

## VARIABLES USED IN TURNOUT ANALYSES IN "BRITAIN (NOT) AT THE POLLS, 2001"

by

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**Note:** Data are from the 2001 BES pre-post in person (CAPI) panel survey (weighted N = 2303). Information in parentheses below refers to question number in pre- or post-election survey. PRE = pre-election survey; POST = post-election survey.

**Voted in General Election:** Voters are scored 1, non-voters, 0. The question is: "Talking to people about the general election *on June 7<sup>th</sup>*, we have found that a lot of people didn't manage to vote. How about you – did you manage to vote in the general election?" (Q. 8a, POST). 72.7% of the respondents in the pre-post panel claimed to have voted.

**Vote in General Election (Adjusted):** Persons stating that they voted in the general election (Q. 8a, POST) and having an average or above average score (i.e. scores of 8, 9, or 10) on the likelihood voting scale (Q. 6, PRE) are scored as voters (+1). All other respondents are scored as non-voters (0). By this measure, 60.8% of the respondents voted.

**Likelihood of Voting:** This is a 0-10 scale, based on the question: "Please think of a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means *very unlikely* and 10 means *very likely*, how likely is it that you will vote in the general election?" (Q. 6, PRE).

**Benefits of Voting:** Measured as the average absolute difference in the perceived utilities provided by the various parties, with absolute differences computed based on pairwise comparisons of the parties. Utilities are measured using the placement of parties on 0-10 thermometer scales (Q.'s 11a - 11e, POST). On using such scales for this purpose, see Samuel Merrill III and Bernard Grofman, *A Unified Theory of Voting: Direction and Proximity Spatial Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, chs 4-7).

**Civic Duty:** "It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election" (Q. 17a, POST); (b) "I would be *seriously* neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote" (Q. 66g, POST). Responses are recoded from +5 "strongly agree" to +1 "strongly disagree."

**Costs of Voting:** A two-item additive index based on responses to the following questions: (a) "It takes too much time and effort to be active in politics and public affairs" (Q. 17d, POST); (b) "Most of my family and friends think that voting is a waste of time" (Q. 17g, POST). Responses are coded from +5 "strongly agree" to +1 "strongly disagree."

**Election Interest:** Measured using the question "How interested were you in the general election that was held on June 7<sup>th</sup> this year?" (Q. 3, POST). Responses are recoded from +4 "very interested" to 1 "not at all interested."

**Exposure to Election News on TV:** Respondents were asked "How much attention did you pay to television coverage of the General Election?" Responses were recoded: +4 "a great deal" to +1 "no attention" (Q. 64, POST).

**Interest in Politics Generally:** The question is: "How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics? (Q. 1, POST). Responses are recoded from +5 "a great deal" to +1 "none at all."

**Labour Heartlands Supporter:** Labour party identifiers (Q. 2a, POST) who are working class (ACCLASSA, PRE) and reside in the Midlands, North, Scotland or Wales (AREGIONH, POST) are scored 1; other respondents are scored 0.

**Local Party Campaign Contact:** This is a 0-3 additive index based on responses to three questions asking respondents if a party or parties called at their home, telephoned them, or came to their home on election day to try to take them to the polls (Q.'s 60, 61, 62, POST).

**Perceived Closeness of the Election in R's Constituency:** Respondents were asked: "On a scale from 0 to 10, how *close* do you think the election will be in this constituency? 0 means that the election will *not be close at all* and 10 means that the election will be *very close*" (Q. 27, PRE).

**Performance Dissatisfaction:** A four-item additive index based on respondents' evaluations of how well the Labour government has handled: (i) the NHS, (ii) education, (iii) crime, (iv) transport (Q.6, POST). Responses are recoded +1 "very well" to +5 "very badly."

**Labour Leaner Performance Dissatisfaction:** Labour leaners are designated as respondents in the pre-election survey who stated that they have not decided how to vote, but are "most likely" to vote Labour (Q.7b, PRE). These respondents are scored 1; other respondents are scored 0. The resulting dummy variable is multiplied by scores on the performance dissatisfaction index described above.

**Political Influence:** The question is: "On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means no influence and 10 means a great deal of influence, how much influence do you have on politics and public affairs?" (Q. 36, PRE).

**Political Knowledge:** Respondents were asked: "Please tell me if you think the following statements are *true* or *false*. If you don't know just say so and we will skip to the next one" (Q. 68, POST). The political knowledge index ranges from 0 (no correct responses) to 6 (six correct responses).

**Social Trust:** A 0-20 additive index based on responses to the following questions: (a) "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful dealing with people. Please use the 0-10 scale to indicate your view, where 0 means can't be too careful and 10 means most people can be trusted;" (b) "Do you think most people you come into contact with would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair? Please use the 0-10 scale again where 0 means would try to take advantage and 10 means would try to be fair" (Q.'s 48, 49, POST).

**Socio-Political Contact:** A 0-2 additive index based on responses to the following questions: (a) "Over the past few years, has anyone asked you to get involved in politics or community affairs;" (b) "Over the past few years, have you volunteered to get involved in politics or community affairs" (Q.'s 42, 43, POST). "Yes" answers are scored 1; "No" and "Don't know" answers are scored 0.

**Strength of Party Identification:** Persons indicating that they have a party identification are asked: "Would you call yourself very strong [party identified with], fairly strong, or not very strong?" (Q. 2d, POST). Responses are recoded +3 "very strong" to +1 "not very strong" or "don't know." Those without

a party identification are scored 0.

### **Socio-Demographics**

1. **Age:** age in years (Q. 38, PRE).
2. **Education:** number of years of formal education (Q. 42, PRE).
3. **Ethnicity:** persons designating their ethnicity as "white British" = 1; others = 0 (Q. 50, PRE).
4. **Gender:** men = 1; women = 0 (AGENDER, PRE).
5. **Region:** set of dummy (1-0) variables, with Greater London as the reference category (AREGIONH, PRE).
6. **Social Class:** working or lower class (C2, D, E) = 1; upper and middle class (A, B, C1) = 0 (ACLIASSA, PRE).