

**THE ISSUE AGENDA AND VOTING IN 2005**

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## **Abstract**

### **THE ISSUE AGENDA AND VOTING IN 2005**

This chapter considers how issues affected party choice and the election outcome in 2005. Analyses of British Election Study data show that the mix of issues was quite different from 2001. However, as in 2001, valence issues concerning economic performance and public service delivery strongly influenced major party voting. A triumvirate of valence issues, leader images, and partisanship gave Labour just enough to win again.

## THE ISSUE AGENDA AND VOTING IN 2005

The 2005 British general election was a competitive contest. In the preceding 2001 election Labour had held 'all of the cards' – presiding over a robust economy, it had the most party identifiers, the best leader, and was judged best on issues deemed important by many voters. Four years later, Labour's had been dealt a new, very different hand – Tony Blair's approval ratings had plummeted in the wake of the Iraq war, the number of Labour partisans had fallen substantially, and the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats were poised to challenge Labour on a variety of issues that many people thought had been mishandled or neglected. In the event, Labour did secure a third consecutive victory, but a significant loss of votes and seats gave the party faithful little cause for celebration.

In this chapter, we investigate how issues affected electoral choice in 2005. Although issues are at the centre of general election campaigns, there is longstanding disagreement about how they influence voting. Academics, journalists and assorted political pundits frequently adopt a particular view of how issues work. Parties are seen as staking out 'for' and 'against' positions on issues such as Britain's adoption of the EURO, the invasion of Iraq or the trade-off between tax relief v. public services spending, and oftentimes are criticised for failing to 'capture the middle ground' or 'shift to the centre'. Thus, a common explanation of the Conservatives' electoral misfortunes since 1997 is that they have adopted extremist positions -- travelling too far to the right on the ideological spectrum.<sup>1</sup> Now there is a debate about how far the Liberal Democrats are to the left of New Labour.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the popularity of this positional or spatial model in media commentary and academic research, it failed to provide a convincing account of voting in the 2001 general election.<sup>3</sup> And, there are grounds for thinking that the positional model fared poorly again in 2005, particularly for explaining support for Labour and the Conservatives. Accordingly, we first examine reasons why an alternative ‘valence’ model may tell a better story of issue effects on political choice. After discussing the position and valence models, we investigate their effects on voting in 2005 using data from the British Election Study's (BES) Rolling Campaign Panel Survey (RCPS).<sup>4</sup> The conclusion reprises major findings and briefly reconsiders how issues affected the election outcome.

### **Rival Models of Issue Voting**

In Anthony Downs' pathbreaking study, the basic idea underlying the spatial model of party competition is that voters choose the party closest to them on policies that reflect positions on a left-right ideological continuum.<sup>5</sup> In this way, voters rationally maximise their utility, i.e., the benefits or income that they expect to receive from one party being in government as opposed to another. Downs' best-known theoretical result was that, in a two-party system with a normal distribution of voters along an underlying ideological continuum, parties will locate themselves at the position of the median or ‘middlemost’ voter to maximise the votes that they receive. Much subsequent research has examined this result and its extensions to multi-party competition in multi-dimensional ideological spaces.

The valence model, originally introduced by Stokes, constitutes the major rival perspective. According to Stokes: ‘valence-issues [are] those that merely involve the

linking of the parties with some condition that is positively or negatively valued by the electorate<sup>6</sup>. The key point is that party competition and public issue concerns typically are not about the ends of government action. Rather, they involve competing claims about which party has the means – who is best able to deliver what (virtually) everybody wants. In Britain, voters have been consistently concerned about valence issues – the ability of governments to produce in those policy areas that matter most to people. A healthy economy is the classic example, with the vast majority of voters demanding strong economic performance as indexed by high rates of growth coupled with low interest rates, and low inflation and unemployment rates. Non-economic valence issues are also important, and parties are judged by their ability to deliver highly valued public services in areas such as crime, education, health care, and national security.

The valence model contains an important sub-model -- the issue-priority model -- that claims parties benefit differentially from the salience of particular issues. The importance of issue salience may be understood with reference to theories about how parties use issues in elections. As argued by Budge and others, party competition involves attempts to impose rival issue agendas.<sup>7</sup> Parties concentrate on promoting a subset of valence issues that they ‘own’, or have a marked advantage on, and they ignore other issues, particularly those ‘owned’ by their rivals. If a party can pre-empt the issue agenda, it gains a strategic advantage. And, because the issues involved typically are valence issues, that advantage can be decisive.

There are several reasons why the valence model may provide a better explanation of issue voting than the spatial model. In his critique of the spatial model, Stokes criticized one of its key assumptions, which he thought was inconsistent with

evidence about how voters behave. This was that there is a single, unchanging, ordered left-right dimension along which the parties manoeuvre. He suggested that the valence model could solve many of the problems the assumption created. In the valence model, there is no ordered, unchanging dimension but, rather, a single point in issue space where the voters want to locate, since that provides the optimal outcome. Thus, the theoretical apparatus defining the valence model is much simpler than the spatial model, and really reduces to the question: 'which party will deliver on a consensually valued policy outcome?'

