class?*

I code this into a simple binary variable. The subjectivity of this question is a weakness of this study as it does not account for the objective circumstances in which one grew up, and respondents may report their class background to be the same as their class identity. Almost three quarters of respondents believed their childhood family to have been working class which may also contribute to explaining the high levels of working-class identification found in the modern electorate.

Both of these explanatory variables raise potential endogeneity problems because of respondents reporting their parents' partisanship and class. There may therefore be incentives for them to report their parents' partisanship or class being the same as their own identities. However, this would not explain the relative underrepresentation of Conservative parents in the data – if respondents were simply projecting their views onto their parents we would not expect to find this asymmetry. In addition, this potential endogeneity problem is also faced by other research on political socialisation. In particular many historical data sources used the same or a similar set of questions to assess family class and party background, including Butler and Stokes. Therefore, while this data is far from ideal, to dismiss its findings based purely on this issue would be to also dismiss some of the main findings in political behaviour. However, even if

there is reverse causality at work here the results would still imply that class identity is a political identity. This point will be further expanded in the discussion section. In order to confirm the results in this paper and such previous research, future intergenerational panel surveys should include parental reporting of their occupation and party identification.

For the final independent variable, in order to measure an individual's current social class I recode the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification SOC2010 found in the BES data to create a binary variable representing whether the respondent has a working-class occupation, namely those individuals with routine, semi-routine and lower supervisory and technical occupations. The NS-SEC definitions code pensioners and the unemployed by their previous occupation.

Finally, I also create control variables including a continuous variable for age and binary variables for ethnicity, gender and degree level education.

Models

I use logistic regression models where working-class identity is the dependent variable and ordered logistic regression models where strength of partisanship is the dependent variable. The categories for each party, here Labour and the Conservatives, list identifiers as being 'very strong', 'fairly strong', 'not very strong' or 'not'. These statistical models will allow me to test each of the theoretical models outlined above to

establish first the influence of political socialisation on class identity and partisanship, before including interactions with current social class.

Results

In line with previous research on class identity, the BES data from 2015 and 2017 present a significant disparity in the proportions of identifying versus occupationally working-class respondents. 63% of respondents across these years identified as working class in response to either the prompted or unprompted questions, however only 37% held working-class jobs. Most respondents also expressed either a partisan identity or a feeling of being closer to one of the political parties, with most expressing loyalty to one of the two main parties – just over a third of respondents identified as Labour and a little under a third identified as Conservative.

The descriptive data provides support for the theory that parental socialisation factors are likely to contribute to forming class identities. As shown in Table 1.1, more than three-quarters of respondents brought up in working-class families identify as working class, and similarly three-quarters of respondents from middle-class families identify as middle class. The breakdown of class identity by parental partisanship is also striking: while the class identification of the children of Conservatives is relatively equally split between working class and middle class, three quarters of respondents with Labour parents identify as working class. These results suggest a strong relationship between parental socialisation and class identity, with political as well as social factors relevant to the formation of individuals' views about their own class.

Table 1.1: Class and Party Identity by Parental Partisanship, Family Class, Occupational Class, Vote Choice and Class Identity, Row Percentages

	Class Identity		**Party Identity**		
	Working Class	Middle Class	Labour	Conservative	N
Parental Partisanship					
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	61	31	27	26	1855
At least one parent Labour	74	22	52	19	2148
At least one parent Conservative	45	50	16	59	1178
Family Class					
Don't Know	25	17	26	20	186
Working Class	79	18	38	41	3755
Middle Class	21	75	26	28	1227
Upper Class	55	45	38	23	13
Occupational Class					
Managerial and Professional	46	48	33	36	1898
Intermediate	69	25	35	33	665
Employers in small organisations	62	32	26	41	462
Working Class	78	17	40	24	1767
Vote Choice					
Labour	68	28	83	2	1402
Conservative	50	45	6	81	1507
Other	61	32	15	12	1020
Did not vote	75	19	32	17	1238
Class Identity					
Don't Know			27	25	279
Working Class			40	24	3262
Middle Class			26	45	1637

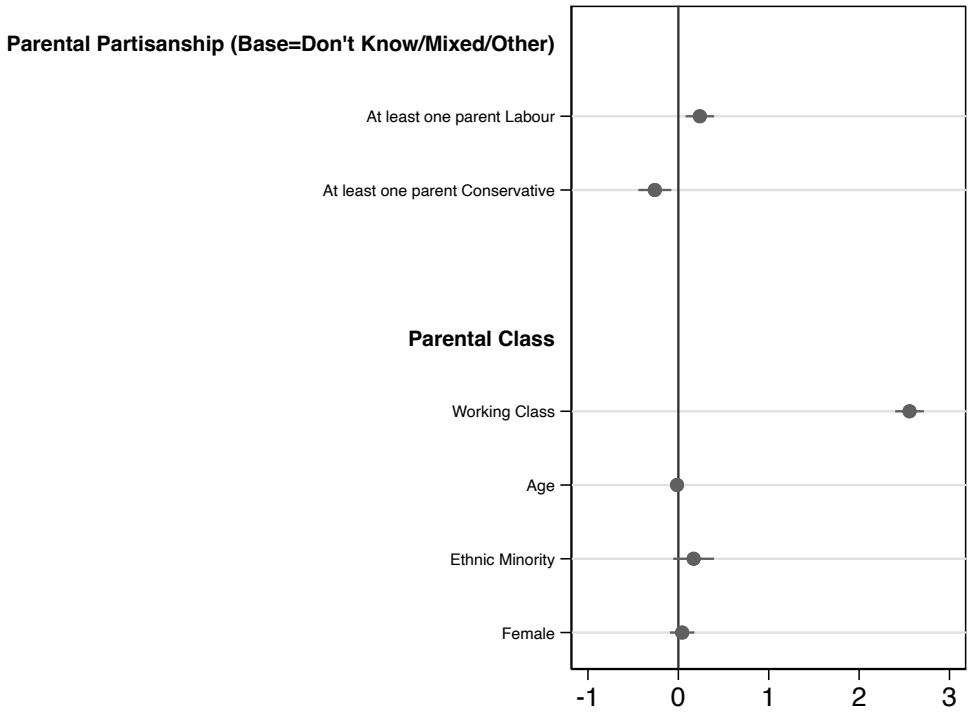
Note: The N figure denotes the total number of respondents for each category – in a few cases these are not the figures by which the row percentages were calculated due to missing data.

There is initial support for the relationship between parental socialisation factors and party identification. More than half of the children of Conservative or Labour parents identify with the same party as their parents, while less than a fifth identify with its main opposition. Family class also appears to have some influence, with more respondents from working-class families identifying with Labour and more from middle-class families identifying with the Conservatives. The link between class identity appears stronger than either family class or occupational class however, with 40% of individuals who identify as working class also identifying with Labour, and 45% of middle-class identifiers reporting Conservative partisanship. When it comes to voting, there is a strong relationship between Labour voting and working-class identity, with 68% of Labour voters identifying as working class. Perhaps surprisingly however, the majority of Conservative voters also identify as working class. In keeping with the theory of Labour's traditional base being the working class, more respondents in working-class jobs reported a Labour identification. However, the figure of 40% seems relatively low for the group supposed to provide Labour's core support. The data shows there is little difference in the proportions of respondents in managerial and professional jobs who support the two main parties. These initial correlations provide support for the theory that parental socialisation influences class and partisan identities which will now be tested in the models, and the results of the hypotheses discussed.

H1: Parental social class and partisanship influence a respondent's class identity.

First, I test how the theoretical model which includes only background socialisation factors can contribute to an explanation of class identity (figure 1.2). Figure 1.4 shows the results of logistic regression models to assess the influence on class identity of parental partisanship and parental social class.

Figure 1.4: Logistic regression for likelihood to identify as working class (Model 1 in Table A1)



The results presented here suggest that parental socialisation remains key to the formation of class identity. The positive coefficient for parental social class tells us that respondents whose family was working class when they were growing up are found to be significantly more likely to identify as working class. The magnitude of the effect of a working-class background is particularly notable. These results suggest that family background is the most important factor in determining working class identity.

However, the significance of parental partisanship is also notable, with those with Labour parents being more likely to identify as working class and those with Conservative parents being less likely to do so. Note that the interaction of the parental influences of class and partisanship is not significant (Table A1). The controls for ethnicity and gender are insignificant, but there is a significant age effect, with the likelihood of identifying as working class decreasing with age, all else held constant. These findings provide strong evidence for

this paper's key finding that class identity is a somewhat political identity which is formed in relation to the political discourse one grows up around.

H2: Parental social class and partisanship along with the respondent's own class identity influence a respondent's party identity.

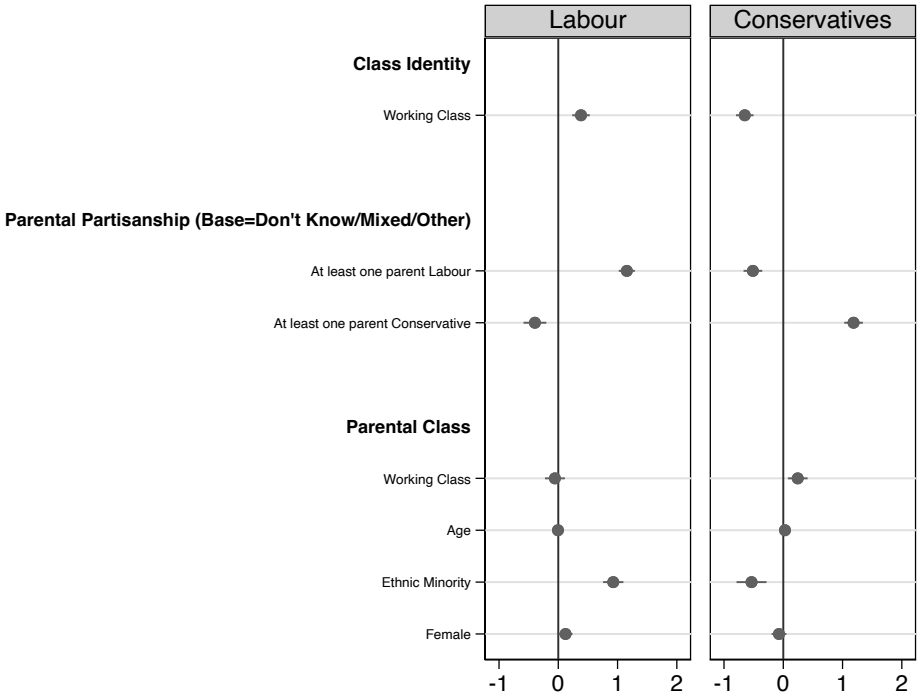
The results of the first socialisation model (figure 1.2) also show that parental socialisation factors and class identity influence partisanship. The coefficients for parental partisanship in Figure 1.5 show that individuals are significantly more likely to strongly identify with the party their parents supported and less likely to strongly identify with a party if their parents supported its main opposition. However, the results for parental social class are not consistently significant. Surprisingly, having working-class parents in fact makes one more likely to strongly identify as Conservative while the class of one's family while growing up does not have a significant effect on likelihood to strongly identify with Labour. This presents an interesting puzzle as to why working-class parentage in fact leads to Conservative identification. This counteracts some of the impact of those who identify as working class being less strongly Conservative – which might be a modest partial effect after controlling for class identity, or could point to a new phenomenon perhaps related to the higher authoritarianism of those with a working class identity (Evans and Mellon, 2016).

In terms of a respondent's identities, identifying as working class is found to increase strong identification with Labour and decrease the strength of identification for the Conservatives. As expected given the relationship between party identities and vote choice, these factors also have similar significant effects on the likelihood of predicting Labour and Conservative voting (figure A1; table A3). The controls match with findings in other research, with ethnic minorities

and younger people being more likely to identify with Labour, and less likely to identify with the Conservatives, and women being slightly more likely to identify with Labour than men.

Here, the introduction of an interaction term between family class and parental partisanship does have significant effects (table A2), but only for Conservative identity. Interestingly, having Labour parents reduces the likelihood of strongly identifying as Conservative more for those from middle-class families than for individuals from working-class families. This could be because for individuals from working-class backgrounds, identifying as Conservative is associated with an aspirational middle-class image. For individuals who are already middle class the influence of parents' opposition to the Conservatives may have a stronger effect.

Figure 1.5: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative Identity (Model 5 in Table A2)

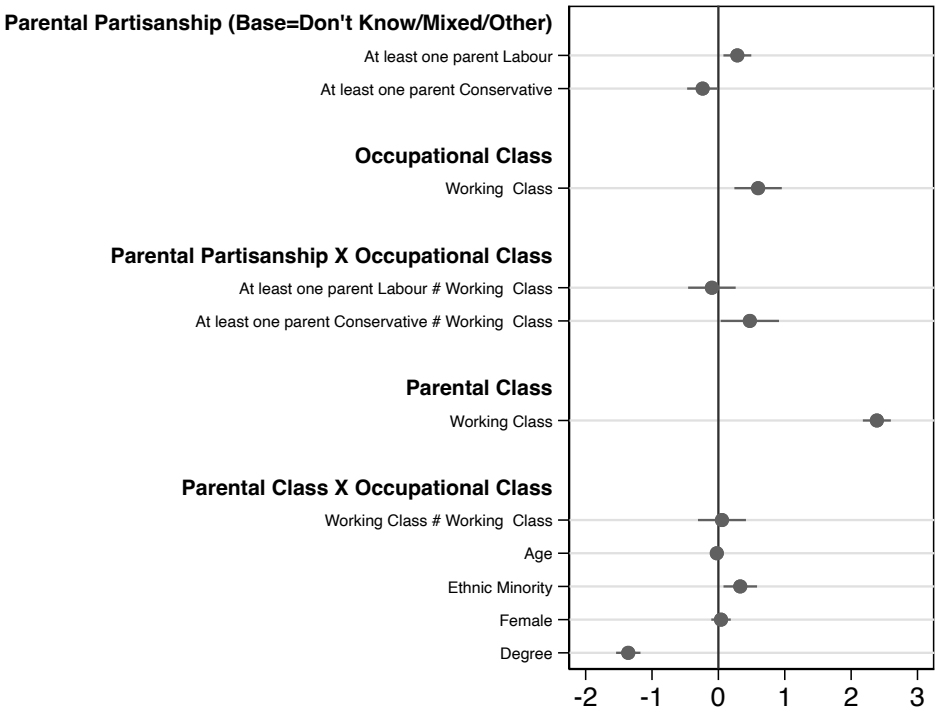


H3: When a respondent's social class conflicts with parental class or partisanship, the relationship between parental characteristics and respondent class identity or partisanship will be weaker.

The previous two hypotheses have found strong evidence for the influence of socialisation on identities in modern Britain. Here I test the addition of interaction terms between occupational social class and these socialisation factors.

It is striking that the effects of parental partisanship and family class background on class identity remain strong and significant after occupation and education are introduced (figure 1.6; table A4). The effect of occupational class itself is also significant, with individuals who have working-class jobs being more likely to identify as working class. As before, having working-class parents has the largest impact on explaining why an individual identifies as working class, while those with Labour parents are more likely to identify as working class, and those with Conservative parents are less likely to do so.

Figure 1.6: Logistic regression for likelihood to identify as working class (Model 12 in Table A4)



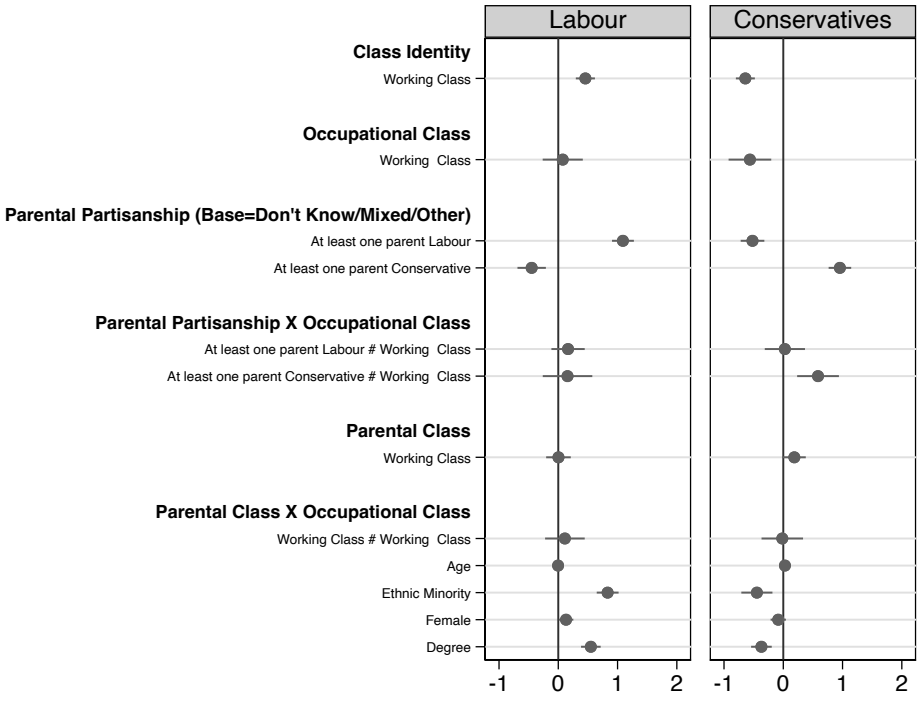
Here, the interaction terms introduced to the model are largely insignificant. However, the positive interaction term for having Conservative parents and being occupationally working class tells us that having Conservative parents in fact strengthens working-class identity for those who have a working-class job, in contrast to our expectations in Hypothesis 3 which was of such an interaction weakening the effect of occupational class on class identity.

The controls for age again show that older people are less likely to identify as working class and that gender has no significant effect. However, ethnicity is significant, with ethnic minorities being more likely to identify as working class. The controls for education introduced here have strong and highly statistically significant effects, showing that degree level education

decreases the likelihood one will identify as working class, in line with evidence presented by Evans and Tilley (2017).

Moving on to the impact of these interaction terms on respondent partisanship, parental partisanship continues to have strong effects (figure 1.7), however family class is no longer significant in its effects once class identity is included in the model. While having a working-class occupation has a negative effect on likelihood to identify strongly with the Conservatives, there is no positive effect for strong Labour identification – a striking finding given that the working class represent the traditional base of the Labour party.

Figure 1.7: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity (Model 18 in Table A5)



The interactions of parental socialisation with occupational class add little to our understandings of the formation of partisanship. The only significant interaction is between

current occupation and Conservative parental partisanship for Conservative identification. Having Conservative parent(s) counteracts some of the negative effect of holding a working-class job on the likelihood of strong Conservative identification.

The controls for age and ethnicity mirror the findings for the second hypothesis. The effects of education are strong - Labour identity is predicted to be stronger for individuals with degrees, whereas Conservative identification is stronger for individuals with lower levels of qualifications. While going against traditional class voting models, these findings do match with contemporary theories of the increased importance of education to political positions, with highly educated professionals being more likely to hold socially liberal values and support parties of the left.

Overall then, my results show we must reject hypothesis 3 as there is not clear support for the theory that the relationship between parental characteristics and class identity will be weaker when parental characteristics conflict with occupational social class.

These findings in relation to the effects of class identity, parental partisanship, occupational class and education also hold true in models of individual vote choice for Labour or the Conservatives (figure A2; table A3 & A6). While it would be interesting to also test the influences of these factors on turnout, following literature on declining turnout amongst the working classes in Britain in response to New Labour's modernisation (Heath, 2007; Evans and Tilley, 2017), this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Further, these results for class and party identities have surprising replicability amongst different groups in the electorate. One response to this research may be to suggest that such findings may not hold true across an increasingly ethnically diverse and regionally divergent nation. However, results in the appendix (figures A3-A26) demonstrate that, to the contrary, while there are some small differences in effect size and in significance, particularly for groups for which there is a smaller sample available in the data, these results for the formation of class and partisan identities are remarkably similar between people of different ethnicities and gender and between regions.

Discussion

How does parental partisanship and parental social class influence the formation of class and party identities in modern Britain?

Class identity in modern Britain is a strong political identity in its origins and effects, being in part formed by parental partisanship and strongly influencing party identities. The very strong effects of parental social class are in line with the expectations of other research that class backgrounds contribute to the formation of class identities. The strong effects of parental partisanship are also significant and show class identity to be not merely be a social identity but also political in origin. The political views of the household one grows up in continues to influence our perceptions of our place in the class structure, as well as our views about politics. This is in line with Butler and Stokes's analysis of the influence of family socialisation on politics in Britain in the 1960s. This points to a much wider influence of party politics on society - parental

socialisation suggests a long-term influence of the political system on contemporary class identity cleavages which has not been considered in recent research on modern divides in class politics.

Class identity remains predictive of support for the two major parties, which, given their traditional associations with the two major classes, is not surprising. There are also powerful effects of family socialisation factors on partisanship. While the direct effects of family class are not clear and consistent, there is some evidence of a positive and significant effect for Labour partisanship.

However, this is not the case when class identity is included in the model, suggesting that class identity can explain much of the effects of family class background on partisanship. However, the strong and consistent effects of parental partisanship on a voter's partisanship is notable, especially as this effect remains after incorporating class identity into the models. This suggests that as well as political discourse at home influencing how individuals feel about their social status, there is a direct influence of the political sympathies of parents on current voters.

And in what ways are those relationships affected by occupation?

The results presented here identify an important role of occupational social class in moderating family socialisation processes. However, while the inclusion of contemporary factors does improve the explanatory power of the models, overall these add relatively little to socialisation explanations of the formation of class and party

identities. This suggests that class identities are largely formed before one reaches the workplace.

The magnitude of effects for education are much greater than current social class, providing some evidence for Evans and Tilley's argument that education explains current class identities (2017). However, the evidence presented here suggests that their argument dismisses the continuing importance of parental socialisation factors too quickly. They suggest that an education-based explanation is needed to understand why working-class identity has remained so prevalent despite labour market change. However, the continuing importance of one's family circumstances may also contribute to an explanation of why occupation and class identity have diverged in recent decades, and why working-class identities have experienced relatively little decline. While more individuals now have middle-class jobs, the gradual pace of labour market change means that a large proportion will still have been brought up in working-class households. We may expect class identities to take longer to shift if there is a generational delay, in which most people still hold class identities that match their parents' class but not necessarily their own. Parental partisanship also matters to this explanation – the political views of one's parents contributing to the formation of social identities suggests that class identity is at least in part a political identity. Given the strong associations between the Labour Party and the working class and the Conservatives and the middle class in Britain over the last century, it is perhaps unsurprising, if previously empirically unsubstantiated, that there is an association between the political and the social and that these identities feed into each other and overlap, with class identity being a somewhat political identity.

Additionally, class identity is shown to be a more reliable predictor of party identification than occupational class, for which the results are not strong and consistent. Given the continued focus of the literature on class voting in the UK on factors relating to an individual's occupational class, these results represent an important alternative account.

It is striking that in some cases occupational class does not modify socialisation processes. Most notably, holding a working-class occupation does not have a significant effect in strengthening Labour identity. Given the Labour Party was founded to represent 'labour' and the working classes, and given its historic links with the union movement, we would expect holding a working-class job to lead individuals to more strongly identify with Labour. The results presented here suggest that occupation can now add little to an account of why individuals support Labour, and that their social and political upbringing has more explanatory power. However, this is not the case for Conservative identification, with occupation having a comparable effect magnitude on strength of Conservative identification to class identity (figure 6). This is a striking finding that supports narratives that in the 21st Century Labour has lost touch with its traditional base of support.

Given the strong relationship between party identities and voting behaviour, it should not be surprising that these results also translate into influencing vote choice (figures A1-A2; tables A3 & A6). Class identities and parental partisanship also have significant effects on likelihood to vote Labour or Conservative, and the findings that

occupational class makes no significant difference to Labour support also holds. While party identities may be weakening, these additional results show that the findings here on the importance of interlinked political and social identities have practical relevance in their application to political behaviour in contemporary elections.

The decline of working-class occupations means that fewer people will be growing up in working-class households in the future – and given that this has the strongest influence on one's likelihood to identify as working class, this may be expected to lead to declining working-class identity. Further research should look to analyse how this develops with future data. Additional research could also valuably further assess the impact of growing social mobility on class and party identities, particularly in cases where the early life socialisation that comes from parental characteristics conflicts with the adult socialisation of occupation. Additionally, further research could perhaps look to decompose the total effect of parental class and partisanship on respondents' class and partisanship into direct and indirect effects via the respondent's occupational status, in order to understand the relationships studied here in more depth.

It might not be the case that working-class identity does decline in future if it is one's perception of their family class, rather than its objective circumstances, that matters to the formation of these individual identities. As highlighted earlier, the BES data used here only includes respondents' self-reported family class while they were growing up and so I am not able to assess the relative importance of one's subjective perception of their family circumstances and the objective occupations of their parents. Considering again the issue of potential endogeneity here due to the self-reporting of parental class

and partisanship, it seems that even if individuals are attributing statuses to their parents based on their own identities that still tells us about the politicisation and desirability of certain class identities. However, while it is likely that there is some endogeneity problem present, the data suggests that it is unlikely that variation in reported family background is primarily due to respondents' current identities. This is due to the underrepresentation of Conservative parents and the fact parents are reported to have differing partisanships in a quarter of cases in the data, both of which suggest that individuals are not merely projecting their own identities onto their parents. Yet even if this was the case it still would show a very political process at the heart of the creation of class identity where individuals feel the need to project a certain political identity onto their parents in defence of their own identities.

As party identities weaken the influence of parental partisanship may also be less strong for future generations. The data shows that far more young people than older people don't know their parents' partisanship, suggesting that the weakening of these party identifications may already be resulting in a lesser presence of these effects for younger cohorts in the electorate. Understanding the influences of parental socialisation on the formation of political and social identities will therefore continue to be crucial to understanding future political and social change.

It is also interesting to note that these models appear to explain relatively more of the variation in Conservative partisanship than Labour partisanship. In a context in which the rise of working-class Conservatism is now much talked about, particularly following the 2019 General Election which is not included in my analysis, the findings

here suggest that Conservative support was up to 2017 in fact strongly negatively linked to being working class, both in terms of occupation and identity. The fact that occupation did still matter for Conservative identification, with holding a working-class job weakening the probability of identifying with the Conservatives, shows that it was not the case that occupation had little consequence for partisanship in recent years. In the case of the Conservatives, it continues to have significant effects in the direction we would expect, which makes the lack of effect for Labour even more noteworthy.

This paper presents new evidence that parents are significant in forming the political views of the British electorate, and that their influence continues to have effects above and beyond those of occupation. The class and politics of the family one grows up in influence not just one's own party political identification, but also social identification in the form of class identity. This paper suggests however that class identity is not simply a social identity but is fundamentally political in origin and effect. Future research should continue to consider how these identities reinforce each other in the creation of political loyalties. Further research would benefit from discerning why Labour supporting parents appear to be overrepresented relative to Conservatives and from considering in detail the differential influences of mothers and fathers on political socialisation.

The complementary effects of political and social parental influences on political and social identities suggests that these are more closely related than has been appreciated in recent research. Given the relative importance of class identity compared to

occupational social class in the creation of party identities, it seems that class identity has become a political identity. It may even have become increasingly so as working-class occupations have declined, carried through generations by the political attitudes and subjective social positions of parents which they instil in their children. However, I will reserve for future research this question of how much these processes have changed over time, and whether class identity has in fact become an increasingly political identity or whether in fact the politicisation of this identity has long been present in British society. While this paper has contributed significantly to understanding of the relationship between socialisation, class identity and partisanship, its focus on the current British electorate means it is not able to address such questions on the long-term nature of the relationship between class identity and political identities and behaviour. Therefore, such further research will be necessary in order to fully resolve the puzzle of declining party identity without declining class identity in Britain.

Have Brexit and other recent political events altered the strength of British and English national identities in England?

As devolution makes politics in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland increasingly distinct from the politics of England, understanding the latter becomes ever more key to an understanding of British politics. Brexit saw England vote more strongly than the other nations to leave the EU, and only in England did a stronger identification with the substate than with Britain relate to a higher likelihood to vote Leave. As such, understanding English national identity is key to understanding recent shifts in British voting behaviour. Major political events may have led English voters to reconsider their affiliation with the dual national identities of Englishness and Britishness. This paper tests whether recent major political events have shifted national identities in England. Using British Election Study Internet Panel data from 2014-2021, it assesses whether major political events (the Brexit referendum, Boris Johnson's premiership and the coronavirus pandemic) caused shifts in national identities in England. The findings show that both Britishness and Englishness declined over this time period, driven primarily by Remainers feeling these identities less strongly after the Brexit referendum.

Introduction

The 21st Century has been a time of great change for British politics. Newly introduced devolution settlements in Scotland and Wales have expanded and brought a new focus to politics in these countries. Voters have also become more volatile – moving away from holding strong ties to a party (Denver, Carman and Johns, 2012, p. 70). Alongside these changes have been a series of significant political events which voters have responded to in unpredictable ways. Amongst this change in British politics, it is necessary to not lose focus on English politics. England, after all, makes up 84% of the British population (Park, 2022b, 2022a) and 82% of seats in the House of Commons (Parliament, 2023) – and so is the dominant nation in politics in the UK. As changing identities and changing politics have gone hand-in-hand in Britain, so understanding shifts in identities in England is key to understanding modern British politics.

Indeed, previous research demonstrates that identities in England are significant to voting behaviour. As well as important identities such as partisanship and class identities which matter across Britain, national identities in England have been found to be strongly linked to voting behaviour on perhaps the most significant issue in British politics in recent decades – Brexit. Heath et al (2019) found that those people in England who identified as solely English, or as more English than British, were more likely to vote for Brexit than those who identified as solely British or more British than English. These results were the mirror image of results for Scotland and

Wales where stronger identification with the substate was linked to a higher likelihood of voting to Remain in the European Union.

This finding is perhaps not surprising when we consider the broader cultural position of Englishness as compared to Scottishness or Welshness. While being Scottish or Welsh has been a source of pride for politicians across the political spectrum, whether they believe in secession or not, Englishness has perhaps not been so widely emphasized as a political identity. Groups that have put more weight on Englishness as a political identity, such as the English Defence League, have led this identity to become associated with a particular brand of right-wing politics. It is perhaps these associations that have led to symbols of Englishness being met with distaste by some, such as Labour MP Emily Thornberry, who had to resign from her Shadow Cabinet post after appearing to criticize such symbols when posting a picture of a house displaying English flags on Twitter (Walsh, 2014).

By contrast, Britishness has maintained a reputation as a relatively more cosmopolitan identity in England – as illustrated by this being the preferred identity of immigrants and ethnic minorities (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 47).

Given the many changes in British politics in recent years, there is cause to consider the influence of these events on identities in England. Major debates around the future of the UK such as the Scottish independence referendum and the Brexit referendum may have caused some to question both the UK's role in the world and their own identification with their nation. The importance of political events to

changing political identities links to the theory of 'electoral shocks' proposed by Fieldhouse et al, in which highly salient major political events can shift perceptions of parties (2019). I test whether this theory may also apply to other political identities. This brings me to examining national identities as a testcase – assessing whether the major events of the Brexit referendum, premiership of the seen-to-be more nationalist Boris Johnson (Honeyman, 2023) and the coronavirus pandemic have shifted national identities in England.

This brings me to the following research questions:

1. Have recent political events changed national identities in England?
2. Which voters in England have come to feel more or less English or British in response to major political events?

Literature Review

National identities in England have been relatively under-researched, compared with other national identities in Britain which have been focused on more since devolution. However, since the shock result of the 2016 Brexit referendum interest in national identities in England have grown. As researchers have sought to explain why Britain voted for Brexit, a greater focus on identities and political attitudes in England has been required (Sobolewska and Ford, 2020; Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021).

Brexit illustrates the importance of understanding English voting behaviour to understanding British politics, since England represents the vast majority of the

British population. However, as asymmetric devolution continues to develop in Britain, so English politics becomes increasingly complex and distinct. Political changes in England, alongside long-term changes of voters moving away from political parties creates instability in political identities. As such, national identities may, like party political identities, become more likely to shift in response to major political events. Given the significant events we have seen in English politics in recent years, and this broader picture of constitutional change, English national identities are particularly worthy of study.

The UK is a nation with a complicated set of national identities present within it. In this sense then, it is a 'state-nation' (a country where individuals hold a variety of national identities though they are united in one democratic community) as opposed to a 'nation-state' (a country where individuals share a single common national identity within a democratic community) (Stepan, Linz and Yadav, 2011). Although this distinction may represent the balance of national identities in Britain today, it should be acknowledged that many within the nation would disagree as to whether this set up as a 'state-nation' is how Britain should remain. On the one hand, nationalists within the different nations of the UK who advocate for separatism would maintain that their nation would be better served as a 'nation-state' and so separating from the democratic community of the British state and from British identity. Alternatively, some may advocate for Britishness being the sole relevant identity in Britain, and so oppose those other sub-national identities held by many Brits. However, to the extent that across Britain most people hold dual national identities, with attachment to both Britain and the nation they live in, it seems that Englishness

and Britishness can coexist – both within the country and within individuals. Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that this multiplicity of identities is further complicated by within UK migration, with people from other parts of the UK coming to live in England and representing a distinct group with their own political interests and concerns, such as Scots who live in England and so were unable to vote in the 2014 independence referendum despite its implications for their own citizenship (Leith and Sim, 2020).

Since the late 1990s, despite political changes in Britain, national identities in England have remained relatively stable. When asking a 'Moreno' national identity question which assesses the extent to which a respondent prioritises one of the identities over the other, the picture of national identities in England is one of fluctuations. The most prevalent identity throughout this time period is 'equally English and British' for which the percentage of people selecting it moves bounces between the low thirties to mid forties (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 41). The long-term trends across multiple surveys also point to an increase in the proportion of people who choose a relatively stronger English than British identity, driven both by an increase in predominantly English identification and a fall in Britishness (Wyn Jones *et al.*, 2012, 2013; Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, pp. 41–42). Kenny (2015) has highlighted the need for further research to understand why Englishness has become increasingly desirable as an attachment, particularly at a point when attachment to the unions of the UK and the EU have been in decline. By analysing the changes in strength of identification with Englishness and Britishness over various salient events, this paper provides a contribution to answering this question.

The coexistence of Englishness and Britishness works in a different way to the coexistence of other British and sub-state identities, such as Scottish, Welsh and Irish. Sub-state national identities in these places have stood against Britishness, often opposing the imperial history of Britain. English nationalism however looks to England within the UK and advocates for a particular image of Britain and its place in the world, embracing Britain's imperial history, with the history of English nationalism bound up with the history of the empire according to Wellings (2002) – but this perspective is often not shared by British identifiers in England (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021). Englishness then is distinct from other British substate identities in its vision of England as a key component of the UK, rather than emphasizing distinctness.

The development of English nationalism over time highlights the complexities of it as an ideology, as well as going some way to explain why it has not gained further ground. English nationalism is complex, with scholars highlighting that it does not neatly fit into ethnic or civic conceptions (Kumar, 2003; Aughey, 2007). The idea of Englishness has, Kumar (2003) argues, been shaped by Britain's history of empire – where the need for unity required the repression of expressions of nationalism. Before the First World War, Englishness was largely cultural, based in the arts, history and the English landscape. Even as nationalism grew across Europe through the 20th Century, this was not the case in England where, Kumar argues, it would have been bizarre for a secessionist form of English nationalism to flourish. English dominance within the UK meant that any case for English separatism would seem unnecessary.

In the 1990s, English nationalism was expressed as a defense of Britishness, creating a contrast with nationalism in Scotland and Wales which was bolstered by devolution (Wellings, 2007).

More recently, English nationalism has been shaped by Euroscepticism and opposition to European integration which have aligned with older narratives of English nationalism (Wellings, 2010, 2018). Meanwhile, Britishness has been presented as an open-looking identity in contrast to ideas of 'little England', leading to immigrants being more inclined to identify as British (Ward, 2006). This vision of Britishness as an open and cosmopolitan identity was encouraged by progressives in the late 20th Century, and particularly by New Labour who promoted an internationalist vision of Britain (Kenny, 2014). These visions of English and British identities having a different relationship with open versus closed social attitudes fits with David Goodhart's argument that there is a relationship between place, mobility and Englishness. Goodhart (2017) distinguishes between Brits who are firmly attached to a place and community ('somewheres' in his terminology) and those who are more geographically mobile with less deep roots (Goodhart's 'anywheres'). English identity forms part of his definition of 'somewheres' – with this group being more nationalistic and more likely to identify as English. While the relationship between Englishness and political attitudes is well established, existing research does not examine how identities shift in response to political events that resonate with these other identities associated with Englishness. This paper seeks to contribute to this debate by showing this relationship between political events and changing identities over highly salient moments in recent years.

There are differences between English and British identifiers in both the kinds of people who relate more strongly to one identity or the other and in the social and political attitudes of those with different national identities. For instance, higher levels of education and non-Christian religious beliefs are linked to weaker English identity, though both make no difference to Britishness (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 50). Class also has a complex relationship with English identity and nationalism. Aughey (2012) argues that while class matters for Englishness, with differing conceptions of Englishness between different classes, class is also a significant divide between people in England, so much so that this prevents the growth of a common nationalism.

There has been much written on the relationship between ethnicity and English national identities. For individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as there being a balance of attachment between Englishness and Britishness there may also be attachment to ethnicity as a social identity. Heath et al (2013) surveyed people from ethnic minority backgrounds in Britain and found that while some prioritised their Black or Asian identity over their Britishness, and some prioritized their Britishness, for most these identities were equally salient. In a personal account of the experiences of Black British people and their relationship with British national identity, Afua Hirsch discusses her heightened interest in analysing her own identities as someone with multiple identities, and contrasts this with individuals whose identity is clear and secure as a result of being in the ethnic majority in their nation (2018, p. 268). White English people also hold particular views on national identities in England, with

Mann's qualitative interviews finding that Englishness was generally defined in opposition to multiculturalism, although this wasn't necessarily intended to be exclusionary (2011). While differences between groups in their relationship with national identities is well established, whether these differences fluctuate over time in response to political events is not clear from existing literature and represents a contribution of this paper.

Additionally, different political attitudes are associated with each of these two national identities – with anxiety about devolution, opposition to immigration, Euroscepticism and Conservative voting both higher amongst those with English identities (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2014; Sobolewska and Ford, 2020, p. 230; Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 122). English identifiers are also less likely to vote for Labour, even controlling for other factors (Denham and Devine, 2018). Political Englishness has also not been actively adopted by major political parties, which Kenny (2014) argues is a result of politicised Englishness sometimes being seen to represent discontent on issues such as welfare, Europe and immigration. He further highlights (2016) that the politicisation of Englishness is a complex phenomenon which requires further study from political scientists, including looking further beyond political influences on Englishness to consider the broader cultural resonances of Englishness. While this paper looks to political events, further research would benefit from appropriate data to research fluctuations in national identities over salient cultural events such as high-profile sports tournaments.

The relationship between Englishness and Euroscepticism has been seen as particularly significant in recent years, as English identification translated into a higher likelihood of voting for Brexit (McAndrew, 2016; Henderson *et al.*, 2017; Heath and Richards, 2019). Brexit was a transformative event in recent British politics, and understanding the significance of the event and the attitudes and identities associated with voting to Leave the European Union is important to consider its hypothesized significance for national identities here. A wide range of factors beyond national identity have been presented as predictors of voting for Brexit, including beliefs about the economic consequences, current economic circumstances, attitudes to immigration and the 'othering' of the EU in the UK (Goodwin and Heath, 2016; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Harold D. Clarke, Goodwin and Whiteley, 2017; Van Der Zwet *et al.*, 2020).

While the result of the referendum itself was a shock in Britain, the growth of Eurosceptic attitudes and political discourse was not new. Despite elites in the EU promoting European citizenship and identity, this has not been widely accepted by European populations, particularly in Britain (Leith *et al.*, 2019). In fact, European integration has been found to generate nationalism (Wellings, 2021), and nationalism is in turn a core component of Euroscepticism across Europe (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002). In Britain, more prominent Euroscepticism saw the rise of the UK Independence Party who advocated for leaving the EU. Supporters of this party were predominantly working-class and felt 'left behind' in an increasingly globalised world (Ford and Goodwin, 2014). Yet this party also had a distinct basis in terms of the national identification of its supporters, with a larger proportion of UKIP voters

identifying as very strongly English than was the case for any other party (Hayton, 2016) and around twice as many UKIP supporters identifying as English as identified as British (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2014). This existing research then suggests a relationship between national identities and investment in outcomes of the Brexit referendum which has not previously been adequately researched.

As these findings illustrate, by 2016 England was the most Eurosceptic nation in Britain and Englishness was a significant predictor of voting Leave (Henderson *et al.*, 2016, 2017), with English identifiers also more likely to emphasize the benefits rather than the costs of Brexit (Harold D Clarke, Goodwin and Whiteley, 2017). The relationship of national identities to Brexit vote differed across the UK, with the influence of Britishness also not being uniform as in England British identifiers leaned towards Remain while in the rest of the UK they skewed towards Leave (Ormston, 2015; Heath and Richards, 2019).

Devolution in Britain has created a paradox (known as the "West Lothian Question") where MPs from devolved countries can vote on issues in Westminster which affect only England, while English MPs (and indeed MPs from devolved nations) have no influence on certain domestic issues within the devolved nations. This situation is unpopular in England, with 64% of voters agreeing Scottish MPs should not vote on English laws in 2016 (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 62). Mycock and Hayton (2012) argue that the de facto role of Westminster as England's parliament which has become embedded post-devolution has created a serious dilemma for the major unionist parties. While some individual politicians have sought to engage in debates

about Englishness, the major parties have not reached a consensus on the political future of England. They argue that there may be political incentives for populist right parties to embrace English nationalism and move away from unionism. While at the time of their writing this was discussing UKIP, this incentive may have persisted beyond that party's lifetime and remain relevant to newer parties occupying a similar ideological space. Considerations of the future of England have not only come from politicians, with this becoming a topic commentators on the right have been concerned with, including considering the impact of Englishness as an identity on politics in England (English, Hayton and Kenny, 2009). From 2015-2020 votes in Westminster did introduce a set of internal parliamentary rules to tackle this, allowing for English Votes for English Laws (EVEL), but this has since been removed – and so the paradox of the West Lothian Question has returned.

