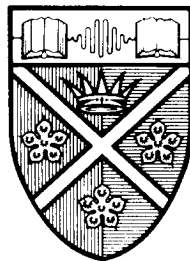


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*GENERATION AND GENDER
IN BRITISH VOTING*

*Patricia Findlay
Stephen Griffiths
Mark Franklin*

No. 40

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GENERATION AND GENDER IN BRITISH VOTING

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STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

(Series Editor Jeremy Richardson)

NO. 40

ISSN 0264-1496

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COHORT ANALYSING BRITISH ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

by Mark N. Franklin

The two papers which constitute the bulk of the present monograph were written as student research papers for a course in Electoral Behaviour at the University of Strathclyde in 1984. Their objectives and findings are different, but they have in common an attempt to look at political values and issue preferences separately among different age-groups within the voting population. In particular they distinguish cohorts of voters born after the Second World War from those born earlier, and establish the existence of cohort effects (that is, effects that differ as between different age-groups) in British voting behaviour.*

The idea that different age-groups respond differently to issue concerns is not a new one. Indeed, in Europe and the United States it is now widely accepted that a 'silent revolution' in political values has occurred, with young voters demonstrating a concern for

*The term 'cohort' is a technical one in the jargon of social research. It is essentially equivalent to 'generation', though without any implication as to the time-span encompassed by the age-group concerned. A cohort can span any period, and in voting studies often constitutes those who come of voting age between one election and the next. In the present monograph, however, cohorts are conceived of as spanning more years than this. A 'cohort effect' is thus equivalent to a generation effect (new voters enter the electorate with distinctive features that are retained as they grow older), and must be carefully distinguished from an 'age effect' (people acquire new features as they grow older) and from a 'period effect' (new features are acquired by all those alive at a specific point in time).

individualism and the quality of life that goes beyond material gratification (Inglehart 1971, 1977, 1981). But in British voting studies, the idea that young voters behave distinctively has not yet taken root. Inglehart himself found much less evidence in Britain than elsewhere for the existence of a 'post bourgeois' group with distinctive values, and the idea of linking changes in British voting behaviour to the emergence of such a group was dismissed by Crewe, Sarlvik and Alt (1977) in the seminal study which established the nature of partisan dealignment in Britain.

In published work only Samuel Beer, in his Britain Against Itself, appears to endorse the idea of Inglehart's silent revolution having occurred in this country; and Beer conducts no data analysis to support his stand.

But it can be argued that the search for cohort effects in Britain was too readily abandoned. It is well understood in social research that cohort effects are hard to identify (see for example Converse 1976), and the search for them made by Crewe, Sarlvik and Alt was hardly exhaustive. In a work published this year I try to show that the decline of class voting in Britain was indeed associated with a cohort effect, though of a very subtle kind, such that defectors from class voting consisted both of the very young and also of the very old, while those who came to voting age during the period 1929 to 1959 were less inclined to desert the party of their class (Franklin, 1985: Figure 7.2).

With this finding in mind, students of the Electoral Behaviour Seminar at the University of Strathclyde in 1983-4 were led to look for cohort effects in their research projects.* In the pages that follow we present the findings of just two of these projects, chosen both to illustrate the range of topics suitable for cohort analysis in British voting studies, and also because of the substantive significance of the findings.

* These two projects focus on the 1979 and 1983 British General Elections. The data for the 1979 election derive from the post-election survey conducted at the University of Essex by Ivor Crewe, Bo Sarlvik and David Robertson; and kindly made available by the ESCR Data Bank at the University of Essex. The data for the 1983 election derive from an election day study directed by Ivor Crewe for the Gallup Organization, and kindly made available by Gallup.

A SILENT REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN?

by Stephen Griffiths

In 1971 Ronald Inglehart presented his now famous thesis "The Silent Revolution in Europe". In this he posited intergenerational change in post-industrial societies. Inglehart wrote: "A transformation may be taking place in the political cultures of advanced industrial societies. This transformation seems to be altering the basic value priorities of given generations." (Inglehart, 1971 : 991). He was then, tentatively suggesting that there would be conflict in the value priorities of different generations. His argument, based on Abraham Maslow's psychology, was that because of the Great Depression and the Second World War, people born before 1945 would place greater emphasis on safety needs and needs relating to economic security. People born after 1945 did not have the experience of an economic depression or a major war and in fact lived through a period of affluence unparalleled in the Twentieth Century. Such people would not place great emphasis on safety needs but, taking such needs for granted, would pursue more aesthetic and individualistic goals. In short, post-war cohorts would be more liberal than pre-war cohorts.