There is an important theoretical connection between the valence and spatial models that is particularly relevant to the 2005 British election. If the Downsian median voter theorem applies to *party strategy*, then the spatial model turns into the valence model. When parties locate themselves at an equilibrium point they, by definition, eliminate any spatial distances between themselves, and so voters can no longer choose between them on spatial grounds. In that case, electoral choice becomes a decision about which party can best deliver the equilibrium policy. Thus, in an election in which policy distances between the parties are modest, or one where valence issues dominate, we should observe much more valence voting than spatial voting.

Another important point is Stokes' argument that parties compete in a highly variable, multidimensional and potentially mutable issue space. He writes, '[j]ust as the parties may be perceived and evaluated on several dimensions, so the dimensions that are salient to the electorate may change widely over time.'<sup>8</sup> In essence, Stokes observed that the issue/ideological space becomes contested, rather than being a stable framework within which competition occurs. This insight accords well with the idea of issue

priorities, i.e., that parties try to compete on dimensions most favourable to them and to ignore those that are unfavourable.

In sum, the suggestion is that the spatial model might be less important than the valence model in influencing electoral choice in a variety of contexts. In Britain, there are reasons why the importance of the spatial model has declined over the past decade. One is that policy distances between the parties have narrowed. Budge et al.'s 'Manifesto Project' data document that the three main parties were closer together in their manifesto promises in 2001 than at any other time since 1945.<sup>9</sup> This situation did not change appreciably in 2005. Consequently, one would expect the spatial model to become less relevant over time as 'position politics' is being transformed into 'valence politics' by a lack of spatial variation in the policies on offer. If differences between parties on a classic position issue like taxation v. public service spending have become relatively trivial, then it would not surprise that the voters do not judge the parties on these issues.

A second consideration involves the possibility that valence issues have more retrospective rather than prospective content, whereas spatial issues have more of the latter than the former. Valence is about performance; although voters may evaluate valence issues both prospectively and retrospectively, they are likely to put more emphasis on retrospection (performance) rather than prospection (promise) because retrospective thinking enables them to use 'hard' information about parties' (and party leaders') track records. In contrast, spatial issues are about promises and, accordingly, people must judge parties and politicians prospectively.

This reasoning suggests that spatial issues may become increasingly irrelevant when a governing party has been in power for several years, such as Labour in 2005,

since voters can judge it on its record. Is the economy robust? Are cherished public services being delivered? Are the streets safe? Is national security at risk? For opposition parties in this situation, there is no track record to go on, and so spatial issues will continue to play a role when people think about voting for them. This is particularly the case for smaller parties such as the Liberal Democrats or Greens which may have no national-level government record by which they can be judged.

It is not hard to find examples of valence issues and issue-priority strategies operating in the 2005 election campaign. In his first campaign speech, Michael Howard spoke of ‘the smirking politics of Mr. Blair and the woolly thinking of the Liberal Democrats’ (Guardian, 6/4/05). This is not the language of spatial issues, but rather an attempt to focus public attention on the untrustworthiness of an unpopular prime minister, while branding a rival opposition party as unfit for national power. In response, Tony Blair countered by challenging that the aim of the election was ‘to build on the progress made, to accelerate the changes, to widen still further the opportunities available to the British people and above all else to take that hard-worn economic stability, the investment in our public services, and entrench it’ (Guardian, 6/4/05). Blair’s emphasis was entirely on selected aspects of his government’s record -- on key valence issues relating to economic performance and public service delivery.

The Conservatives also recognized the importance of valence issues and issue-priorities. Accordingly, they concentrated on what they defined as security issues, principally crime, asylum-seekers and immigration, and largely avoided Labour’s strong card, the economy (Guardian, 11/4/05). Before the campaign began, it appeared that Labour might play into the Tories’ hand by marginalizing Chancellor of the Exchequer

Gordon Brown, widely lionised as the architect of Britain's economic prosperity. However, with polls showing their party's support flagging, Labour strategists decided to 'bring Gordon back.' By putting Brown in the spotlight beside Tony Blair, Labour dramatised its 'ace' issue priority – the economy. The Conservative and Labour campaign strategies thus provide excellent examples of issue-priority politics -- where the contest involves setting the content of a valence politics agenda rather than debating the pros and cons of contentious position issues.