Further complication to governance in England has come from asymmetric devolution within England itself. While London, which has a directly elected mayor and assembly, is the region with the greatest powers, more cities and areas of England are receiving bespoke devolution deals, resulting in directly elected metro mayors and greater powers for local government. Yet not all settlements provide the same set of powers – and so the picture of governance in England is becoming increasingly complex. England itself is relatively absent as a political unit, with power split between a British Parliament above and local governments below. The removal of the influence of the European Parliament has not necessarily made the governance of England more transparent.

In contrast to these changes in governance in England, governance in Scotland has become focused around the Scottish Parliament with growing powers and a distinct set of political debates. Assertive, political nationalism in Scotland stands in marked contrast to a fading sense of England as a political unit. This could be seen to leave Englishness as a largely cultural phenomenon, and as a relatively apolitical identity – the nation of England may not be much represented politically but it does stand as its own unit, separate from the rest of the UK, in many sports. Indeed, while beyond the scope of this paper, the success of the England men's and women's football teams in recent tournaments may have bolstered English national pride. This sense of English identity as being based on cultural markers and standing in contrast to a more political Scottish identity was highlighted by Bechhofer and McCrone (2013). However, research by Henderson and Wyn Jones demonstrates that the markers of English and British identities are actually very similar, with people pointing to the same history, values and institutions. They also find that political dimensions of Englishness are often cited, including values, institutions and policy, leading them to conclude that 'contra both older and more recent claims that Englishness is somehow a cultural rather than political identity, there are clear political dimensions to Englishness too' (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 116). As a result of these political dimensions, and the relationships between national identities and political attitudes, it is plausible to think that political events may impact national identities as a type of political identity, as well as national identities through their political associations influencing the outcomes of political events. The establishment of Englishness as a political as well as a cultural identity therefore requires further

investigation in terms of how this identity is impacted by politics as well as how it shapes it.

Henderson and Wyn Jones' analysis also goes further, conducting factor analysis to determine which attitudes are most related to English national identity. As well highlighting some components of Eurosceptic attitudes as associated with Englishness, they find other attitudes to be related, including beliefs that England's values are different to the rest of the UK, that English culture is not valued as much as other attitudes, that Scottish MPs shouldn't vote on English issues, that St George's Day should be a holiday, that young people don't respect British values and that Britain's best moment was in the past (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, pp. 126–127). Together these attitudes paint a picture of a kind of political Englishness which is concerned with England's future relationships with the rest of the UK and with the EU. By contrast, while those people who prioritise their sense of Britishness in England are less anxious about devolution and less likely to be Eurosceptic, when Henderson and Wyn Jones conduct factor analysis of attitudes and Britishness they find Britishness to only be related to Englishness. This supports their conclusion that Englishness and Britishness have similar markers and that those who are most nationalist about the British state are in fact the English identifiers rather than those who are more strongly attached to Britishness. They determine that 'it is Englishness that underpins a politicized national identity that helps to explain political views in England' (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 128).

Previous research then presents an image of a politicised Englishness, associated with its own vision of how England should be, while maintaining a British nationalism with England as a key part of the UK. Englishness is also related to a particular and Eurosceptic view of England in the world. This paper turns to assessing how national identities in England have changed in response to recent major political events, including Britain's departure from the EU. Political events have been found to impact feelings of closeness to the nation before, with Tilley and Heath showing political changes contributed to declines in British national pride (2007). Given the magnitude of the political events analysed here, I expect to find further changes in national identities in response to these events.

Hypotheses

Political events seem likely to have shifted national identities in England over recent years. Here, I seek to test how these identities have shifted amongst members of the two major political groups which have emerged during this time period – Remainers and Leavers. It is necessary to understand the changes in the strength of identification within each of these groups over this time period in order to see the full picture of overall changes in identifications, since these group level changes will, I predict, drive any overall changes. As such, hypotheses are presented at the group level.

As established above, Englishness and Britishness have traditionally been associated with different wider cultural identities. Thus, at the time of the Brexit referendum,

British identification was more strongly linked to Remain voting and Englishness to Leave (Heath and Richards, 2019).

The referendum represented a heated campaign, with political parties, most notably the Conservatives, dividing between the two sides. The outcome of a vote in favour of Leaving the European Union, at 52% to 48%, represented a significant shock as it went against the expectations of the polls and the media. It is therefore not so much the campaign as the shock of the result that I expect to have shifted national identities for voters – making them feel more or less part of the nation depending on whether it agreed with them on this crucial issue. For Leavers, the result will have been a moment for celebration – even more so for the fact it showed that their opinion was the majority on an issue that many felt their concerns over had been long ignored. For Remainers, the result represented a break from a status quo they supported – perhaps suggesting to them that the country they lived in was different to what they thought.

In consequence, I expect the referendum to have disassociated Remainers from their countries – weakening both Englishness and Britishness. However, I expect that Englishness will decline by a greater amount given the referendum result was driven by English voters and that, as established above, Britishness is associated with more open values. As such I expect Remain voters to become relatively more British compared to Leavers over this time period. For Leave voters, Englishness is expected to increase given the nation's backing for Leave despite other nations of the UK opting for Remain. As a result of these changes amongst different voters I expect the overall strength of Englishness to remain constant despite becoming more polarised.

H1. The Brexit referendum decreased Englishness and Britishness amongst Remain voters and increased Englishness amongst Leave voters.

My next hypothesis refers to changes as a result of the premiership of Boris Johnson. Johnson came to power in 2019, following the failure of Theresa May's Brexit negotiations. As the most prominent backer of Leave in the referendum, Johnson's tagline became 'Get Brexit Done' (Ford *et al.*, 2021). As someone who embodied the cause of Leave and was then painted by the press to represent a nationalist image of Britain (Honeyman, 2023), it seems likely then that Johnson would have furthered the divisions of the Brexit referendum – particularly as the debate over how to 'do' Brexit was far from over, and was another issue on which Leave and Remain voters were polarised (Hobolt, Tilley and Leeper, 2022).

I therefore expect Remain voters to come to feel even less English and British and Leavers even more English and British over this period. As a result, the overall pattern of constancy obscuring greater polarisation in English national identities is expected to continue.

H2. The premiership of Boris Johnson decreased Englishness and Britishness amongst Remain voters and increased Englishness and Britishness amongst Leave voters.

The coronavirus pandemic represents a rather different issue, with a rather different set of influences on voters and their identities. While the pandemic was an international issue, each country approached how to deal with it rather differently – and this was doubly the case in Britain where the devolved nations had differing approaches to handling the pandemic. Although in the devolved nations, some aspects of the pandemic handling fell to the devolved government and some to the British Government, in England all decisions were made by the British Government, headed by Boris Johnson. The British Government's presentation of the pandemic response was illustrated in a very British way however – and the imagery of this was perhaps stronger than most Brits are used to seeing in, for instance, the daily press conferences with ministers and scientific experts flanked by Union Jack flags. Additionally, as detailed above the NHS which was at the heart of the pandemic response is an institution linked to pride in Britishness (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 54). As people saw the NHS play a key role in the pandemic response, their pride in the institution turned to celebration of the organisation and its staff whose work was recognised throughout the pandemic in events such as the weekly clap for carers which marked the contribution of NHS staff and other key workers (Addley, 2020). As a result of this strong national symbolism, it may be that national identities moved with valence judgements – so those who were therefore most impressed by the Government's handling might have felt closer to the nation of Britain, whereas those who were more sceptical may have come to feel more removed.

Given that the British Government was generally seen to have handled the pandemic poorly by voters (see my paper on the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland), I expect that overall this will result in falling Britishness over this time period.

> H3. Britishness declined during the coronavirus pandemic, and declined most greatly amongst those who judged the Government's pandemic handling most poorly.

Data and Methods

This paper uses data from the British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP) 2014-2021 (Fieldhouse, E., J. Green, G. Evans, J. Mellon & C. Prosser, J. Bailey, R. de Geus, 2021), which has been running since early 2014. This panel study has the advantage of allowing me to show shifts in individuals' identities over time, and to see shifts over multiple major political events. Table 2.1 details which waves and dates translate into which time period in my analysis. For respondents who responded to multiple waves over a given time period, I use the wave closest to the significant event (e.g. referendum, change of premier or onset of pandemic). It should be noted that not all waves contain the relevant questions on national identities.

The complexities of overlapping identities in England make measuring English national identities particularly tricky. Frequently, research measures national identity in England using 'Moreno' questions, where individuals are asked to select the relative importance of two different identities, e.g. whether they identify as English not British or more English than British (therefore assuming a degree of British identification). However, such questions are naturally limited by the fact they address only two identities at a time, and by the fact that they give little information about the strength of relative identities (e.g. how much more English than British does one feel). Other measures of national identity can assess other aspects of national identification, such as national pride or attachment.

Table 2.1: BESIP Waves used in each time period

Time Period	Waves
Pre-Brexit	Wave 1 (Feb-Mar 2014); Wave 2 (May-June 2014); Wave 3 (Sept-Oct 2014); Wave 4 (March 2015); Wave 7 (April-May 2016)
Post-Brexit	Wave 9 (June-July 2016); Wave 10 (November-December 2016); Combined Waves 11 & 12 (April-June 2017); Wave 13 (June 2017)
Pre-Johnson	Wave 14 (May 2018); Wave 15 (March 2019); Wave 16 (May-June 2019)
Johnson Premiership	Wave 17 (November 2019)
Coronavirus Pandemic	Wave 20 (June 2020); Wave 21 (May 2021)

The BESIP overcomes the issue in Moreno questions of the lack of relative importance of different national identities by getting individuals to rank how strongly they feel each national identity on a 0-10 point scale, which can then be compared with their rankings for other national identities. Don't Know responses are dropped from the analysis – these represent a 3-14% of responses in each wave, as illustrated in appendix Table B1. It is therefore changes in these scales with which this article is interested.

In order to assess the relationship of national identities and referenda positioning, I use past or intended vote in the appropriate referenda. To assess changes in response to perceived handling of the coronavirus pandemic is more complex, and for this I use a competence scale. This uses three questions on different aspects of government competence during the pandemic (handling of lockdowns, effectiveness of testing and the distribution of PPE for healthcare workers) which are asked of respondents in both the pandemic waves of the British Election Study Internet Panel in June 2020 and May 2021 to create a one to five scale where five represents the most competence – the government in question would be judged to have handled all three issues very

well – and one the least competence. Further details about this scale are contained in the paper on coronavirus in Scotland, on page 167.

In my multivariate linear regression models of change in national identities, I also include controls for other social cleavages which have been found to be significant to shaping national identities and voting behaviour in England – age, gender, ethnicity and religion.

Results

Table 2.2 presents a picture of changing national identities in England over recent years. Feelings of both Englishness and Britishness have declined over this time period, and the relative strengths of the two identities have changed too, though not significantly until Boris Johnson took power. Although the strength of attachment to both Englishness and Britishness has been relatively similar over recent years, originally identification with Englishness was stronger than attachment to Britishness. However, this has changed since Boris Johnson became Prime Minister in 2019, with Britishness now the stronger identity. It must be stressed however that the differences here, while significant, are very small in scale. Englishness has declined by the greatest amount, by half a point on a 0-10 scale, while the change in the difference of Englishness and Britishness is only 0.13.

Table 2.2: Means of Englishness and Britishness by period

	Englishness		Britishness		Englishness - Britishness	
		SD		SD		SD
Pre-Brexit	5.8	1.6	5.7	1.5	0.07	1.7
Post-Brexit	5.6*	1.8	5.6*	1.6	0.04	1.8
Pre-Johnson	5.4*	1.8	5.5*	1.6	-0.03	1.5
Johnson Premiership	5.5*	1.8	5.6*	1.5	-0.11*	1.6
Covid	5.3*	1.8	5.4*	1.6	-0.06*	1.6

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Despite the divisive Brexit referendum, there is little sense that these identities are becoming more polarised since 2016. The standard deviations for Britishness and for the difference between Englishness and Britishness have been relatively constant over time. However, the increase in standard deviation for Englishness following the Brexit referendum is significant – suggesting that there is more division in how strongly people identify with England after the referendum. However the fluctuation in the standard deviation for Britishness suggests that its declining mean in identification is not driven solely by a minority of voters becoming significantly more disengaged, but that this is a process happening across the population.

Also relevant to these findings are the trend in those respondents who answered Don't Know when asked to place the strength of their national identities, detailed in appendix Table B1. The percentage of respondents who did not want to place themselves on this national identity scale varies between different time periods and for different identities, ranging between 3.2% and 13.9% of respondents. This represents a substantial variation in national identification around the time periods of certain events – and in particular the post-Brexit referendum decline in people answering don't know shown in Table B1 (where it drops below double figures and stays this way for the remaining time periods) suggests that this referendum may have done something to crystalise identification in England. Additionally, the proportion of those selecting Don't Know was higher for the Englishness scale than for Britishness in all waves – providing an alternative indication that Britishness is relatively more strongly felt.

Table 2.3 looks in more detail at the declines in national identities outlined in Table 2.2, by breaking down these changes by vote in the 2016 EU referendum. As detailed above, Britishness and Englishness were linked to differing voting behaviour in the referendum. The results in Table 2.3 show that both national identities have been more strongly held by those who voted Leave throughout this time period, however the gap is relatively larger for Englishness than Britishness. English national identity is at least a point stronger for Leave voters throughout the time periods studied, whereas the gap in Britishness floats around half a point. Yet it is striking that the pattern of declining affinity with these identities holds for both Leave and Remain voters, and for both Englishness and Britishness. The decline is, however, more marked amongst Remainers, whereas for Leavers the identities have at points fluctuated back to near their original strength.

Table 2.3: Means of Englishness and Britishness by Brexit vote and period

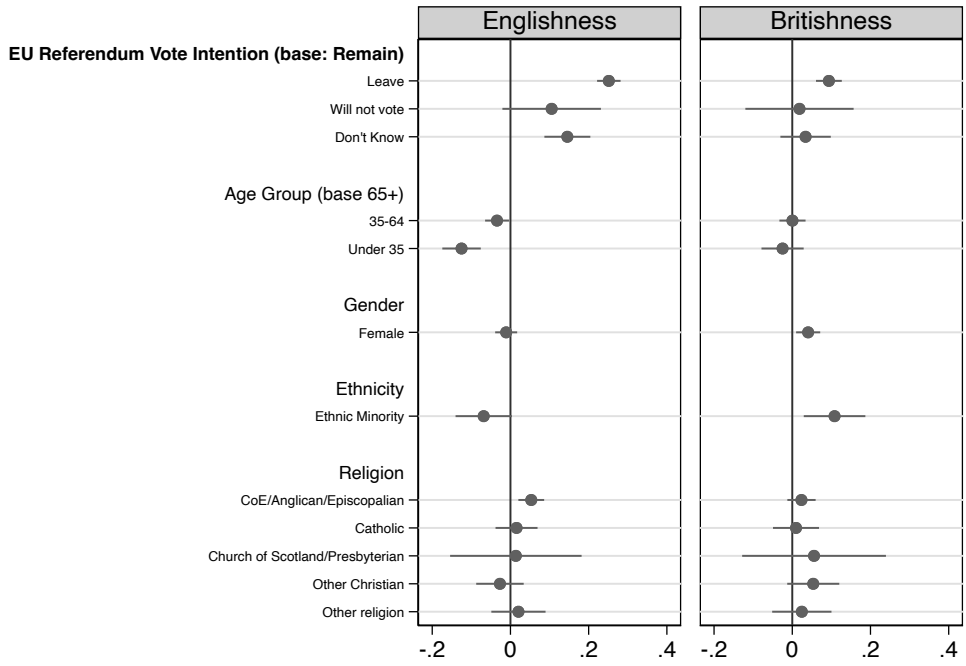
	Englishness		Britishness	
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain
Pre-Brexit	6.3	5.3	6.0	5.6
Post-Brexit	6.3*	5.0*	5.9*	5.4*
Pre-Johnson	6.1*	4.9*	5.8*	5.2*
Johnson Premiership	6.2*	5.1*	6.0*	5.5*
Coronavirus Pandemic	6.0*	4.8*	5.8*	5.2*

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided $p<.05$) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

For each of Tables 2.2 and 2.3, the sample used includes all respondents who completed the relevant questions in a wave within a given time period. For robustness, appendix tables B2 and B3 show the results only for respondents who completed the relevant questions in a wave within each time period. While a useful comparison, it should be noted that the respondents included in this sample are likely to be particularly highly politically engaged given the high number of long political surveys that they would need to complete over several years. These tables demonstrate there are only minor differences between using the full sample and a much smaller size returning sample, and so demonstrate that changes in national identities are not driven by changes in the composition of the sample, such as from new immigrants moving to England.

Figures 2.1-2.3 display coefficients (with 95% error bars) showing the change for each group relative to the change in the baseline group over the course of each major event. Figure 2.1 shows coefficient plots of changes in both national identities in England over the 2016 Brexit referendum. Leavers became relatively more English compared to Remainers over this time period, though turning to Table 2.3 we see this is not because of a great strengthening of Englishness amongst those who intended to vote Leave, but instead a result of the fact that their English identity remained fairly constant while Englishness dropped for Remainers. Those voters who did not yet know how they would vote in the referendum also became relatively more English compared to Remainers, perhaps that those who had a stronger view on the referendum issue in advance were more likely to shift their wider social identities in response to the shock result.

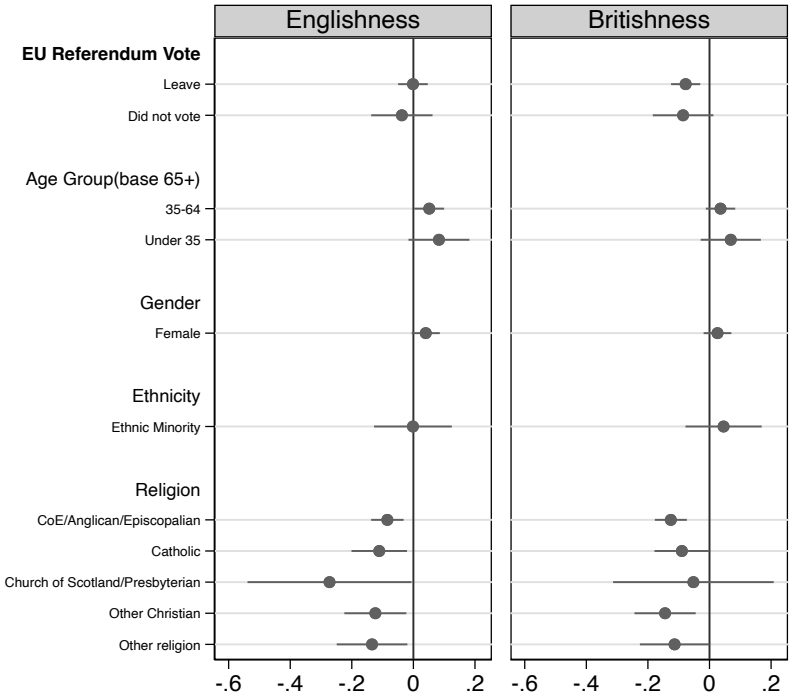
Figure 2.1: OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from pre-Brexit referendum to post-Brexit referendum



Britishness also became relatively stronger for Leavers compared to Remainers over the referendum, but as was the case for Englishness this is due to a sharper drop in identification for those who intended to vote Remain, detailed in Table 2.3. However, the gap between Leave and Remain supporters increased less for British identity than for Englishness.

Figure 2.2 looks at a later period of change in British politics – the premiership of Boris Johnson who became Prime Minister in 2019. Johnson was presented as a more nationalist leader than his recent predecessors (Honeyman, 2023). Over this period of change, there was no difference in change in Englishness by Brexit referendum vote, though Table 2.3 shows that the overall strength of Englishness was increasing for both these groups.

Figure 2.2: OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from before Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister to during his premiership

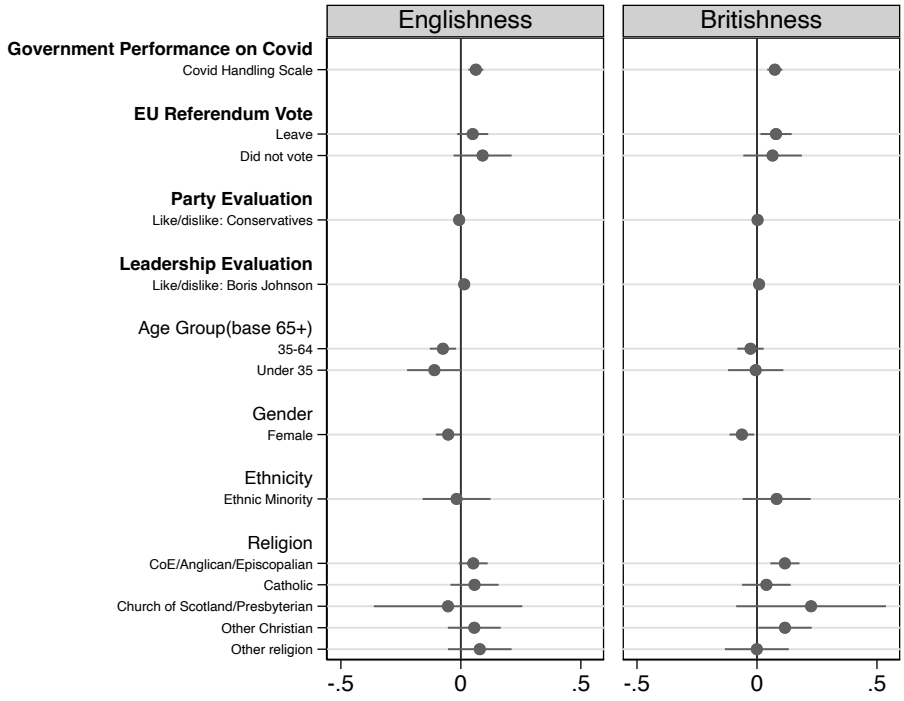


However, Leave voters did come to feel less British compared to Remainers. As Table 2.3 demonstrates, this is a result of Britishness increasing more steeply over this period for Remainers. This finding stands in contrast to the expectations of

Hypothesis 2 that Britishness would fall for Remainers in this time period. However, as demonstrated in Table 2.3 this increase proves to only be a temporary effect, with Britishness falling amongst Remainers once more following the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Figure 2.3 examines changes in national identities over the coronavirus pandemic, also incorporating a scale assessing how well the British Government handled the pandemic. Given the results in my paper on the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland show that perceptions of government performance over the pandemic are heavily dependent on prior party and leadership evaluation, I also incorporate these variables as controls.

Figure 2.3: OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from pre-coronavirus pandemic to during the pandemic



The results show that those individuals who believed the Government had handled the pandemic well came to feel more English over this time period. However, prior perceptions of the governing party and its leader, as well as EU referendum vote,

made no significant difference. Looking at Table 2.2, it should be noted that despite the positive coefficient here for pandemic handling, in fact most voters came to feel less English over the pandemic. This makes sense when one considers that most English voters judged the government to have handled the pandemic badly. So while Englishness may have declined less steeply for those who judged the Government to have handled the pandemic well, it will have declined more steeply for those who thought the government had performed poorly.

Figure 2.3 also shows that those who believed the Government had handled the pandemic well came to feel more British over the pandemic. As Table 2.2 shows that Britishness also declined over this time period, the effects are expected to be similar to Britishness – with negative evaluations of Government performance leading to steeper drops in Britishness than for those who judged the Government to have handled the issue well. Those who voted Leave also came to identify more strongly with Britishness compared to Remainers over the pandemic, though as shown in Table 2.3 this is again a case of a steeper decline in Britishness being present for Remainers at this time compared to Leavers.

Discussion

The findings here show that national identities in England are weakening, and that these changes have occurred in response to recent political events. Since the Brexit referendum both Englishness and Britishness have fallen, and while there has been some variation in their onward trends they have not again reached the pre-Brexit peak seen in this data. There has also been a further weakening over the coronavirus pandemic. Over this time period we have also seen a shift in the balance of Britishness and Englishness, with Britishness now becoming the more strongly held of the two identities – though both have remarkably similar levels of identification.

There is some evidence of growing polarisation as a result of the Brexit referendum. While there is movement in the mean level of identification with these identities and the standard deviation for Britishness remains fairly constant, the standard deviation for Englishness does significantly increase after the Brexit referendum, suggesting this identity became more polarised at this point. Further, there are differences observed between Leave and Remain voters in the levels of their identifications with each national identity, and also the pace of change varies between these voters. Leave voters are more strongly attached than Remainers to both Englishness and Britishness, and the strength of their identification also declines less than for Remain voters, providing an indication of growing polarisation as the gap between Leavers and Remainers increases over the time period studied. Figure 1 shows that the big change in identification between those who voted different ways in the Brexit referendum came over the referendum itself, showing the impact political events can

have on shifting identities. Further evidence for the impact of political events on national identities comes from the decline in voters responding 'Don't Know' when asked their strength of national identity since the Brexit referendum. As shown in Table B1, for both Englishness and Britishness the percentage of Don't Knows drops by four percentage points after the referendum when compared with every other time period studied.

The paper also provides evidence that national identities declined further after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, and that this is in part due to perceptions of government handling of the pandemic – with more positive perceptions of government performace linked to stronger national identities. This demonstrates an alternative way in which political events can shift national identities.

In a sense, the findings here continue the long-term trends observed of declining British identity in England. However they add a new dimension in the political basis of the decline, with Remainers becoming less attached to Britain since Brexit. However, given we also observe declines in Englishness here amongst these same voters this is not a continuation of declining Englishness as the expense of Britishness. The declines in both identities suggest an element of politcisation to both identities, as voters feel less attached to both the state and sub-state due to political choices. It also reinforces the close relationship between these two identities which, while not declining completely equally, are shifting to a similar degree amongst the same group of voters.

These changes demonstrate the power of political events to shift identities. The Brexit referendum examined here was to some degree an 'external' shock to the political system – it represented a polarising issue which voters quickly needed to become informed and make a choice about. Information was critical to this campaign, as it is in any referendum, and the fact that major parties, notably the Conservatives, split on the issue further meant that voters were less able to rely on existing cues for information. However, the referendum was of course not entirely external to the political system, instead it was motivated by political concerns to address a high-profile topic of political debate.

Despite this debate being high-profile in political terms, the referendum still represented an opportunity for many people to make their minds up about an issue they may not prevously have considered in detail. As such, the very process of making that choice and voting a particular way in the referendum may have wider consequences in shaping political and social attitudes. As Brexit identities have become embedded and strongly held (Hobolt and Tilley, 2019; Hobolt, Leeper and Tilley, 2021), individuals may therefore come to use this identity as a cue for the formation of other attitudes. This then, can lead to the reevaluation of national identities, and could explain the shifts we've seen being divided along Brext lines since the referendum.

Further research on national identities in England would be enhanced by an in-depth analysis of the regional differences in these identities, which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, given that existing research has shown that Londoners are less

likely to identify with either national identity than those who live elsewhere in England (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021, p. 50), further research into national identities in England would be attractive. Further research would also benefit from an assessment of cultural factors beyond the scope of this paper, such as examining the effects on national identities in England of the successes of the English national football teams.

Despite the evidence presented in this paper that national identities are weakening in England, we should not jump to conclusions on the back of this about the political future of England. The developments seen in recent years suggest that England is fracturing through different devolution deals to different regions and areas, the impact of which on identities is a valuable avenue for further research. There is also not a strong political will from any of the major parties to move towards a politics more centred on England or Englishness. It does not seem that there has been a significant growth in Englishness at the expense of Britishness, which McCrone (2023) argues is one of the pre-conditions of a nationalist movement – and establishes that Englishness also fails to meet the other necessary conditions: an imagined community that is relevant to the modern world and a political ideology carried by a party or social movement. As England is lacking in each of these, it seems that a growth of attachment to Englishness is not necessarily a precursor to greater political or constitutional change in Britain.

Have constitutional referendums and other recent political events altered the strength of British and Scottish national identities in Scotland?

National identities in Scotland have become increasingly politicised, particularly as those who identify more strongly with Scotland than with Britain are more likely to support Scottish independence. Referendums on independence and Brexit in Scotland raised big questions about both the future of Scotland, and what it means to be Scottish today. These kinds of major political events may have led Scots to reconsider their affiliation with the dual national identities of Scottishness and Britishness. This paper tests whether major political events have shifted national identities in Scotland. Using British Election Study Internet Panel data from 2014-2021, it assesses whether major political events (the Scottish independence referendum, Brexit referendum, Boris Johnson's premiership and the coronavirus pandemic) caused shifts in national identities in Scotland. The results show that while the strength of national identifications varies between voters with different political preferences, overall changes to national identities in Scotland have been limited, even over politically turbulent periods. The most notable change is a small decline in Britishness driven primarily by Remain voters since the Brexit referendum. However, there is little change in Scottishness and little polarisation. These findings demonstrate that stronger national identities are not a necessary condition for support for Scottish independence from the UK and UK independence from the EU to grow.

Introduction

Scottish national identity has become increasingly politicised in recent years, in particular in relation to debates about Scottish independence. Individuals who identify as Scottish, or at least as more Scottish than British, were more likely to back independence in 2014 than those who saw themselves as equally, more or solely British (Curtice, 2016). In particular, over the last independence referendum campaign, it was amongst these more Scottish identifying groups that support for independence increased most, even while starting at higher levels (Curtice, 2016). In a context in which the SNP Government in Scotland is pushing for a second referendum on independence understanding the relationship between national identity in Scotland and its political consequences is particularly important.

Previous research has focused on the relationship between national identities and changing political identities over time, rather than assessing the changes in national identity itself, and in particular the extent to which national identities change or strengthen in response to major political events. Here I test whether major political events in recent years have made Scots reconsider their affiliation with the nations they belong to. The importance of political events to changing political identities links to the theory of 'electoral shocks' proposed by Fieldhouse et al, in which highly salient major political events can shift perceptions of parties (2019). I test whether this theory may also apply to other political identities, and focus on Scottish national identity as a test case for this hypothesis.

Scottish national identity is a particularly interesting test case due both to its relationship with voting behaviour, but also because of the sheer number of 'electoral shocks' which have occurred in Scotland in the last decade. Since the referendum on independence in 2014 in which 55% of Scots voted No to independence, voters in Scotland have faced major political events almost annually – a General Election in 2015 returning a Conservative Government (with a substantial number of Scottish Conservatives as part of their number for the first time in decades); a Scottish Parliament Election in 2016 (which returned another SNP Government), followed by a referendum on membership of the European Union a few months later (in which the UK voted to Leave, despite the majority of Scots voting to Remain); Scottish council elections and another General Election in 2017 (motivated by the issue of Brexit); an election-free but Brexit dominated 2018; another General Election (once again motivated by Brexit) in 2019; the start of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020; Scottish Parliament Elections held in the midst of the pandemic in 2021, which returned another SNP Government; and Scottish council elections held as the pandemic started to wane in 2022. Together these represent a staggering number of potential shocks to the political system in a relatively short time period. Given the movement we saw in the political consequences of Scottish national identity in another relatively short time period – the course of the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum campaign – it seems worth assessing the impacts of these salient political events on this highly politicised social identity.

Previous research on the topic of national identities in Scotland has not uncovered the causal puzzle of whether shifting national identities contributed to referendum vote

choice, or whether instead those individuals who made a political choice in their referendum vote later updated their social identity in line with this. This paper will seek to do so as far as is possible with available data, and will further investigate the puzzle of whether social identities are shifting alongside political events, and whether these identities only change for certain supporters based on their prior political persuasions.

This brings me to the following research questions:

1. Have political events since 2014 changed national identities in Scotland?
2. Which voters in Scotland have come to feel more or less Scottish or British in response to major political events?

Literature Review

National identity in Scotland has become increasingly politicised since the 1980s, when the SNP's narrative set Scottishness against Thatcherism, claiming that Thatcherite policies threatened Scottish institutions and values (Johns and Mitchell, 2016). This identity has continued to be politicised through the introduction of devolution, the rise of the SNP to governmental power in Scotland, and in particular during the Scottish independence referendum. These events, followed soon after by the Brexit referendum, have resulted in marked shifts in voting behaviour in Scotland (Fieldhouse and Prosser, 2016; Hassan, 2018; Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). These series of shocks to the Scottish political system are established to have transformed party

political identities, so here I test whether they have also resulted in similar shifts in the politicised social identity of nationality.

Existing research suggests this may be the case. Fieldhouse et al found that there was some movement amongst initial Labour supporters during the 2014 independence referendum, with changes in Britishness and in satisfaction with democracy moving in opposite directions for Yes and No voters (2019). Those who had supported Labour prior to 2014 but who voted No became more British in their identity, while those who voted Yes moved away from their British identity.

Variations in national identities in Scotland are not new, yet the long-term maintenance of Scots' identification with their nation is striking. Despite centuries of political turmoil Scottish national identity has not just survived but thrived in Scotland since the Treaty of Union. Mitchell argues that the ideology of union, rather than specific legal obligations, enabled separate Scottish institutions to continue to operate and for a sense of Scottish distinctiveness and identity to be maintained (2014). He claims that the maintenance of Scottish identity was not in any sense inevitable, but was a result of haphazard challenges and responses to distinct Scottishness over time (Mitchell, 2014). Mitchell identifies a paradox of national identities which makes variations in their future strength difficult to predict – as national identities can become stronger even when the institutions associated with the nation decline (2014).

So while the advent of devolution and the creation of the Scottish Parliament in the late 1990s might have seemed likely to boost Scottishness, research on national identities during the first decade of devolution found little evidence of this or of a pronounced decline in Britishness (Curtice *et al.*, 2009). Instead, the overwhelming picture of national identities in Scotland throughout devolution is one of consistency – as trends in 'Moreno' national identities in which respondents weigh up how strongly attached they feel to two national identities show, Scottishness has remained stronger than Britishness throughout (What Scotland Thinks, 2024). Data from polls collected by What Scotland Thinks between 1999 and 2020 show that Scottish only, more Scottish than British and equally Scottish and British identities fluctuate but each remain fairly strong, whereas only British and more British than Scottish identities are each consistently held by 10% or less of the population (2024). These results demonstrate that there has been a long-term dominance of Scottish national identity compared to Britishness in Scotland, and the relative stability of these survey results suggest that, while there is some evidence of equally British and Scottish identity strengthening over time and only Scottish identity weakening, there is not a strong long-term change in identities pre-2014 of which the results in this paper may only be a continuation. Indeed, the What Scotland Thinks data shows there is if anything a reverse in direction of the trends in equally Scottish and British and only Scottish identities from 2014 onwards (2024).

This finding of broad stability is not to say that there was no evidence at this point of political events influencing shifts in national identities in Scotland – with Curtice et al (2009) referencing the notable decline in British national identity in Scotland between

the two devolution referendums of 1979 and 1997, during which time the UK Government opposed the creation of devolved legislatures. This time period also saw substantial declines in British national pride in Scotland, driven by lower pride in Britishness amongst younger generations (Tilley and Heath, 2007).

In addition to these long-term findings about national identities in Scotland, existing research demonstrates that national identities can fluctuate in response to the salience of the political arena, with Scottishness being more important during British elections than during Scottish elections and varying accordingly (Henderson, 2007). This suggests that national identities in Scotland may be responsive to political events.

As well as identities being related to the relevant political arena, there are also long-standing associations between national identity and party preference. In the late 1990s, those who identified as strongly Scottish were 'profoundly anti-Conservative' (Bennie, Brand and Mitchell, 1997, p. 141). However, despite this Scottish national identity was a weak predictor of voting behaviour in early devolution and in the first Scottish Parliament election (Paterson, Brown and Curtice, 2001). This is due to the SNP not being the only beneficiary of anti-Conservative sentiment amongst strong Scots, with Labour also gaining a lot of support from Scottish identifiers (Bennie, Brand and Mitchell, 1997). The inability of Scottish national identity to explain constitutional and political attitudes at this time was not attributed to it being an insignificant identity however, but to its pervasiveness (Paterson, Brown and Curtice, 2001). These high levels of identification with Scottishness in Scotland may result in a ceiling effect when considering changes in national identities in Scotland – as so

many Scots identified as Scottish to at least some degree it would be hard for Scottishness to grow even following this significant constitutional shift (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009; Curtice *et al.*, 2009). However, the negative association between Scottishness and Conservative support persisted during the first decade of devolution – when respondents were given a forced choice between Scottishness and Britishness Henderson (2007) found that having a stronger attachment to the Conservatives was a negative predictor of Scottishness.

The fact that national identities have not always been decisive for political behaviour in Scotland represents a contrast between national identities in Scotland, and those in other regions vying for independence. National identities in Scotland are very different to Catalonia. In Scotland, Britishness and Scottishness coexist, and emphasizing one does not necessarily mean denying the other, while in Catalonia, Spanish and Catalan identities are in greater conflict as a result of having historically been mobilised to be opposed and mutually exclusive (MacInnes, 2001). Furthermore, national identities in Catalonia have been shown to have a stronger relationship with constitutional preferences and with party support than has been the case in Scotland (Marti-Tomas, 2010). However, the fact that national identities in Scotland are less politicised than in Catalonia is not to say that these do not have an impact on political behaviour, or that these identities may not be impacted by political events in turn.

Additionally, while national identities have not always been central to political choices, this does not mean that they have been insignificant social identities to Scots.

Bond and Rosie (2002; 2003) found Scottishness to be a relatively high salience identity compared to other social identities such as class, age and gender – indeed Scottishness was generally deprioritised only in relation to personal life cycle identities such as being a parent or a spouse.

National identities in Scotland continue to be complexly split between different levels today. While a combined sense of both British and Scottish identity is the norm, around a third of Scots identify as solely Scottish, and a further third identify as primarily Scottish though also British (Sobolewska and Ford, 2020) – suggesting that identification with Scotland is perhaps the most significant of the dual identities held by Scots today. However, a majority of Scots comfortably identify with both nations (Curtice, Devine and Ormston, 2013; Sobolewska and Ford, 2020), and many also comfortably hold regional and supranational identities. Former Liberal Democrat leader and Scottish Highland MP for over 30 years, Charles Kennedy, highlighted such a shared identity by regularly stating his identity as a Highlander, Scottish, British and European (Kennedy, 2015; Sturgeon, 2016). The significance of such shared identities is also found in academic research, with Bechhofer and McCrone (2014c) examining the relationship between Gaelic identity and Scottish identity and finding that not only do these identities not detract from each other, but in fact the more Gaelic someone identifies as, the more Scottish they are.

The dual identities held by many Scots today are not the result of an inevitable process. Instead as Mitchell (2014) argues they have been built and maintained by political action over time. The UK is in this sense a ‘state-nation’ rather than a

'nation-state' in Stepan et al's terminology (2011). Stepan et al (2011) contrast the idea of a 'nation-state' where there is alignment between cultural and national identities and the boundaries of the state and a 'state-nation', a country containing multiple groups which think of themselves as a nation and have leaders who strive for independence within one democratic community. While this distinction reflects that many people in modern Britain hold multiple national identities, there are of course disagreements about whether this set-up is the most appropriate path forward for the UK. Nationalists advocating for independence are of course seeking to create their own 'nation-states' and there are some staunch unionists who would oppose devolution and hold that Britishness should be the dominant identity and Britain a 'nation-state' – though this is a minority views. Indeed, the multiplicity of identities we see in Britain has been implicitly recognised by British political leaders over time, who have contributed to the development of asymmetric devolution in order to maintain the unity of the state (Brown, 2014).

However, while in some 'state-nations' national identification with the central state is strong, and perhaps even stronger than in 'nation-states', Nairn argues that this is not the case in the UK (2015). He theorises that the UK is held together by a relatively weak sense of loyalty to the state, in the British case loyalty to the monarchy, and there is therefore an underdeveloped sense of belonging.

Nationalism represents a different phenomenon to national identity. While national identity refers to an individuals' attachment to and identification with the nation, nationalism represents a political ideology which holds that nations should be the

basis of states. The literature identifies two major strands of nationalism which each give a different basis on which an individual is or is not a member of the nation, and which each suggest different forms of 'in-groups' which individuals will identify with as fellow members of the nation. Under an ethnic conception of nationalism, fellow members of the nation are those that share an ancestry and an ethnic group. Members of the nation are those who are born there and/or whose families originate from the nation. This therefore presents a fairly closed view of who can be a member of a nation. Civic nationalism takes an approach based more on institutions than characteristics of birth, where members of the nation are those who identify with the nation and share its values.

The form of Scottish nationalism seen to be promoted by the SNP, and so to be politically activated in recent years, is a civic form. The idea of the Scottish nation they promote is one based on socio-democratic political values, and is open to immigration and migration from within the UK. This is reflected in a 2007 study of SNP members, where members identified living in Scotland as being more important than being born there for instance (Johns and Mitchell, 2016). However, it is also worth noting that only a minority of these SNP members thought place of birth and ancestry were unimportant to Scottish national identity (Johns and Mitchell, 2016). Amongst the Scottish public more widely there is a stronger prioritisation of ethnic factors, with polling showing that most Scots identify being born in Scotland as important to being Scottish, and identifying this as important to being Scottish at a higher rate than living in Scotland (Smith, 2016). These quantitative findings match with qualitative research on what it means to be Scottish, with interviewees

emphasizing birth and upbringing (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009). Further evidence of an ethnic basis to Scottish identity comes from Sime (2020) who found that new young migrants to Scotland don't necessarily adopt Scottish identities and in some cases see this identity as restricted and denied to them.

Despite this evidence of an ethnic basis to Scottishness, Scottish national identity may perhaps have remained strong and desirable because it has been presented by political nationalists in a way which avoids many of the negative connotations of ethnocentrism which are associated with other national identities. While nationalism is often banal and unnoticed (Billig, 1995), at points it can gain salience in relation to political debates and events. The political construction of Scottish nationalism has seen it built to be an identity which makes its 'other' not a people, but an ideology. Scottish nationalists and in particular the SNP have built an image of Scottishness as opposed to political positions – such as Thatcherism, austerity and Tory politics – rather than as being opposed to a group of people, such as immigrants, the English or the British (Johns and Mitchell, 2016; Sobolewska and Ford, 2020). This stands in marked contrast to English nationalism south of the border, where the issue of immigration has become more politically salient and where political connotations of English identity are exclusionary of people and places (by being anti-immigration and anti-EU) rather than ideology (Sobolewska and Ford, 2020).