### **Issues and Voting in 2005**

To evaluate the role of issues in 2005, we specify indicators of the spatial and valence models and estimate their effects in multivariate models of electoral choice. For this purpose, we use data from the BES RCPS internet survey. The first wave of this survey was conducted just before the campaign began; the second, during the campaign; and the third, immediately after polling day. In the following analyses, the dependent variable, voting behaviour, is measured using the post-election data, and independent variables are measured using pre-election data.<sup>10</sup>

The spatial model is tested using three position issues: Britain's relationship with the European Union, taxation v. public spending, and combating crime v. rights of the accused. Regarding the former, although Britain's relationship with the EU was not prominent in the election, the parties nonetheless took distinctive stances on the issue. For the most part, these were extensions of longstanding positions and should have been readily apparent to voters. The Conservatives were committed to rejecting the European constitution outright in the referendum promised by Labour. The Liberal Democrats and Labour favoured the constitution, although the former party has been consistently more

supportive of European integration than the latter. Clearly, 'Europe' had potential to be an important position issue since it divided the government and main opposition parties.

Positions on the issue are measured using a 11-point scale anchored at 0 by the phrase 'Britain should definitely get out of the EU,' and at 10 by the phrase 'Britain should definitely stay in the EU.' Respondents were requested to locate themselves on the scale. Their average score was 5.2. When asked to score the three major parties, they assigned average scores to Labour, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats of 7.6, 4.3 and 6.9, respectively. Thus, Labour was viewed as more supportive of the European Union than the Liberal Democrats, and a great deal more supportive than the Conservatives.

The second position issue was taxation v. public spending as measured by a similar question. The 0 point of the scale was labelled as 'government should cut taxes a lot and spend much less on health and social services,' and the 10 point was labelled as 'government should raise taxes a lot and spend much more on health and social services.' The average self-assigned score was 5.5, and average scores for Labour, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats were 6.6, 4.1 and 6.7, respectively. These numbers suggest that, in the public mind, real policy differences existed between the governing and the main opposition party. Interestingly, the Liberal Democrats' widely publicized policy of raising income tax for affluent tax-payers did separate them significantly from Labour.

The third position issue was combating crime v. rights of the accused. Respondents were presented with a 0-10 scale and asked: 'Some people think that reducing crime is more important than protecting the rights of people accused of

committing crimes. Other people think that protecting the rights of the accused people is more important than reducing crime. On the 0-10 scale below, where would you place your own view?' In this case, respondents gave themselves an average score of 2.3, and Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats average scores of 5.4, 3.2 and 5.6, respectively. Like Europe, but unlike taxation, the Conservatives were closer to the position of the average voter than Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

These position issues were incorporated into the voting models by combining them into three additive indices. Each index variable summarizes how close a party is to a respondent's location on the three issue dimensions.

Turning to valence issues, these were measured with three sets of items. First are voters' evaluations of national and personal economic performance. As shown in Table 1, substantial minorities offered negative evaluations, and in no case did more than one-quarter indicate that they thought conditions would improve in the future. However, there were also sizable minorities (ranging from 33 to 40%) who believed that things would remain the same. In the context of a relatively buoyant economy such as Britain enjoyed in 2005, these latter responses can be interpreted as indicators of economic optimism.

(Table 1 about here)

The economic evaluations were supplemented by a measure of emotional reactions to the economy. Respondents were asked to select from a list of eight words to describe how they felt. As Figure 1 indicates, the most frequently reported feeling (45%) was uneasiness, but another large group (38%) described themselves as hopeful. Approximately 20% said they were confident or afraid, and from 7 to 13% indicated they

were proud, disgusted, happy or angry. Creating two summary indices by counting positive feelings (proud, confident, hopeful, happy) and negative ones (afraid, uneasy, disgusted, angry) reveals a virtually even balance of emotional reactions. Overall, 48% selected one or more positive words to describe their feelings about the economy, and 50%, one or more negative words.

(Figure 1 about here)

A third measure of valence issues uses questions about government performance in several policy areas. Besides the economy, these include asylum seekers, crime, education, railways, pensions and terrorism. Figure 2 displays percentages judging that the Labour government had handled each of these issues 'very' or 'fairly' well, and percentages who thought a Conservative government would perform very or fairly well. Labour had an edge on five of the seven issues, although apart from the NHS, the advantages were not large. For their part, the Conservatives had a substantial lead on asylum-seekers, and a modest one on pensions. However, perhaps the larger story is the strong tendency to report uncertainty about issue performance or to claim that neither party would do a good job. Only on the economy does even a slight majority (51%) state that a party (Labour) would perform well. Overall, the average percentage offering a positive endorsement is only 27%.

(Figure 2 about here)

To measure issue salience, we use an open-ended question about the most important issue facing the country. A follow-up question asked which party was best handle to handle this issue. Responses to the first question were diverse, with only one issue (asylum seekers/immigration) being mentioned by more than 20% and only two

others (crime, NHS) being mentioned by more than 10% (see Table 2). However, two more general facts are noteworthy. First, a complex issues which had been almost wholly absent in 2001 were collectively prominent in 2005. Altogether, 41% mentioned either asylum/immigration, crime or terrorism. Second, valence, not position, issues dominated the issue agenda. Position issues that have occasioned sharp debate among parties, pundits and public such as Europe, the Iraq War, taxation and civil liberties were seldom top priorities. Altogether, less than 10% cited any of these issues as most important.