Scottish nationalism has become associated with left-wing, liberal and multicultural politics. These positions have further contributed to the SNP's positioning as the party of Scotland while Labour has been seen to focus on Westminster, and has gone

alongside their taking of the traditional policy ground of Labour, particularly as they moved to the centre under New Labour (Hassan, 2018). As the SNP has promoted Scottish national identity, and the Conservatives have championed Britishness, Labour sought to reconcile these Scottish and British identities (Ward, 2006), but to little success as their political power in Scotland has continued to decline. Unionist parties now have to put forward a distinct Scottish offer in UK General Elections which distinct Scottish leadership can contribute to, as was the case for Ruth Davidson whose campaign combining Scottish distinctiveness and strong support for the Union led the Scottish Conservatives to a their strongest result in nearly forty years at the 2017 General Election (Henderson and Mitchell, 2018). The SNP has successfully mobilised political concerns over issues such as austerity as a kind of 'other' for those who identify as Scottish since Thatcher, and Scottish politics during this time period has become increasingly distinct.

Although the SNP may have successfully promoted a particular brand of Scottish nationalism, it is not the case that national identities can explain the party's growing electoral success. Indeed, when the party first came to power in Scotland in 2007 it was not due to a change in the relationship between national identity and vote – instead the SNP's vote increased across all groups (Johns *et al.*, 2010). The party's return to power in 2011, this time as the first majority government of Scottish devolution, again cannot be credited to identities. The 2011 election was won by the SNP thanks not to its policies but to its performance in government in the previous parliamentary term (Carman, Johns and Mitchell, 2014). Given the importance of performance politics to the SNP's success, Carman, Johns and Mitchell (2014)

predicted that the 2014 Scottish independence referendum would be yet another test of performance, with voters deciding how to vote based on their beliefs about whether an independent Scotland would perform better or worse.

This proved to be the case, with voters' evaluations of the economic consequences of independence being key to their vote choice in the referendum (Curtice, 2021b). These economic perceptions also extended to predictions about the impact of independence on equality – with people who believed independence would reduce the gap between rich and poor being more likely to vote Yes (Henderson and Mitchell, 2015). These findings about the rational calculations that led to voters voting for independence demonstrate that growing support for nationalist causes is not necessarily predicated on a growth of nationalist sentiment. Indeed, qualitative research from after the referendum has found that it has not brought about a coherent nationalism in Scotland even amongst those who voted Yes, and has shown that in fact some young people go as far as to distance themselves from overtly nationalist motivations for their vote for independence (Breeze *et al.*, 2015).

These motivations for voting for independence or to remain in the UK were not purely impartial rational calculations however. Perceptions of whether Scotland was likely to be better off under independence varied greatly depending on the community one lived in, with those from the most deprived area only narrowly thinking independence would make the country worse off, whereas in the most affluent neighbourhoods more than twice as many people thought independence would make Scotland worse off (Curtice, 2015b). As well as differences between individuals in

the economic perceptions they come to, individual risk assessments have also been shown to impact vote choice in other referendums (Nadeau, Martin and Blais, 1999).

The Scottish independence referendum presented a significant issue for voters to consider, and faced the issue pertinent to many referendums of having reduced party cues since the campaigns were run across parties – although in practice this may have been a less significant issue in this referendum as each of the major parties were united behind their position. Additionally, independence was a long-standing issue of public debate in Scotland, so while it may not have been highly politically salient until the SNP won a majority in 2011, it was an issue voters were aware of and had a particularly long campaign which built throughout the three and a bit years between the Scottish Parliament election of 2011 and referendum polling day in September 2014. This campaign therefore represents quite a different political referendum to the equally significant Brexit referendum in June 2016, which came a little more than a month after the May 2016 Scottish Parliament election and only 13 months after the Conservatives were elected on a manifesto of holding a referendum in May 2015. As a result of the shortened campaign period with Scots focused on the Holyrood elections until a month before, the Brexit referendum had a lesser impact on public debate in Scotland – this was further reinforced by the fact that the major parties in Scotland all backed Remain and the issue of EU membership had received less attention from politicians north of the border (Henderson *et al.*, 2022). However, the shock of a result that went against the opinions of the majority of Scots does not mean that the referendum was necessarily less significant in its impacts on politics and political identities in Scotland.

As in the Scottish independence referendum, expected outcomes mattered in the Brexit referendum. Fisher and Renwick (2018) found that across Britain expectations of the effects of Brexit mattered, but generally such that Leave voting was associated with there being no expected change across different metrics, with immigration the notable exception. Scotland voted very differently to England and Wales in the referendum, with Scotland opposing Brexit while its neighbours voted in favour – only Northern Ireland also voted to Remain. Scotland faced a very different set of political cues to those in England during the referendum, and had a greater deal of political consensus with the leaders of all the major parties advocating for Remain. Indeed when the weight of establishment support behind Remain was so significant, Greene, Spoon and Williams (2018) have argued some Scots may even have turned to longer term concerns about the future of Scotland as reasoning for their decision - highlighting that there could be a strategic case to vote Leave for supporters of independence if they believed a British departure from the European Union would bolster support for Scottish independence.

Following the referendums in Scotland, there was further polarisation amongst the parties. The SNP's support of Remain grew more vocal as they claimed the vote for Brexit was a sufficiently significant change to hold another referendum on independence, while the Conservatives supported the vote for Leave as they sought to implement Brexit in Westminster. As Henderson et al argue this had the effect of further pushing Yes supporters towards Remain and No supporters towards Leave – and it 'changed (and at times made less clear) the cues from parties about different

constitutional and Brexit options' (2022, p. 14). This resulted in the Scottish electorate splitting into four 'tribes' or clans based on their combination of constitutional preferences (McMillan, 2021; Henderson *et al.*, 2022). Each of these groups is reacting to further changes in Scottish politics differently, and so this paper will seek to assess how national identities are shifting for each of these groups.

These tribal constitutional identities may be a relatively recent development in Scotland, but they are not weakly held – indeed Henderson et al's analysis demonstrates that these identities are more common and stronger than party preferences in Scotland today, leading them to conclude that 'constitutional issues, rather than partisan preferences, divide Scots' (2022, p. 152). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are variations between members of each tribe in how strongly attached to their identities they are, with cross-pressured voters such as those who back a political party who disagrees with one of their constitutional preferences (e.g. Yes Leavers) being less attached to their constitutional identities than those for whom these neatly align (e.g. Yes Remainers) (Henderson *et al.*, 2022, p. 158). These findings demonstrate that the new constitutional identities held by Scottish voters are part of their political identities, and so it seems likely that any shifts in politicised national identities will be seen unevenly across these groups, particularly as constitutional preferences link to national identities.

Research has shown a relationship between Brexit voting and national identity in Scotland which differs from that in England. In Scotland, those who identified strongly with Scotland were more likely to support Remain, whereas in England it

was British identifiers who leaned towards Remain and English identifiers who supported Brexit (Heath and Richards, 2019; Henderson *et al.*, 2020). However, national identity did not have an equally strong association across nations – with national identities being more strongly related to Brexit voting in England than in Scotland (McCrone, 2017).

The role of national identities in referendum voting behaviour may also have been significant in less direct ways. Sobolewska and Ford argue that the success of the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum compared to the Yes campaign in the Scottish independence referendum may in part be explained by the fact that the Brexit campaign was focused against an 'other' in Europe which few voters had much attachment to, whereas in Scotland the national 'other' of Britain had much stronger identification for voters (2020).

Given that as discussed here previous developments in the political character of national identity have been driven by past events, there is good reason to think that there will be continued differences between different political cleavages in how Scottish and British they feel today. These identifications may also have shifted over such a politically turbulent decade for Scotland. This brings me to my hypotheses.

Hypotheses

The major political shocks of recent years (that is the 2014 independence referendum, 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2020-2021 Coronavirus pandemic) seem likely to

have caused shocks to national identities in Scotland. I expect there will be significant differences in changes in national identities between individuals with different political identities in Scotland, and that these changes among different groups will drive overall change in identification. In this section I discuss both changes among different groups and overall changes, but hypotheses are articulated at the group level since it is these within-group changes which will drive any overall change.

The Scottish independence referendum politicised national identities, with nationalists and unionists competing to demonstrate how committed to Scotland's future they were. This is reflected in the greater alignment between party support and national identity seen by Bond (2015) after the independence referendum campaign – while there was little shift in national identities for SNP supporters (who already strongly prioritised Scottishness over Britishness), amongst Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative supporters there was a smaller proportion of respondents who prioritised their Scottish national identity. This research looked at the prioritisation of national identities, whereas the data used here allow me to assess changes in the strength of national identities. Looking at this different metric then, I expect that Scottishness will have increased for those who supported independence, and Britishness increased for those who opposed independence and so spent more time thinking about the benefits of being part of the United Kingdom.

In terms of overall trends then, I hypothesize that Scottishness will have increased during the 2014 independence referendum, where individuals were thinking about the future of their country and where those who were more strongly Scottish were, in the

end, more likely to vote for independence (Curtice, 2016). I do not expect an overall increase in Britishness due to the close nature of the result, where 45% of Scots voted for independence. This lack of a result for the Unionists to celebrate will limit the extent to which Britishness increased for No voters, and so be cancelled out by relatively lower Britishness from Yes voters.

> H1. The Scottish independence referendum increased Scottishness amongst Yes voters and Britishness amongst No voters.

The Brexit referendum I expect to have increased a sense of Britishness for some and Scottishness for others – due to the divides between different Scots on the future of the UK. In part due to the strong positions of the SNP and the Conservatives on the issue of Brexit, this political debate also became one with the potential to influence the formation of national identities. In particular, I expect the combination of referendum votes reflecting the stances of these two parties will shape changes in national identities most strongly – that is that those voters whose own stance matched that of the SNP (Yes Remain) will come to feel more Scottish, while those whose stance matched those of many Conservatives (No Leave) will have come to feel more British in response to Britain's choice to leave the EU.

In terms of overall trends, I hypothesize that there will be a decline in Britishness – while the minority of Scots who supported Brexit are likely to have felt more connected to the UK, those in Scotland who backed Remaining in the EU are likely to feel more removed from the country as a whole who decided against that. This sense

of distance may have been further exacerbated by the enactment of Brexit in the months and years following the vote, with the UK government taking a 'one nation' approach that could be seen as not in keeping with the plurinational nature of the UK (McEwen, 2018). Overall then, Scottishness is expected to increase. While those Scots who voted for Brexit may have become somewhat alienated from their fellow citizens it seems likely that this effect would be smaller than a corresponding increase in Scottish feeling for those Scots who believed that Scotland was being taken out of the EU against its will.

> H2. The Brexit referendum increased Scottishness amongst Remain voters (particularly those who also voted Yes) and increased Britishness amongst Leave voters (especially those who voted No to independence).

Finally, the coronavirus pandemic allowed the British and Scottish Governments to be seen to be taking quite different approaches to the significant political issue of the day. I expect that voters who judged a certain government as performing effectively in their handling of the pandemic will have come to feel closer to the country of that government, particularly if there was a significant gap between their evaluations of the two governments.

As to overall trends, as public opinion research shows that in Scotland the Scottish Government was seen to perform significantly better during the pandemic than Westminster (Curtice, 2020a; Gray, 2022) I expect that this unexpected shock to politics in Scotland will have increased a sense of Scottishness, as those individuals

who saw the Scottish Government as taking a distinct and more effective path in tackling the pandemic felt more connected to the Scottish nation in this difficult time.

H3. The coronavirus pandemic increased Scottishness amongst those who judged the Scottish Government's pandemic performance most highly, while Britishness increased amongst those voters who judged the British Government to have handled the pandemic well.

Data and Methods

This paper uses data from the British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP) 2014-2021 (Fieldhouse, E., J. Green, G. Evans, J. Mellon & C. Prosser, J. Bailey, R. de Geus, 2021), which has been running since early 2014, before the first independence referendum, until 2021. This panel study has the advantage of allowing me to show shifts in individuals' identities over time, and to see shifts over multiple major political events. Table 3.1 details which waves and dates translate into which time period in my analysis. For respondents who responded to multiple waves over a given time period, I use the wave closest to the significant event (e.g. referendum, change of premier or onset of pandemic). It should be noted that not all waves contain the relevant questions on national identities.

Table 3.1: BESIP Waves used in each time period

Time Period	Waves
Pre-independence referendum	Wave 1 (Feb-Mar 2014); Wave 2 (May-June 2014)
Post-independence referendum	Wave 3 (Sept-Oct 2014); Wave 4 (March 2015)
Pre-Brexit	Wave 7 (April-May 2016)
Post-Brexit	Wave 9 (June-July 2016); Wave 10 (November-December 2016); Combined Waves 11 & 12 (April-June 2017); Wave 13 (June 2017)
Pre-Johnson	Wave 14 (May 2018); Wave 15 (March 2019); Wave 16 (May-June 2019)
Johnson Premiership	Wave 17 (November 2019)
Coronavirus Pandemic	Wave 20 (June 2020); Wave 21 (May 2021)

A potential issue in the data comes in the British Election Study Internet Panel not always running separate panels for devolved elections, as it can be difficult to

distinguish the impact of devolved elections versus other political events. This is particularly the case for Brexit, where the post-2016 Scottish Parliament election wave is also the post-Brexit referendum wave. It is therefore difficult with this data to disentangle the relative effects of the two events. Likewise in May 2021 there was another Scottish Parliament election, but this is also the next wave conducted since the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic – and so there are likely to be multiple influences at play. As these cannot be precisely separated using this data it is worth acknowledging that these elections may also be part of the cause of movement in identities over this time period. However, the findings here still represent a valuable reflection on movements in national identities at times of significant political events. Disentangling these effects fully is a challenge for further research.

The complexities of overlapping identities in Scotland make measuring Scottish national identities particularly tricky. Frequently, research measures national identity in Scotland using 'Moreno' questions (a measure first applied to Scottish identities by Moreno in the late 1980s (Moreno, 1988)), where individuals are asked to select the relative importance of two different identities, e.g. whether they identify as Scottish not British or more Scottish than British (therefore assuming a degree of British identification). However, such questions are naturally limited by the fact they address only two identities at a time, and by the fact that they give little information about the strength of relative identities (e.g. how much more Scottish than British does one feel). Other measures of national identity can assess other aspects of national identification, such as national pride or attachment.

The BESIP overcomes the issue in Moreno questions of the lack of relative importance of different national identities by getting individuals to rank how strongly they feel each national identity on a 0-10 point scale, which can then be compared with their rankings for other national identities. Don't Know responses are dropped from the analysis – these represent a small proportion of responses in each wave, as illustrated in appendix Table C1. It is therefore changes in these scales with which this article is interested.

In order to assess the relationship of national identities and referenda positioning, I use past or intended vote in the appropriate referenda. To assess changes in response to perceived handling of the coronavirus pandemic is more complex, and for this I use a scale. This uses three questions on different aspects of government competence during the pandemic (handling of lockdowns, effectiveness of testing and the distribution of PPE for healthcare workers) which are asked of respondents in both the pandemic waves of the British Election Study Internet Panel in June 2020 and May 2021 to create a one to five scale where five represents the most competence – the government in question would be judged to have handled all three issues very well – and one the least competence. Further details about this scale are contained in the paper on coronavirus in Scotland, on page 167.

In my multivariate linear regression models of change in national identities, I also include controls for other social cleavages which have been found to be significant to shaping national identities and voting behaviour in Scotland. Scottish politics has long had a religious base, in particular in support for the SNP who traditionally polled

poorly with Catholics (Johns and Mitchell, 2016). Further, national identity has, perhaps unsurprisingly, been strongly linked to partisanship, with the SNP vote traditionally coming from those individuals who identified as Scottish not British (Johns and Mitchell, 2016).

Results

First, it is worth examining the descriptive patterns of change in national identities in Scotland over this time period. These results show the overall trends over the time period and also represent an answer to the first research question which asks what the changes in national identities were in relation to each major political event. Table 3.2 shows foremost that Scottishness is consistently higher than Britishness – and so the people of Scotland identify more strongly with the substate than the United Kingdom as a whole. It also demonstrates that Scottishness has stayed remarkably constant over this turbulent period in Scottish politics, with the exception of a small temporary boost following the 2014 independence referendum. Britishness has, however, seen a small decline over this time period.

Table 3.2: Means and Standard Deviations of Scottishness and Britishness by period

	Scottishness		Britishness		Scottishness – Britishness	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pre-independence referendum	5.6	1.9	4.8	2	0.8	3
Post-independence referendum	5.8*	1.9	4.6*	2.1	1.2*	3.1
Pre-Brexit	5.6*	1.9	4.7*	2	0.9*	3.1
Post-Brexit	5.6*	1.9	4.6*	2.1	1.1*	3.1
Pre-Johnson	5.6*	1.9	4.5*	2	1.1*	2.9
Johnson Premiership	5.7*	1.8	4.6*	2	1.2*	2.9
Covid	5.6*	1.9	4.4*	2.1	1.3*	3

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Before the Brexit referendum, Britishness was at 4.6 or above in all time periods, whereas after the referendum it does not exceed 4.6 – while these differences are small and at some points after the referendum Britishness is as high as at its lowest point before the Brexit referendum, by the end of the time period studied Britishness is lower and the gap between Britishness and Scottishness has substantially increased since the start of the study period – and since the Brexit referendum the difference has been above 1 point on this 10 point scale. This change in Britishness is striking when compared to the greater consistency in Scottishness, which ends at the same point it started at.

Another indication of consistency in these identities is the standard deviations detailed in Table 3.2. If Scotland was becoming more polarised around the issue of national identity, we would expect to see the standard deviation increase for each identity and for the difference between these identities. However, once more what we see is a remarkable consistency, with there being next to no variation in the standard deviation across the time period studied. These findings stand in contrast to media narratives about the increasing polarization of Scotland since the 2014 independence referendum.

Also relevant to these findings are the trend in those respondents who answered Don't Know when asked to place the strength of their national identities, detailed in appendix Table C1. The percentage of respondents who did not want to place themselves on this national identity scale varies between different time periods and for different identities, ranging between 1.7% and 6.4% of respondents. However, the proportion of those selecting Don't Know was higher for the Britishness scale than for Scottishness in all waves – presenting another indication that identification with the sub-state is stronger, or at least more certain, in Scotland.

However, as detailed above, I do not expect the changes in these national identities to be the same across all groups of Scots. Table 3.3 breaks down Scottishness by votes in the independence and Brexit referenda – and so addresses the changes within groups on which the hypotheses were focused. Again, the picture is one of remarkable consistency over this period, with some fluctuations and changes for some groups. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Yes voters score higher on Scottishness, but

there is not a consistent difference between Yes Remain and Yes Leave voters, despite the strong advocation of the Yes Remain position by the SNP. No voters are less strongly Scottish, however interestingly they have become more so since the 2014 independence referendum, and this is particularly the case for No Leavers. This suggests that there is some strengthening of Scottish identification, at least among some groups, though this is fairly small.

Table 3.3: Means of Scottishness by Referendum Votes and period

	Yes		No		
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	Overall
Pre-independence referendum	6.3	6.4	4.8	5.3	5.6
Post-independence referendum	6.5*	6.4*	5.1*	5.5*	5.8*
Pre-Brexit	6.3*	6.2*	5*	5.3*	5.6*
Post-Brexit	6.3	6.3*	5	5.3*	5.6*
Pre-Johnson	6.2	6.3	5.2	5.3*	5.6*
Johnson Premiership	6.3	6.4*	5.3	5.5*	5.7*
Coronavirus Pandemic	6.1*	6.4	5.1	5.4*	5.6*

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Table 3.4 breaks down Britishness by votes in the independence and Brexit referenda. Here again we see a clear split between Yes and No voters, with a much softer split between Leave and Remain voters. However, the gaps between different groups are much bigger than for Scottishness. In line with expectations, No Leavers are the most strongly British group, with Yes Remainers the most weakly British. It is worth noting that the drop in Britishness outlined in Table 2 is seen here in more detail – and from this it becomes clear that this decline comes overwhelmingly from Remain voters, who presumably have come to feel less attached to a wider country which

rejected their desire to be part of the European Union. This is particularly the case for those who voted Yes and Remain, who are the larger of the two Remain voting groups.

Table 3.4: Means of Britishness by Referendum Vote and period

	Yes		No		
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	Overall
Pre-independence referendum	4.1	3.5	6	5.8	4.8
Post-independence referendum	3.4*	3*	6.2	5.9*	4.6*
Pre-Brexit	4*	3.2*	6.1	5.8*	4.7*
Post-Brexit	3.9	2.9*	6.1	5.5*	4.6*
Pre-Johnson	4.2*	2.9*	5.9*	5.2*	4.5*
Johnson Premiership	4.2*	3.3*	5.9*	5.5*	4.6*
Coronavirus Pandemic	4*	2.8*	5.8*	5.2*	4.4*

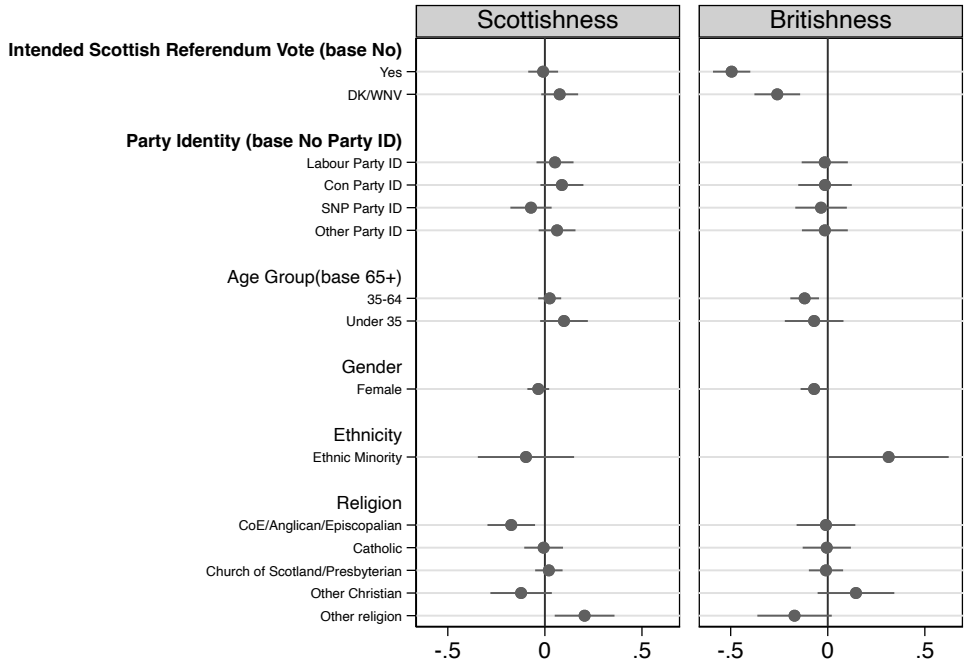
*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

For each of Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 the sample used includes all respondents who completed the relevant questions in a wave within a given time period. For robustness, appendix tables C2-C4 show the results only for respondents who completed the relevant questions in a wave within each time period. While a useful comparison, it should be noted that the respondents included in this sample are likely to be particularly highly politically engaged given the high number of long political surveys that they would need to complete over several years. These tables demonstrate there are only minor differences between using the full sample and a much smaller size returning sample, and so demonstrate that changes in national

identities are not driven by changes in the composition of the sample, such as from new immigrants moving to Scotland.

Moving on from the descriptive data, I then conduct regression analyses of the changes in Scottishness and Britishness over the course of each major political event. Figures 3.1-3.4 display coefficients (with 95% error bars) showing the change for each group relative to the change in the baseline group over the course of each major event. Figure 3.1 shows changes over the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. The results show little variation in the change across levels of the variables in the model. This matches with the findings in Table 3.3 which show Scottishness increasing across voters despite their differing perspectives on independence.

Figure 3.1: Coefficient plot of OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from pre-independence referendum to post-independence referendum



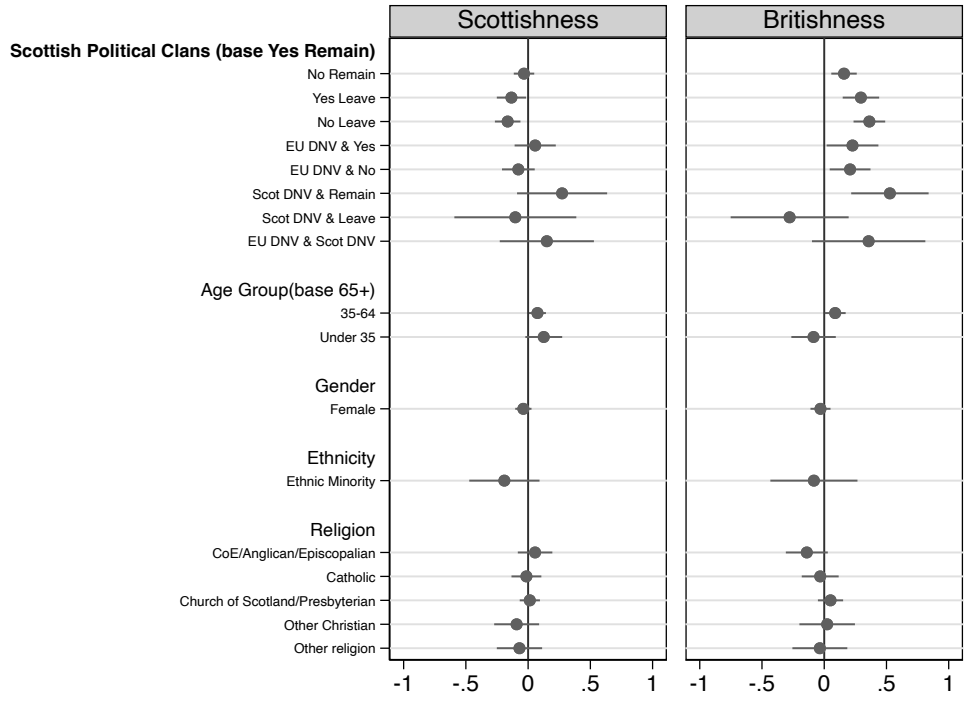
The findings suggest that those who did intend to vote Yes or who had not made up their mind in advance of the independence referendum became more weakly British over this time period compared to those who did intend to oppose independence. Referring back to Table 3.4 shows that in this time period Yes voters did become much less British, while No voters became slightly more so, confirming the robustness of the observations made in Table 3.4.

The findings here suggest that the independence referendum had the result of alienating those who did not vote against independence from Britain, as shown by

falling Britishness amongst not only Yes voters, but also those who did not intend to vote or had not yet made up their mind.

Figure 3.2 shows coefficients which represent partial effects on the changes in national identities over the Brexit referendum. This model does not include party identities because the shifts in Scottish politics between the independence referendum and the Brexit vote mean that by this point SNP partisanship is a post-treatment effect for referendum vote. The models in Figure 3.2 and future figures are therefore cleaner looking just at combinations of independence referendum vote and intended Brexit referendum vote.

Figure 3.2: Coefficient plot of OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from pre-Brexit referendum to post-Brexit referendum



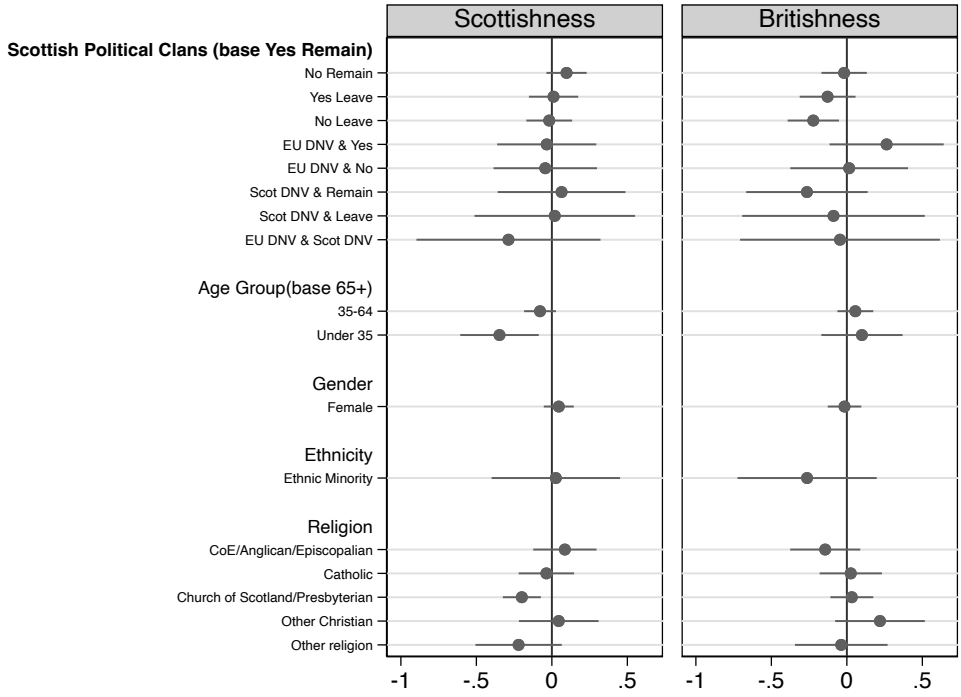
The results show that the Brexit referendum again caused little change in Scottishness amongst voters belonging to different political clans. While No Leavers become slightly less Scottish compared to Yes Remainers, this is not as a result of a shift within the former group, whose level of identification with Scotland stays constant in Table 3.3, but rather a reflection of the fact that this group did not see a significant increase in Scottishness as Yes Remainers (the baseline group) did.

There are bigger changes in Britishness apparent over the Brexit referendum, with most voters becoming relatively more British compared to Yes Remainers. Looking

at Table 3.4, this appears to be a reflection of the fact that Yes Remainers saw one of the biggest drops in Britishness over this period – and so other voters would have come to be relatively more British. However, this should not obscure the fact that Britishness was declining across all groups except No Leavers over this time period. It is simply the case that the drop in attachment to Britain was particularly strong for those who voted both Yes and Remain.

Figure 3.3 shows coefficients which represent partial effects on changes in national identities following the start of Boris Johnson's term as Prime Minister. Johnson might be thought to be important to the story of changing national identities given the extent of his unpopularity in Scotland (What Scotland Thinks, 2023a).

Figure 3.3: Coefficient plot of OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from before Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister to during his premiership



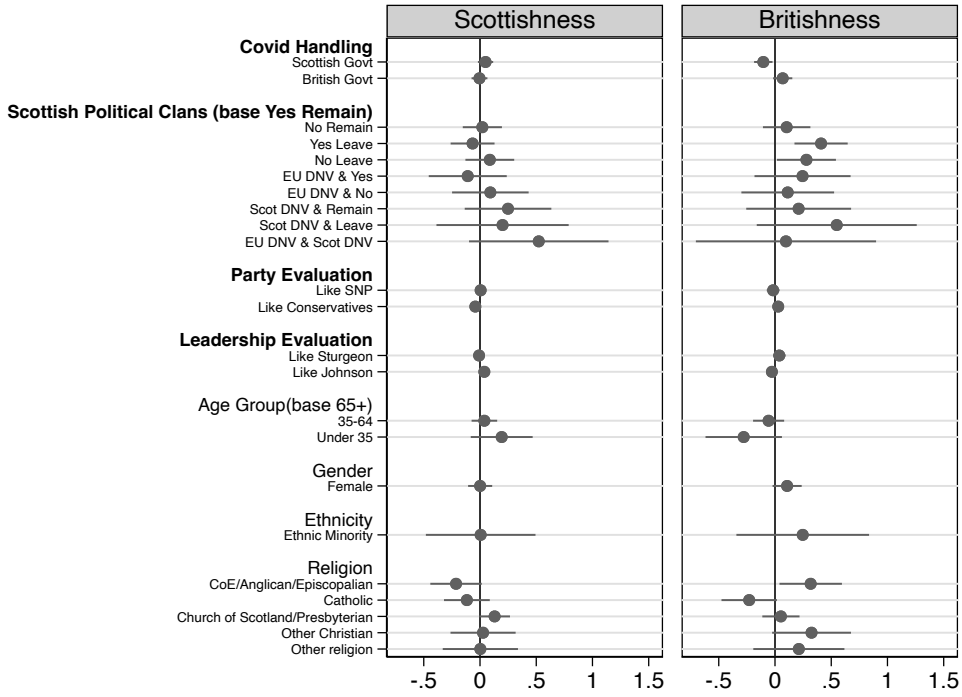
The models here once more show limited change in Scottishness between different groups over this time period. However, these models do allow us to confirm that the pattern in Table 3.3 is robust to controls. As shown in Table 3.3, the lack of differences between different clans reflects the fact that Scottishness was increasing amongst all of these groups in this time period.

Intriguingly, No Leavers did become relatively less British compared to Yes Remainers in this period – in contrast to earlier expectations of Yes Remainers being

further alienated from Britain by Boris Johnson. This is accounted for by the bigger increases in Britishness for Yes Remainers in this period as shown in Table 3.4.

Figure 3.4 shows coefficients which represent partial effects on changes in national identities over the coronavirus pandemic. As will be demonstrated in more detail in my fourth paper on the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland, evaluations of Government handling of the pandemic in Scotland were strongly influenced by prior liking of the SNP, the Conservatives and their leaders. These variables are therefore included in these models as controls.

Figure 3.4: Coefficient plot of OLS regression models to predict change in national identities from pre-coronavirus pandemic to during the pandemic



The findings suggest that Government handling of the pandemic made little difference to Scottishness, and that there was also no significant movement in strength of Scottish identity between members of different Scottish political clans. Prior party and leadership evaluation also do not explain variations in change in Scottishness. Although Table 3.3 shows that Scottishness was falling over this time period, it seems like both constitutional political preferences and perceptions of government handling of the pandemic fail to point to particular voters as responsible for this change.

The picture is somewhat different for Britishness, where perceptions of the Scottish Government's handling of the pandemic was found to be significant. Higher ratings of the Scottish Government's performance during the pandemic did significantly reduce the strength of British identification. Further, there are some differences between the Scottish political clans, with Yes Leave and No Leave voters becoming more British compared to Yes Remainers. Looking at Table 3.4, this appears to be the result not of a growth of Britishness amongst Leave voters but of a relatively smaller decline in Britishness amongst these voters compared to Yes Remainers.

The findings here demonstrate a change in national identities based not just on political identities but instead on the perceived competence of governments during a crisis, with perceptions of government performance moving voters to feeling closer or further from the nation – and indeed in this case with perceptions of good performance at one level of government leading individuals to feel less attached to a nation with a different level of government.

Discussion

The results here show minimal changes to national identities in Scotland, even over politically turbulent periods. While there is some truth to the popular narrative that Scotland is more Scottish and less British than it was before 2014, these changes are really very small. Changes in Scottishness have been minimal overall, though there has been a small increase for No voters. Britishness has declined more, particularly amongst Remain voters, but the magnitude of overall change is small. The findings here suggest there have been some changes to national identities following major political events, most notably in decreasing Britishness after the Brexit referendum, but the scale of these changes should not be overstated.

As well as minimal changes to the mean level of identification, the findings here suggest that it is not the case that there is more variation at the extremes either. This goes against the popular media narrative that Scottish nationalists have whipped up feelings of Scottishness, and that independence supporters are now fervently Scottish. These findings demonstrate that they are in fact barely more so than at the time of the last referendum in 2014, and that the greatest (though still small) changes to national identification in Scotland have been for Britishness. The findings here suggest that the relative decline of Britishness can be attributed in large part to the Brexit referendum. While Britishness did recover slightly after the referendum under Boris Johnson, it never again exceeded any of the pre-Brexit referendum levels.

During the independence referendum, those who did not intend to vote to keep the Union in place came to feel less British, while No supporters became more so. This is perhaps not surprising for Yes supporters who were voting against the Union, but it is striking that there was also a decline in Britishness for those who did not know how they would vote or did not even intend to vote. This suggests that the wide-reaching campaign around the issue of independence did do something to shift national sentiments.

The issue of Brexit is where we see the most movement in national identities – with Yes Remainers coming to feel more Scottish but less British. While there are minimal other changes in Scottishness over this period, there is a different picture for Britishness which drops for all Remain voters, though particularly those who voted Yes and Remain. While it is significant that these changes are among Remain voters, this is not to say that changes in national identities were a direct consequence of the Brexit referendum campaign itself as there may be other factors at play - although the fact that the movement in identities observed is for voters with a particular view on the Brexit referendum suggests that this was the dominant event in this period for influencing these changes. The referendum campaign in Scotland was a truncated affair, coming soon after the Scottish Parliament Elections so the shock of the result and the following reactions of the major parties may have served to influence voters more than the campaign before polling day. Further, the ongoing, uncertain and disputed process of implementing Brexit might have further alienated Remain voters from a sense of Britishness.

The rise of Boris Johnson to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom marked another shift in politics in Scotland, where Johnson and his views were largely unpopular. The UK instating a Prime Minister who polarised the public might therefore have translated into further polarising identities in Scotland. However, while Johnson becoming Prime Minister does lead to increased Britishness, this is not driven by further polarisation – and was also accompanied by increases in Scottishness. In fact, Yes Remainers become more British during this period to a greater extent than No Leavers.

Finally, the coronavirus pandemic marked an important moment for the UK, and for Scotland, where the Westminster and Holyrood Governments took differing approaches to handling the most significant issue of the day. Here we do see shifts in national identity – while Scottishness declines this is not due to differences in the perceived competence of the Scottish and British governments. However, declines in Britishness can in part be attributed to government performance. Individuals who thought that the Scottish Government had handled the pandemic particularly well became less British in their identification, even while controlling for their previous views on the major parties and their leaders. This suggests that voters may shift not only their support for parties but also their social identities in response to their perceptions of the merits of government performance.

The findings in this paper demonstrate that growing support for political nationalism does not require stronger attachment to national identities. Despite growing support for the SNP and for Scottish independence over this time period (What Scotland

Thinks, 2022, 2023e, 2023d, 2023b, 2023c), voters in Scotland do not feel substantially more Scottish than they did in early 2014. This fits with theories hypothesizing a ceiling effect for Scottishness – as the identity is so widely held it might not be plausible to expect there to have been further increases over this time period, even as constitutional issues have become highly salient. While Britishness has declined, this seems to be less an effect of the success of Scottish nationalists and more a consequence of Scotland being outvoted in the Brexit referendum by the rest of the UK – as the move away from Britishness has been driven by those who voted Remain in 2016. While Scotland may be more strongly Scottish over British now compared to before the independence referendum, in contrast to popular narratives this has not been driven by a greatly strengthened Scottishness. So while there is some truth to the idea that Scotland is becoming more Scottish and less British, these changes are in reality really very small. While there have been many significant changes in Scottish politics in recent years, a transformation in national identities is not one of them.

These findings suggest that Britishness continues to be more politicised than Scottishness in Scotland. High levels of identification with Scotland over time continue during this turbulent time period, whereas it is Britishness that shifts in response to these changes, albeit to a small degree. However, this paper does add a new set of reflections on the political associations of national identities in Scotland – showing that as constitutional identities have emerged as strong political identities, so national identities have become further related to these new identities. Political influences on national identities are not merely about party politics, but reflect a

wider set of political views. Over this turbulent recent period in politics, the fact that it is a constitutional identity, and a constitutional identity not solely focused on Scotland's future no less, which has the greatest impact highlights this development in the political associations of national identities in Scotland.

The fact that Britishness is weakening amongst Remainers may also contribute to this identity becoming increasingly politicised in Scotland. Britishness has historically been associated with Conservative support in Scotland , and as the Conservative party in Scotland after the referendum advocated respecting the result and implementing Brexit, this may leave Britishness in Scotland as more strongly associated to a Leave-supporting Conservative party.

The two referendums here represent a significant set of shocks to politics in Scotland. While to some extent these are external events – separate to everyday politics, and requiring voters to consider an issue rather than parties as they would in an election. Making choices on such issues are further complicated by the political cues available – while on the Scottish independence referendum parties were united behind positions providing strong cues to voters, in the Brexit referendum this was not the case. Although the major Scottish parties were generally more united, parties in Westminster, particularly the Conservatives, were split on the issue, creating a more challenging political environment for voters to make choices in. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the lengths of the relevant campaigns – with the Scottish independence referendum having a much longer build-up than the Brexit referendum.

Despite these differences, the referendums represented a common challenge to voters to pick a side on a particular topic which was motivated by wider political debate but represented a separate incidence of political decision making very different to an election. The effects of those referendum decisions have had wider consequences than might have been foreseen in advance. Referendum positions have become entrenched in Scottish politics, with Henderson et al (2022) arguing that vote choice in the independence referendum impacted vote choice in the Brexit referendum. The combinations of these attitudes have also become significant dividing lines in Scottish political behaviour, suggesting that these instances of political behaviour have wider impacts in shifting political attitudes, in contrast to the commonly accepted path from attitudes to behaviour. This paper adds another contribution of a way in which we see changes in attitudes which differ amongst groups who made different behavioural choices in their referendum vote.

There is a risk that this paper finds relatively little change in national identities as a result of the data it uses. The British Election Study Internet Panel is conducted online by YouGov, and contains respondents who are relatively highly politically engaged (with a mean of 6.9 on an 11-point engagement scale in May 2021) – and who are also individuals willing to respond to a large number of political surveys (a mean of 10 of the 21 waves, but with a fifth of the panel having responded to 17 or more waves). This high level of political engagement may result in respondents being relatively more committed to their political positions than less engaged individuals would be, and so the panel may understate the degree of change present in the population as a whole over this time period. However, this should be considered

alongside the fact that the Scottish population is deeply polarised over the highly salient issue of independence – this is not solely an issue which divides the politicly engaged. So while data collected face-to-face would be preferable were it available at appropriate intervals, and such may show more change, it seems unlikely that this would tell a greatly different story.

The findings in this paper must be considered in contrast to my findings on national identities in England in the previous paper. Looking at the relative strengths of identities in each country, Scottishness is held to a similar level of strength in Scotland as Englishness is in England – a finding which stands in contrast to popular narratives about the strength of Scottish identities (Appendix Table C6). So the big contrast between the two countries is in how strongly attached they are to Britishness – which is around a point stronger in England than in Scotland. There is however an indication that national identities in Scotland may be relatively more strongly held – and that comes in the much lower level of Don't Know responses given by Scots in response to national identity questions (Tables C1, C5).

When we turn to the patterns of change in national identities, these are much clearer in England where there is a clear pattern of declining national identities. Yet in both England and Scotland we see the influence of the Brexit referendum on identification with Britain for Remain voters. In both England and Scotland then, it seems the political events of recent years have influenced how strongly voters are attached to the nation – and that political decisions they disagree with can lead to voters feeling alienated from their country. However, while there are stronger patterns in England

than in Scotland, in both cases the declines we see in national identities in response to political events are relatively small. While we might see fluctuations in these identities in response to political events, there is also consistency of these identities in greatly politically turbulent times.

The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Support for the SNP and Scottish Independence

Abstract

The retrospective model of voting holds that parties are elected based on their perceived competence in government and punished for incompetence. This theory is complicated in contexts of multilevel governance as it requires attributing responsibility to a particular party in a particular level of government. This paper tests the extent to which this model explains public opinion in a multilevel context (Scotland) on a high-stakes valence issue (the coronavirus pandemic). Using British Election Study Internet Panel data from 2019-2021, it assesses how the public responded to the perceived competence of the Scottish Government and British Government. The results find that for each Government those voters who rated their handling of the pandemic more highly increased their liking of the governing party and its leader. Further, those voters who thought a Government had performed well were more likely to switch towards supporting the party in power, but this depended on how much they previously liked that party. Similarly, increases in support for Scottish independence from the UK came from those voters who not only judged the Scottish Government to have handled the pandemic well, but also previously liked the SNP prior to the pandemic.

Introduction

'Competence is a necessary condition of electability' (Green and Jennings, 2017, p. 1). Competency evaluations have long been seen as significant to governments' chances of election and re-election. Often, these assessments are seen to centre on economic performance, though competence can apply to a range of issues. Green and Jennings, building on Petrocik (1996), split these competence assessments into three areas: issues on which a party is seen as most competent on, short-term performance assessments and perceptions of general competence (2017). This paper focuses on the importance of short-term assessments on issues other than the economy, using the case of the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland.

The coronavirus pandemic is significant as a valence issue, an issue for which performance is significant to voters' perceptions. Stokes (1963) argued that competence is significant to issues when contemporary politics situates an issue as one based on competence rather than position, that is where voters agree about the desirable outcome. The coronavirus pandemic represents such an issue. While there were some disagreements among voters about whether governments should prioritise minimising the spread of the virus or supporting the economy, the overwhelming desire from the public was to halt the spread of the virus and minimise case numbers (Green et al, 2020). The outbreak further represents a potential 'electoral shock', a highly salient major political events which can shift perceptions of parties (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). There is therefore potential for the competence evaluations

discussed here to shift perceptions of the major parties far beyond the scope and duration of the pandemic.

Scotland is a particularly relevant case in which to assess the competence of government handling. The devolved setup of British governance meant that responsibility for handling the pandemic was split between the Scottish and British Governments. Where responsibility for performance is split between different parties, voters are less able to vote based on retrospective government performance as there is uncertainty about who is responsible (Lewis-Beck, 1988; Powell and Whitten, 1993; Whitten and Palmer, 1999; Duch and Stevenson, 2008). This is particularly the case in systems of multi-level government, such as federal systems in Canada, the US and supranational governance in the form of the EU (Cutler, 2004, 2008; Arceneaux, 2006; Hobolt and Tilley, 2014).

This is the case in Scotland, where multi-level devolved government has split responsibility for governance between the Scottish and British governments. While Johns (2011) showed that while many voters in Scotland were largely able to accurately attribute responsibility for issues to the Scottish or UK Government, this had little influence on moderating the effect of those issues on party choice. The coronavirus outbreak is an interesting test of voters' abilities to differently assess the competence of the Scottish and British Governments. While healthcare is devolved to the Scottish Government (which most Scots are aware of (Johns, 2011)), many aspects of the pandemic required coordinated Government responses, particularly the periods of lockdown and the vaccination programme. Other aspects of the pandemic

response were not devolved and so fell solely under the control of the British Government, such as the crucial furlough scheme which covered a large percentage of employee's wages, allowing them to remain employed even when there was no work for them to do. Further, some of the presentational aspects of the pandemic present in the media, such as the focus on the daily press conferences from 10 Downing Street may have made the pandemic response look rather less divided between the two governments and rather more the responsibility of the British Government than it actually was.

Furthermore, the Scottish case is important to assess because of shifts in public opinion illustrated by opinion polling during the course of the pandemic. The Scottish Government has received much more favourable assessments of their handling of the pandemic than the British Government (Curtice, 2020a; Gray, 2022). Governmental competence is established as one of the reasons for the SNP's growing support (Johns and Mitchell, 2016), with valence voting also having been found to be significant in Scottish Parliament elections (Johns *et al.*, 2009). Carman, Johns and Mitchell (2014) anticipated after the SNP were elected to form a majority government in 2011 that performance would be significant for voting in Scotland on constitutional as well as electoral matters. Indeed, during the pandemic support for independence also increased in the polls, consistently reaching a majority between the summer of 2020 and early 2021 (Curtice, 2020a; What Scotland Thinks, 2022), which media narratives attributed to the Scottish Government's effective handling of the coronavirus crisis (Brooks, 2020; Drury, 2020). Therefore, understanding the link

between perceived governmental competence, support for the SNP and support for independence in Scotland is pressing.

Literature Review

When Covid-19 spread around the world in early 2020 it immediately became a global issue, forcing countries to determine how to stop the spread of a virus that was moving across borders undetected. Each state made different choices about how to handle this pressing crisis within their existing institutional set-up. Dealing with such a fast-moving threat presented a particular challenge for multi-level governments in order to coordinate responses across levels when the split of responsibilities may not be clearly or neatly aligned. Responses to the pandemic were devised within existing structures which were not always designed to deal with a challenge of this nature, and these differences in set-up had consequences for how successfully the pandemic was managed. Pre-existing institutions, political dynamics and government relationships are important to explanations of differential performance in pandemic management across countries with multi-level governance (Casula and Pazos-Vidal, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2021). Some multi-level systems also had the additional complication of changes to the balance of responsibilities between different levels at different points in the pandemic, with shifts between more and less centralised approaches to pandemic handling in Germany, Italy and Spain (Kuhlmann and Franzke, 2022; Angelici *et al.*, 2023).

In the UK, the multi-level set-up of pandemic handling resulted in confused messaging, particularly in the early months of the pandemic. The UK ran daily press conferences at 10 Downing Street, fronted by the Prime Minister and other senior ministers and officials who were framed by Union Jacks, to provide updates and detail new measures. Flags are powerful symbols of national identity (Billig, 1995) and the use of them in the UK Government press conferences added to the imagery of the British pandemic response. However, in these press conferences it was rarely made clear whether measures announced applied only to England or also to devolved nations in the UK (Basta and Henderson, 2021). Research has shown the importance of consistency in crisis communication and that decentralisation does not necessarily undermine consistency, although it may be more challenging in a multi-level context (Schnabel, Anderson and De Francesco, 2023). The UK's failure to provide clear guidance about which rules applied where from its central communications presents a challenge not just for the efficacy of the UK's pandemic response but also for the public in the devolved nations to be able to attribute credit and blame to the relevant level of government.

In a paper also addressing competence assessments of devolved and British governments in different nations in Britain during the pandemic, Griffiths and Larner (2021) conclude that voters' pre-existing political identities were significant to explaining the perceived competence of these different levels of government. This included not just party political identities, but also national identities – with their results showing that more Scottish respondents had a more negative view of the UK's handling of the pandemic (Griffiths and Larner, 2021). This paper goes beyond their

analysis in several ways: examining the leadership dimension in influencing perceived competence, considering interactions between prior political attitudes and perceived government competence in forming mid- and post-pandemic party preference, and most significantly in considering the influence of independence attitudes. By nature of its looking across the nations of Britain, Griffiths and Larner's paper takes a comparative approach, whereas this paper is able to more fully consider the influence of attitudes towards independence in the formation of political attitudes in Scotland during the pandemic, and also looks to the consequences of perceived pandemic competence by assessing whether people who believed the Scottish Government handled the pandemic well moved to become more supportive of Scottish independence.

Party political motivations for assessments of pandemic performance in Britain were also found by Green, Evans and Snow (2020), although their research focused on the UK Government level rather than the devolved governments. Interestingly, their findings showed little difference between Leave and Remain voters in their competence evaluations, perhaps suggesting that political motivations to take a certain perspective on government competence are driven by partisan loyalty rather than by political attitudes. Across countries, research has shown that support for the government's handling of the pandemic was stronger if a respondent had voted for the party in government at the last election (Jørgensen *et al.*, 2021).

Attitudes towards coronavirus, the pandemic and how it should be handled more widely have been found to be influenced by a range of political factors. This is also

the case for those who took a more extreme view of the pandemic and came to accept conspiracy theories – belief in conspiracy theories about coronavirus has been found to be associated with those at the extreme ends of the political spectrum, with those persistent conspiracy theories concentrates on the far right of the political spectrum (Eichhorn *et al.*, 2022). Rejection of coronavirus vaccines has been found to be associated with wider attitudes, such as lacking trust in authorities and scientific experts (Lindholt *et al.*, 2021).

Wider social and moral attitudes have also been found to be associated with attitudes and behaviour in relation to the coronavirus pandemic. Personal morality has been found to be a predictor of people's behaviour and compliance during the pandemic (Pavlović *et al.*, 2022), while self-interested concerns predicted condemnation of others on issues such as vaccines and compliance with the rules (Bor *et al.*, 2023). National identity has also been shown to have a direct impact on behaviour during the pandemic, with those people who identified more strongly with their nation being more supportive of public health policies, acting in ways to promote public health and even staying at home more (Van Bavel *et al.*, 2022).

Not only have social and political attitudes influenced individuals' attitudes to and behaviour during the pandemic, but the pandemic in turn has the potential to impact people's social and political attitudes. Delhey et al (2023) find that health fears are particularly powerful influences on attitudes, with health fears actually increasing institutional trust while changes in economic fears can lower trust.

Existing research demonstrates that political attitudes have consequences for attitudes towards the coronavirus pandemic, and that these pandemic attitudes have consequences for social and political attitudes in turn. This paper will consider how these attitudes developed in Scotland in its context of multi-level devolved governance and of heightened political divisions following the recent constitutional referendums on Scottish independence and EU membership.

Research Questions

How do perceptions of the handling of the coronavirus outbreak vary between individuals with different political attitudes?

Previous research has established that partisanship shapes perceptions of party performance and responsibility (Rudolph, 2003; Marsh and Tilley, 2010; Tilley and Hobolt, 2011). Following this, I expect that strong SNP partisans will be more likely to attribute responsibility for the handling of those elements of the crisis they believe were handled well to the Scottish Government, while Conservative partisans will attribute positive handling to the UK Government.

Given the salience of constitutional factors in Scotland, and that there is some evidence that constitutional preferences shape attributions of responsibility in Scotland (Johns, 2011), I expect that there will also be differences in perceptions of the handling of the coronavirus outbreak between individuals with different combinations of constitutional preferences on the two major debates – Yes or No to Scottish independence and whether to Remain in or Leave the European Union. I expect that those who support independence for Scotland and European Union membership (Yes Remain - the position of the SNP) will be more positive about Scottish Government handling of the outbreak, while No Leavers (the position of half of 2019 Conservative voters in Scotland, as shown in this data) will give more credit to the UK Government.

For which voters has perceived handling of the pandemic increased liking of Nicola Sturgeon/Boris Johnson and the SNP/the Conservatives?

A key finding of opinion polling was that favourability towards SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon increased, as well as support for the SNP as a party over the pandemic. Here, I aim to establish whether this growth in support is predominantly among voters who were already favourable to the SNP and so have judged their performance during the pandemic more favourably. Equally, although the British Government's performance was criticised in Scotland, particularly during the first wave of the pandemic, it may be that those voters who thought the Government in London had managed the pandemic well moved towards supporting the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and his party. Consequently, I will seek to establish whether the pandemic has contributed to a more polarised Scotland, or whether increasing favourability has come from those voters who were previously less inclined towards the SNP and their leader, so increasing nationalist popularity across the board.

Are individuals who believe the Scottish Government has handled the coronavirus outbreak well more likely to switch to support the SNP or independence?

Are individuals who believe the British Government has handled the coronavirus outbreak well more likely to switch to support the Conservatives or the Union between Scotland and the rest of the UK?

Another key finding of opinion polling was that support for the SNP and independence increased during the pandemic. However, it is not clear how much this can be directly attributed to the SNP Government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak. The retrospective model of voting (by which voters assess government performance when making their vote choice) would hold that voters who judge the Scottish Government to have handled the outbreak well should be more likely to support the SNP in future elections, and those who judge the British Government's handling favourably should be more likely to support the Conservatives. However, whether such a valence model of party choice applies to voting behaviour on constitutional issues is less clear.

Data and Methods

While positive perceptions of the Scottish Government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak, increasing support for the SNP and a temporary boost in support for independence have been supported by various polls, there has not been so far been data available to test the impact of coronavirus on public opinion in Scotland using nationally representative academic surveys. Here I use the British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP) (Fieldhouse, E., J. Green, G. Evans, J. Mellon & C. Prosser, J. Bailey, R. de Geus, 2021), which has been running since before the first independence referendum in 2014, to assess perceptions of Government handling of the crisis and to test shifts in the electorate towards the SNP and independence. This panel study has the advantage of allowing me to show shifts in individuals'

preferences over time, in order to show the impact of the pandemic in changing individuals' opinions more effectively than cross-sectional polling.

Wave 20 of the BESIP was conducted in June 2020 following months of lockdown in response to the coronavirus outbreak, while Wave 21 was conducted in May 2021 following several more national lockdowns and in the midst of the first round of vaccinations, with 58% of Scots having received their first immunisation by late May (BBC, 2021). These timings are significant in limiting the story this paper can tell as they miss the peak of support for Yes in the polls. In June 2020, Yes had only just taken a lead in the polls, with this lead extending further later in the summer and autumn months (What Scotland Thinks, 2022). Therefore Wave 20 of this survey may prove to be too early to see the full extent of the coronavirus effect on support for independence, while Wave 21 may be too late, coming after No had moved ahead in the polls once more.

Existing research using Wave 20 data has found Government handling to be important in explaining defection from the Conservatives across Britain, particularly for those voters who voted for the Conservatives for the first time in the 2019 General Election (Green et al, 2020). However, this research did not consider the differing position of Scotland, where voting behaviour is increasingly distinct from the rest of Britain.

To assess the competence of the British and Scottish governments during the coronavirus outbreak I create a scale using the three questions on individual aspects

of government competence. These are: the Governments' handling of the national lockdowns; the effectiveness of the testing system; and distributing PPE for health workers. Together these questions each refer to salient and highly publicised issues in the public domain over the course of the outbreak, and these are questions which are asked of respondents in both June 2020 and May 2021, allowing for comparability over the pandemic. Unfortunately other questions on topics it would have been interesting to include such as vaccines were only asked in May 2021. To create a scale I average across the scores given on a 1-5 scale for the government in question for each of these three metrics – with five representing the most competence – the government in question would be judged to have handled all three issues very well – and one the least competence. In a pragmatic approach to reduce lost data I code all 'don't know' responses to neutral, however it should be noted that this does not affect the results and it only slightly enhances the sample size compared to removing these responses. As demonstrated in appendix Figure D5, removing Don't Knows from the scale has little impact on predictions of government competence. The scales have high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the British Government and 0.83 for the Scottish Government in Wave 20, and of 0.82 for the British Government and 0.83 for the Scottish Government in Wave 21. These high figures may also tell us something substantive – as it may be that respondents may have been guided by pre-existing partisan attitudes across issues rather than evaluating each issue independently.

To test the questions posed by this paper, I conduct regression models using this scale. These include OLS models to predict perceptions of government competence

and movement to support or oppose the parties of government and constitutional positions on the future of Scotland, and random effects models to assess changes in support for parties and their leaders. In these models there is clustering by Westminster parliamentary constituency to account for any unobserved constituency level factors or within constituency clustering – this should therefore account for any local area factors which might influence support for parties or for constitutional positions such as the influence of local MPs or local political issues and campaigns.

The models include a range of political factors potentially significant to competence evaluations and their consequences. There are natural correlations between some of these variables, for example between 2019 vote for the SNP, liking of the SNP and liking of Sturgeon – all three are included as variables in the models for robustness. However, this inclusion could create concerns about collinearity as omitting one of these variables in the models below could somewhat strengthen the effect size. However, removing one of these variables, such as liking for Sturgeon, does little to impact the overall models in practice. As detailed in appendix models D5 and D7 both liking Sturgeon and liking the SNP are already significant predictors in their models, and so while the removal of a variable may somewhat increase the effect size of another, any collinearity is not resulting in a lack of statistically significant effects here.

Given these associations may impact the effect size, the lack of significance when these variables are used as controls in some models should not be taken to definitively point to a null effect – such as is the case for the leadership variable in

Table 4.4. There, liking of Sturgeon is included as a control variable when considering whether voters switched towards supporting the SNP and independence. Due to the natural correlations between this variable measuring liking of the party leader and the variable measuring liking of the party the lack of significance of this control variable should not be interpreted to conclude there is definitely no leadership effect. Most importantly, the main findings of this paper are not affected by potential collinearity among the control variables because the main results highlighted in this paper remain statistically significant.

Results

Attitudes to the handling of the coronavirus outbreak in Scotland

The assessment Scottish voters make of the UK Government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak would not make for reassuring reading in Westminster. 73% of the Scottish public think the UK Government handled none of the lockdown, testing and PPE for healthcare workers well in the first wave of the pandemic, however this had dropped to 58% by May 2021. These figures are a strikingly more negative assessment of the Government's performance compared to those of English people (62% thought the UK Government had handled none of these factors well in June 2020, falling to 41% in May 2021) and Welsh respondents (66% in June 2020, 45% in May 2021).

By contrast, attitudes to the Scottish Government's handling of the crisis are notably more positive. Only 39% thought the Scottish Government had handled none of lockdown, testing and PPE for healthcare workers well in June 2020, with this falling slightly to 35% in May 2021. This matches with recent polling which suggests Scottish voters were more favourable about the Scottish Government's performance during the pandemic than they were of the British Government's performance (Gray, 2022).

While these headlines suggest a very different picture of perceived competence in handling of the pandemic between the British and Scottish Governments in Scotland,

it is not the case that all individuals perceive the handling by each Government as equally good or bad. As we would expect, political influences result in different perceptions of the handling of the coronavirus outbreak. Perceptions of Government handling vary substantially between supporters of different parties and by referendum voting intentions, as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, which utilise the performance scale described above. Appendix Tables D1-D4 provide further details on how these evaluations varied between different groups for each element of government handling used in the overall scales.

Figure 4.1: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the UK vs Scottish Governments by referendum vote, Scottish respondents only

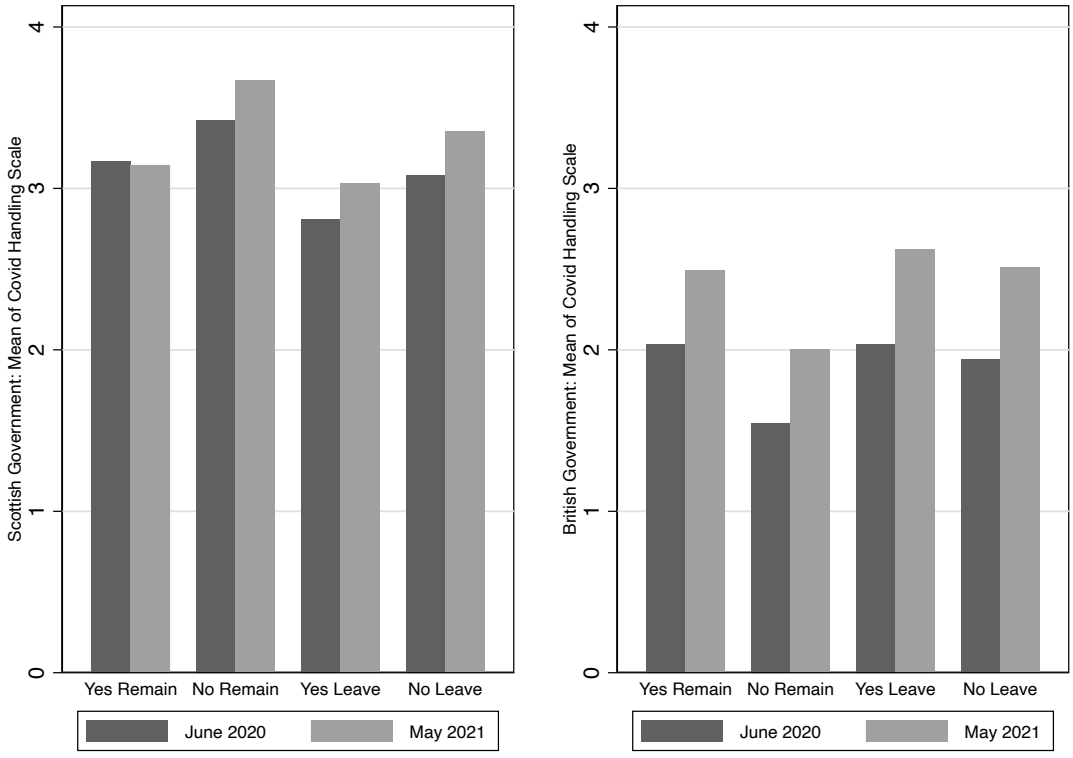
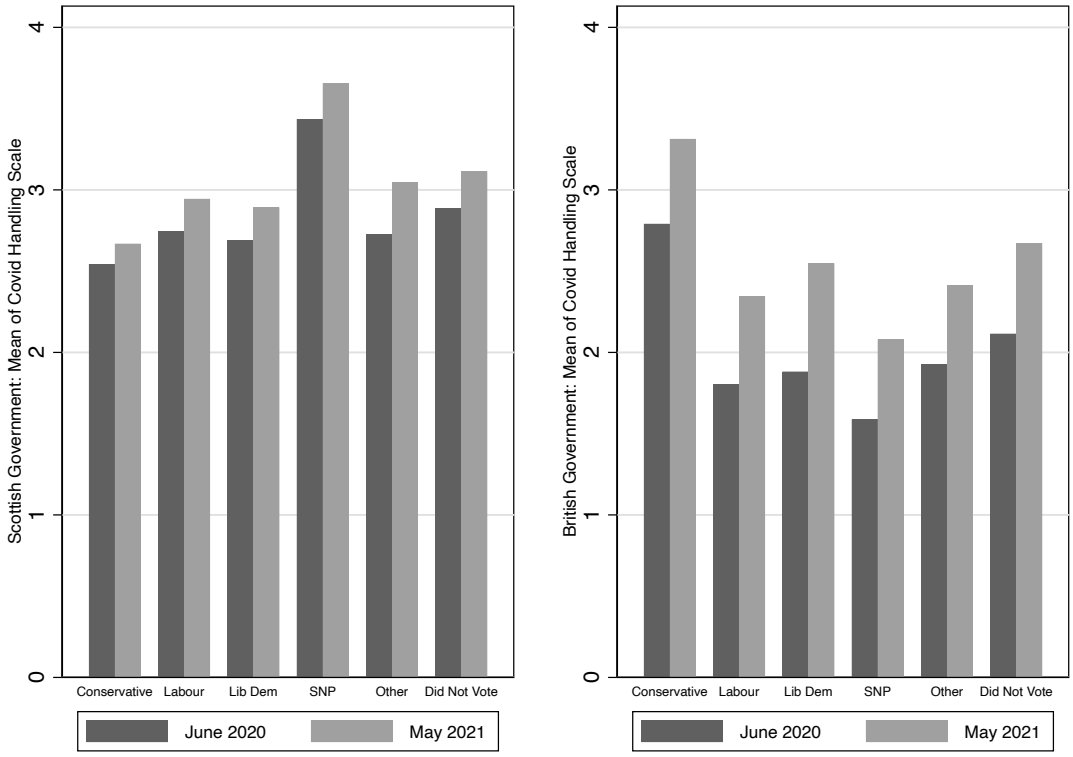


Figure 4.2: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the UK vs Scottish Governments by 2019 vote, Scottish respondents only

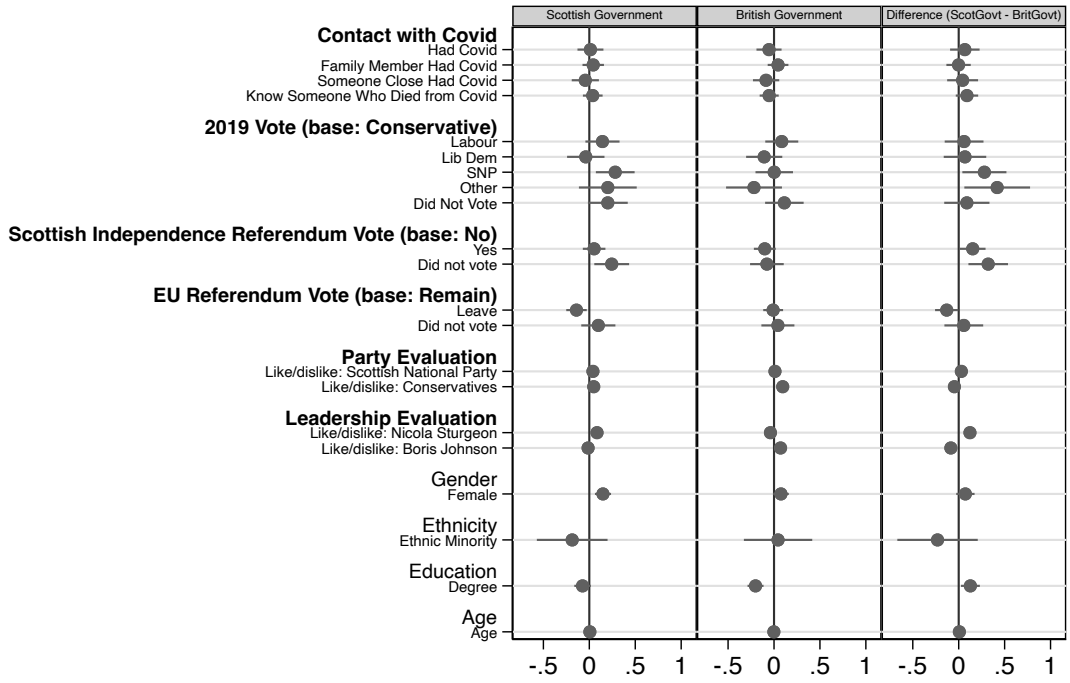


Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show that Conservative and No Leavers voters are most supportive of the UK Government's performance, while SNP voters and Yes Remainers are the group most supportive of the Scottish Government's handling. This suggests that political predispositions may have influenced individuals in their drawing their conclusions about Government competence, with those who already had higher opinions about the parties in charge being more likely to rate their performance favourably.

Though even beyond this, we find a large gap between the overall evaluations of the Scottish and British Governments' performances. This suggests that responses to the pandemic are not solely a partisan story – as even though more Scots identify with the SNP than with the Conservatives the findings in Figure 4.2 suggest that the Scottish Government received more credit from its opponents for its handling of the crisis than the British Government received from those who supported parties other than the Conservatives.

In Figure 4.3, I test to see whether political factors are indeed significant predictors of government performance, and particularly whether they are more so than one's own contact with the virus. One might expect that contracting coronavirus, or someone one knows contracting the virus, might lead individuals to assess government performance more negatively due to their own personal contact with coronavirus, particularly if someone they know has died. While Figure 4.1 assesses evaluations in May 2021 compared to party and leader evaluations from December 2019 – different dates are considered from the waves available in Table D5.

Figure 4.3: Coefficient plots of OLS regression models to predict the likelihood of judging Governments to have performed well in different aspects of responding to the coronavirus outbreak, May 2021



The results show that political factors have far more explanatory value than personal contact with coronavirus. None of the contact with coronavirus variables were significant in the models (Table D5).

The strongest political predictors were liking the SNP and Nicola Sturgeon or the Conservatives and Boris Johnson for the Scottish and British Governments respectively. Those individuals who liked the ruling party and its leader in the previous wave were more likely to judge their performance positively. Despite the

relative strength of these political factors, it should be noted that their magnitude is small and these models still fail to explain the majority of the variation in government evaluations – yet to the extent this variance is explainable these models make clear that political factors are key. Additionally, it should be noted that the liking of parties and leaders is naturally correlated here, and so the removal of one variable may further strengthen the effect size of another.

The final model in Figure 4.3 assesses which of these factors contribute to explaining the difference in the ratings of the two Governments. Here positive numbers suggest one is relatively more favourable to the Scottish Government compared to the British Government, whereas negative numbers suggest one is more likely to favour the UK Government's approach. Once more, factors related to personal experiences of coronavirus were insignificant, while explanations for this gap came from previous ratings of the parties and their leaders. Here however previous referendum vote becomes significant.

This section has showed that attitudes to the handling of the coronavirus outbreak in Scotland were political in nature and motivation. However, the pandemic has further had political consequences for the parties in power, which will be examined in more detail next.

Political consequences of attitudes to handling of the coronavirus outbreak in Scotland

As well as political factors influencing how individuals viewed the relative responses of the Governments of Scotland, I expect there will be further political consequences of the pandemic in shaping views of the parties, their leaders and individual voters' preferences going forward. Table 4.1 shows the net changes in liking of leaders and parties while Table 4.2 shows vote choice for the parties and support for the union and independence, broken down by how well respondents judged the Scottish or British Government to have performed in handling the coronavirus outbreak in May 2021.

Table 4.1: Net changes in liking of leaders and parties, December 2019-May 2021

Net change in…	Liking of Sturgeon	Liking SNP	Liking of Johnson	Liking Conservatives
Coronavirus Competence Evaluation (May 2021)	For the Scottish Government		For the British Government	
Positive	1.1	0.6	1	0.5
Neutral	0.4	0	0.2	0.3
Negative	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2	0
December 2019-May 2021 Change	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.2

Table 4.2: Vote Shares for Parties and Constitutional Preference (excluding would not vote/don't know)

	SNP			Conservatives			Independence			Union		
	Dec 2019	June 2020	May 2021	Dec 2019	June 2020	May 2021	Dec 2019	June 2020	May 2021	Dec 2019	June 2020	May 2021
Coronavirus Competence Evaluation (May 2021)	For the Scottish Government			For the British Government			For the Scottish Government			For the British Government		
Positive	74.3	70.9	72.5	60.9	59.4	64.3	68.2	64.2	69	88.8	82.1	82.8
Neutral	43	40.7	39	29.3	27.2	32.7	51.6	53.3	46.6	62.6	62.3	69
Negative	15.4	13.8	9.6	8.2	2.8	6.5	19.6	24.7	12.7	31.3	30.3	34.9
Total	42.8	44.1	42.7	24.3	21.5	23.7	47.5	48.7	45.5	52.5	51.3	54.6

Table 4.1 shows that those people who judged the Scottish Government's performance most highly increased their liking of Sturgeon and the SNP by greater amounts over the pandemic, while those who judged the British Government's handling most favourably increased their liking of Johnson and the Conservatives by the greatest extent. The picture for vote choice is more complex. The results here suggest that the increases in SNP support came from those voters who judged the Scottish Government's coronavirus performance more highly, while support for the SNP actually slightly decreased among those voters who judged their performance badly. By contrast support for the Conservatives increased amongst those who judged the British Government to have handled the pandemic anything but badly.

Support for independence shows little movement between the waves, although of the small changes there are the biggest increase in support for independence actually comes from those voters who were most negative towards the Scottish Government's coronavirus performance in Wave 20, before their support drops dramatically in Wave 21. The UK Government's performance also seems from this descriptive data to be related to support for the Union, with those who judged their performance most positively also being those most supportive of remaining in the United Kingdom.

The limited change we see in support for independence may be a result of when the waves were conducted and the fact that these missed the peak of pandemic support for independence. However, it also may be a result of the respondents to the BESIP panel generally being very highly politically engaged (a mean of 6.8 on an 11-point scale in June 2020, and 6.9 in May 2021), and so may be likely to have formed opinions on Scotland's key constitutional question early and be unlikely to change them quickly. Though it should be acknowledged that many Scots now have entrenched views on the question of independence,

and so these panel respondents may not be that different. Yet it's also notable that panel respondents have generally answered many waves of the BESIP survey (a mean of 10 of the 21 waves, but with a fifth of the panel having responded to 17 or more waves). This further suggests that many of the BESIP panel respondents are highly politically engaged. Therefore, the panel may be likely to understate the degree of change present in the population over this time period.

It is also worth noting that by June 2020, Yes had only just begun to creep ahead in the polls – while their lead became more established in the summer and autumn (What Scotland Thinks, 2022). Therefore Wave 20 of this survey may simply be too early to see the full extent of the coronavirus effect on support for independence, while Wave 21 may be too late, coming after No had moved ahead in the polls once more. Further research is therefore required to assess the full extent of the coronavirus pandemic on support for independence in Scotland.

Despite these concerns, the pattern of change in Table 4.2 suggests that the results presented here from the BESIP can tell us something about the changes in support for the SNP in Scotland during the first phase of the coronavirus pandemic. The remainder of this paper will concentrate on assessing how robust the findings of Tables 4.1 and 4.2 are when modelled.

In Figures 4.4 and 4.5, I assess why these changes in the likability of parties and their leaders have emerged, and how much this is due to the perceived handling of the coronavirus outbreak. The results suggest that the handling of their Government's response to coronavirus is a substantive factor in increasing the likelihood of liking both leaders and parties. Those who had supported one of the governing parties in the last general election also increased

their liking of the party they backed over the pandemic. While Yes voters came to like the SNP even more than they had previously, they also came to like the Conservatives less, suggesting that Scotland may be becoming even more polarised for certain voters.

Figure 4.4: Coefficient plot of random effects models to predict the change in liking of party leaders, W19-W21

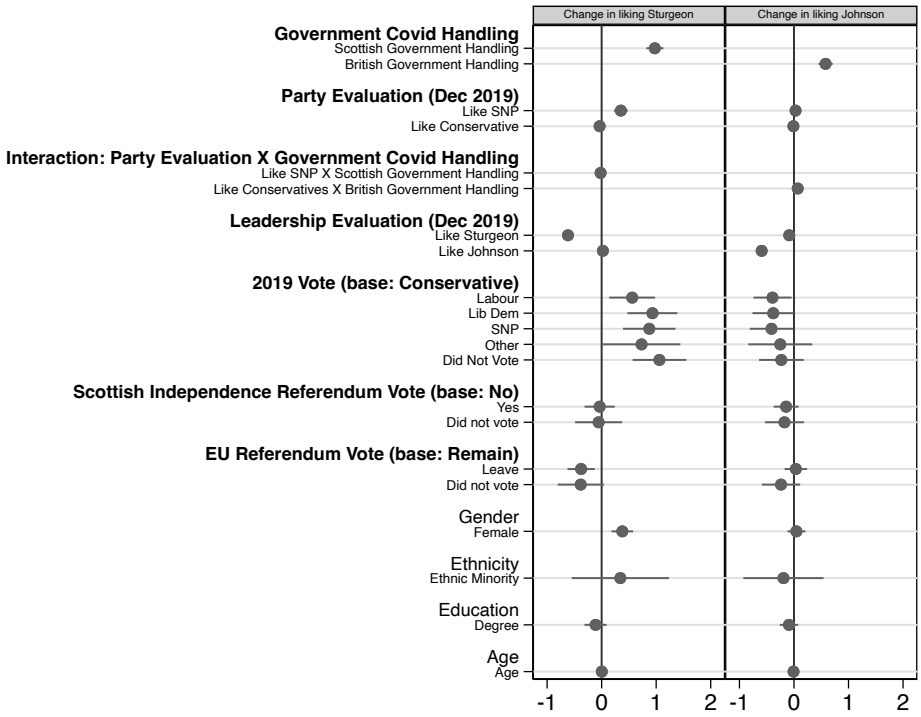
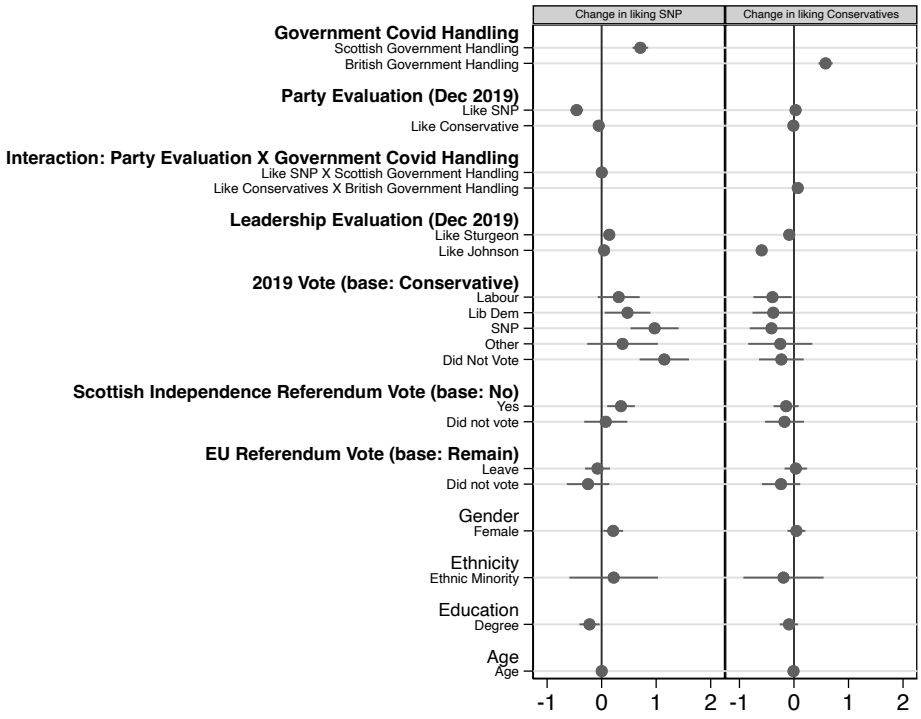


Figure 4.5: Coefficient plot of random effects models to predict the change in liking of parties, W19-W21



While on average voters increased their liking for the party and leader of governments they judged to have handled the pandemic well, it should be noted that the interaction with previous liking of the party in power, while insignificant, does create a different pattern of changes in liking for different voters (see appendix figures D1 and D2). This is therefore not merely a dose response where an increase of one point in the coronavirus handling scale results in the same level of increase in liking the party or leader however high or low that coronavirus handling rating is.

The overall increased likability of both the SNP and the Conservatives, and of Sturgeon and Johnson, are expected to translate into increases into support for the parties at elections. Table 4.3 shows the changes between 2019 vote and general election vote intention as measured in June 2020 or in May 2021, the latter being measured in the wake of the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections. It shows that SNP and Conservative supporters have moved away from their 2019 vote choice the least of the major parties in Scotland, and further that supporters of other parties, particularly Labour and the Lib Dems, have moved towards these parties. These movements towards the two governing parties may ultimately contribute to a more divided Scotland, given these two sides represent the extremes of the debate on the constitutional future of Scotland.

Table 4.3: 2020 and 2021 Vote intention by 2019 vote

2019 Vote	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	SNP
June 2020				
Would Not Vote	2.1	1.9	0	0.7
Conservative	65	6.3	10.2	0.7
Labour	3.5	50.8	19.3	6.1
Lib Dem	1	2.8	30.1	0.4
SNP	3.3	15.7	14.4	83.6
Don't Know	17.2	20.7	18.4	6.4
May 2021				
Would Not Vote	0	0.5	0	1.9
Conservative	79.1	6.7	17.4	1.4
Labour	7.5	49.7	11.8	6.4
Lib Dem	0	1.7	30.8	0.6
SNP	2	14.8	12.3	81
Don't Know	7.9	21.2	19.8	5.6

Next, I test the extent to which positive evaluations of the Governments' handling of coronavirus have contributed to voters switching to support those governing parties. Table 4.4 uses a linear model of change in vote choice, where the dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to the governing party and -1 if an individual switched away from the governing party. It shows that having a more positive evaluation of a governing party's performance during the pandemic does increase the likelihood of switching to support them, but this was only the case for those individuals who previously liked that party more, as the predicted probabilities are insensitive to covid evaluations for those who previously didn't like the party in power. Judging a Government's performance favourably was on its own insufficient to change how likely an individual was to vote for them. This finding tells us something about the extent of polarisation in Scotland – as even on a high-stakes issue being impressed with government performance was not enough to get someone to vote for a party they believed had performed well unless they already quite liked the party. This suggests that the pandemic did little to shift Scottish voters away from the patterns of polarisation already gripping the nation, and instead evaluations of government performance did little to move voters away from the constitutional or party clans they were already part of.

Table 4.4: OLS regression models to predict change in supporting parties or constitutional preferences, May 2021 compared to December 2019.

	SNP	Conservatives	Yes	No
Government Covid Handling				
Scottish Government Handling	0.022 (0.013)		0.021 (0.014)	
UK Government Handling		0.014 (0.011)		-0.014 (0.014)
Party Evaluation (Dec 2019)				
Like SNP	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.0039 (0.0065)	-0.038*** (0.011)	0.0069 (0.0080)
Like Conservatives	-0.010 (0.0058)	0.00014 (0.0083)	0.0092 (0.0063)	-0.0012 (0.010)
Interaction: Party Evaluation X Government Covid Handling				
Like SNP X Scottish Government Covid Handling	0.013*** (0.0022)		0.0077** (0.0024)	
Like Conservatives X UK Government Covid Handling		0.011*** (0.0023)		0.00060 (0.0028)
Leadership Evaluation (Dec 2019)				
Like Sturgeon	0.0070 (0.0067)	-0.011 (0.0060)	0.00068 (0.0074)	-0.0023 (0.0075)
Like Johnson	0.0027 (0.0056)	0.0036 (0.0050)	-0.0038 (0.0060)	0.0019 (0.0061)
2019 Vote (base – Con)				
Labour	-0.059 (0.033)	0.54*** (0.030)	-0.045 (0.037)	0.081* (0.037)
Lib Dem	-0.018 (0.036)	0.58*** (0.032)	0.022 (0.040)	0.073 (0.041)
SNP	-0.69*** (0.039)	0.58*** (0.035)	0.017 (0.043)	0.027 (0.044)
Other	0.038 (0.055)	0.57*** (0.049)	0.044 (0.064)	0.072 (0.065)
Did not vote			0.077 (0.046)	0.0058 (0.046)
Scottish Referendum (base = No)				
Yes	0.10*** (0.023)	-0.0050 (0.020)	0.021 (0.025)	-0.015 (0.026)
Did not vote	0.038 (0.037)	-0.012 (0.033)	0.0058 (0.041)	0.063 (0.041)
EU Referendum (base = Remain)				
Leave	-0.034 (0.020)	-0.0013 (0.018)	-0.019 (0.022)	0.033 (0.022)

Did not vote	-0.040 (0.038)	-0.012 (0.034)	-0.12** (0.039)	-0.074 (0.041)
Gender				
Female	-0.013 (0.016)	-0.024 (0.014)	-0.0076 (0.017)	-0.011 (0.018)
Ethnicity				
Ethnic minority	-0.017 (0.085)	-0.032 (0.076)	0.24** (0.082)	-0.024 (0.084)
Education				
Degree	0.00046 (0.016)	-0.0047 (0.015)	0.048** (0.018)	0.0012 (0.018)
Age				
Age	0.000075 (0.00059)	-0.00028 (0.00053)	0.0012 (0.00066)	-0.00073 (0.00066)
Constant	0.0065 (0.059)	-0.46*** (0.051)	-0.16** (0.063)	0.047 (0.064)
Observations	1260	1260	1247	1247
R2	0.350	0.292	0.065	0.019

t statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$
Note: Dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to the SNP and -1 if an individual switched away from the SNP.