(Table 2 about here)

Table 2 also shows which party was judged best able to handle various most important issues. The Conservatives had large leads on two of them -- immigration and crime -- and this helps explain why they spent much of the campaign emphasizing these issues. In addition, the Conservatives had advantages on Europe, taxation, and among people dissatisfied with Tony Blair's performance. Labour also had issues that worked in its favour, enjoying strong leads on the economy and public services. Perhaps less easily anticipated was Labour's lead among voters citing terrorism. For their part, the Liberal Democrats were favoured strongly on civil liberties and the Iraq War. Unfortunately for them, these issues exercised only 3% of the electorate.

Overall, no party had a commanding lead on the most important issues, with 26% favouring the Conservatives, 23% favouring Labour, and 9%, the Liberal Democrats. This was a very different distribution than in 2001, when fully 39% of the BES respondents had chosen Labour, and only 14% and 7%, respectively, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. What *was* similar to 2001 was the fact that no party was able to dominate the issue agenda. In 2001, fully 38% had said that no party was best equipped

to handle the most important issue, or that there were no important issues. The 2001 figure was only slightly less – 33%.

The several issue variables are used to investigate how position and valence issues affected voting in 2005. As indicated, the effects of position issues are assessed using three summary indices that measure the proximity of voters to the three main political parties on the issues of membership in the EU, taxation-public spending and crime-rights of accused dimensions. Assessments of Labour's performance on valence issues are measured with a factor-score variable generated by a principal components analysis of economic evaluations, emotional reactions to the economy, and judgments about how the party would handle public service delivery in several areas. This analysis produced two factors – one for the economy and one for public services. Similarly, assessments of how the Conservatives would handle various valence issues are summarized by a factor-score variable that summarised judgments of how well the Conservatives would handle various issues (see Figure 2). Finally, issue-priority effects are assessed using dummy variables that delineate the party best able to handle most important issues.

We specify a multivariate model that includes the several issue variables just described. To evaluate accurately the relative importance of position and valence issues, the model includes controls for leader images, partisanship and socio-demographic characteristics. Partisanship is measured using dummy variables based on responses to the standard BES party identification question. Party leader images are summarized using eleven-point dislike-like scales. Socio-demographic variables include age, education, ethnicity, gender, home ownership, occupational status and work sector. Two variants of the model are analysed. In the first, voting for the governing Labour Party is

contrasted with voting for the opposition parties. In the second, voting for the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats or all other parties is considered, with Labour voting treated as a reference category.

### **Models of Electoral Choice**

Binomial logistic regression estimates of the Labour v. other party voting model reveal that partisanship and leader affect have highly significant effects, and all coefficients are correctly signed (see Table 3, Panel A). Regarding valence issues, the variables measuring economic evaluations-emotional reactions to the economy and Labour's handling of non-economic policy areas have expected positive effects. As also anticipated, evaluations of how the Conservatives would handle various policy areas have significant negative effects. Again, all issue-priority variables measuring party preferred on most important (largely valence) issues are statistically significant and properly signed. However, only one of the three position-issue indices achieves significance -- perceptions of proximity to Labour influences the likelihood of casting a ballot for the party.

(Table 3 about here)

Table 3, Panel B contains multinomial logistic regression estimates for the opposition party voting model. Leader and partisanship variables again are important, although there are some interesting differences between the parties. Feelings about Charles Kennedy have no impact on Conservative voting, and feelings about Michael Howard have no effect on the Liberal Democrat voting. However, feelings about Tony Blair influence voting for all opposition parties.

Regarding issues, spatial variables have some significant effects. Proximities to the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties influence Conservative voting, and proximities to Labour and Liberal Democrats affect voting for the latter party. Proximity to Labour affects 'other party' voting. Taken together with the findings for the Labour voting model discussed above, it appears that voters do not take into account their evaluations all of the spatial distances between parties, which classic Downsian theory suggests that they should. So the evidence is not fully consistent with the tenets of the spatial model, which requires individuals to evaluate all the choices on offer before reaching a decision.

Table 3, Panel B also documents numerous effects of valence issues on opposition party voting. Conservative support is influenced by all three performance evaluation variables, and three of four issue-priority variables. The story for Liberal Democrat support is similar – two performance evaluations are significant and properly signed, as are two of the issue-priority variables. 'Other' party voting is also affected by several of the valence issue variables.

The next step in the voting analyses involves calibrating the relative importance of valence versus position issues, and the importance of both types of issue compared to party leader images and partisan orientations. To this end, we first set all independent variables at their means. Then changes in the probability of voting for a party are calculated as the values of variables of interest are varied from their minimum to maximum values. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the five predictor variables with the largest effects on Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat voting, plus the effects of statistically significant issue-proximity variables.