The second set of models in Table 4.4 turn to the question of independence. As in the previous models, this also uses a linear model of change in vote choice, where the dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to supporting that constitutional position and -1 if an individual switched away from supporting that position.

While polls conducted during the pandemic began, for a few months, to predict a majority support for independence, that is not supported by data from the BESIP which shows that 41.3% of the Scottish population would vote Yes in June 2020 (50% of those who know how they would vote), only a slight change from 41.5% (49%) in December 2019. Therefore, while support for independence was growing in the polls over this time period, there is little change in our sample of panel data respondents. However, two points are worth bearing in mind. First, much of the support for independence came later in the course of 2020 but fell away again before our next wave of data in May 2021, with this peaking in the Autumn when polls identified support of up to 58%, with an average of 54% (Curtice, 2020b; Gray, 2020). Second, the analysis conducted here may still identify a pattern of change amongst those voters who did switch towards supporting independence during the pandemic which is likely to reflect the movement amongst the Scottish electorate as a whole.

A further consideration in these tables is not to over-interpret the lack of significance for leadership evaluations included here as a control variable for completeness. Given that leadership will be strongly associated with other political variables in the models, such as party liking, the null results here do not prove that leadership is not important.

The answer to whether increases in support for independence is due to the Scottish Government's handling of the pandemic appears to be yes, but only if they previously liked

the SNP, and only after the first wave of the pandemic (Table D8). However, having a positive view of the British Government's handling of the pandemic does not increase support for the union.

Conducting the analysis separately by political knowledge as in Appendix Tables D9 and D10 shows little difference between individuals of different levels of political attention. While this is limited by the very low sample sizes for those with the lowest political attention due to the over-representation of the politically interested in the panel, the results do suggest that these models explain relatively more of the change for those uninterested respondents as demonstrated by the higher R squared values. However, coronavirus handling is only significant for those with medium or high levels of political attention – suggesting that even an issue so momentous in scale may have had more limited impact on the political preferences of the least informed.

Discussion

This paper uses political survey data to establish that perceptions of the Scottish and UK Governments' handling of the pandemic in Scotland were explained more by political factors than by contact with the virus, influenced by how much individuals previously liked the parties and party leaders who made up those Governments. This supports the findings of previous research that partisanship influences perceptions of government performance (Rudolph, 2003; Marsh and Tilley, 2010; Tilley and Hobolt, 2011).

The paper further establishes that differing perceptions of the handling of the coronavirus pandemic by the different Governments of Scotland also have political consequences, and that these consequences may in fact be to increase polarisation in Scotland. Liking of the party leaders and their parties increased most amongst those individuals who judged their Government's performance highly.

Increasing support for both governing parties is found to come from those voters who previously liked the ruling party and judged its pandemic performance to have been successful. This suggests that the pandemic has served to further polarise Scottish voters. Judging a party of government to have handled the crisis successfully is not on its own a significant factor in explaining why one might move to supporting that party. Instead these increases are found to occur more greatly for those who previously liked that party more.

The picture for independence is more complex. The models tested here which attempt to explain changes in support for independence have little explanatory power. However, the results do suggest that those individuals who judged the Scottish Government to have performed best were more likely to switch to supporting independence if they previously

liked the SNP. These findings therefore provide some limited support to media narratives that the handling of coronavirus was significant to increasing support for independence. As the polls saw support for independence increasing once more in late 2021-early 2022 it may be that future data also highlights the importance of handling of the pandemic as being crucial to explaining changes to support for independence (Curtice, 2022).

There is, however, some suggestion in the data that the coronavirus outbreak has slightly softened the strongest dislike of the parties, with those who most strongly disliked the SNP falling from 32% of those surveyed to 30% and the proportion who most strongly disliked the Conservatives falling from 48% to 46% - yet these are small changes in a polarised nation. Similarly, extremely strong dislike of the party leaders fell over this time period with those who most strongly disliked Nicola Sturgeon falling from 33% to 26% of voters, and those who most disliked Boris Johnson falling from 47% to 44%. These figures provide some hope that the success of the Governments' handling of the pandemic may in fact have reduced some of the polarisation in Scotland by softening the strongest dislike for each party and its leader. However, it may be that these changes prove to be temporary – perhaps the result of voters developing some sympathy for leaders who had just experienced a stressful and severe crisis. Further, given the polarisation still present in the voting patterns in the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021 (Curtice, 2021a), it may be that these softening attitudes are a long way from translating into differing voting behaviour.

The findings establish the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland as a valence issue. Voters who judged governments to have performed well came to like the parties in government and their leaders more, although this is tempered by predispositions.

Further research on this topic could go further than this paper has done to consider the causal mechanisms at work here, and would benefit from considering this and other multilevel contexts in which highly salient valence issues have emerged to develop a structural model of how such events change political preferences. Such future research would allow researchers to assess the contribution of some factors such as past referendum votes which may be heavily mediated in the analysis here and would enhance both theoretical and empirical work in this area.

Additional avenues for further research would be to consider further the extent to which competence evaluations about one government in a multilevel context impacts the evaluations of another level's government. It may be the case that in situations such as this one, the perceived incompetence of one government may increase evaluations of another – so increasing the absolute as well as the relative values placed on their competence. This paper also raises questions about the extent to which political attention impacts such evaluations, and future research should consider the process by which political attention contributes to the formation of evaluations and to utilising these evaluations to guide shifts in political preferences.

Another suggestion for further research would be to assess this issue in the framework of proximity of government considerations in a multi-level context. For many parts of rural Scotland, the government in Holyrood may feel as far away as the government in Westminster and the relative proximity (or lack of) may impact how individuals feel about the relevant governments. Applying for access to postcode data for respondents and using these to add a measure of the miles to London or Edinburgh (or their Parliaments) could be a

valuable addition to future research's understanding of the factors that influence perceptions of competence during a crisis in a multi-level system.

This paper has highlighted the importance of competence evaluations on valence issues other than the economy in situations of devolved governance. Such competence evaluations have important consequences in increasing support for the party in government by those who have judged them to perform well, but crucially only if the voter already liked that party. There are also effects for competence evaluations in increasing liking for the party itself, and for its leader. However, the lack of relationship between competence and independence found here suggests that performing well in government may lead voters to like a party and its leader more, but they will not necessarily agree with its ideas more.

These findings have implications for the SNP's long-term prospects. While in the case of the coronavirus pandemic it seems they have largely not paid the cost of governing, having had another successful election result in the Scottish Parliament in 2021. Future research should consider how much evaluations of the Scottish Government's performance over the coronavirus pandemic continues to contribute to perceptions of the SNP's perceived competence following the change of leadership from Nicola Sturgeon to Humza Yousaf in 2023.

This paper has shown that attitudes towards the party do change to some extent to reflect the party's perceived performance in power – and so it seems unlikely they will be immune from facing the electoral consequences of actions their government takes which may be viewed less favourably by Scottish voters. The SNP has perhaps been lucky to have been in power over a period during much of which the Westminster Government has been unpopular in

Scotland – so ensuring they remain the favourable option despite any policy failures. If this is the case, it seems the SNP could suffer in future in a different electoral context in which there is a more popular and/or non-Conservative led government in Westminster, or the prospect of one with a Labour opposition looking like it will take power.

Further research on this topic would be enhanced by more survey questions which would allow researchers to better evaluate such issues by asking voters which level should govern on which issue. It is challenging to disentangle partisan perspectives on which party a voter would like to see handle a certain issue to which level of government a voter believes should be responsible, but an analysis of this issue would be a valuable contribution to the field. This paper shows that management of the pandemic by the Conservative British Government was unpopular in Scotland, whereas the SNP Scottish Government was seen as more competent. Therefore as well as these evaluations having consequences for the parties of government, they may have wider consequences for evaluations of which level should govern which I leave to future research.

However, while this competence may not result in higher support for independence in the short-term overall, it may contribute to a long-term process by which the competence of the Scottish Government as it has established its right to handle things differently to the rest of the UK, first under Labour/Lib Dem coalition governments, and now under the SNP, has led to the growth of a distinct Scottish politics and the establishment of Scotland as an appropriate level of governance to make major decisions (Hassan and Shaw, 2012; Finkelstein, 2015) - a process which it has been argued is also now happening in Wales (Bush, 2021). This legitimacy of Scottish governance may make the argument easier for nationalists – who can show that Scotland can already govern itself. If this is the case, then

the perceived competence of the Scottish Government in handling the coronavirus crisis could have political implications for years to come.

Conclusion

This thesis has assessed developments in political attitudes and identities in modern Britain and Scotland. Through four distinct papers it has considered a set of differing research questions and provided contributions to our understanding of attitudes and identities.

In my first paper, on the formation of class identity and highlighting the continued key role of parental socialisation, the contribution was to update our understanding of how this important social identity is passed down over generations – explaining why working-class identities remain high even as working-class occupations have declined. It further contributes to an understanding of the political nature of class identity – which not only influences voting behaviour, but is itself influenced by parental partisanship and co-formed with one's own partisan identities. This raises further questions for future research to consider about whether other identities that are not ostensibly partisan may be similarly influenced by partisanship.

The findings here provide a contribution which should be considered in the wider debate on class politics in Britain. These results contribute to explaining why class identity remains strongly linked to voting behaviour in a way that objective social class is not so clearly following declines in traditional class voting. The results also provide an indication that an aspect of class (in identification) remains politically significant while relatively immune to labour market change (since occupation represents only a small part of the story of the formation of these identities). This paper has therefore provided an important balance to existing literature which focuses on the death of class politics.

Turning to my research on national identities in England, the paper finds that both Englishness and Britishness have declined, though the fall in Englishness has been steeper.

The changes in both of these identities are driven by the same group of voters – those who supported Remain in the 2016 EU referendum. Following that result they have become more distinct from Leavers in their national identities and have come to identify less strongly with both England and Britain. Given the close relationship between national identities in England it is perhaps unsurprising that they are falling together amongst Remainers post-Brexit as they feel alienated from the political choice of their country which for most in England is both England and Britain. This paper then adds a contribution to research on how Brexit has divided Britain – leading to changed political attitudes and identities.

Conducting a similar analysis in Scotland finds a different set of changes in national identities over the same time period, though this is to be expected given the different relationships between national identities in Scotland compared to England. In England, Englishness and Britishness are closely entwined, whereas in Scotland there is more of a trade-off – while many Scots hold both identities strongly, more people prioritise Scottishness over Britishness (Henderson *et al.*, 2020; Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021; What Scotland Thinks, 2024). This paper finds that despite popular narratives of the growth of Scottish political nationalism since 2014, there has not been a great strengthening of Scottish national identity. This is however perhaps not surprising given the high levels of pre-existing identification with Scottishness which may have hit a ceiling effect. However, there has been some separation between the strengths of Scottishness and Britishness with Britishness declining over this time period, driven by Remainers feeling less British after the Brexit referendum. The paper therefore demonstrates that nationalist movements can thrive without great changes to national identity, provided that this was already a strong social identity.

The fact that it is just Britishness falling in Scotland talks to how national identities work differently across the nations of Britain, and have different political associations. The fall of Britishness amongt Remainers in England and Scotland shows a way in which Britishness does work similarly in different parts of the UK, though its starting level of strength and relationship with substate identities may be different.

Looking at the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland provided an important test on the formation of and consequences of competence assessments on a highly salient issues split between two strands of multi-level governance. The paper demonstrated that, in a polarised context such as Scotland, prior perceptions matter. As such, prior political attitudes contributed to explaining who believed which government to have performed well during this high-stakes scenario. Prior attitudes also moderated the impact of competence on later attitudes towards the parties, their leaders and the constitutional positions they stood for. As such, while support for the SNP grew during the pandemic amongst those who judged their government to have handled the situation well, it was still driven by those who previously liked the party. The results in this paper provide an important wider contribution in demonstrating the limits of competence evaluations, even in moments of global shocks. While these evaluations have a role to play in determining individuals vote choice, they do not take place independent of previous political attitudes. This represents an important finding in the newly emerging field of research assessing the political consequences of the pandemic.

Together these four papers represent a set of important contributions to understanding the development of political attitude and identities in Britain and Scotland over the last decade. While in many ways both Britain and Scotland have been transformed by recent political

events, the findings here also show some points of constancy. Class identities remain important in Britain, and while their formation is impacted by occupation, the parental transmission of class and party identities remains a powerful force in creating political identities in Britain – much as it was in the 1960s. Most voters still hold fairly strong national identities too in both Scotland and England, although Brexit has alienated voters who disagree with it from countries who voted for it. Perceived government competence still matters too in influencing voters' party preferences, even in highly polarised environments. There may have been many significant changes in British and Scottish politics in recent years, but political attitudes and identities are in many cases merely further developed by these changes rather than transformed.

Methodologically, these papers have been drawn from quantitative analysis of survey data collected by the British Election Study, utilising both their face-to-face data collected after each General Election and their internet panel study conducted at regular intervals since 2014. The questions included in different iterations of this long-running survey project have contributed to the shape of this thesis – and the contrasts between the papers raise issues about which questions it would be valuable to include in future surveys. The first paper on class identities in Britain is the only one looking at identities over the long-term, using recall questions asked of adult respondents about their parents' situation and attitudes when they were growing up. Later papers use internet panel data, allowing for consideration of changes within respondents over time, but focusing on a much shorter timeline.

Considering some of the questions about the formation and development of these identities on different timescales where questions are available to do so would contribute further to our understanding. The class identity paper raises a question about the long-term formations of

national identities, particularly as while there has been some movement in these identities in response to political events these have been fairly small in magnitude. In particular, in Scotland it might be the case that strong Scottish national identities may become more partisan over time if the children of SNP voters think of themselves as more Scottish. If this is the case, and given the established relationship between national identity and referendum vote choice in Scotland (Curtice, 2016), this would create a dilemma for Unionist politicians who could be incentivised to encourage increases in British identity. Such further research on national identities would also benefit from a broader examination of the influence of region, the urban/rural divide and how such identities are formed differently for immigrants and the children of immigrants. While considering these long-term factors in the formation of national identities would require the right data (a high sample size of Scottish respondents would be necessary for example, particularly as the proportion of SNP backing parents is likely to be low among voting age Scots) this would be a valuable avenue for future research.

Additionally, looking at the stability of class identity over time would be an interesting project. Having demonstrated that these class identities are formed in such a long-term manner via parental socialisation, it would be valuable to test whether these long-term influences outweigh short-term political shocks. Subjective class questions have been included more regularly in later waves of the British Election Study Internet Panel, and these additional questions will allow future researchers to address a wealth of questions on the formation, role and impact of class identity in modern Britain.

Further research would also benefit from expanding the analysis here of the impact of political events on national identities to other nations of the UK. While in Wales this would be possible to do comparatively using British Election Study data, though was beyond the

scope of this thesis, in Northern Ireland this would require further challenges of both data and event selection.

Further work on the cross-overs between class and national identities would also be valuable to an understanding of modern British voting behaviour. Such identities might work together or reinforce each other, much as I showed class identity and party identity do. This, alongside understanding whether these identities change in response to political events in similar ways, would contribute to our understanding of the influence of social identities on voting. Such understanding would be further enhanced by also drawing the links between these identities and wider social values which influence both political attitudes and voting. If different combinations of class and national identities relate to different value profiles this could tell us not just how these voters are likely to vote today, but may be useful as a tool in prediction models examining political change. As partisanship becomes a less stable identity in driving political behaviour, it is paramount to understand other identities, their stability, and their influences on voters.

While this thesis raises many questions and presents avenues for future research, the findings do tell us something about Britain today. They contribute to a movement away from looking at Britain only as one coherent country – instead to understand British politics we also need to understand the units that make up Britain. Understanding politics in these differing units also involves understanding the people who live in them, and what factors influence their political attitudes and identities. This thesis has contributed to this understanding – addressing how identities are formed, how they change in response to political events and how major political events shift political attitudes. Together these findings contribute to a picture of a changing Britain, with a more volatile electorate and significant political changes.

While new identities have emerged in recent years, and other identities have continued to fade, this thesis asserts that understanding identities is still key to understanding voting behaviour in Britain and in Scotland.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Class Identity

Figure A1: Logistic regression for likelihood to vote Labour or Conservative (Model 9 in Table A3)

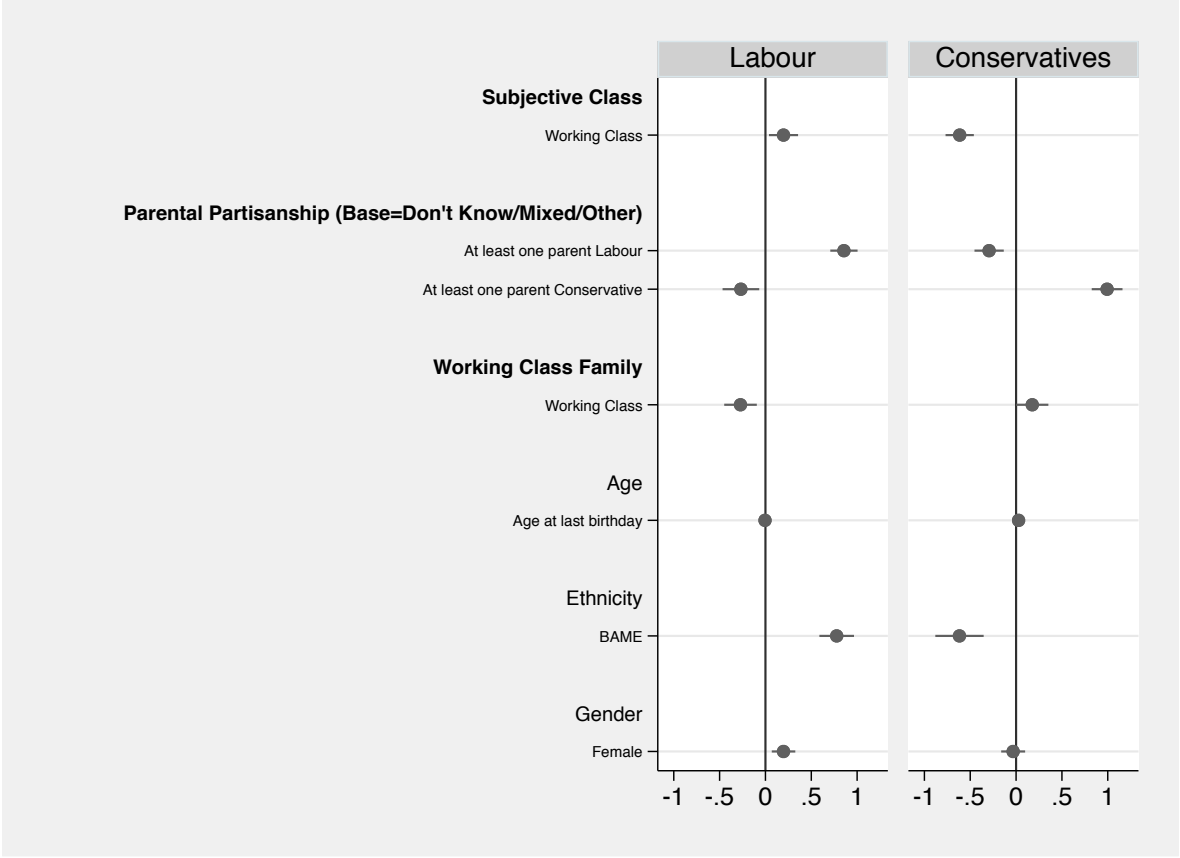


Figure A2: Logistic Regression for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative (Model 24 in Table A6)

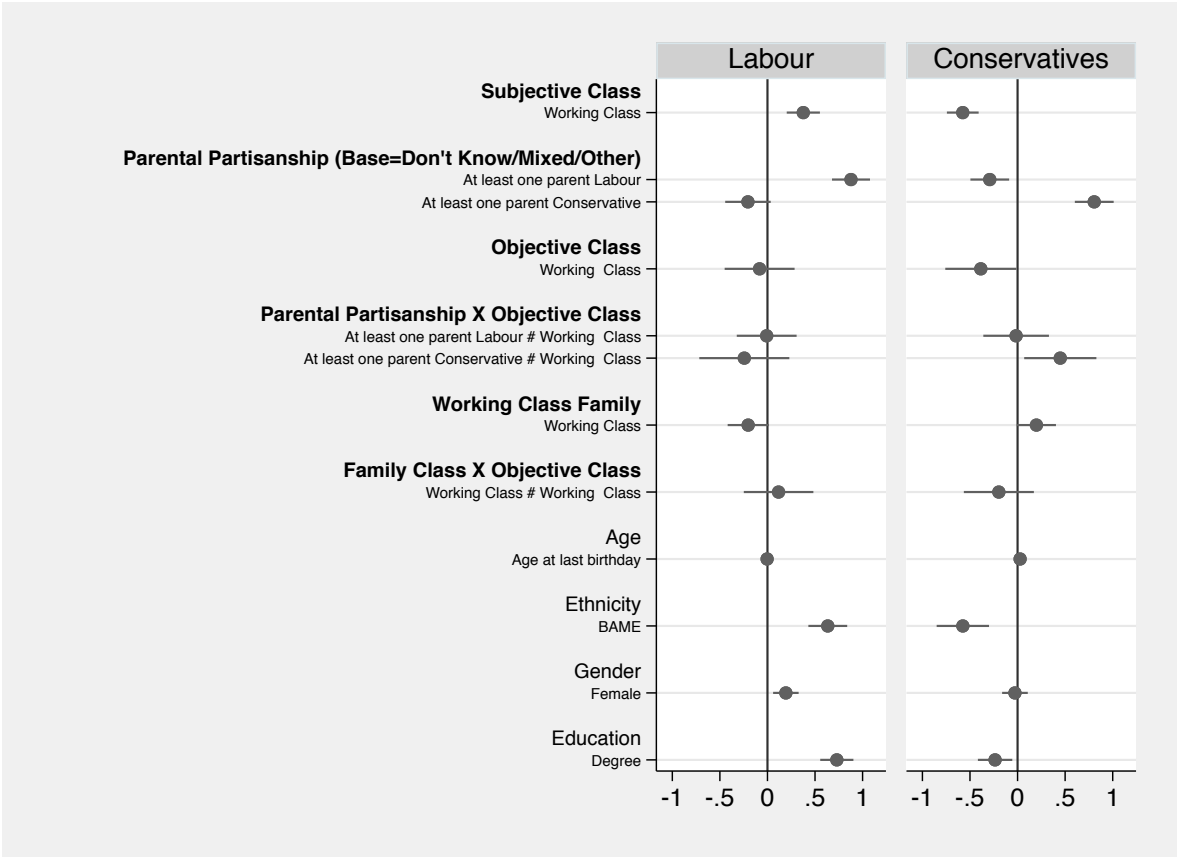


Figure A3: Logistic Regression Model for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Comparison of Men and Women

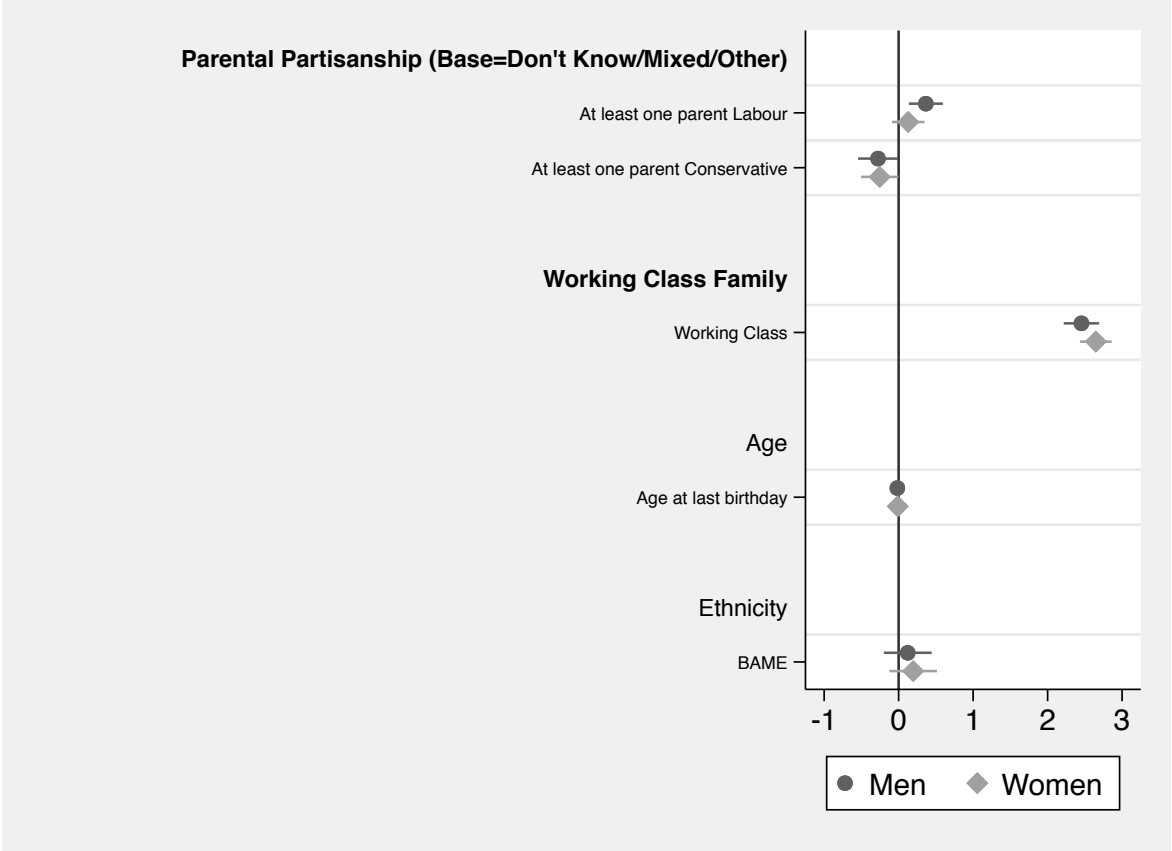


Figure A4: Logistic Regression Model for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Comparison of White and Ethnic Minority Respondents

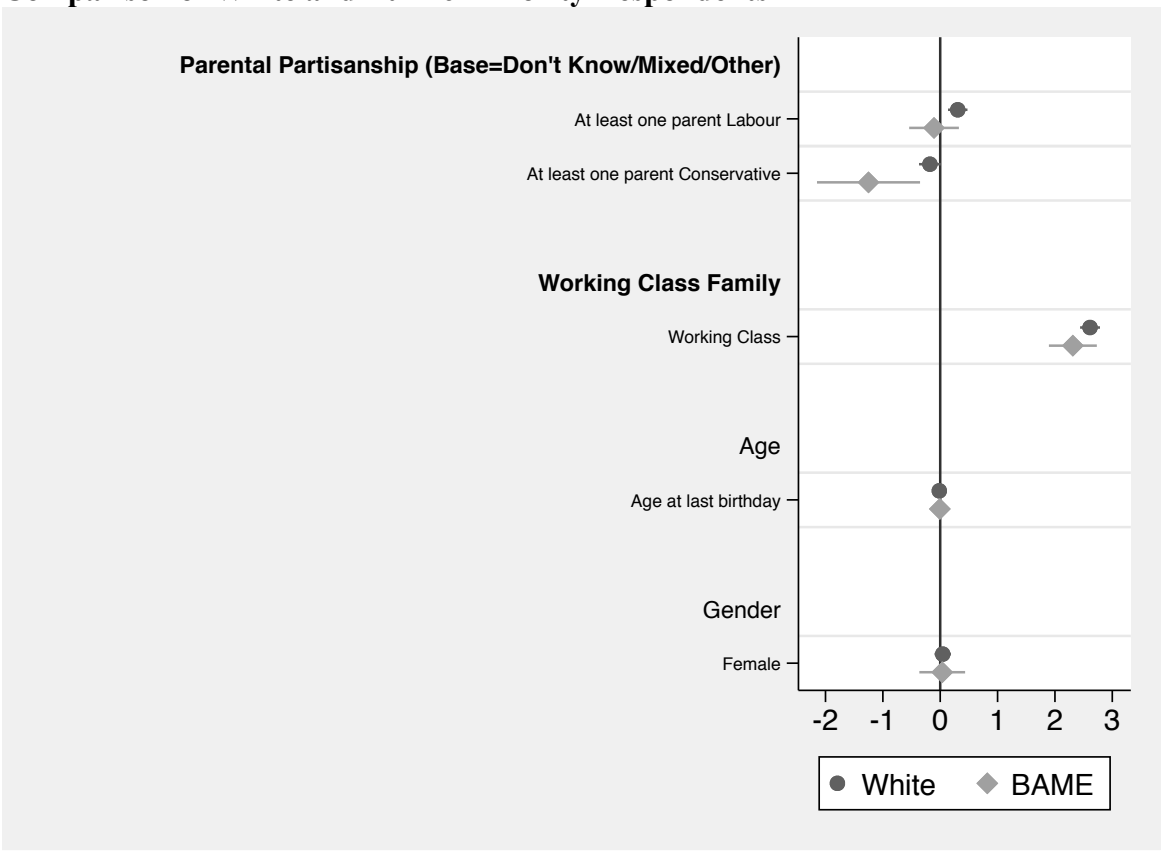


Figure A5: Logistic Regression Model for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Comparison of Male/Female/White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

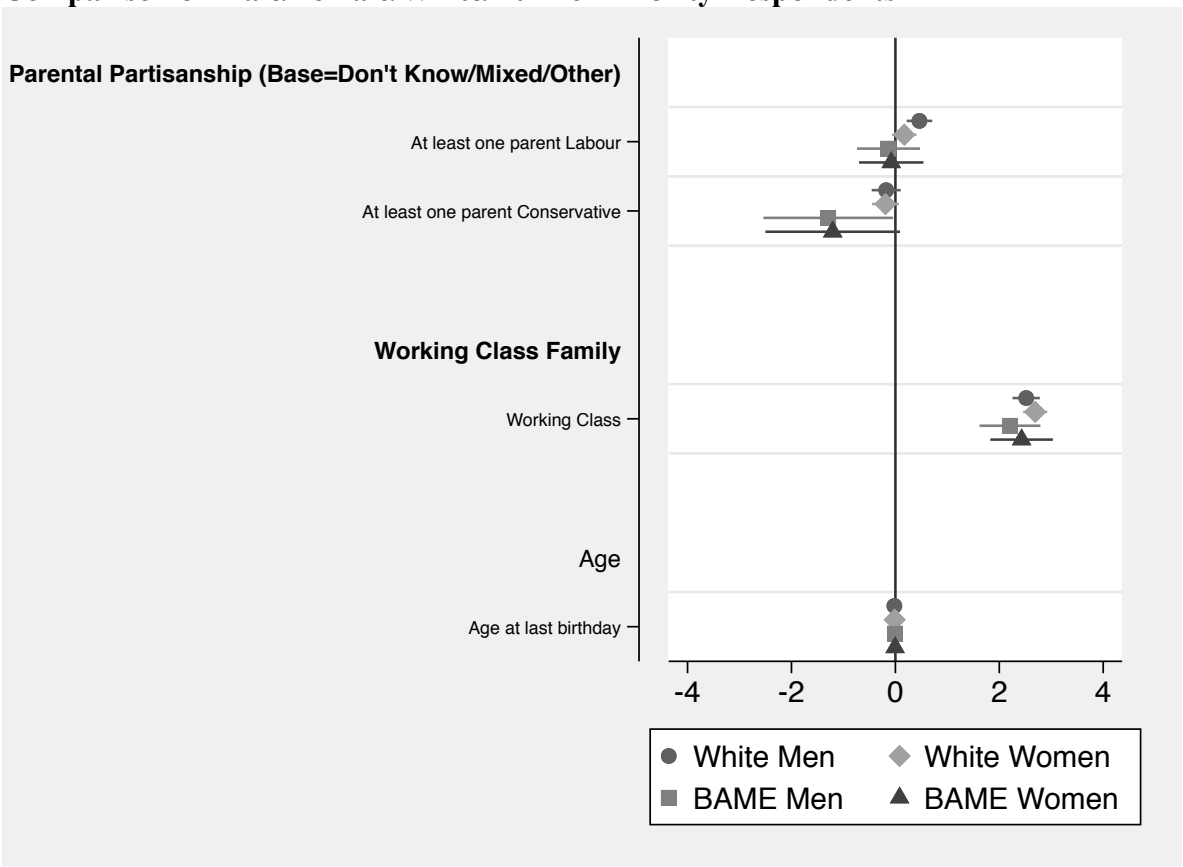


Figure A6: Logistic Regression Model for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Comparison by Region

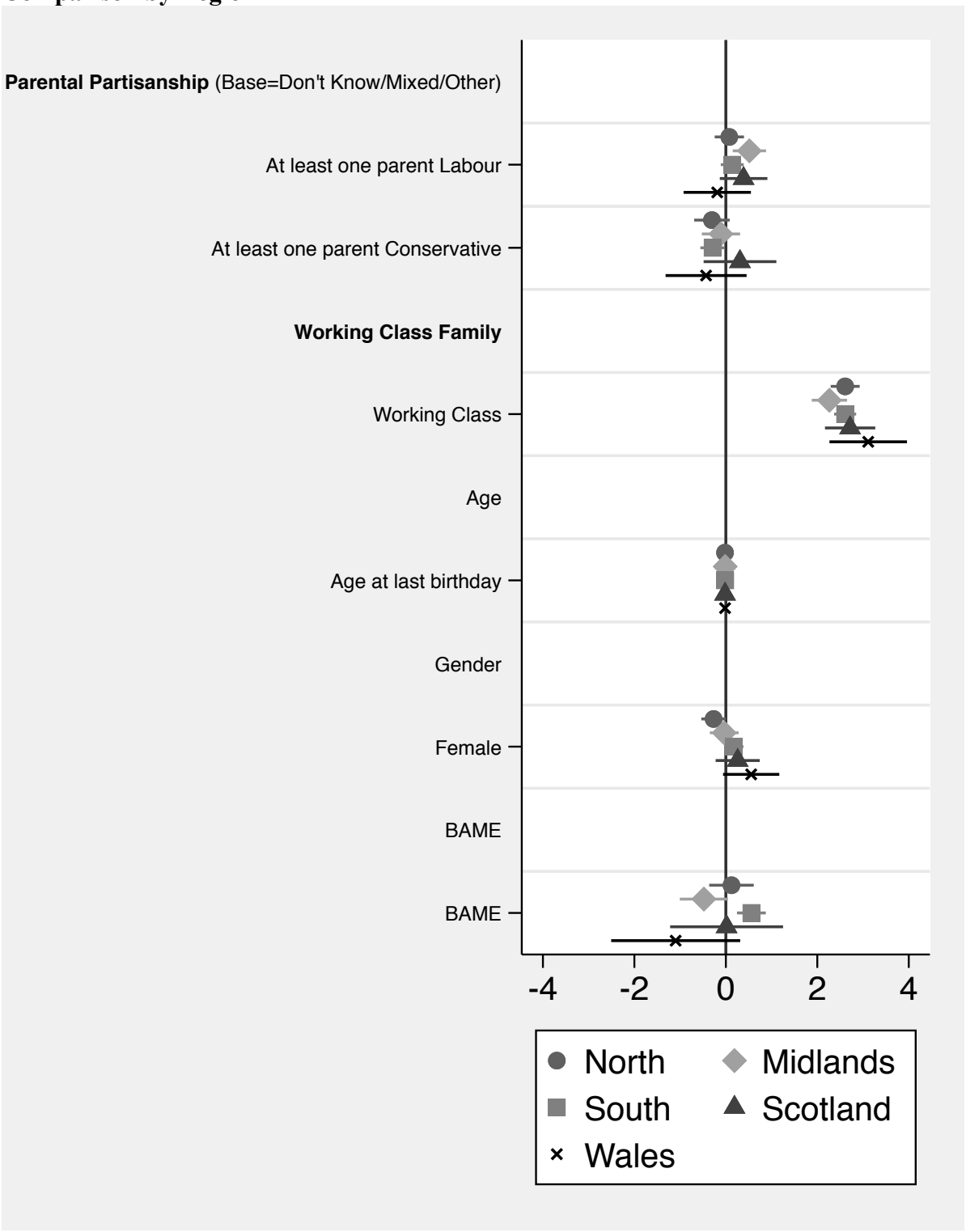


Figure A7: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Comparison of Men and Women

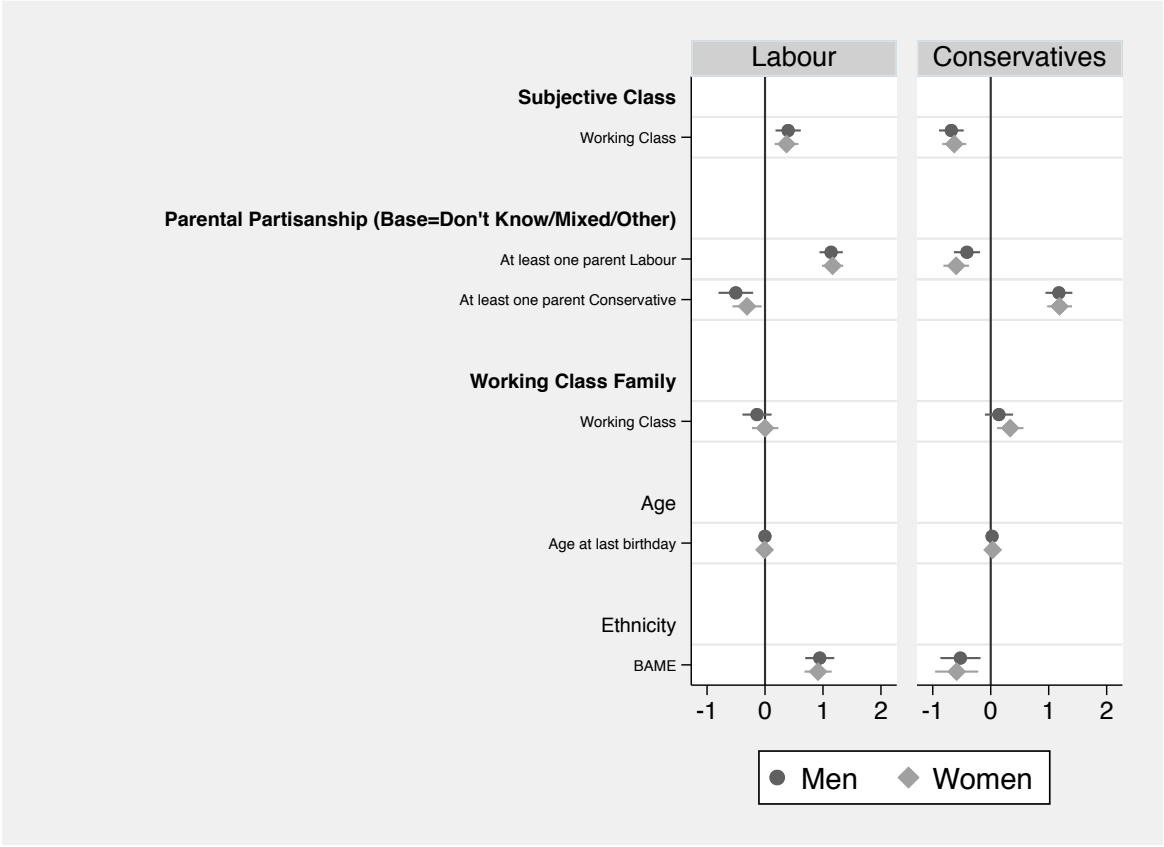


Figure A8: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Comparison of White vs Ethnic Minority Respondents

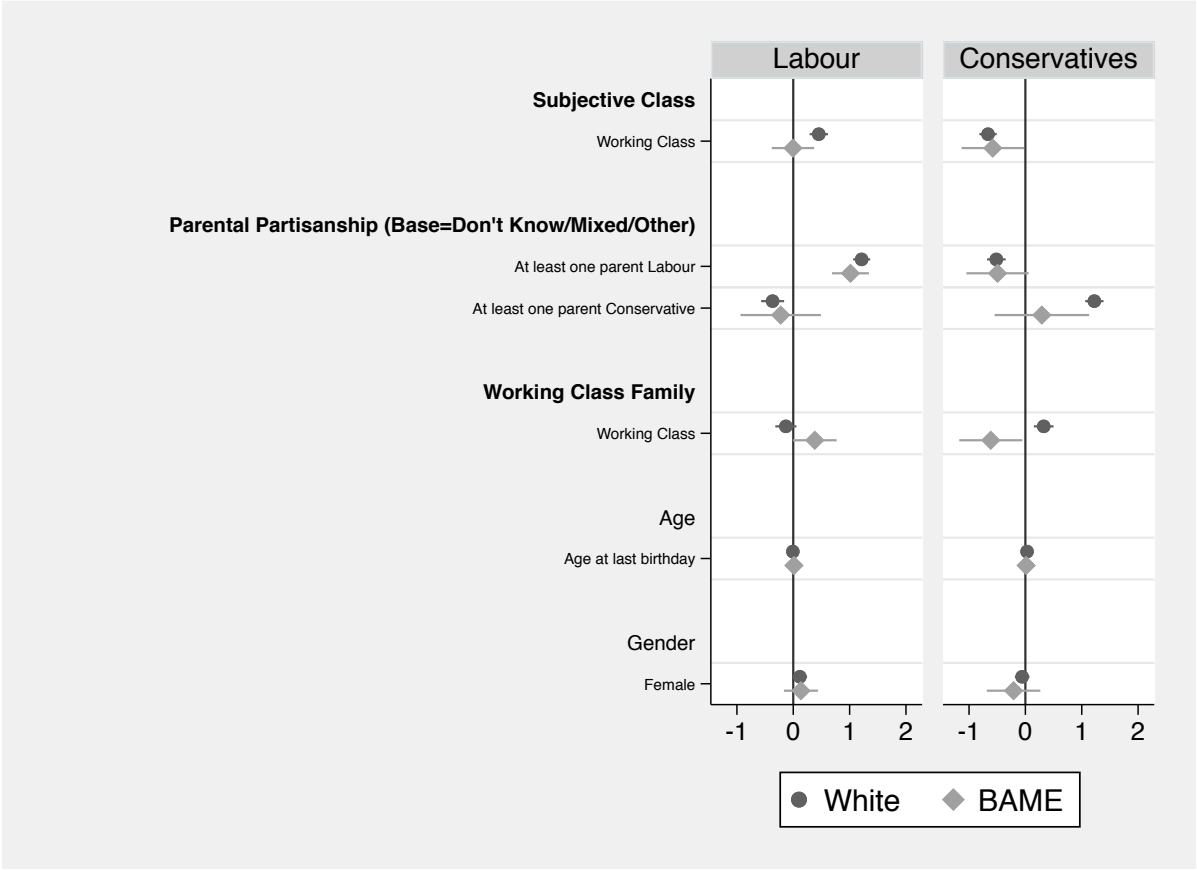


Figure A9: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Comparison of Male/Female and White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

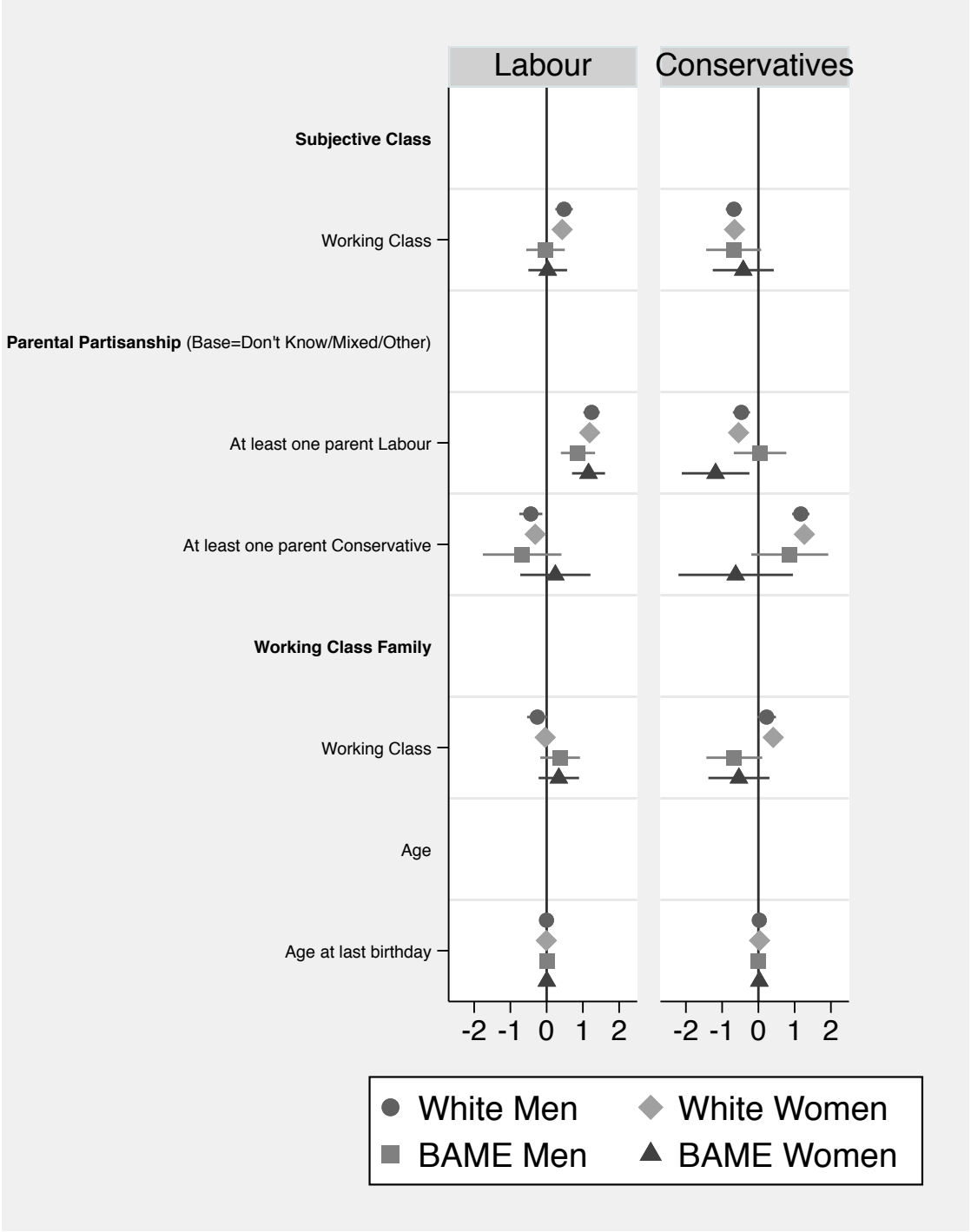


Figure A10: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Comparison by Region

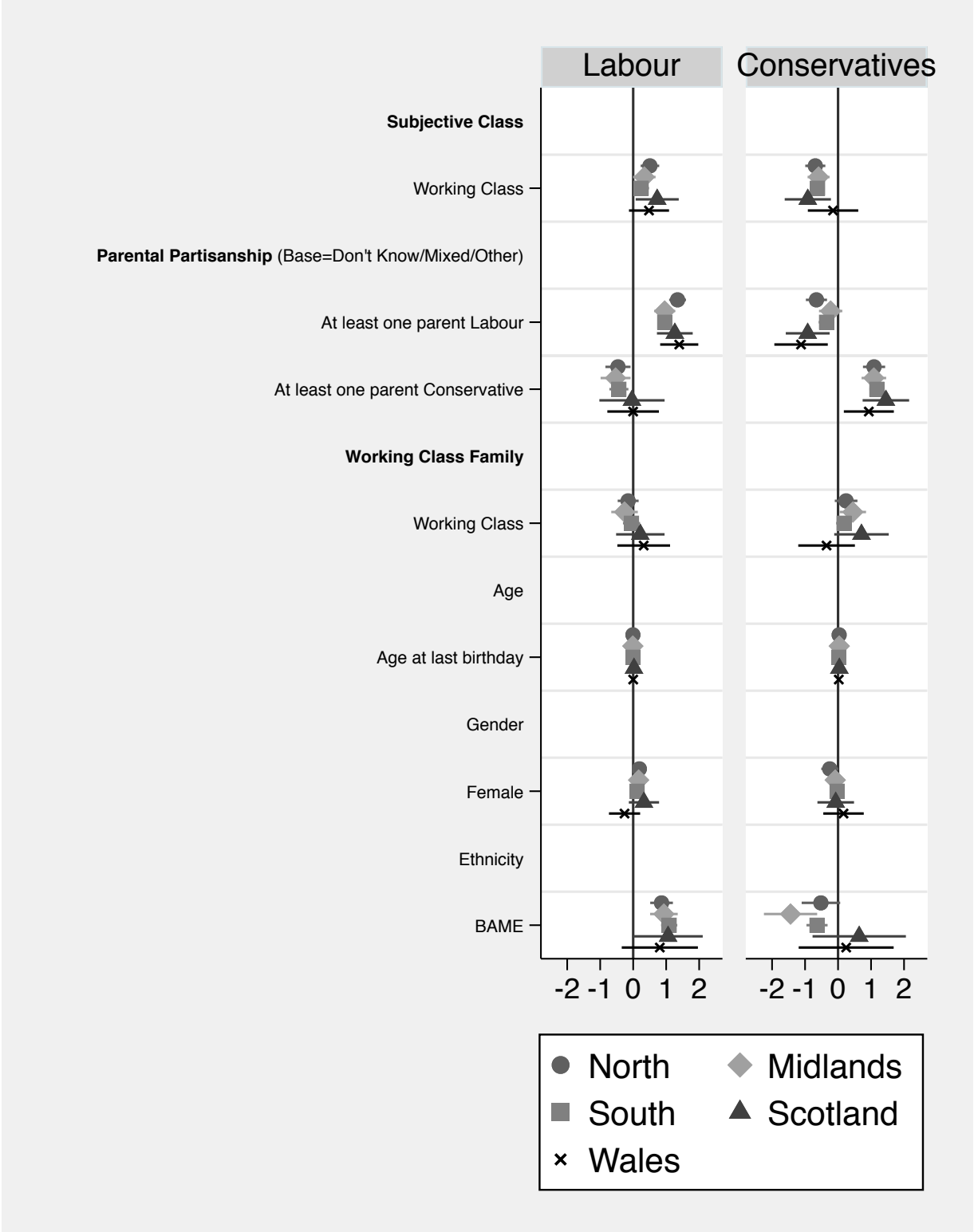


Figure A11: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: Men vs Women

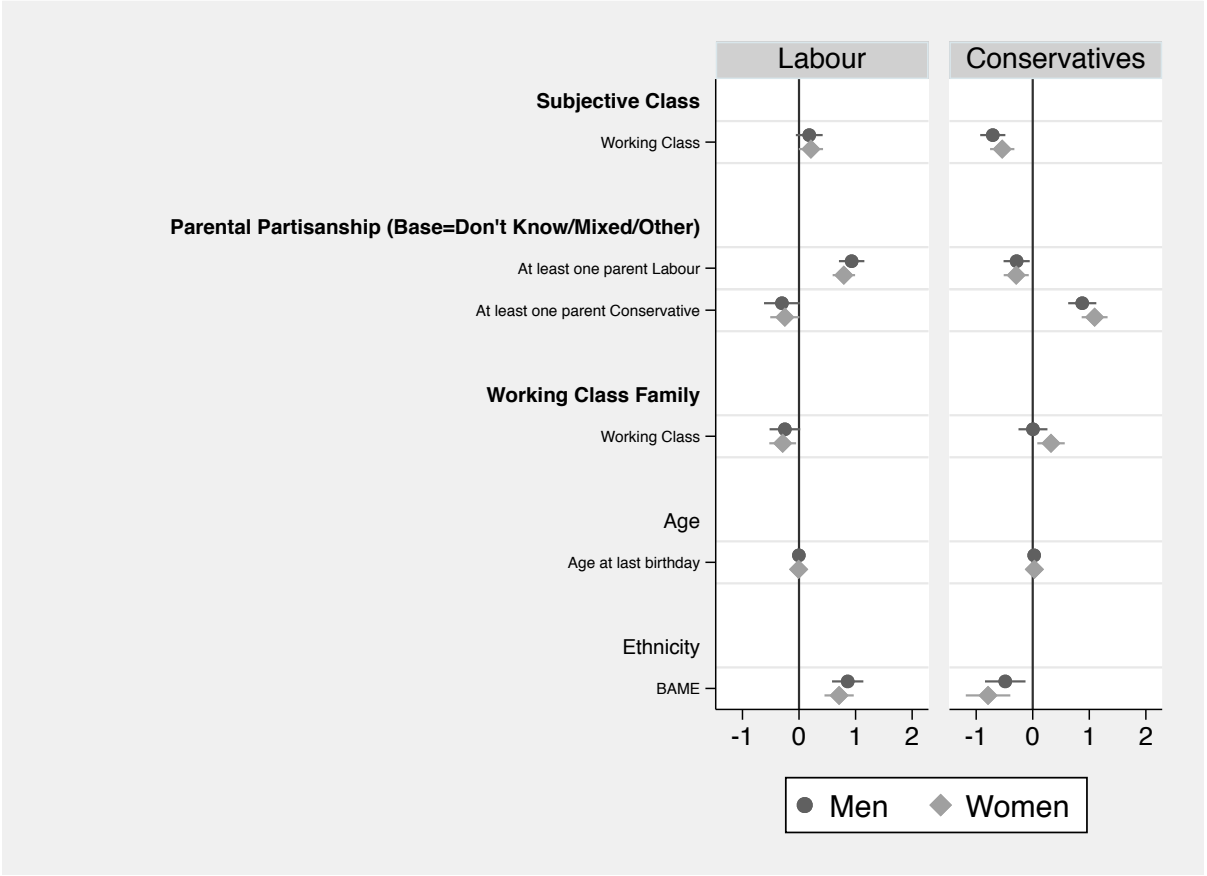


Figure A12: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: White vs Ethnic Minority Respondents

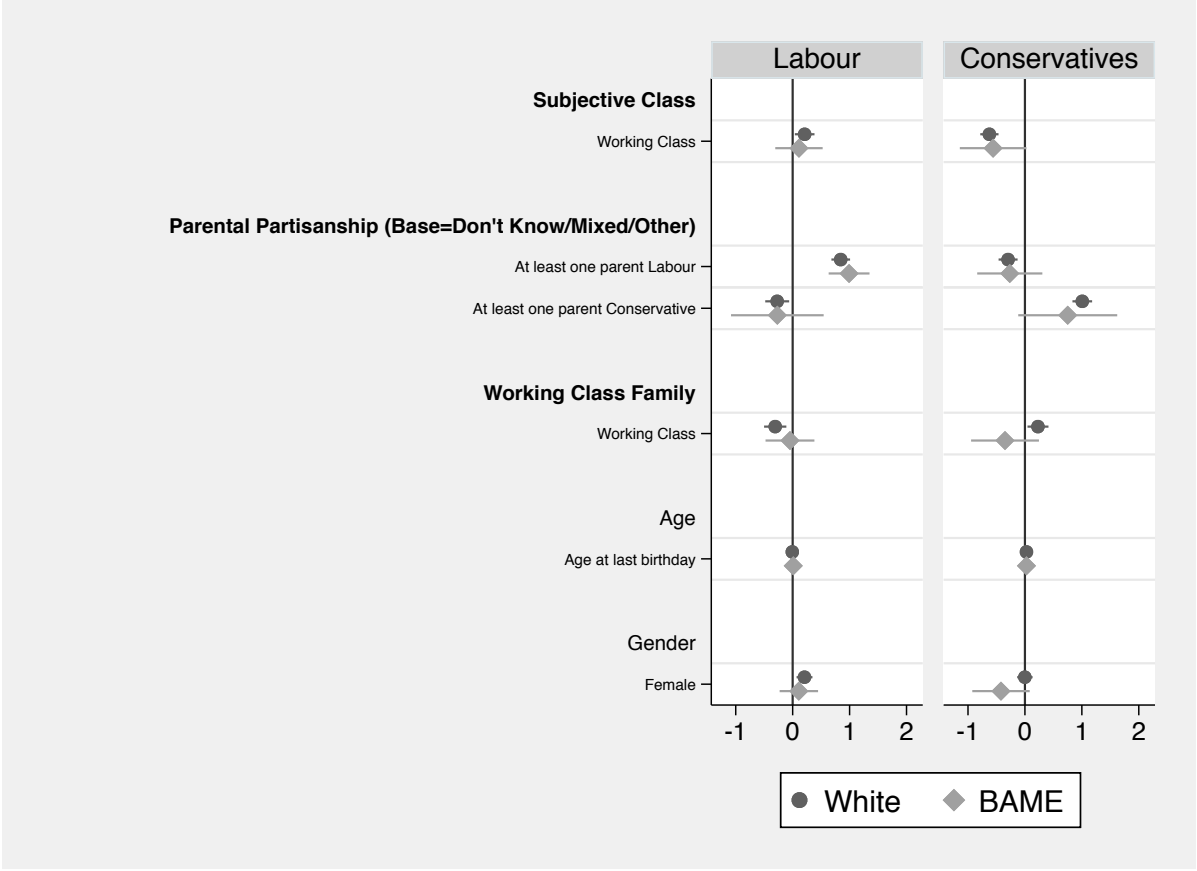


Figure A13: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: Male/Female and White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

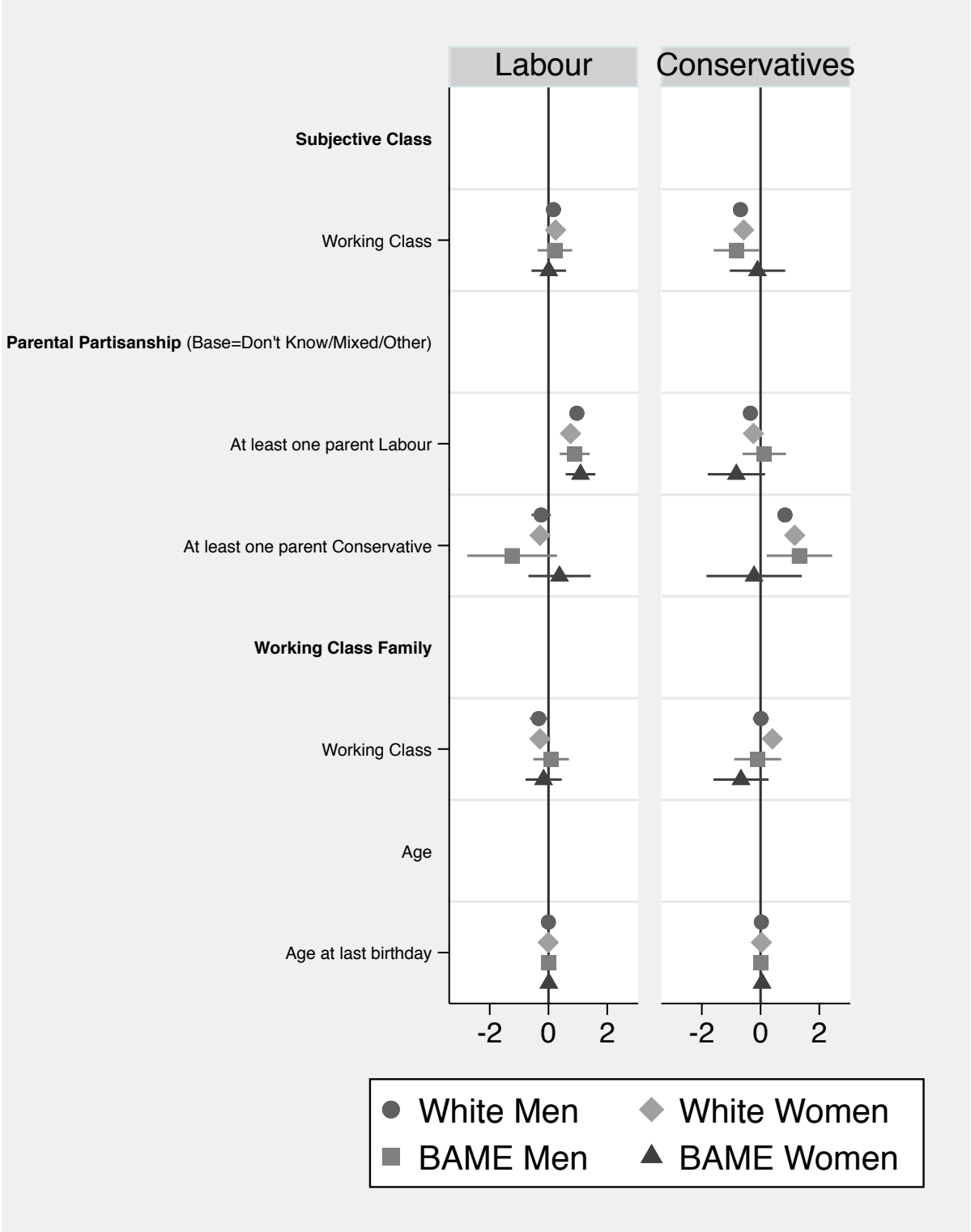


Figure A14: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: By Region

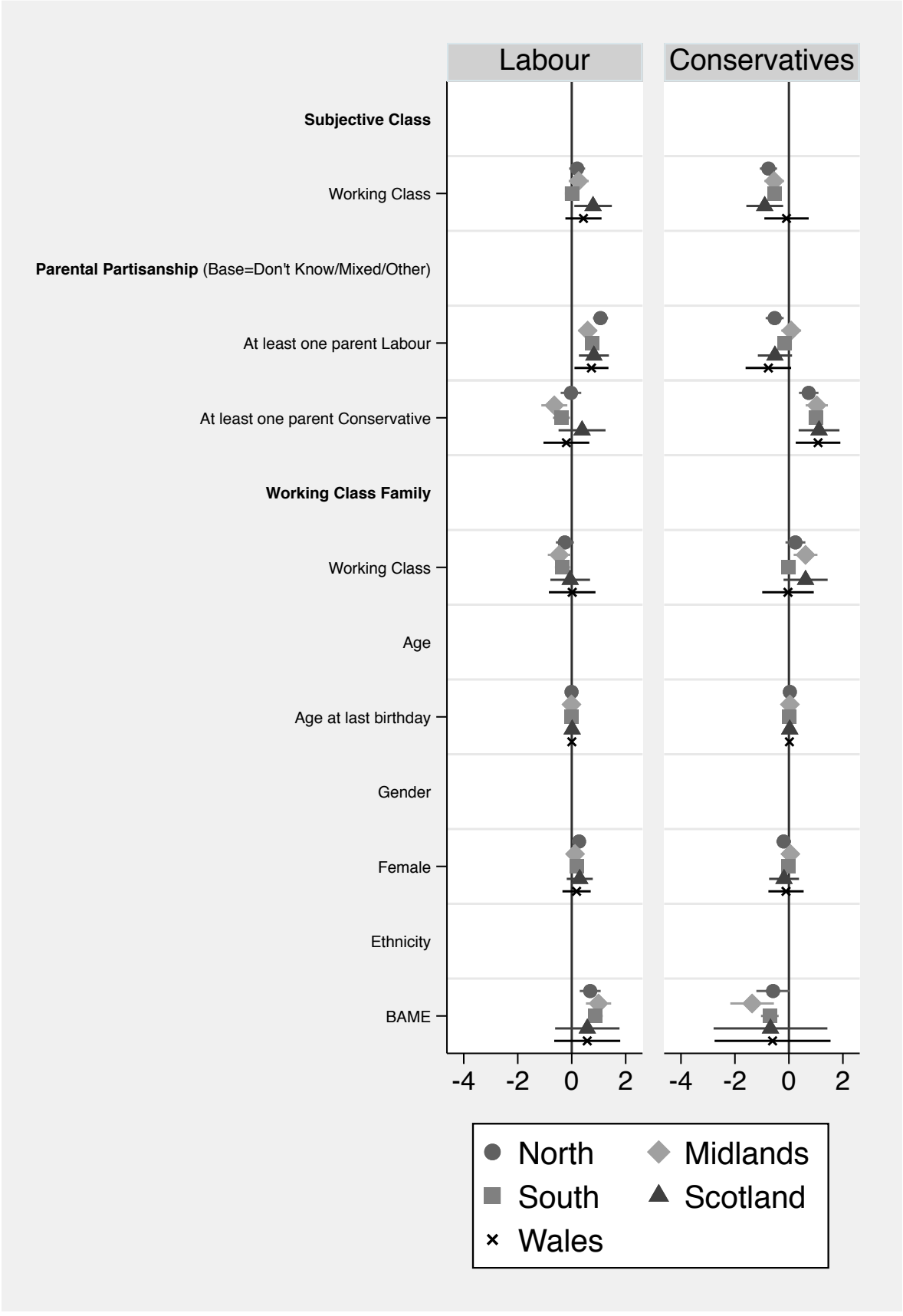


Figure A15: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Men vs Women

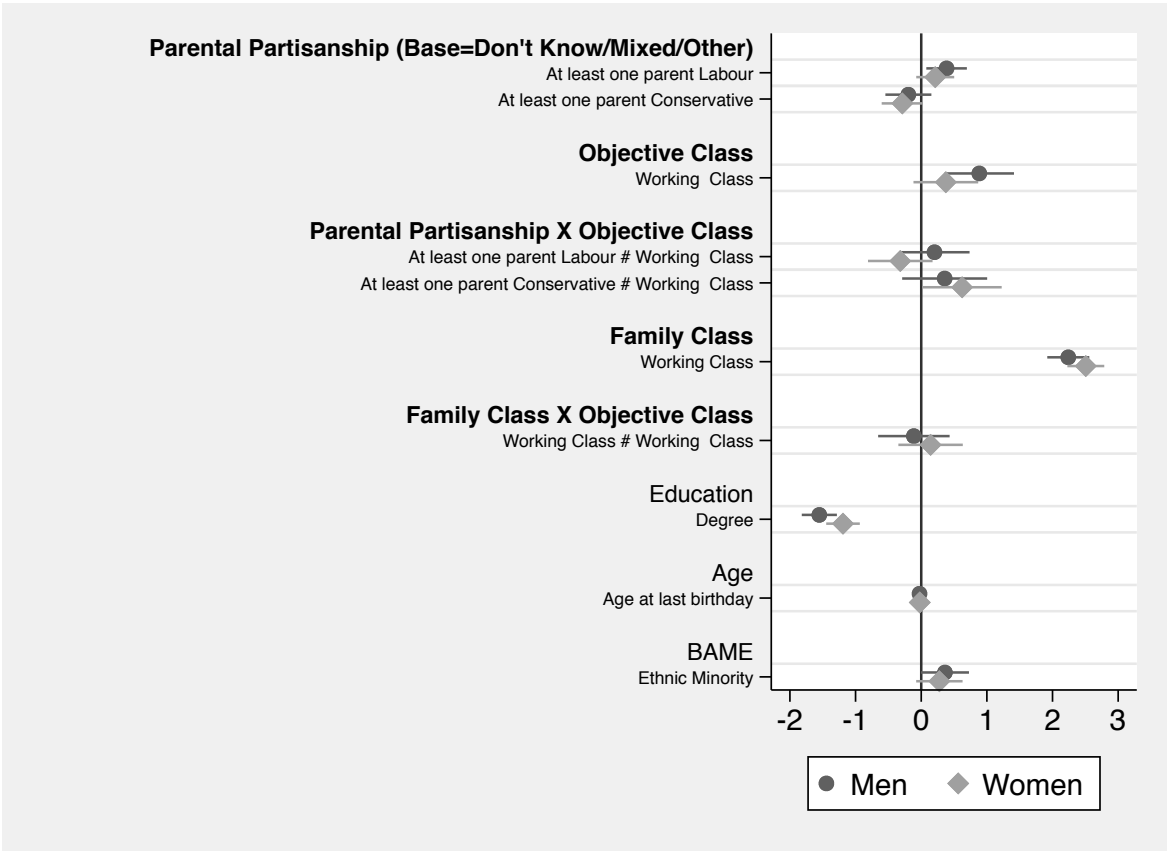


Figure A16: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: White vs Ethnic Minority Respondents

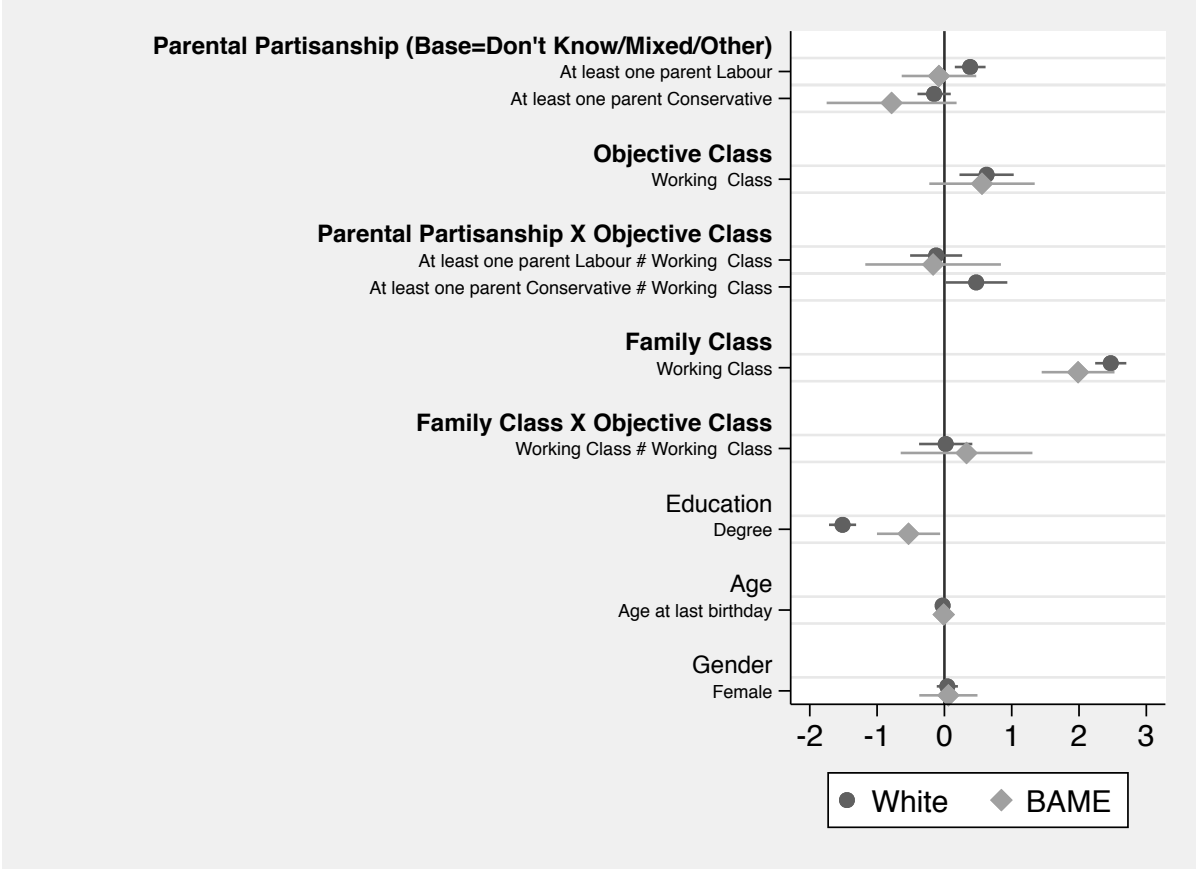


Figure A17: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: Male/Female and White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

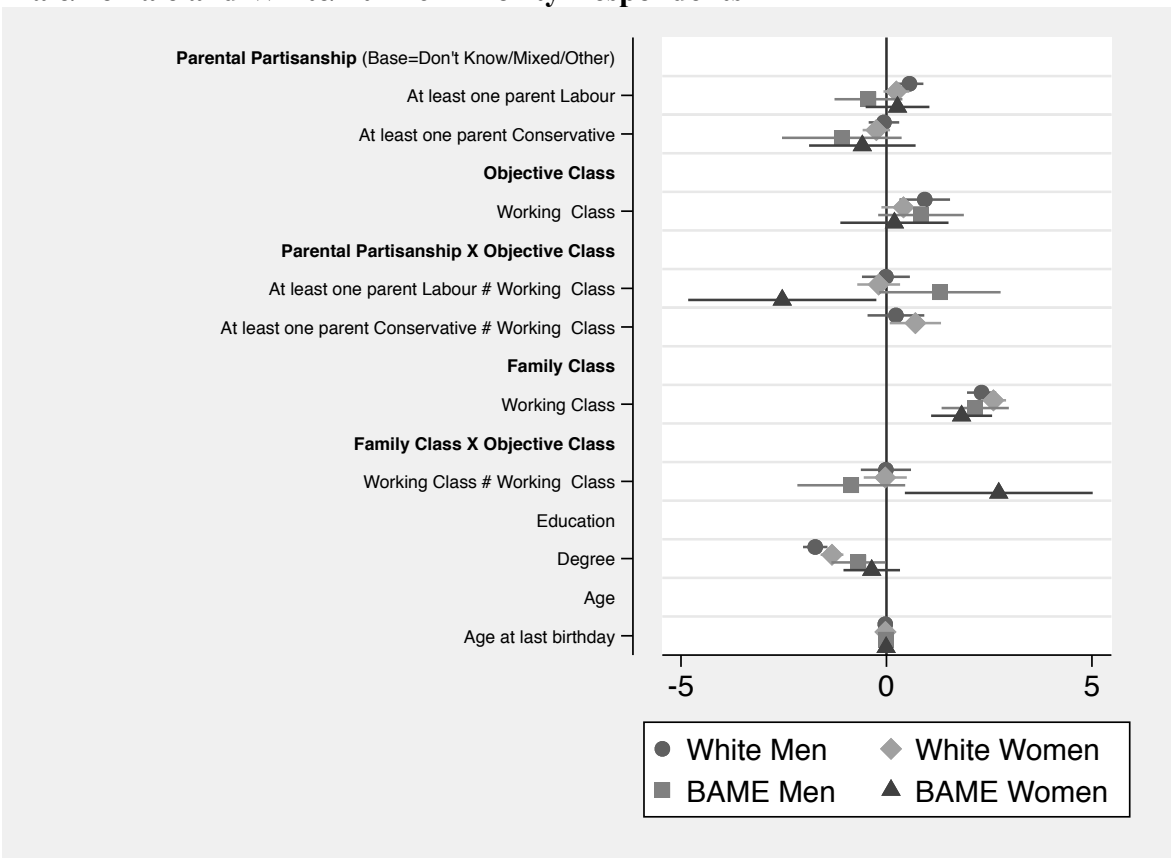


Figure A18: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class: By Region

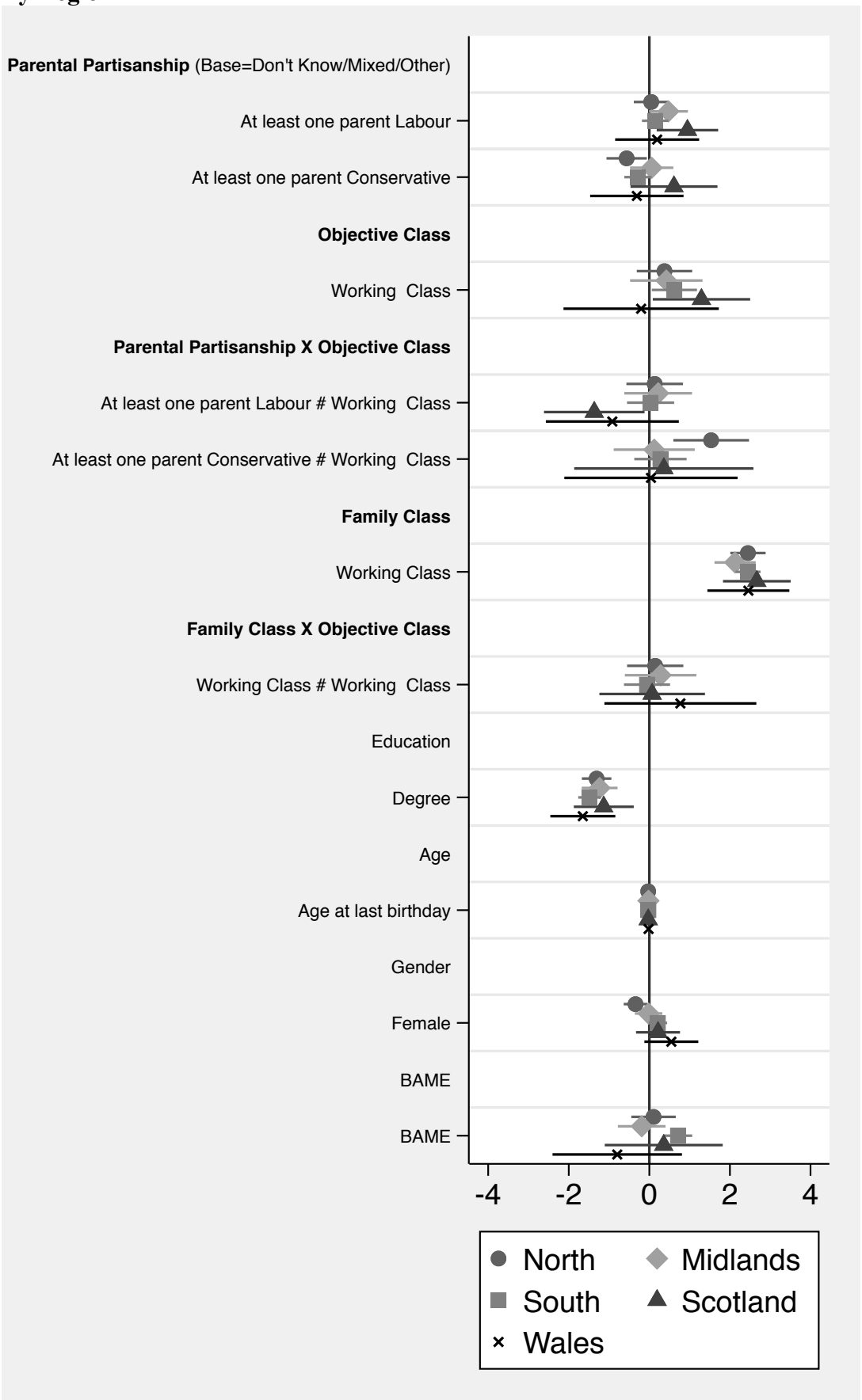


Figure A19: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Men vs Women

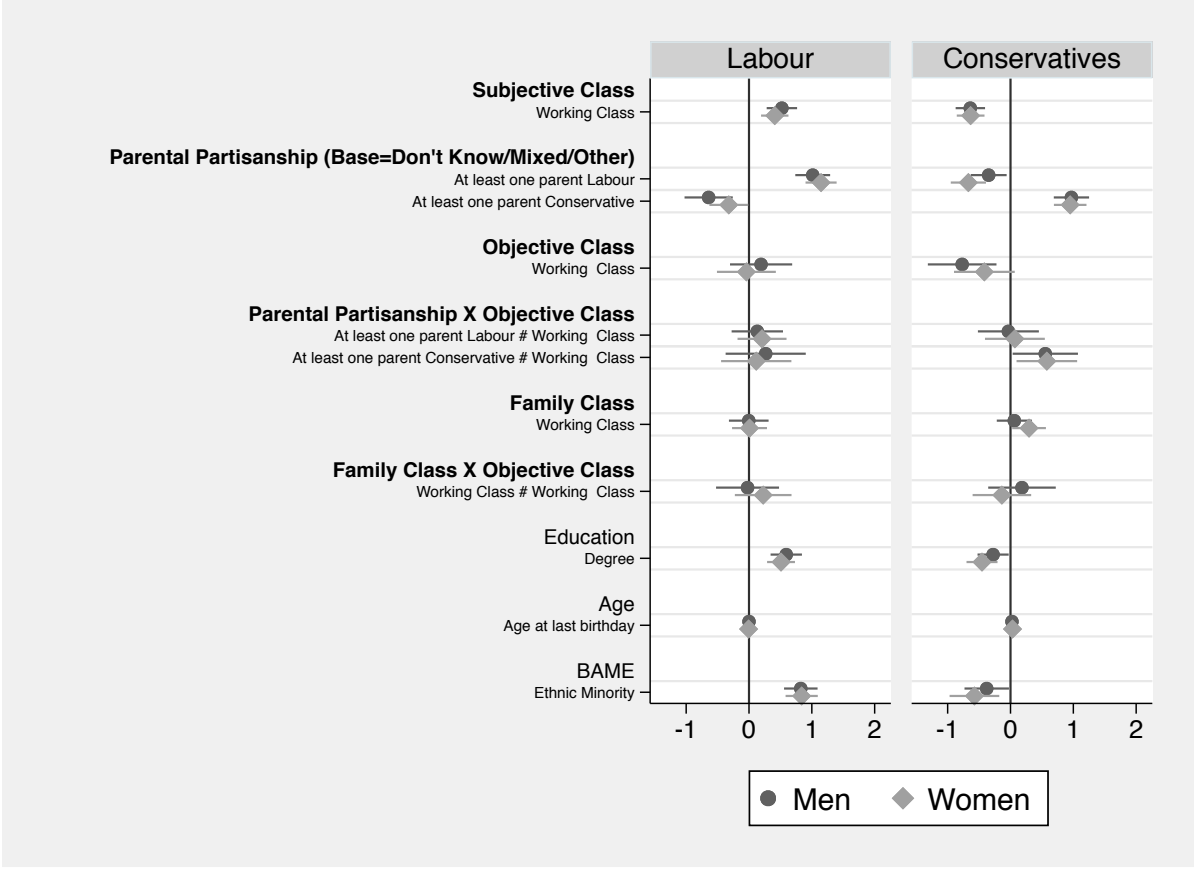


Figure A20: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: White vs Ethnic Minority Respondents

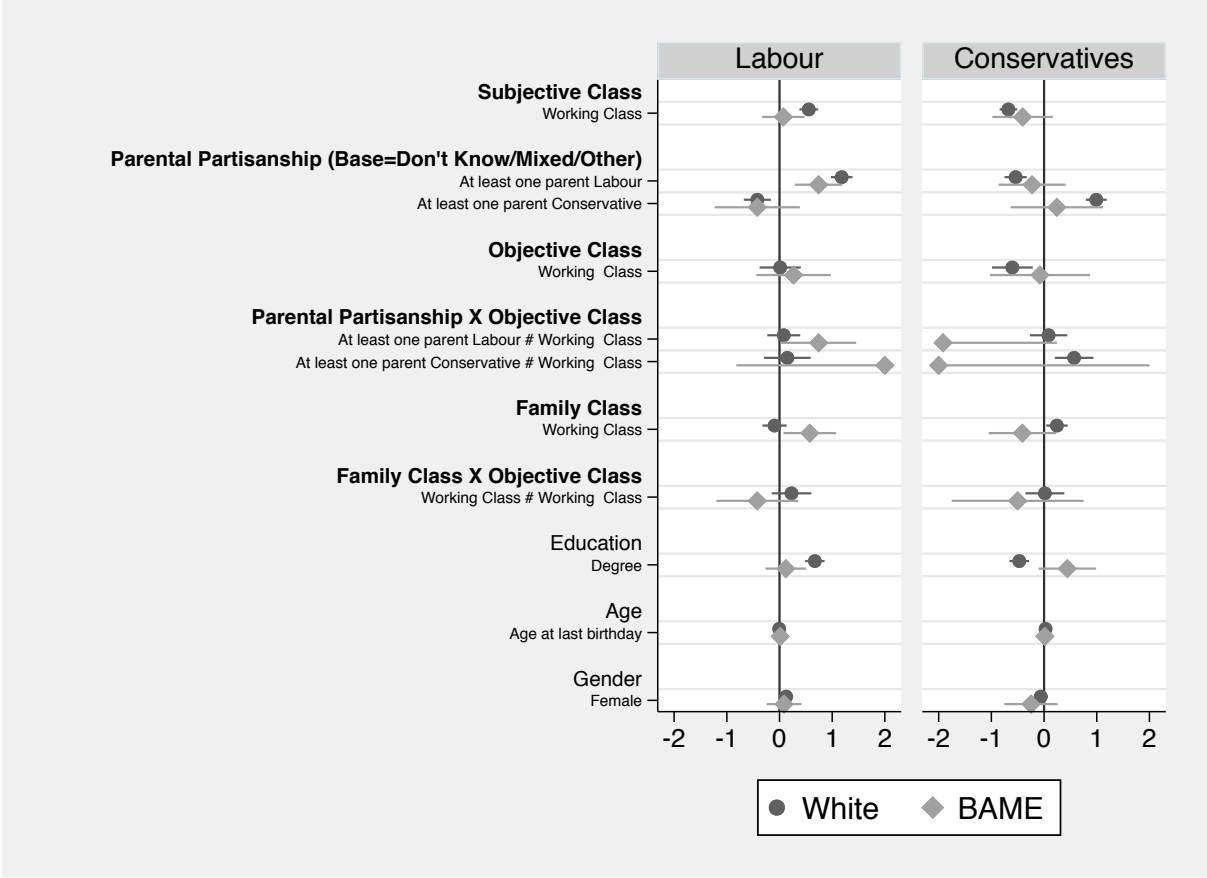


Figure A21: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: Male/Female and White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