Figures 3 and 4 tell similar stories. The dominant predictors are leader images and valence issues. Varying feelings about Tony Blair from their minimum to their maximum value increases the probability of a Labour vote by fully 46 points, and varying scores on the Labour public service delivery issue variables increases that probability by 45 points. The comparable figures for Conservative voting are nearly identical. Effects of the issue-proximity variable are much more modest – 14 points for Labour and 16 points for the Conservatives. The Liberal Democrat story is different. Figure 5 shows that the top five predictors include the party's issue-proximity variable which can change the probability of a Liberal Democrat vote by fully 41 points – less than the 49 points associated with changing feelings about Charles Kennedy, but considerably larger than any other significant predictor. Taken together, these findings are consistent with the conjecture that position issues have their strongest effects on support for smaller parties such as the Liberal Democrats. Valence issues dominate for the larger parties.

(Figures 3, 4 and 5 about here)

### **Conclusions**

Valence issues concerning economic performance and public service delivery in several areas joined leader images and partisanship to strongly influence voting for the Labour and Conservative parties in 2005. Effects of spatial issues, although not wholly absent, were much smaller. The situation was different for Liberal Democrat voting, where both valence and position issues, as well as feelings about Charles Kennedy and Liberal Democrat partisanship, were major predictors of party support. Overall, these findings accord well with theoretical expectations, and they indicate that voters' issue orientations played a major role in determining voting in 2005.

The analyses also provide insight regarding the election outcome. The mix of salient issues in 2005 clearly was very different than in 2001. When voters went to the polls in Britain's first 'post-911' general election, issues such as immigration, crime and terrorism, which had virtually no play in 2001, were collectively accorded top priority by over 40% of the electorate. Although Labour received relatively good grades for its performance on the latter issue, it failed miserably on the former two. More generally, although Labour continued to receive relatively high marks for its work on the economy, the NHS and education, the new issue agenda clearly took its toll. Overall, less than one voter in four chose Labour as best able to handle their most important issue. The Conservatives did only slightly better, while the Liberal Democrats and various other parties remained essentially 'non starters' on the issues that mattered most to people.

Clearly, even with a strongly biased electoral system, Labour could not have remained in power had issues, principally valence issues, been the only thing that mattered in 2005. Other key variables -- leader images and partisanship -- provided Tony Blair and his party with the additional leverage they needed to win again. Although Blair's image had been severely tarnished by the events precipitated by his decision to join the United States in invading Iraq, he was fortunate that his principal rival, Michael Howard was even less warmly received. Labour also continued to enjoy a substantial, if substantially reduced, edge in party identifiers. Taken together, the 'valence politics' triumvirate of (selected) valence issues, leader images, and partisan attachments gave Mr. Blair just enough of what was needed for him to stay in No. 10 -- at least for now.

## Endnotes

1. See J. Gray and D. Willetts, *Is Conservatism Dead?* Profile Books, 1977.
2. See P. Marshall and D. Laws, *The Orange Book: Reclaiming Liberalism*, Profile Books, 2004.
3. H.D. Clarke, D. Sanders, M. Stewart and P. Whiteley, *Political Choice in Britain*, Oxford University Press.
4. 2005 BES survey data and questionnaires are available at [www.essex.ac.uk/bes](http://www.essex.ac.uk/bes)
5. A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row, 1957.
6. D. Stokes, 'Spatial Models of Party Competition', *57 American Political Science Review*, 1963: 368-377.
7. I. Budge and D. Farlie, *Explaining and Predicting Elections*, George Allen and Unwin, 1983.
8. D. Stokes, *op cit.*, p. 371.
9. I. Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preferences*, Oxford University Press, 2001.
10. Details re: measurement of variables used in the voting analyses are available at the 2005 BES website. See note 4 above.

Table 1. Economic Evaluations in 2005

<i>Economic Evaluations</i>	<u>Lot Worse</u>	<u>Little Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Little Better</u>	<u>Lot Better</u>
Personal economic conditions over past year	13%†	32	33	19	3
National economic conditions over past year	8%	33	37	21	2
Personal economic conditions over next year	10%	31	34	22	3
National economic conditions over next year	8%	31	40	21	1

† - horizontal percentages.

Source: 2005 BES Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, pre-campaign wave,  
(weighted N = 7862).

Table 2. Most Important Issue Facing Country and Party Best Able to Handle It

<i>Most Important Issue</i>	Party Best Able to Handle Issue					Total Citing Issue
	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberal Democrats</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>D.K. None</u>	
Asylum Seekers, Immigration	10%†	<b>42</b>	3	19	27	23%‡
Crime	20%	35	6	2	<b>37</b>	14
National Health Service	36%	15	10	2	<b>37</b>	14
Economy General, Unemployment	<b>54%</b>	18	5	3	21	9
Education	31%	11	25	1	<b>32</b>	4
Taxation	9%	<b>39</b>	18	4	30	4
Terrorism	<b>43%</b>	15	2	3	38	4
Political Pathologies	2%	27	20	10	<b>41</b>	3
Europe, Euro	13%	<b>34</b>	8	33	13	2
Environment	9%	0	9	<b>62</b>	18	2
Housing Prices, Cost of Living	22%	6	12	3	<b>57</b>	2
Iraq War	10%	13	<b>35</b>	7	<b>35</b>	2
Social Pathologies	27%	14	17	7	<b>35</b>	2
Public Services	<b>35%</b>	22	12	4	27	2
Tony Blair's Leadership	8%	<b>45</b>	19	5	24	2
Civil Liberties	3%	20	<b>53</b>	5	20	1
Values, Morality	6%	16	13	9	<b>56</b>	1
Miscellaneous Other Issues	27%	15	12	7	<b>40</b>	8
Not Sure, Don't Know	9%	4	3	2	82	2