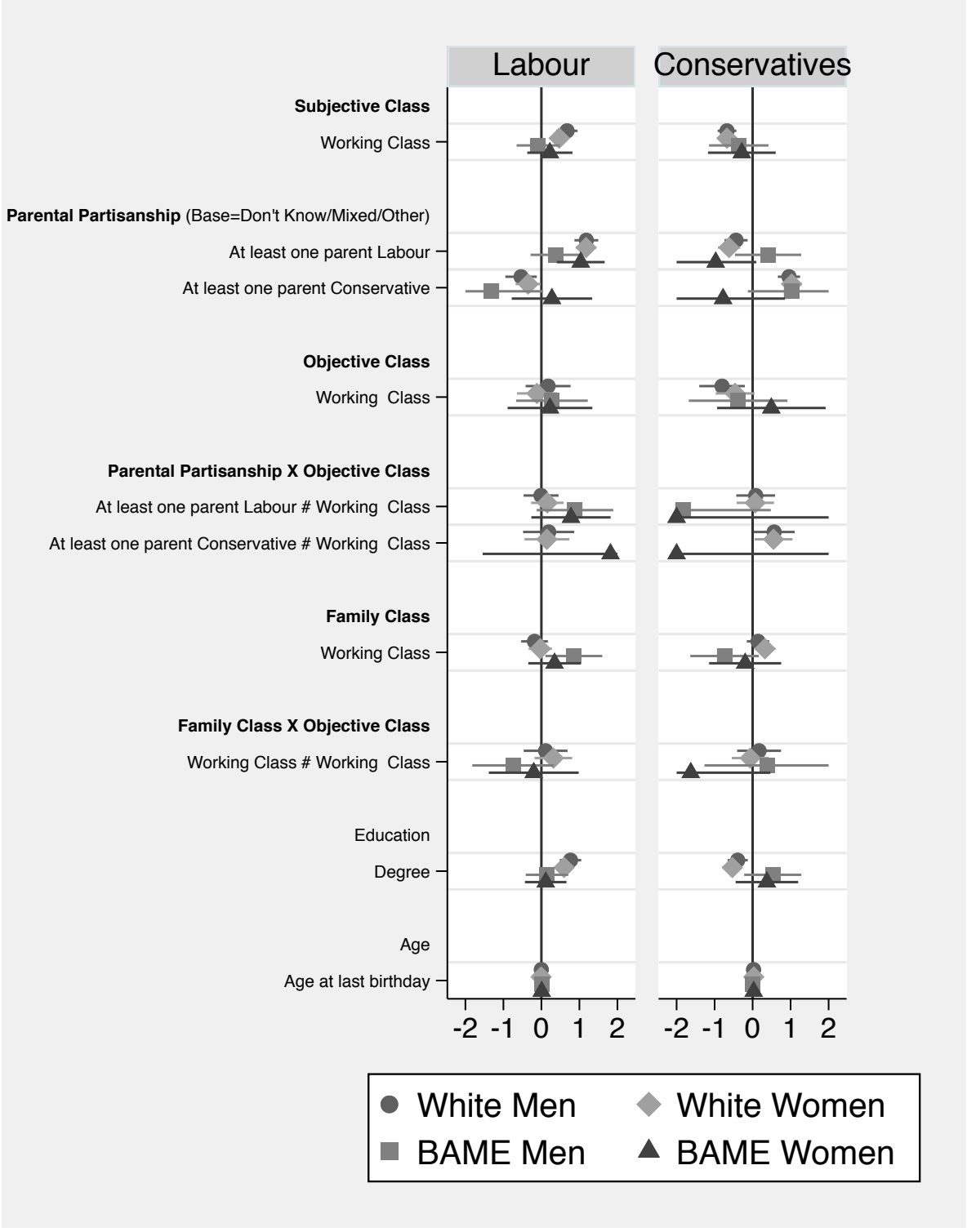


Figure A22: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity: By Region

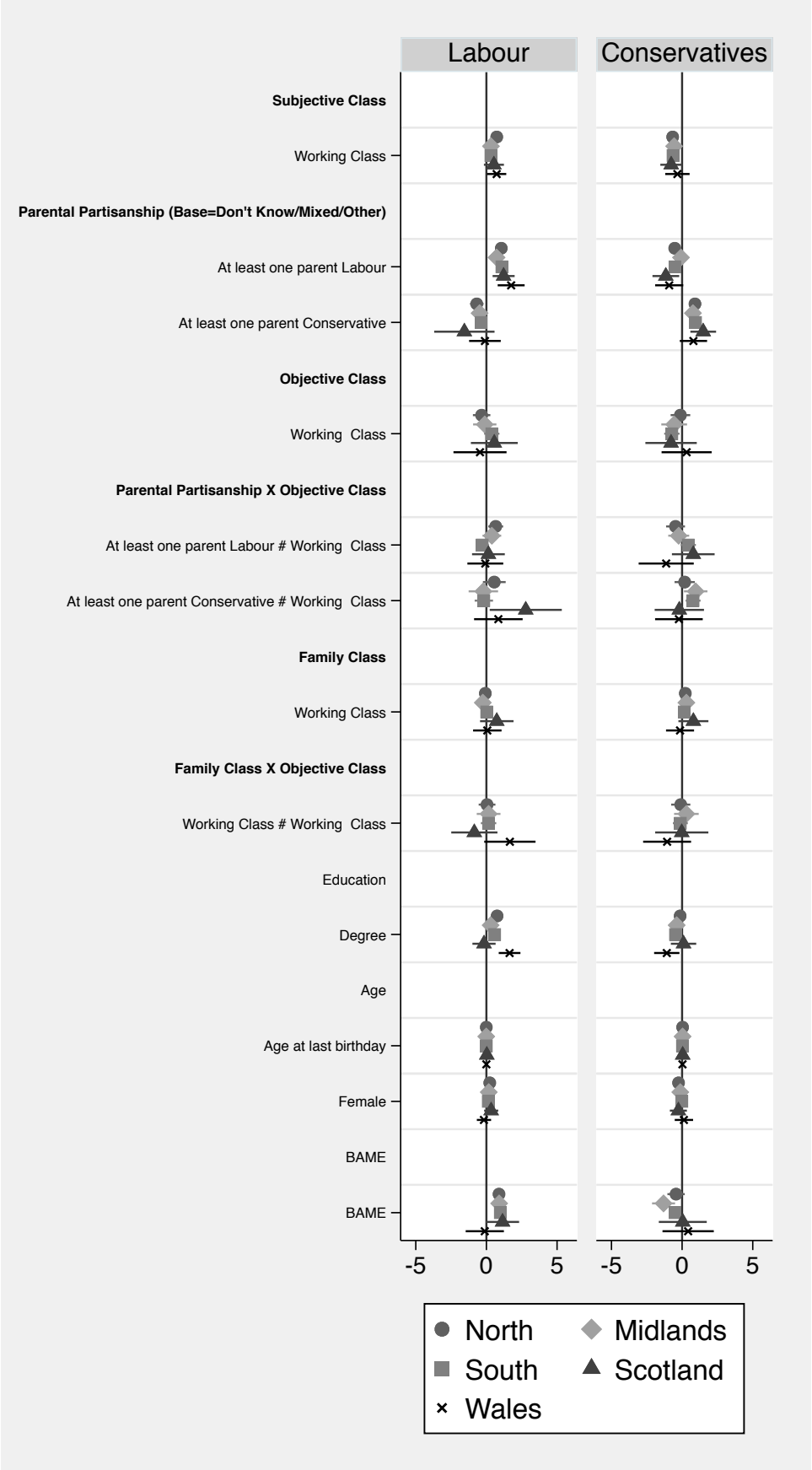


Figure A23: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: Men vs Women

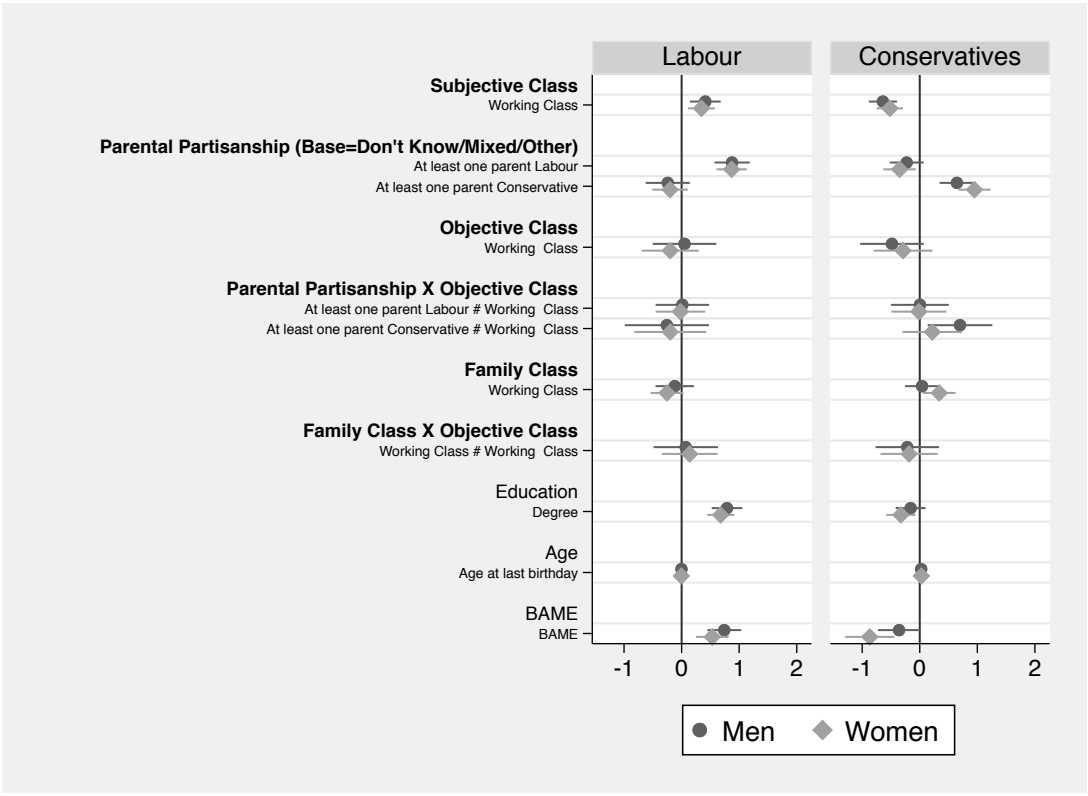


Figure A24: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: White vs Ethnic Minority Respondents

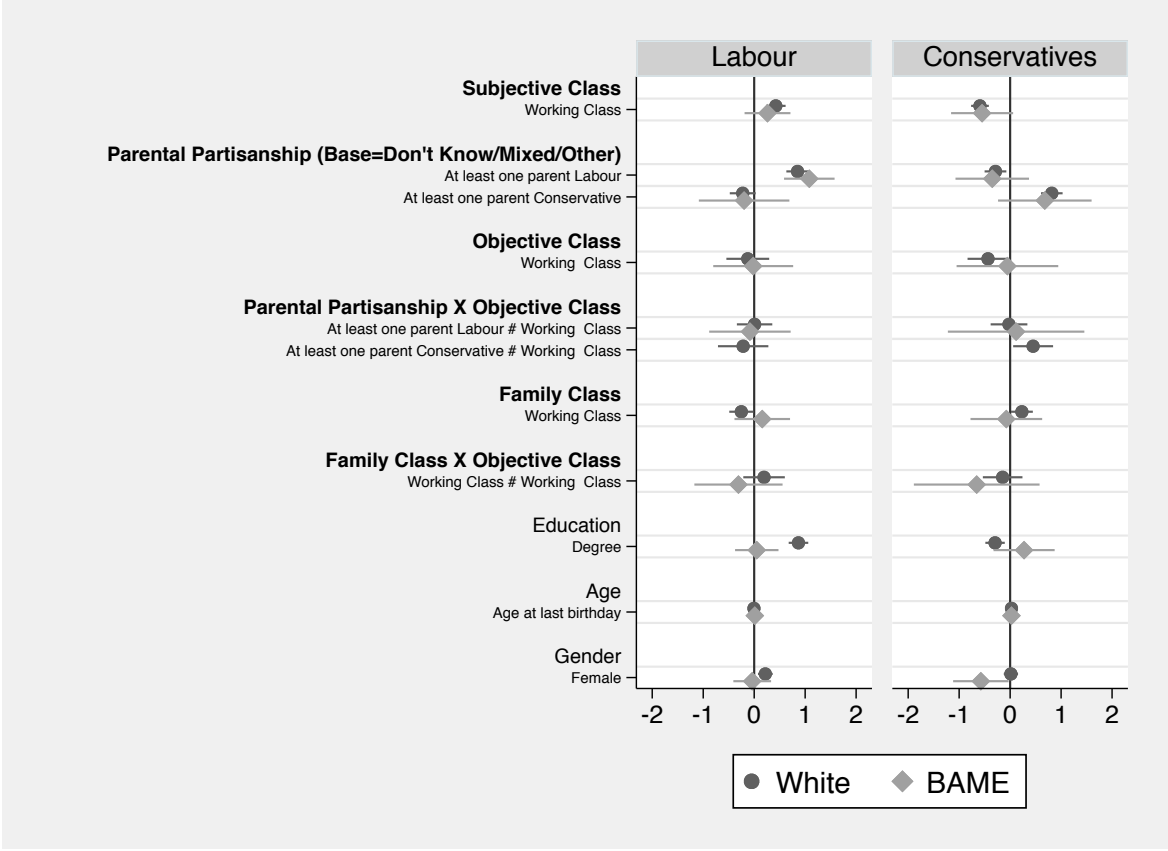


Figure A25: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: Male/Female and White/Ethnic Minority Respondents

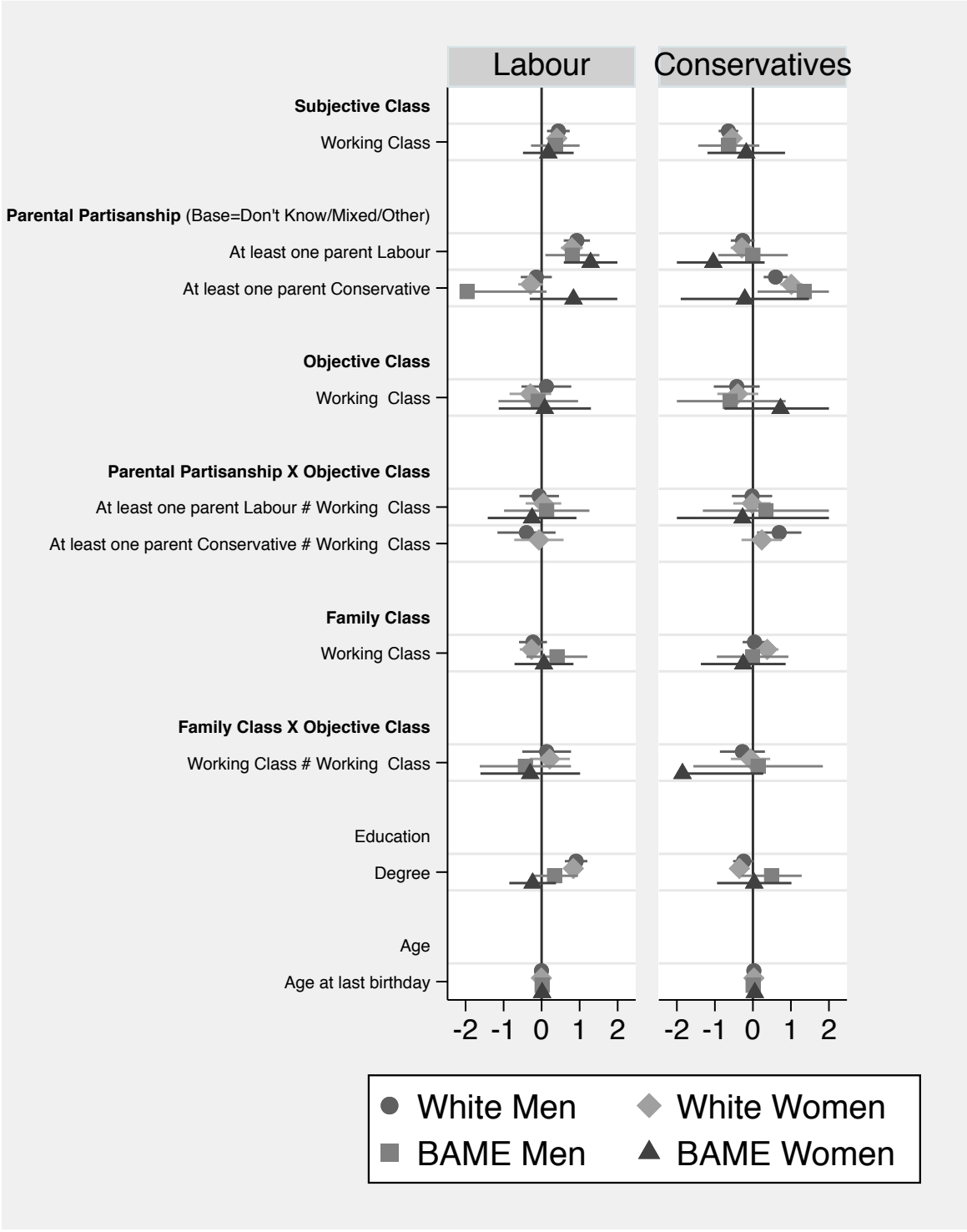


Figure A26: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative: By Region

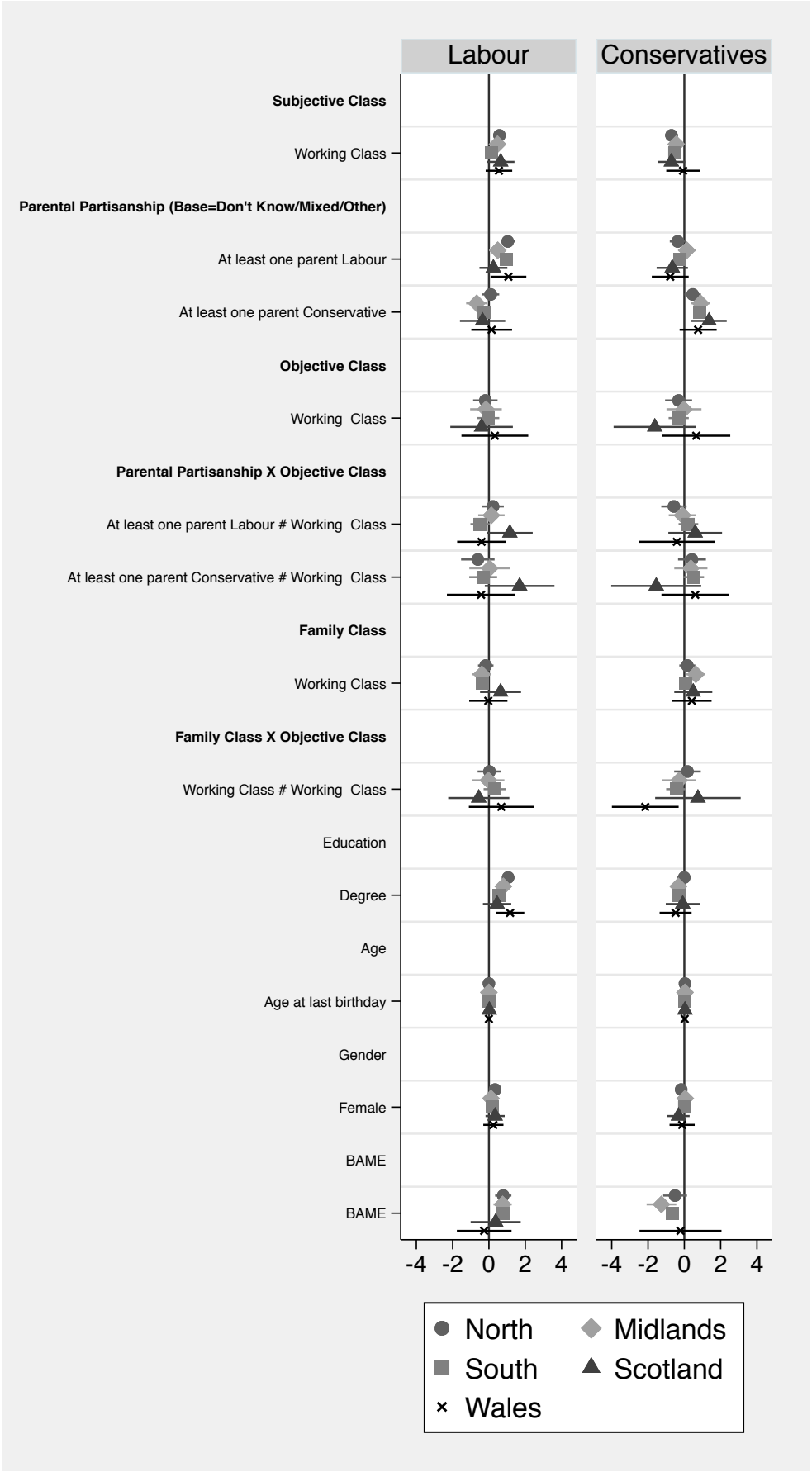


Table A1: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class

	(1)	(2)
Parental Partisanship		
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour	0.238** (2.96)	0.238 (1.42)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.260** (-2.79)	-0.387* (-2.54)
Family Class	0 (.)	0 (.)
Working Class	2.558*** (31.56)	2.494*** (20.57)
Age		
Age	-0.0144*** (-7.31)	-0.0144*** (-7.25)
Ethnicity		
Ethnic Minority	0.169 (1.47)	0.164 (1.43)
Gender		
Female	0.0426 (0.62)	0.0428 (0.62)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class		
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class		0 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class		0.0118 (0.06)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class		0.203 (1.07)
Constant	-0.577*** (-4.51)	-0.536*** (-3.71)
Observations	5130	5130
Pseudo R^2	0.225	0.225

t statistics in parentheses
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
** $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

Table A2: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity

	(3)		(4)		(5)		(6)	
	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative
Parental Partisanship								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour	1.165***	-0.540***	1.175***	-1.152***	1.156***	-0.512***	1.176***	-1.110***
	(16.89)	(-6.76)	(7.75)	(-5.48)	(16.72)	(-6.39)	(7.73)	(-5.27)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.415***	1.194***	-0.287	0.843***	-0.394***	1.186***	-0.256	0.830***
	(-4.24)	(14.94)	(-1.92)	(6.94)	(-4.03)	(14.78)	(-1.71)	(6.81)
Family Class								
Working Class	0.156*	-0.121	0.214	-0.496***	-0.0565	0.244**	0.00883	-0.133
	(2.09)	(-1.66)	(1.86)	(-4.35)	(-0.66)	(2.88)	(0.07)	(-1.09)
Age								
Age	-0.00556**	0.0302***	-0.00560**	0.0299***	-0.00470**	0.0289***	-0.00473**	0.0286***
	(-3.25)	(16.32)	(-3.25)	(16.10)	(-2.73)	(15.56)	(-2.73)	(15.33)
Ethnicity								
Ethnic Minority	0.935***	-0.546***	0.937***	-0.561***	0.927***	-0.535***	0.929***	-0.549***
	(10.73)	(-4.25)	(10.74)	(-4.35)	(10.61)	(-4.15)	(10.63)	(-4.24)
Gender								
Female	0.120*	-0.0791	0.120*	-0.0765	0.122*	-0.0721	0.122*	-0.0698
	(2.01)	(-1.25)	(2.01)	(-1.21)	(2.04)	(-1.13)	(2.03)	(-1.09)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0 (.)	0 (.)			0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class			-0.0225	0.778***			-0.0346	0.763***
			(-0.13)	(3.40)			(-0.20)	(3.33)

At least one parent Conservative X Working Class			-0.225 (-1.15)	0.575*** (3.65)			-0.243 (-1.24)	0.584*** (3.70)
Class Identity								
Working Class					0.384*** (5.07)	-0.649*** (-8.60)	0.385*** (5.09)	-0.650*** (-8.59)
cut1	1.092*** (9.31)	2.369*** (18.43)	1.131*** (8.32)	2.103*** (14.96)	1.230*** (10.17)	2.187*** (16.78)	1.276*** (9.14)	1.919*** (13.46)
cut2	1.662*** (14.02)	3.008*** (22.86)	1.702*** (12.41)	2.744*** (19.16)	1.803*** (14.74)	2.835*** (21.28)	1.849*** (13.13)	2.569*** (17.71)
cut3	3.195*** (24.96)	4.939*** (32.99)	3.234*** (22.26)	4.677*** (29.28)	3.338*** (25.34)	4.785*** (31.65)	3.384*** (22.71)	4.521*** (28.02)
Observations	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130
Pseudo R^2	0.066	0.098	0.066	0.100	0.068	0.106	0.068	0.108

t statistics in parentheses
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A3: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood Vote Labour or Conservative

	(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)	
	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative
Parental Partisanship								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour	0.862*** (11.39)	-0.319*** (-3.94)	0.926*** (5.74)	-1.055*** (-4.96)	0.856*** (11.30)	-0.294*** (-3.61)	0.920*** (5.70)	-1.015*** (-4.76)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.278** (-2.73)	1.004*** (11.80)	-0.134 (-0.90)	0.691*** (5.32)	-0.268** (-2.63)	0.993*** (11.59)	-0.120 (-0.80)	0.670*** (5.14)
Family Class								
Working Class	-0.164* (-2.08)	-0.167* (-2.17)	-0.0674 (-0.55)	-0.534*** (-4.48)	-0.272** (-3.00)	0.177* (1.97)	-0.175 (-1.35)	-0.194 (-1.52)
Age								
Age	-0.00515** (-2.77)	0.0284*** (14.81)	-0.00512** (-2.74)	0.0280*** (14.50)	-0.00472* (-2.53)	0.0272*** (14.05)	-0.00469* (-2.50)	0.0268*** (13.73)
Ethnicity								
Ethnic Minority	0.781*** (8.12)	-0.630*** (-4.70)	0.784*** (8.14)	-0.645*** (-4.80)	0.777*** (8.07)	-0.617*** (-4.59)	0.780*** (8.10)	-0.631*** (-4.67)
Gender								
Female	0.197** (3.02)	-0.0393 (-0.59)	0.197** (3.01)	-0.0359 (-0.54)	0.197** (3.01)	-0.0319 (-0.48)	0.196** (3.00)	-0.0286 (-0.43)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0 (.)	0 (.)			0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class			-0.0962 (-0.53)	0.915*** (3.95)			-0.0962 (-0.53)	0.900*** (3.88)

At least one parent Conservative X Working Class			-0.268 (-1.33)	0.504** (2.97)			-0.275 (-1.36)	0.523** (3.07)
Class Identity								
Working Class					0.197* (2.43)	-0.615*** (-7.81)	0.199* (2.45)	-0.616*** (-7.79)
Constant	-1.163*** (-9.23)	-2.378*** (-17.81)	-1.229*** (-8.53)	-2.112*** (-14.46)	-1.233*** (-9.52)	-2.201*** (-16.24)	-1.300*** (-8.84)	-1.931*** (-13.02)
Observations	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130	5130
Pseudo R^2	0.052	0.106	0.052	0.109	0.053	0.116	0.053	0.119

t statistics in parentheses
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
** $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

Table A4: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Identify as Working Class

	(11)	(12)	(13)
Parental Partisanship			
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour	0.252**	0.286**	0.281
	(2.89)	(2.67)	(1.17)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.115	-0.237*	-0.306
	(-1.13)	(-1.99)	(-1.51)
Family Class			
Working Class	2.406***	2.388***	2.349***
	(27.06)	(22.19)	(13.99)
Occupational Class			
Working Class	0.696***	0.598**	0.783***
	(8.37)	(3.28)	(3.42)
Age			
Age	-0.0233***	-0.0236***	-0.0237***
	(-10.40)	(-10.46)	(-10.47)
Ethnicity			
Ethnic Minority	0.326*	0.330*	0.321*
	(2.53)	(2.56)	(2.50)
Gender			
Female	0.0418	0.0397	0.0433
	(0.56)	(0.53)	(0.58)
Education			
Degree	-1.346***	-1.358***	-1.361***
	(-14.46)	(-14.51)	(-14.55)
Parental Partisanship X Occupational Class			
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class		0 (.)	0 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class		-0.0977	-0.538
		(-0.53)	(-1.40)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class		0.474*	0.202
		(2.12)	(0.56)
Family Class X Occupational Class			
Working Class X Working Class		0.0538	-0.228
		(0.29)	(-0.82)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class			
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class			0.0130
			(0.05)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class			0.104
			(0.42)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class X Occupational Class			
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class X Working Class			0 (.)

At least one parent Labour X Working Class X Working Class			0.592 (1.35)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class X Working Class			0.459 (0.99)
Constant	0.0282 (0.18)	0.0765 (0.46)	0.111 (0.58)
Observations	4757	4757	4757
Pseudo R^2	0.283	0.284	0.285

t statistics in parentheses
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A5: Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity

	(14)		(15)		(16)		(17)		(18)		(19)	
	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con
Parental Partisanship												
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour	1.17*** (16.19)	-0.55*** (-6.62)	1.10*** (11.77)	-0.55*** (-5.41)	1.32*** (6.78)	-1.25*** (-4.85)	1.16*** (16.03)	-0.52*** (-6.29)	1.09*** (11.59)	-0.52*** (-5.09)	1.31*** (6.74)	-1.22*** (-4.73)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.40*** (-3.95)	1.11*** (13.44)	-0.47*** (-3.85)	0.96*** (10.00)	-0.23 (-1.29)	0.60*** (4.29)	-0.39*** (-3.83)	1.11*** (13.42)	-0.45*** (-3.67)	0.96*** (9.86)	-0.21 (-1.18)	0.59*** (4.20)
Family Class												
Working Class	0.25** (3.14)	-0.11 (-1.42)	0.22* (2.26)	-0.12 (-1.33)	0.43** (2.83)	-0.56*** (-3.97)	0.04 (0.40)	0.19* (2.21)	0.00 (0.03)	0.19 (1.89)	0.22 (1.39)	-0.26 (-1.75)
Occupational Class												
Working Class	0.32*** (4.75)	-0.48*** (-6.46)	0.12 (0.71)	-0.63*** (-3.43)	0.42 (1.87)	-0.82*** (-3.45)	0.28*** (4.12)	-0.40*** (-5.33)	0.08 (0.44)	-0.56** (-3.07)	0.34 (1.51)	-0.74** (-3.08)
Age												
Age	-0.00** (-2.63)	0.03*** (15.45)	-0.00** (-2.69)	0.03*** (15.41)	-0.00** (-2.68)	0.03*** (15.17)	-0.00 (-1.78)	0.03*** (14.24)	-0.00 (-1.84)	0.03*** (14.17)	-0.00 (-1.82)	0.03*** (13.92)
Ethnicity												

Ethnic Minority	0.85*** (9.07)	-0.47*** (-3.56)	0.85*** (9.11)	-0.47*** (-3.53)	0.85*** (9.12)	-0.48*** (-3.60)	0.83*** (8.82)	-0.45*** (-3.36)	0.83*** (8.86)	-0.44*** (-3.33)	0.84*** (8.88)	-0.45*** (-3.39)
Gender												
Female	0.13* (2.08)	-0.09 (-1.41)	0.13* (2.09)	-0.09 (-1.43)	0.13* (2.11)	-0.09 (-1.38)	0.13* (2.08)	-0.08 (-1.28)	0.13* (2.09)	-0.08 (-1.29)	0.13* (2.10)	-0.08 (-1.24)
Education												
Degree	0.45*** (5.50)	-0.21* (-2.42)	0.44*** (5.41)	-0.21* (-2.42)	0.44*** (5.37)	-0.22* (-2.53)	0.56*** (6.61)	-0.37*** (-4.12)	0.55*** (6.52)	-0.37*** (-4.15)	0.55*** (6.47)	-0.38*** (-4.26)
Parental Partisanship X Occupational Class												
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class			0.15 (1.07)	0.03 (0.20)	-0.44 (-1.27)	0.57 (1.20)			0.17 (1.15)	0.03 (0.16)	-0.37 (-1.07)	0.52 (1.08)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class			0.19 (0.88)	0.54** (3.04)	-0.17 (-0.44)	0.80* (2.49)			0.16 (0.73)	0.59** (3.26)	-0.15 (-0.40)	0.82* (2.53)

Family Class X Occupational Class									
Working Class X Working Class	0.11 (0.63)	-0.03 (-0.14)	-0.30 (-1.18)	0.32 (1.15)		0.11 (0.65)	-0.02 (-0.09)	-0.26 (-1.00)	0.30 (1.09)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class									
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)				0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class			-0.30 (-1.35)	0.92** (3.26)				-0.31 (-1.40)	0.92** (3.27)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class			-0.44 (-1.79)	0.66*** (3.49)				-0.44 (-1.77)	0.67*** (3.50)

Parental Partisanship X Family Class X Occupational Class				
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class X Working Class	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class X Working Class	0.74* (1.96)	-0.73 (-1.42)	0.67 (1.77)	-0.68 (-1.31)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class X Working Class	0.59 (1.26)	-0.51 (-1.31)	0.52 (1.11)	-0.48 (-1.22)

Class Identity												
Working Class							0.46***	-0.63***	0.46***	-0.64***	0.45***	-0.64***
							(5.56)	(-7.73)	(5.57)	(-7.85)	(5.51)	(-7.86)
cut1	1.42***	2.14***	1.34***	2.07***	1.48***	1.78***	1.64***	1.87***	1.56***	1.80***	1.70***	1.50***
	(10.28)	(14.64)	(9.03)	(13.60)	(8.59)	(10.72)	(11.35)	(12.49)	(10.10)	(11.49)	(9.57)	(8.83)
cut2	1.99***	2.79***	1.91***	2.73***	2.05***	2.43***	2.21***	2.53***	2.14***	2.46***	2.28***	2.16***
	(14.28)	(18.75)	(12.78)	(17.58)	(11.84)	(14.47)	(15.17)	(16.63)	(13.70)	(15.49)	(12.71)	(12.59)
cut3	3.53***(	4.74***(	3.46***(	4.67***(	3.60***(	4.39***(	3.76***(	4.50***(	3.69***(	4.42***(	3.83***(	4.13***(
	23.78)	28.63)	21.86)	27.30)	19.91)	23.99)	24.23)	26.73)	22.40)	25.42)	20.50)	22.26)
Observations	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757
Pseudo R^2	0.069	0.100	0.069	0.101	0.070	0.103	0.072	0.106	0.072	0.108	0.073	0.110

t statistics in parentheses

Source: 2017 & 2015 BES

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A6: Logistic Regression Models for Likelihood to Vote Labour or Conservative

	(20)		(21)		(22)		(23)		(24)		(25)	
	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con	Lab	Con
Parental Partisanship												
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour	0.89*** (11.15)	-0.33*** (-3.92)	0.89*** (8.75)	-0.32** (-3.09)	1.08*** (5.26)	-0.90*** (-3.62)	0.88*** (11.02)	-0.30*** (-3.63)	0.88*** (8.62)	-0.29** (-2.81)	1.08*** (5.22)	-0.87*** (-3.51)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.27* (-2.56)	0.92*** (10.49)	-0.22 (-1.83)	0.82*** (7.89)	0.02 (0.13)	0.49*** (3.30)	-0.26* (-2.45)	0.93*** (10.45)	-0.21 (-1.68)	0.81*** (7.74)	0.04 (0.23)	0.48** (3.20)
Family Class												
Working Class	0.00 (0.03)	-0.11 (-1.34)	-0.02 (-0.23)	-0.07 (-0.78)	0.20 (1.28)	-0.45** (-3.05)	-0.17 (-1.81)	0.16 (1.73)	-0.20 (-1.84)	0.20 (1.90)	0.03 (0.17)	-0.18 (-1.18)
Occupational Class												
Working Class	0.01 (0.19)	-0.50*** (-6.55)	-0.04 (-0.22)	-0.44* (-2.33)	0.25 (1.06)	-0.51* (-2.12)	-0.02 (-0.28)	-0.43*** (-5.61)	-0.08 (-0.44)	-0.39* (-2.03)	0.20 (0.82)	-0.44 (-1.81)
Age												

Age	-0.00* (-2.37)	0.03*** (14.05)	-0.00* (-2.38)	0.03*** (14.03)	-0.00* (-2.33)	0.03*** (13.73)	-0.00 (-1.72)	0.03*** (12.91)	-0.00 (-1.72)	0.03*** (12.87)	-0.00 (-1.67)	0.03*** (12.56)
Ethnicity												
Ethnic Minority	0.65*** (6.25)	-0.60*** (-4.29)	0.65*** (6.25)	-0.60*** (-4.29)	0.65*** (6.25)	-0.61*** (-4.35)	0.63*** (6.09)	-0.57*** (-4.09)	0.63*** (6.09)	-0.58*** (-4.09)	0.64*** (6.10)	-0.58*** (-4.14)
Gender												
Female	0.19** (2.84)	-0.03 (-0.48)	0.19** (2.85)	-0.04 (-0.53)	0.19** (2.84)	-0.03 (-0.45)	0.19** (2.81)	-0.02 (-0.36)	0.19** (2.83)	-0.03 (-0.40)	0.19** (2.81)	-0.02 (-0.32)
Education												
Degree	0.64*** (7.51)	-0.10 (-1.10)	0.64*** (7.43)	-0.09 (-0.98)	0.64*** (7.40)	-0.10 (-1.07)	0.73*** (8.27)	-0.25** (-2.65)	0.73*** (8.20)	-0.24* (-2.56)	0.73*** (8.16)	-0.25** (-2.66)
Parental Partisanship X Occupational Class												
Don't Know/Mixed /Other X Working Class			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)

At least one parent Labour X Working Class	-0.01 (-0.08)	-0.01 (-0.04)	-0.44 (-1.19)	-0.24 (-0.46)	-0.01 (-0.05)	-0.01 (-0.08)	-0.41 (-1.10)	-0.27 (-0.52)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class	-0.21 (-0.89)	0.41* (2.12)	-0.88 (-1.94)	0.62 (1.82)	-0.24 (-1.01)	0.45* (2.32)	-0.89 (-1.94)	0.64 (1.84)
Family Class X Occupational Class	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
Working Class X Working Class	0.11 (0.59)	-0.20 (-1.09)	-0.32 (-1.14)	-0.05 (-0.16)	0.12 (0.63)	-0.20 (-1.05)	-0.29 (-1.05)	-0.06 (-0.21)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)			0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent			-0.29	0.77** (2.80)			-0.29	0.77** (2.80)

Labour X Working Class	(-1.22)		(-1.24)	
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class	-0.49* (-1.98)	0.57** (2.80)	-0.49* (-1.98)	0.58** (2.81)
Parental Partisanship X Family Class X Occupational Class				
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class X Working Class	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class X Working Class	0.58 (1.41)	0.14 (0.26)	0.55 (1.33)	0.17 (0.31)

At least one parent Conservative					1.06 (1.95)	-0.44 (-1.06)					1.02 (1.88)	-0.41 (-0.97)
X Working Class												
X Working Class												
Class Identity												
Working Class							0.37*** (4.19)	-0.57*** (-6.67)	0.38*** (4.24)	-0.58*** (-6.77)	0.37*** (4.21)	-0.58*** (-6.79)
Constant	-1.45*** (-9.75)	-2.20*** (-14.47)	-1.44**(-9.09)	-2.19*** (-13.76)	-1.58**(-8.77)	-1.94*** (-11.10)	-1.63***(-10.48)	-1.95*** (-12.47)	-1.62**(-9.83)	-1.93*** (-11.80)	-1.77**(-9.47)	-1.67*** (-9.35)
Observations	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757
Pseudo R^2	0.060	0.110	0.061	0.111	0.062	0.114	0.063	0.117	0.064	0.119	0.065	0.122

t statistics in parentheses
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A7: Comparison of Coefficients for Ordered logistic regressions for strength of Labour and Conservative identity

	(26)		(27)		(28)		(29)	
	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour	Conservative
Class Identity								

Working Class	0.46*** (5.57)	-0.64*** (-7.85)	0.49*** (5.75)	-0.63*** (-7.30)	0.46*** (4.89)	-0.63*** (-6.59)	0.32* (2.05)	-0.83*** (-4.67)
Parental Partisanship								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour	1.09*** (11.59)	-0.52*** (-5.09)	1.12*** (11.35)	-0.54*** (-5.13)	1.09*** (10.01)	-0.51*** (-4.13)	1.22*** (5.94)	-0.10 (-0.37)
At least one parent Conservative	-0.45*** (-3.67)	0.96*** (9.86)	-0.43*** (-3.48)	0.98*** (9.47)	-0.29* (-2.02)	0.95*** (8.41)	-0.53 (-1.68)	1.00*** (4.48)
Occupational Class								
Working Class	0.08 (0.44)	-0.56** (-3.07)	0.11 (0.59)	-0.52** (-2.73)	-0.17 (-0.81)	-0.71** (-3.10)	0.57 (1.58)	-0.13 (-0.31)
Parental Partisanship X Occupational Class								
Don't Know/Mixed/Other X Working Class	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
At least one parent Labour X Working Class	0.17 (1.15)	0.03 (0.16)	0.11 (0.75)	0.05 (0.29)	0.30 (1.78)	0.11 (0.53)	0.03 (0.10)	-0.50 (-1.12)
At least one parent Conservative X Working Class	0.16 (0.73)	0.59** (3.26)	0.15 (0.69)	0.54** (2.81)	0.18 (0.71)	0.67** (3.12)	-0.14 (-0.26)	0.10 (0.26)
Family Class								