	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberal Democrats</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>D.K. None</u>
Party Preference, All Most Important Issues	23%†	26	9	9	33

† - horizontal percentages; ‡ - vertical percentages

**Boldface** percentages indicate party favoured by plurality of electorate on an issue.

Source: 2005 BES Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, campaign wave (weighted N = 6119).

Table 3. Binomial and Multinomial Logit Models of Electoral Choice

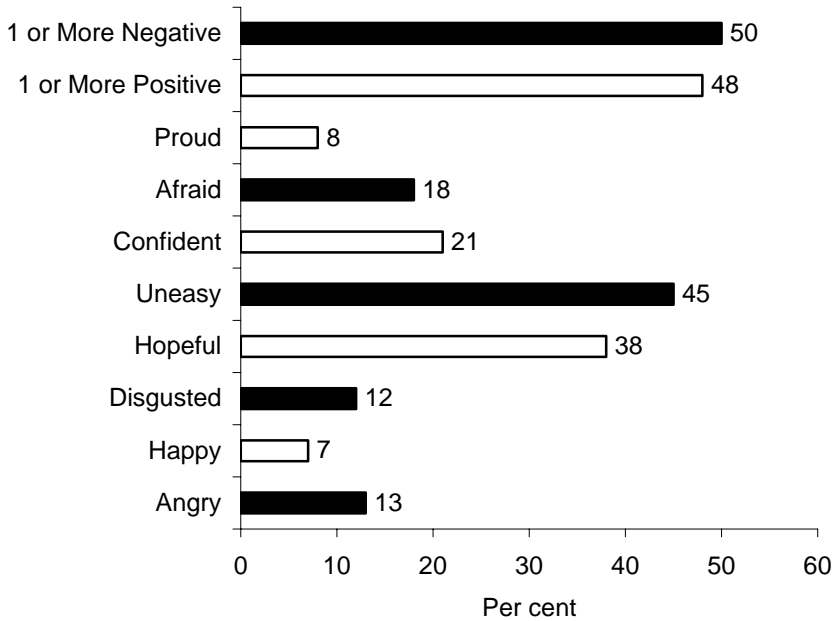
	<u>Panel A</u>		<u>Panel B</u>							
	<u>Labour</u>		<u>Conservative</u>		<u>Vote</u>					
	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>		<u>Other</u>			
	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>s.e.</u>		
<i>Predictor Variables</i>										
Party Identification:										
Conservative	-1.09***	.21	1.05***	.23	0.03	.25	0.47	.29		
Labour	1.28***	.12	-2.16***	.22	-1.10***	.13	-1.20***	.21		
Liberal-Democrat	-0.96***	.18	-0.08	.26	1.19***	.18	-0.35	.31		
Other Party	-0.82***	.21	-0.58*	.29	0.26	.23	1.90***	.24		
Party Leader Affect:										
Blair	0.25***	.02	-0.31***	.03	-0.22***	.02	-0.25***	.03		
Howard	-0.07**	.03	0.29***	.04	-0.01	.03	0.08*	.04		
Kennedy	-0.15***	.02	-0.02	.03	0.24***	.03	0.06	.03		
Party Handle Most Important Issue:										
Conservative	-0.86***	.18	1.18***	.21	0.11	.20	0.52*	.25		
Labour	0.41***	.13	-0.17**	.30	-0.58***	.14	-0.40*	.24		
Liberal-Democrat	-0.67***	.19	0.22	.29	0.59***	.19	0.16	.30		
Other Party	-0.58***	.01	0.61**	.26	0.07	.22	1.05***	.22		
Party-Issue Proximity:										
Conservative	0.01	.01	0.05**	.02	-0.01	.01	-0.00	.02		
Labour	0.03*	.01	-0.02	.02	-0.03*	.02	-0.04*	.02		
Liberal-Democrat	-0.01	.01	-0.05**	.02	0.05***	.02	-0.02	.02		
Performance Evaluations:										
Labour Economy	0.24***	.06	-0.35***	.08	-0.26***	.06	-0.09	.08		
Labour Services	0.43***	.08	-0.59***	.12	-0.38***	.08	-0.54***	.11		
Conservative Services	-0.28***	.08	0.84***	.13	0.24**	.09	-0.00	.12		
(Dis)Approve Iraq War	0.05	.04	.01	.06	-0.08*	.05	-0.04	.06		
Constant	0.48	.45	-1.50*	.65	-1.26**	.49	-1.49*	.65		
McFadden R <sup>2</sup> =	.55				.54					
% correctly classified =	88.0				78.1					
Lambda =	.67				.66					

\* -  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* -  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* -  $p \leq .001$ ; Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, pre-post panel, weighted N = 5002.

Note: results of two analyses are presented: (a) binomial logit analysis of voting for Labour (the governing party) v. voting for any of the opposition parties; (b) multinomial logit analysis of Conservative, Liberal Democrat and other party voting, with Labour voting as the reference category. Analyses include controls for age, education, ethnicity, gender, home ownership, occupational status and work sector.

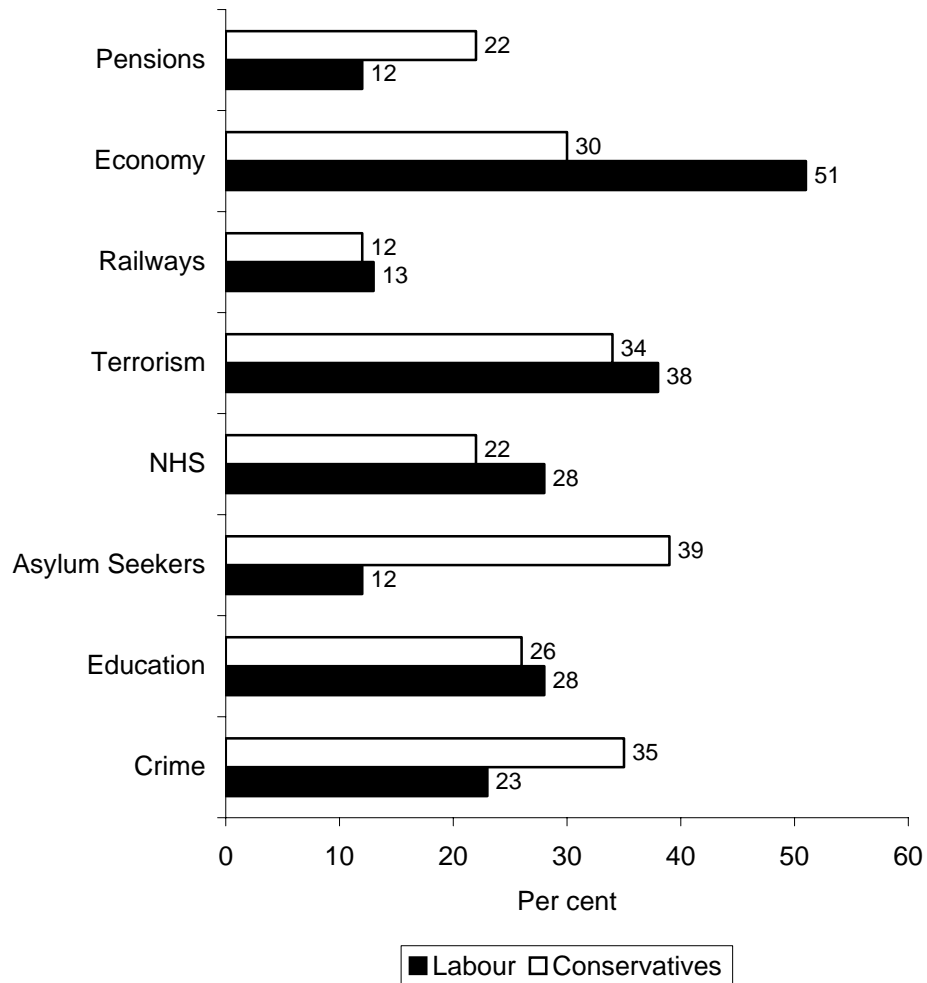
Source: 2005 BES Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, pre-post panel (weighted N = 5002)

**Figure 1. Emotional Reactions to the Economy in 2005**



Source: 2005 BES Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, pre-campaign wave (weighted N = 7862)