Working Class	0.00 (0.03)	0.19 (1.89)	-0.00 (-0.01)	0.15 (1.40)	-0.00 (-0.03)	0.22 (1.87)	0.13 (0.58)	0.16 (0.80)
Family Class X Occupational Class								
Working Class X Working Class	0.11 (0.65)	-0.02 (-0.09)	0.10 (0.58)	-0.08 (-0.40)	0.17 (0.84)	0.11 (0.48)	-0.09 (-0.25)	0.10 (0.26)
Age								
Age	-0.00 (-1.84)	0.03*** (14.17)	-0.01*** (-3.76)	0.03*** (12.52)	-0.00 (-0.94)	0.03*** (13.19)	0.02*** (5.17)	0.04*** (8.15)
Ethnicity								
Ethnic Minority	0.83*** (8.86)	-0.44*** (-3.33)	0.90*** (8.57)	-0.45*** (-3.31)	0.86*** (8.00)	-0.45** (-2.59)	0.90*** (5.48)	-0.54 (-1.26)
Gender								
Female	0.13* (2.09)	-0.08 (-1.29)	0.14* (2.05)	-0.10 (-1.51)	0.13 (1.76)	-0.07 (-0.88)	0.10 (0.85)	-0.07 (-0.48)
Education								
Degree	0.55*** (6.52)	-0.37*** (-4.15)	0.54*** (6.01)	-0.40*** (-4.25)	0.58*** (6.08)	-0.36*** (-3.44)	0.58*** (3.58)	-0.50* (-2.41)
Constant			-1.40*** (-8.73)	-1.65*** (-10.12)	-2.19*** (-12.18)	-2.70*** (-14.14)	-5.01*** (-14.86)	-5.14*** (-12.97)
cut1	1.56*** (10.10)	1.80*** (11.49)						
cut2	2.14*** (13.70)	2.46*** (15.49)						
cut3	3.69*** (22.40)	4.42*** (25.42)						
Observations	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757	4757
Pseudo R^2	0.072	0.108	0.110	0.147	0.096	0.154	0.096	0.136

t statistics in parentheses
Model 26: Ordered Logistic Regression Models, as in Model 18
Model 27: Logistic Regression Models for Party Identity (no measure of strength)
Model 28: Logistic Regression Models for Fairly or Very Strong Party Identity
Model 29: Logistic Regression Models for Very Strong Party Identity
Source: 2017 & 2015 BES
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix B: National Identities in England

Table B1: England: Sample Sizes and Don't Knows by Time Period

	English-ness Sample Size	British-ness Sample Size	Englishness DK	Englishness DK %	Britishness DK	Britishness DK %
Pre-Brexit	11121	11126	1551	13.9	1493	13.4
Post-Brexit	15761	15768	1115	7.1	1057	6.7
Pre-Johnson	23677	23702	2134	9.0	2035	8.6
Johnson Premiership	19442	19463	646	3.3	622	3.2
Covid	19960	19990	1328	6.7	1250	6.3

Table B2: Means of Englishness and Britishness by period: Same sample over time

	Englishness	SD	Britishness	SD	Englishness - Britishness	SD
Pre-Brexit	5.9	1.6	5.7	1.4	0.13	1.6
Post-Brexit	5.7*	1.7	5.6*	1.6	0.15	1.8
Pre-Johnson	5.6*	1.8	5.5*	1.6	0.09*	1.7
Johnson Premiership	5.7*	1.7	5.7*	1.5	0.03*	1.7
Covid	5.6*	1.8	5.5*	1.6	0.09*	1.7

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Table B3: Means of Englishness and Britishness by Brexit vote and period: Same sample over time

	Englishness		Britishness	
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain
Pre-Brexit	6.3	5.4	6	5.6
Post-Brexit	6.3	5.1*	5.8*	5.4*
Pre-Johnson	6.1*	5*	5.7	5.3*
Johnson Premiership	6.3*	5.2*	5.9*	5.6*
Coronavirus Pandemic	6.1*	4.9*	5.8*	5.2*

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Appendix C: National Identities in Scotland

Table C1: Scotland: Sample Sizes and Don't Knows by Time Period

	Scottish-ness Sample Size	British-ness Sample Size	Scottishness DK	Scottishness DK %	Britishness DK	Britishness DK %
Pre-independence referendum	1683	1724	104	5.8	117	6.4
Post-independence referendum	1783	1825	79	4.2	94	4.9
Pre-Brexit	1633	1685	28	1.7	38	2.2
Post-Brexit	2173	2233	84	3.7	122	5.2
Pre-Johnson	2760	2837	167	5.7	193	6.4
Johnson Premiership	2184	2237	42	1.9	52	2.3
Covid	2137	2190	94	4.2	106	4.6

Table C2: Means and Standard Deviations of Scottishness and Britishness by period: Same sample over time

	Scottishness		Britishness		Scottishness – Britishness	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pre-independence referendum	5.6	1.9	4.8	1.9	0.8	2.8
Post-independence referendum	5.8*	1.8	4.8*	2.1	1.1*	2.9
Pre-Brexit	5.6*	1.9	4.8	1.9	0.9*	2.9
Post-Brexit	5.6	1.9	4.5*	2.1	1.1*	3
Pre-Johnson	5.6	1.9	4.5	2	1.1	2.9
Johnson Premiership	5.7*	1.9	4.8*	2	0.9*	2.9
Covid	5.7	1.8	4.4*	2.1	1.3*	3

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Table C3: Means of Scottishness by Referendum Votes and period: Same sample over time

	Yes		No		
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	Overall
Pre-independence referendum	6.3	6.4	4.8	5.6	5.6
Post-independence referendum	6.5*	6.5*	5	5.8*	5.8*
Pre-Brexit	6.4	6.4*	4.8	5.7	5.6*
Post-Brexit	6.3	6.5*	4.8	5.5*	5.6
Pre-Johnson	6.2	6.4	4.8	5.4	5.6
Johnson Premiership	6.3	6.4	4.9	5.7	5.7*
Coronavirus Pandemic	6.2	6.5	4.9	5.6	5.7

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Table C4: Means of Britishness by Referendum Vote and period: Same sample over time

	Yes		No		
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	Overall
Pre-independence referendum	4.2	3.8	5.9	5.8	4.8
Post-independence referendum	3.5*	3.2*	6.1	5.9	4.8*
Pre-Brexit	4.1*	3.5*	6.1	5.6*	4.8
Post-Brexit	4.1	3*	6	5.2*	4.5*
Pre-Johnson	4.4	3	5.9	5.1	4.5
Johnson Premiership	4.5*	3.5*	6	5.6*	4.8*
Coronavirus Pandemic	4.3	2.9*	5.7*	5.3*	4.4*

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Table C5: England: Sample Sizes and Don't Knows by Time Period

	English-ness Sample Size	British-ness Sample Size	Englishness DK	Englishness DK %	Britishness DK	Britishness DK %
Pre-Brexit	11121	11126	1551	13.9	1493	13.4
Post-Brexit	15761	15768	1115	7.1	1057	6.7
Pre-Johnson	23677	23702	2134	9.0	2035	8.6
Johnson Premiership	19442	19463	646	3.3	622	3.2
Covid	19960	19990	1328	6.7	1250	6.3

Table C6: Means of Englishness, Scottishness and Britishness by period

	Scottishness	SD	Britishness in Scotland	SD	Englishness	SD	Britishness in England	SD
Pre-Brexit	5.6	1.9	4.7	2	5.8	1.6	5.7	1.5
Post-Brexit	5.6	1.9	4.6*	2.1	5.6*	1.8	5.6*	1.6
Pre-Johnson	5.6*	1.9	4.5*	2	5.4*	1.8	5.5*	1.6
Johnson Premiership	5.7*	1.8	4.6*	2	5.5*	1.8	5.6*	1.5
Covid	5.6*	1.9	4.4*	2.1	5.3*	1.8	5.4*	1.6

*Note: an * denotes that there has been a statistically significant change (two sided p<.05) in the mean level of national identity between this time period and the one before*

Appendix D: The coronavirus pandemic in Scotland

Table D1: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the Scottish Government by referendum vote

	Lockdown					PPE					Testing				
	Yes		No		Total	Yes		No		Total	Yes		No		Total
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain		Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain		Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	
June 2020	3.6	3.9	3.0	3.3	3.4	2.9	3.2	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.7
N	195	352	274	453	1502	195	352	274	453	2502	195	352	275	453	1502
May 2021	3.4	3.9	2.7	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.5	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.6	2.6	3.1	3.2
N	185	355	245	471	1483	185	355	245	471	1483	185	355	245	471	1483

Table D2: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the British Government by referendum vote, Scottish respondents only

	Lockdown					PPE					Testing				
	Yes		No		Total	Yes		No		Total	Yes		No		Total
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain		Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain		Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain	
June 2020	2.3	1.9	2.8	2.4	2.3	1.9	1.5	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.9
N	195	352	274	454	1504	195	352	274	454	1504	195	352	274	454	1504
May 2021	2.6	2.1	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.1	1.9	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.4	3.2	2.9	2.8
N	185	355	245	471	1483	185	355	245	471	1483	185	355	245	471	1483

Table D3: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the Scottish Government by 2019 General Election vote,

	Lockdown				Total	PPE				Total	Testing				Total
	Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote		Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote		Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote	
June 2020	3.0	3.2	3.9	3.2	3.4	2.4	2.5	3.2	2.6	2.7	2.2	2.5	3.1	2.6	2.7
N	392	230	541	139	1502	392	230	541	139	1502	392	230	541	139	1502
May 2021	2.8	3.1	4.0	3.4	3.4	2.6	2.9	3.4	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.1	3.6	3.1	3.2
N	366	225	585	138	1483	366	225	585	138	1483	366	225	585	138	1483

Table D4: Perceptions of handling of elements of the coronavirus crisis by the British Government by 2019 General Election vote, Scottish respondents only

	Lockdown				Total	PPE				Total	Testing				Total
	Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote		Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote		Con	Lab	SNP	Did not vote	
June 2020	3.1	2.2	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.6	1.9	1.5	2.2	1.9	2.6	1.9	1.6	2.0	1.9
N	392	231	541	139	1504	392	231	541	139	1504	392	231	541	139	1504
May 2021	3.3	2.5	2.2	2.7	2.6	3.0	2.3	1.9	2.4	2.3	3.5	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.8
N	366	225	585	138	1483	366	225	585	138	1483	366	225	585	138	1483

Table D5: OLS regression models to predict the likelihood of judging Governments to have performed well in different aspects of responding to the coronavirus outbreak

	Dec 2019 – June 2020		June 2020 – May 2021		Dec 2019 – May 2021	
	Scottish Government	UK Government	Scottish Government	UK Government	Scottish Government	UK Government
Had Covid						
Personally	-0.12 (0.087)	-0.085 (0.074)	-0.16 (0.080)	-0.12 (0.076)	0.012 (0.072)	-0.054 (0.070)
Family	-0.021 (0.079)	-0.022 (0.068)	0.085 (0.065)	0.0096 (0.061)	0.042 (0.059)	0.044 (0.057)
Someone Close	0.090 (0.13)	-0.069 (0.11)	-0.040 (0.080)	0.018 (0.076)	-0.044 (0.075)	-0.086 (0.073)
Covid Death						
Know someone who died	0.023 (0.073)	0.021 (0.063)	0.018 (0.062)	0.0065 (0.058)	0.037 (0.055)	-0.053 (0.053)
Vote Choice (Base= Con)						
Labour	-0.014 (0.097)	-0.060 (0.083)	-0.016 (0.097)	-0.061 (0.091)	0.14 (0.095)	0.084 (0.092)
Lib Dem	0.11 (0.10)	-0.14 (0.089)	-0.23* (0.11)	-0.22* (0.11)	-0.038 (0.10)	-0.11 (0.10)
SNP	0.27* (0.11)	-0.042 (0.095)	0.011 (0.10)	-0.13 (0.098)	0.28** (0.11)	0.0024 (0.10)
Other	0.024 (0.15)	-0.17 (0.13)	0.035 (0.15)	-0.19 (0.14)	0.20 (0.16)	-0.22 (0.16)
Did not vote	-0.016 (0.12)	-0.067 (0.100)	0.21 (0.11)	0.18 (0.10)	0.20 (0.11)	0.11 (0.11)
Party Evaluation						
Like SNP	0.053* (0.021)	-0.022 (0.018)	0.036* (0.017)	0.0067 (0.016)	0.039* (0.020)	0.011 (0.019)
Like Conservatives	0.013 (0.018)	0.065*** (0.015)	0.037* (0.017)	0.058*** (0.016)	0.048** (0.016)	0.095*** (0.015)
Leadership Evaluation						
Like Sturgeon	0.056** (0.020)	-0.0035 (0.017)	0.13*** (0.015)	-0.0013 (0.014)	0.084*** (0.018)	-0.039* (0.018)
Like Johnson	0.019 (0.017)	0.10*** (0.014)	0.0084 (0.016)	0.13*** (0.015)	-0.013 (0.015)	0.072*** (0.015)

Scottish Referendum Vote						
Yes	0.091 (0.066)	-0.077 (0.056)	0.012 (0.061)	-0.17** (0.058)	0.052 (0.063)	-0.10 (0.061)
Did not vote	0.094 (0.11)	-0.091 (0.092)	0.060 (0.098)	-0.039 (0.092)	0.24* (0.097)	-0.077 (0.093)
EU Referendum Vote						
Leave	-0.056 (0.060)	-0.10 (0.052)	-0.10 (0.059)	-0.12* (0.056)	-0.14* (0.057)	-0.0094 (0.055)
Did not vote	-0.026 (0.100)	0.048 (0.086)	-0.010 (0.094)	-0.15 (0.088)	0.098 (0.095)	0.042 (0.092)
Gender						
Female	0.22*** (0.047)	0.012 (0.041)	0.043 (0.047)	0.085 (0.044)	0.15*** (0.045)	0.076 (0.043)
Ethnicity						
Ethnic Minority	-0.56** (0.22)	-0.18 (0.19)	-0.43* (0.18)	-0.24 (0.17)	-0.19 (0.20)	0.044 (0.19)
Education						
Degree	-0.046 (0.049)	-0.14*** (0.042)	0.031 (0.048)	-0.12* (0.045)	-0.074 (0.046)	-0.20*** (0.044)
Age						
Age	0.00085 (0.0017)	-0.0042** (0.0015)	0.0046** (0.0017)	0.0014 (0.0016)	0.0059*** (0.0017)	-0.0016 (0.0016)
Constant	2.12*** (0.14)	2.02*** (0.12)	1.89*** (0.15)	2.08*** (0.14)	1.99*** (0.14)	2.38*** (0.14)
Observations	1382	1384	1138	1138	1362	1362
R2	0.266	0.417	0.367	0.456	0.324	0.416

t statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table D6: Net changes in liking of Sturgeon and SNP

Net change in…	Liking of Sturgeon	Liking SNP
Coronavirus Competence Evaluation June 2020		
Positive	1.1	0.5
Neutral	1.2	0.5
Negative	0.7	0.1
Dec 2019 – June 2020 Change	1	0.4
Coronavirus Competence Evaluation May 2021		
Positive	-0.1	-0.1
Neutral	-0.6	-0.2
Negative	-0.7	-0.6
June 2020 – May 2021 Change	-0.4	-0.3
Coronavirus Competence Evaluation May 2021		
Positive	1.1	0.6
Neutral	0.4	0
Negative	-0.1	-0.3
December 2019 – May 2021 Change	0.5	0.1

Table D7: Random effects models to predict the change in liking Sturgeon and the SNP, W19-W20.

	Dec 2019 – June 2020		June 2020 – May 2021		Dec 2019 – May 2021	
	Change in Liking Sturgeon	Change in liking SNP	Change in Liking Sturgeon	Change in liking SNP	Change in Liking Sturgeon	Change in liking SNP
Scottish Govt Covid Handling	1.01*** (0.11)	0.51*** (0.087)	0.41*** (0.089)	0.23** (0.083)	0.98*** (0.080)	0.71*** (0.073)
Like SNP	0.44*** (0.077)	-0.38*** (0.064)	0.15* (0.061)	-0.60*** (0.057)	0.35*** (0.065)	-0.46*** (0.060)
Scottish Govt Covid Handling X Like SNP	-0.092*** (0.017)	-0.043** (0.014)	0.046** (0.015)	0.059*** (0.014)	-0.019 (0.014)	0.0029 (0.013)
Like Conservatives	0.00071 (0.048)	0.026 (0.040)	0.054 (0.036)	0.029 (0.033)	-0.037 (0.036)	-0.053 (0.033)
Like Sturgeon	-0.48*** (0.055)	0.27*** (0.045)	-0.53*** (0.033)	0.16*** (0.031)	-0.62*** (0.042)	0.14*** (0.039)
Like Johnson	-0.059 (0.047)	-0.043 (0.039)	-0.067* (0.033)	-0.045 (0.030)	0.023 (0.035)	0.045 (0.032)
Vote Choice (base = Con)						
Labour	0.36 (0.28)	0.67** (0.23)	0.76*** (0.20)	0.25 (0.19)	0.56** (0.21)	0.31 (0.20)
Lib Dem	1.01** (0.31)	1.19*** (0.26)	0.47* (0.23)	-0.037 (0.22)	0.93*** (0.23)	0.47* (0.21)
SNP	0.50 (0.32)	0.99*** (0.26)	1.17*** (0.22)	1.15*** (0.20)	0.87*** (0.25)	0.97*** (0.23)
Other	0.79 (0.45)	0.88* (0.37)	0.48 (0.32)	-0.033 (0.30)	0.73* (0.36)	0.38 (0.33)
Did not vote	0.68* (0.32)	1.03*** (0.27)	1.15*** (0.23)	0.76*** (0.21)	1.06*** (0.25)	1.15*** (0.23)
Scottish Referendum Vote (base = No)						
Yes	0.29 (0.18)	0.37* (0.15)	-0.019 (0.13)	0.37** (0.12)	-0.035 (0.14)	0.36** (0.13)
Did not vote	0.49 (0.28)	0.25 (0.24)	0.033 (0.21)	0.026 (0.19)	-0.056 (0.22)	0.076 (0.20)
EU Referendum (base = Remain)						
Leave	-0.054 (0.17)	0.050 (0.14)	-0.20 (0.12)	-0.021 (0.11)	-0.38** (0.13)	-0.076 (0.12)
Did not vote	-0.18 (0.27)	-0.047 (0.23)	-0.096 (0.20)	0.20 (0.18)	-0.38 (0.22)	-0.25 (0.20)
Gender						

Female	0.40** (0.13)	0.25* (0.11)	-0.064 (0.098)	-0.068 (0.092)	0.38*** (0.10)	0.21* (0.092)
Ethnicity						
Ethnic minority	0.81 (0.55)	-0.25 (0.46)	0.43 (0.37)	0.036 (0.35)	0.34 (0.46)	0.22 (0.42)
Education						
Degree	-0.29* (0.13)	-0.29* (0.11)	0.13 (0.10)	0.034 (0.093)	-0.11 (0.10)	-0.22* (0.095)
Age						
Age	0.0064 (0.0048)	0.0086* (0.0040)	-0.0031 (0.0035)	-0.0039 (0.0033)	0.0031 (0.0037)	0.0021 (0.0034)
Constant	-1.18* (0.47)	-1.20** (0.38)	-0.98** (0.36)	-0.50 (0.34)	-2.00*** (0.37)	-1.62*** (0.34)
Observations	755	749	1157	1156	1367	1359
Overall R2	0.289	0.257	0.249	0.188	0.285	0.221

t statistics in parentheses
$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table D8: OLS regression models to predict change in supporting independence or the SNP

	SNP Dec 2019 – June 2020	SNP June 2020 – May 2021	SNP Dec 2019 – May 2021	Yes Dec 2019 – June 2020	Yes June 2020 – May 2021	Yes Dec 2019 – May 2021
Scottish Government Covid handling	0.029*** (0.0086)	0.042*** (0.011)	0.071*** (0.0099)	0.018 (0.010)	0.048** (0.015)	0.047*** (0.011)
Like SNP	0.049*** (0.0070)	0.034*** (0.0066)	0.033*** (0.0074)	-0.0010 (0.0083)	0.012 (0.0090)	-0.017* (0.0082)
Like Conservatives	0.0068 (0.0056)		-0.011 (0.0059)	0.0067 (0.0066)		0.0038 (0.0065)
Like Sturgeon	0.0017 (0.0065)		0.0075 (0.0069)	-0.0021 (0.0078)		0.00059 (0.0077)
Like Johnson	-0.0051 (0.0054)		0.0033 (0.0057)	-0.0058 (0.0064)		0.00012 (0.0062)
Vote Choice (base – Lab)						
Conservative	0.026 (0.030)	0.079 (0.042)	-0.071* (0.034)	0.012 (0.037)	-0.016 (0.054)	-0.058 (0.037)
Lib Dem	0.048 (0.030)	-0.043 (0.050)	-0.027 (0.036)	0.062 (0.039)	-0.031 (0.068)	0.021 (0.040)
SNP	-0.61*** (0.029)	-0.55*** (0.032)	-0.69*** (0.040)	0.0063 (0.036)	-0.11* (0.043)	0.029 (0.045)
UKIP			-0.30 (0.28)			0.088 (0.30)
Green	0.15* (0.074)	-0.20*** (0.055)	0.044 (0.094)	-0.035 (0.088)	-0.26*** (0.076)	-0.16 (0.10)
Other	0.088 (0.091)	0.054 (0.095)	-0.015 (0.086)	0.70*** (0.12)	-0.19 (0.12)	0.029 (0.11)
Brexit Party	0.063 (0.081)	0.031 (0.094)	0.39 (0.29)	-0.0033 (0.10)	-0.12 (0.12)	0.12 (0.30)

Don't Know	0.14 (0.095)	0.047 (0.034)	0.054 (0.10)	-0.0051 (0.11)	-0.058 (0.047)	0.25* (0.11)
Did not vote		-0.043 (0.057)		0.10* (0.046)	-0.12 (0.087)	
Scottish Referendum (base = No)						
Yes	0.12*** (0.021)	0.100*** (0.023)	0.10*** (0.023)	0.0051 (0.025)	0.050 (0.030)	0.041 (0.026)
Did not vote	0.016 (0.037)	-0.0034 (0.037)	0.032 (0.037)	0.12** (0.044)	0.014 (0.049)	-0.022 (0.043)
EU Referendum (base = Remain)						
Leave	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.033 (0.022)	-0.027 (0.021)	0.055* (0.023)	-0.035 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.022)
Did not vote	-0.010 (0.036)	-0.058 (0.035)	-0.042 (0.039)	-0.036 (0.039)	-0.12** (0.045)	-0.13** (0.042)
Female	0.0022 (0.015)	-0.030 (0.018)	-0.017 (0.016)	0.016 (0.018)	-0.032 (0.023)	-0.012 (0.018)
Ethnic minority	0.025 (0.072)	-0.0054 (0.065)	-0.023 (0.086)	0.12 (0.080)	-0.059 (0.084)	0.17 (0.087)
Degree	-0.0053 (0.015)	-0.0072 (0.018)	0.000031 (0.016)	0.033 (0.018)	0.0047 (0.023)	0.048** (0.018)
Age (base 65+)						
35-64	-0.0033 (0.017)	0.0094 (0.021)	-0.0032 (0.018)	-0.037 (0.020)	0.044 (0.027)	-0.0056 (0.019)
Under 35	-0.013 (0.029)	0.0091 (0.031)	-0.025 (0.032)	-0.056 (0.034)	0.069 (0.041)	-0.037 (0.036)
Constant	-0.11** (0.033)	-0.082 (0.042)	-0.12** (0.044)	-0.079 (0.041)	-0.11* (0.056)	-0.14** (0.048)
Observations	1271	1153	1260	1250	1040	1174
R2	0.330	0.272	0.334	0.060	0.044	0.064

t statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to the SNP and -1 if an individual switched away from the SNP.

Table D9: OLS regression models to predict change in supporting independence or the SNP, compared to December 2019, broken down by political attention

	SNP Low Attention	SNP Medium Attention	SNP High Attention	Yes Low Attention	Yes Medium Attention	Yes High Attention
Scottish Government Covid handling	0.015 (0.046)	0.063** (0.020)	0.079*** (0.012)	0.11 (0.060)	0.050 (0.028)	0.044*** (0.011)
Like SNP	0.029 (0.041)	0.031** (0.012)	0.036*** (0.0099)	0.038 (0.044)	-0.035* (0.015)	-0.0049 (0.0093)
Like Conservatives	-0.031 (0.024)	-0.0079 (0.013)	-0.014* (0.0070)	0.016 (0.030)	-0.0056 (0.017)	0.0067 (0.0066)
Like Sturgeon	0.032 (0.036)	-0.013 (0.011)	0.0048 (0.0091)	-0.022 (0.040)	0.0063 (0.015)	-0.0084 (0.0087)
Like Johnson	0.025 (0.019)	-0.0039 (0.012)	0.0028 (0.0068)	-0.027 (0.027)	0.010 (0.016)	-0.0033 (0.0064)
Vote 2019 (base – Lab)						
Conservative	0.16 (0.16)	0.060 (0.068)	0.075 (0.041)	0.33 (0.21)	0.20* (0.096)	0.000028 (0.037)
Lib Dem	0.099 (0.15)	-0.016 (0.072)	0.050 (0.041)	0.28 (0.21)	0.13 (0.11)	0.041 (0.039)
SNP	-0.71*** (0.13)	-0.51*** (0.059)	-0.64*** (0.037)	-0.22 (0.17)	0.28** (0.091)	0.030 (0.036)
Green	0.96** (0.35)	0.078 (0.16)	0.063 (0.12)	-0.023 (0.49)	-0.40 (0.22)	0.058 (0.11)
Other	-0.012 (0.34)	-0.33 (0.27)	0.085 (0.093)	0.32 (0.49)	0.28 (0.37)	0.040 (0.11)
Brexit Party			0.43 (0.28)			0.057 (0.26)
Don’t Know	0.14 (0.18)	0.67* (0.28)	-0.031 (0.16)	0.26 (0.26)	1.20** (0.38)	-0.011 (0.15)
Did not vote				0.069 (0.15)	0.31** (0.10)	0.098 (0.056)
Scottish Referendum (base = No)						
Yes	0.060 (0.091)	0.23*** (0.045)	0.086** (0.028)	-0.11 (0.12)	0.0059 (0.061)	0.051 (0.027)
Did not vote	0.010 (0.38)	-0.13 (0.075)	0.088* (0.042)	0.11 (0.22)	0.10 (0.12)	-0.018 (0.040)
EU Referendum (base = Remain)						

Leave	-0.25** (0.094)	-0.0065 (0.043)	-0.010 (0.024)	0.14 (0.13)	-0.021 (0.057)	-0.015 (0.022)
Did not vote	-0.15 (0.14)	-0.018 (0.076)	-0.026 (0.048)	-0.083 (0.17)	-0.21* (0.097)	-0.14** (0.043)
Female	0.015 (0.080)	0.052 (0.035)	-0.030 (0.019)	0.072 (0.10)	0.011 (0.048)	-0.0047 (0.018)
Ethnic minority	0.68 (0.35)	-0.077 (0.16)	-0.057 (0.11)	0.99** (0.38)	0.23 (0.19)	0.17 (0.091)
Degree	-0.080 (0.094)	0.022 (0.037)	-0.012 (0.019)	-0.090 (0.11)	0.060 (0.051)	0.030 (0.018)
Age (base 65+)						
35-64	0.088 (0.083)	-0.041 (0.040)	0.000011 (0.020)	0.018 (0.11)	-0.036 (0.054)	0.010 (0.019)
Under 35	-0.23 (0.14)	-0.0081 (0.066)	0.014 (0.039)	-0.099 (0.16)	-0.19* (0.095)	0.0073 (0.037)
Constant	-0.073 (0.20)	-0.18* (0.080)	-0.18*** (0.045)	-0.54* (0.25)	-0.31** (0.11)	-0.15*** (0.042)
Observations	89	253	918	109	254	884
R2	0.610	0.411	0.331	0.224	0.194	0.052

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to the SNP and -1 if an individual switched away from the SNP.

Table D10: OLS regression models to predict change in supporting the Conservatives or the Union, compared to December 2019, broken down by political attention

	Conservative Low Attention	Conservative Medium Attention	Conservative High Attention	Union Low Attention	Union Medium Attention	Union High Attention
British Government			0.046***			
Covid handling	0.060 (0.035)	0.035 (0.023)	(0.011)	-0.078 (0.059)	0.0051 (0.030)	-0.018 (0.012)
Like SNP	0.023 (0.033)	-0.00050 (0.013)	-0.015 (0.0084)	-0.082 (0.045)	0.019 (0.017)	0.0088 (0.0095)
Like Conservatives			0.024***			
	0.056** (0.019)	0.036* (0.014)	(0.0061)	0.023 (0.036)	-0.012 (0.017)	0.0078 (0.0066)
Like Sturgeon			-0.0018			
	-0.024 (0.028)	-0.018 (0.012)	(0.0077)	0.064 (0.041)	-0.011 (0.016)	-0.0029 (0.0088)
Like Johnson			0.015*			
	-0.040** (0.015)	-0.0071 (0.014)	(0.0059)	-0.0020 (0.029)	0.0083 (0.017)	-0.0030 (0.0064)
Vote 2019 (base – Con)						
Labour			-0.53***			
	-0.42** (0.12)	-0.53*** (0.073)	(0.035)	-0.32 (0.22)	-0.16 (0.098)	-0.033 (0.038)
Lib Dem			0.092**			
	-0.31* (0.12)	-0.024 (0.078)	(0.034)	-0.15 (0.23)	-0.036 (0.11)	0.0099 (0.040)
SNP	-0.084 (0.11)	0.026 (0.064)	0.068* (0.032)	0.15 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.098)	-0.026 (0.037)
Green	-0.40 (0.28)	-0.047 (0.17)	0.014 (0.100)	-0.15 (0.52)	0.36 (0.28)	-0.031 (0.11)
Other	0.21 (0.28)	0.92** (0.30)	-0.0086 (0.079)	-0.45 (0.52)	-0.23 (0.40)	0.21* (0.095)
UKIP			0.76** (0.24)			-0.082 (0.26)
Brexit Party			0.047 (0.24)			-0.028 (0.26)
Don’t Know	-0.23 (0.14)	-0.23 (0.30)	0.13 (0.14)	-0.34 (0.27)		-0.023 (0.15)
Did not vote				-0.15 (0.15)	-0.057 (0.11)	-0.075 (0.055)
Scottish Referendum (base = No)						
Yes	0.018 (0.073)	-0.032 (0.049)	0.010 (0.024)	0.20 (0.13)	-0.013 (0.066)	-0.046 (0.027)
Did not vote	-0.27 (0.30)	-0.018 (0.082)	-0.0035 (0.036)	0.041 (0.23)	0.23 (0.13)	0.028 (0.040)

EU Referendum (base = Remain)						
Leave	-0.046 (0.074)	-0.0054 (0.046)	-0.0085 (0.020)	-0.0022 (0.14)	0.040 (0.060)	0.016 (0.023)
Did not vote	0.016 (0.11)	-0.078 (0.082)	0.025 (0.041)	0.018 (0.16)	-0.33** (0.12)	0.011 (0.045)
Female	-0.090 (0.064)	-0.030 (0.038)	-0.018 (0.016)	-0.076 (0.11)	-0.027 (0.050)	-0.0081 (0.018)
Ethnic minority	-0.10 (0.28)	0.072 (0.17)	-0.11 (0.091)	0.0055 (0.53)	-0.061 (0.20)	-0.0092 (0.088)
Degree	0.17* (0.075)	-0.037 (0.041)	-0.020 (0.016)	0.041 (0.12)	-0.062 (0.053)	0.017 (0.018)
Age (base 65+)						
35-64	-0.13 (0.066)	0.044 (0.043)	0.016 (0.017)	0.14 (0.11)	0.030 (0.056)	0.0075 (0.019)
Under 35	-0.18 (0.11)	0.13 (0.071)	-0.0062 (0.033)	0.17 (0.17)	0.011 (0.10)	0.00067 (0.037)
Constant	0.096 (0.14)	0.021 (0.092)	-0.035 (0.038)	0.21 (0.24)	0.11 (0.12)	0.049 (0.041)
Observations	89	253	918	109	253	885
R2	0.411	0.302	0.315	0.164	0.100	0.023

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is equal to 0 if there is no change, 1 if an individual switched to the Conservatives/Union and -1 if an individual switched away from the Conservatives/Union.

Figure D1: Margins plot for December 2019 – May 2021 change in liking Sturgeon of liking of the SNP in December 2019 X Scottish Government coronavirus handling scale May 2021

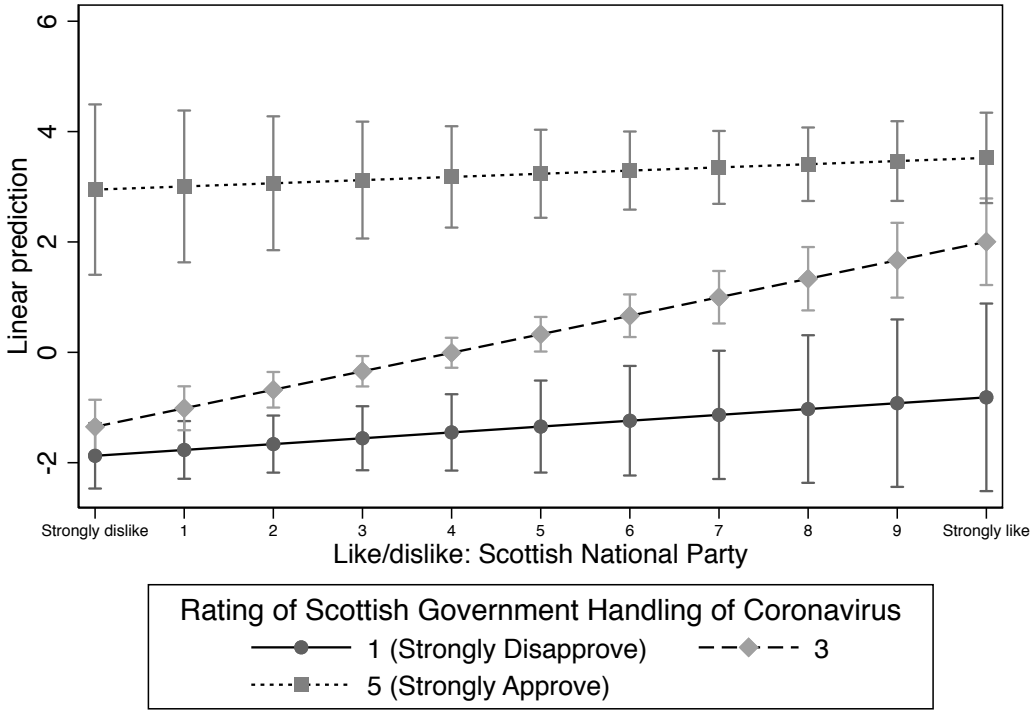


Figure D2: Margins plot for change in liking SNP of liking SNP in December 2019 X Scottish Government coronavirus handling scale May 2021

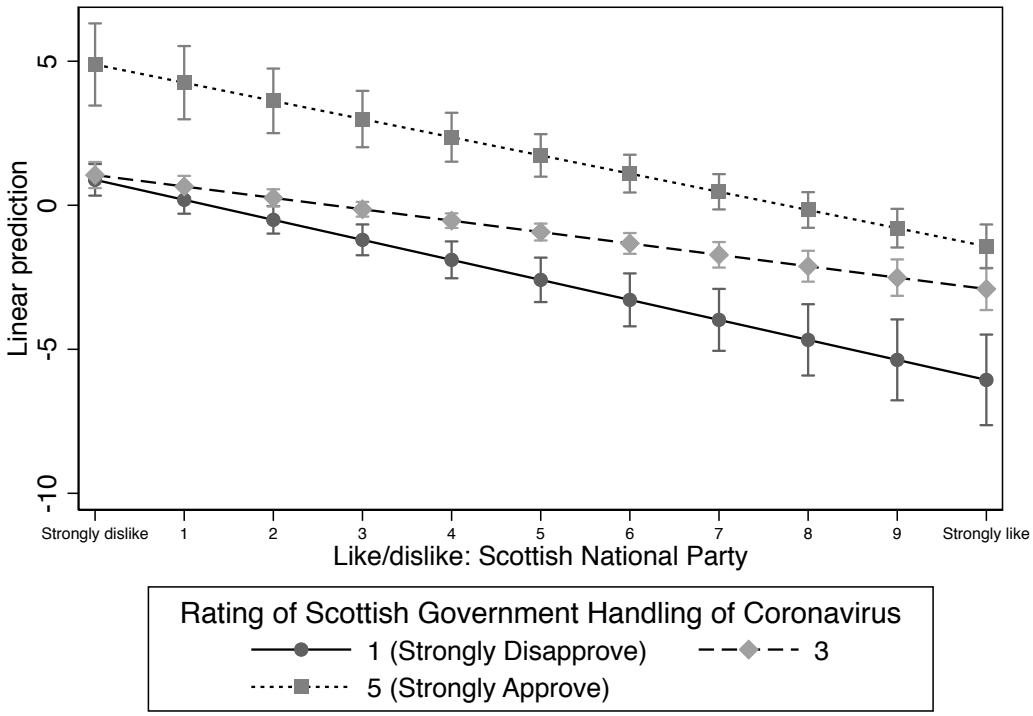


Figure D3: Margins plot for change supporting SNP of liking SNP in December 2019 X Scottish Government coronavirus handling scale May 2021

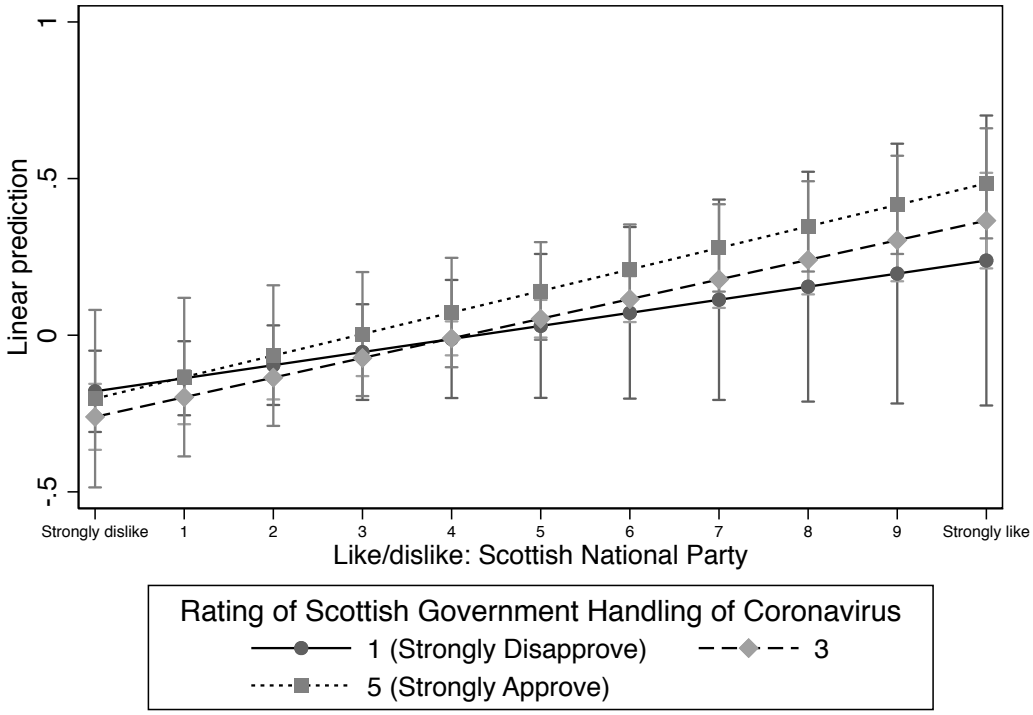


Figure D4: Margins plot for change in support for independence of liking of the SNP in December 2019 X Scottish Government coronavirus handling scale May 2021

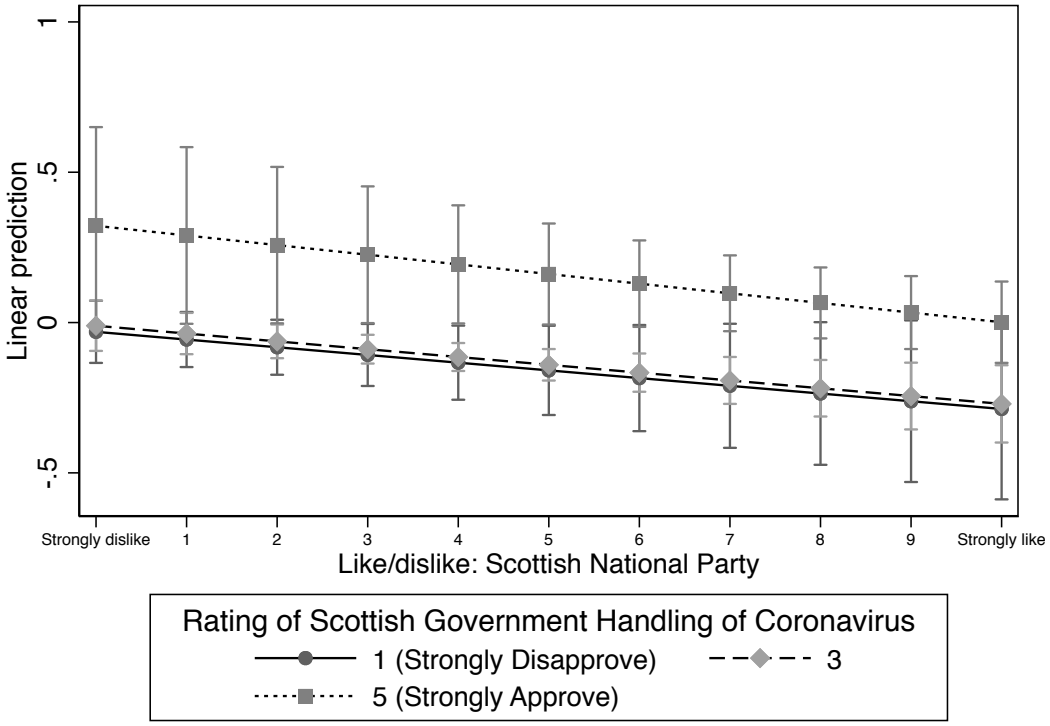


Figure D5: Coefficient plots of OLS regression models to predict the likelihood of judging Governments to have performed well in different aspects of responding to the coronavirus outbreak, May 2021 – Don't Knows removed