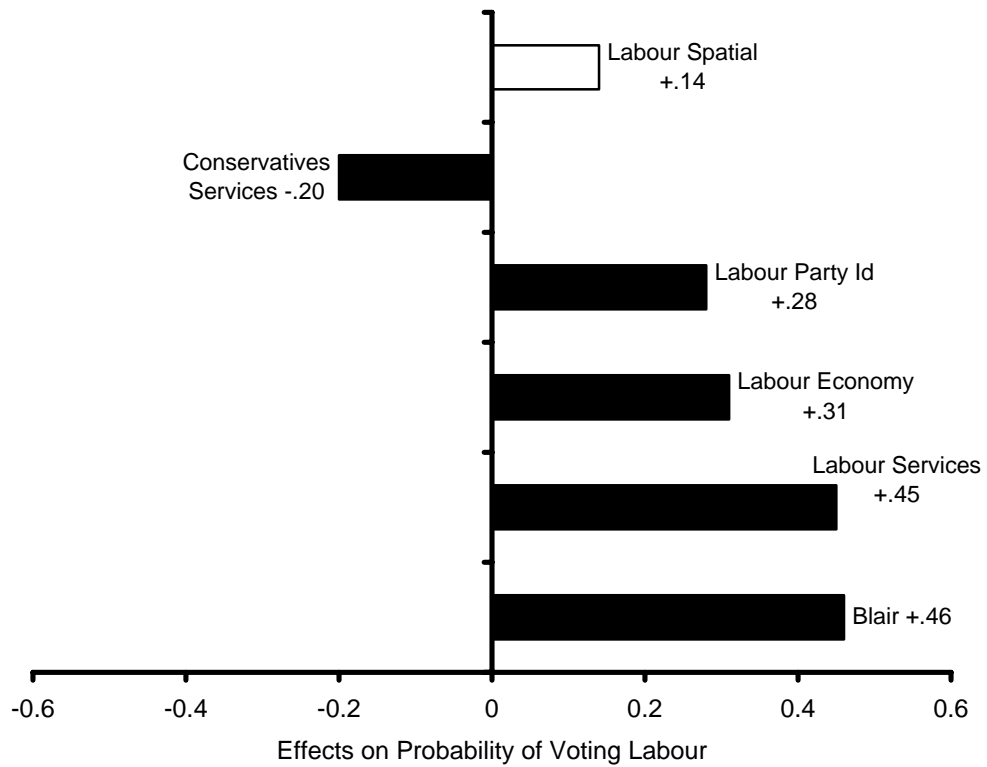
**Figure 2. Issue Performance Evaluations of Labour and the Conservatives in 2005**



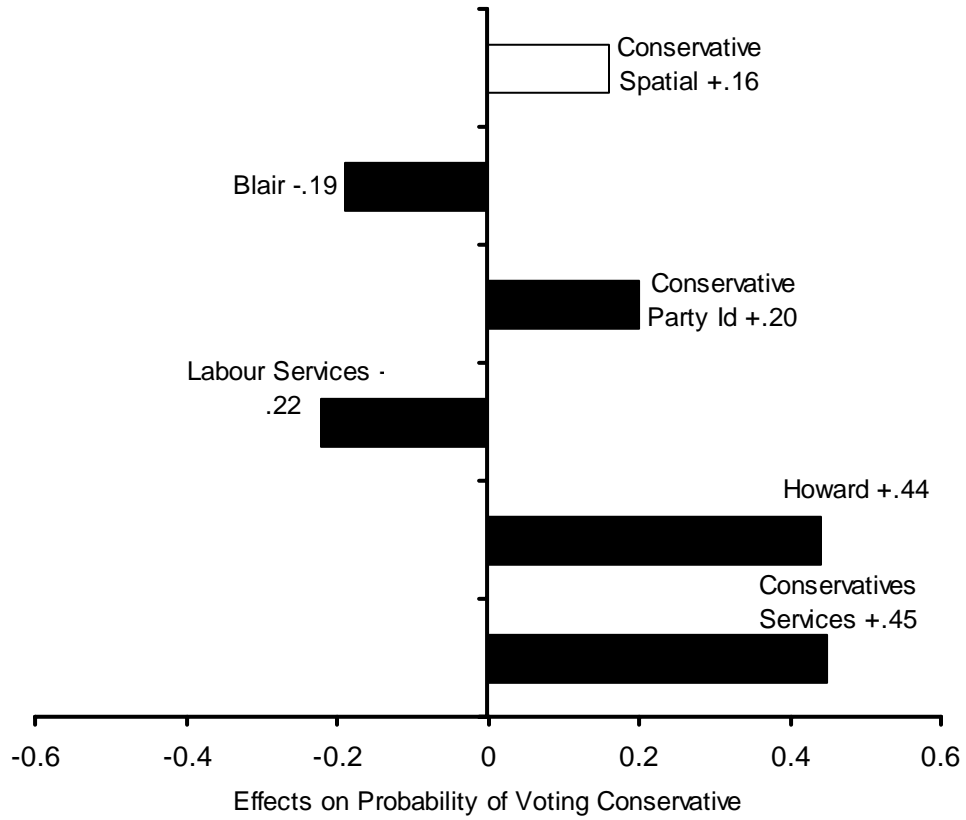
Note: numbers are percentages saying Labour or Conservatives would handle issue "very well; or 'fairly well'.

Source: 2005 BES Rolling Campaign Panel Survey, pre-campaign wave (weighted N = 7862)

**Figure 3. Effects of Selected Predictors on Probability of Voting Labour**



**Figure 4. Effects of Selected Predictors on Probability of Voting Conservative**



**Figure 5. Effects of Selected Predictors on Probability of Voting Liberal Democrat**