Inglehart tested this hypothesis on several European countries and his findings can be summarised as follows. Occurrence of values relating to safety needs is uniformly high among pre 1945 cohorts. Occurrence of values relating to individualism is uniformly high among

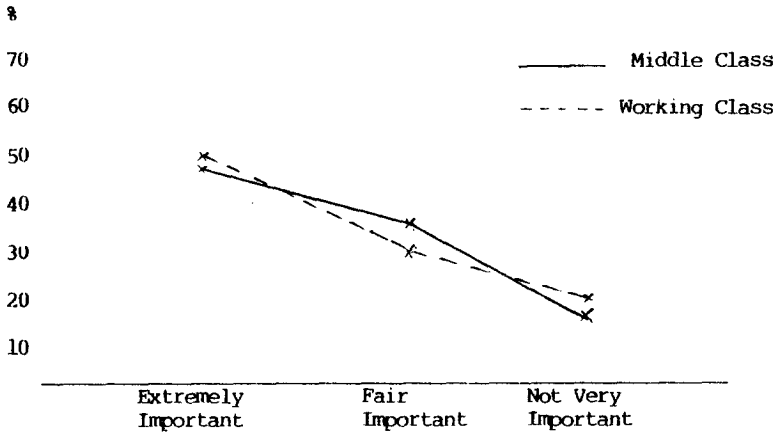
post 1945 cohorts. He controls this for education and socio-economic status and concludes that age cohort differences are not due to educational differences alone and that differences persist when socio-economic status is taken into account. Inglehart found therefore, intergenerational conflict which could not be fully explained by socio-economic status or differences in educational standards.

In Decade of Dealignment, which charts electoral trends of the 1970s, Sarlvik and Crewe (1983) look at the electorates response to social and cultural change. There was no intention of looking at the data as Inglehart did, but Sarlvik and Crewe did want to find out if there had been a "rightward shift" in electors attitudes in response to the social and cultural change of the previous decade. They set out to test this by asking questions about changing moral standards and changing standards of authority. They wanted to gauge the attitude of the electorate toward the permissive society, law and order, and racial and sexual equality. None of these opinions correlated strongly with the vote but there were strong opinions on social and cultural change. Most people were of the opinion that pornography had gone too far and most people said they would like to see greater respect for authority. Sarlvik and Crewe came to these conclusions for the electorate as a whole, but if we disaggregate by age we may find that different age groups react differently to questions on law and order, permissiveness, and equality. It may also be that there is a higher correlation between party vote and certain attitudes among different age groups. What we can do

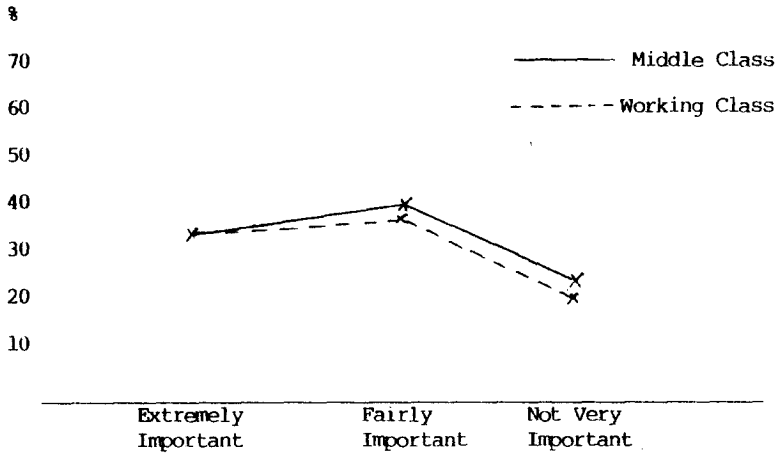
FIGURE ONE

IMPORTANCE OF LAW AND ORDER IN VOTE FOR CLASS.

PRE-WAR COHORTS.



POST WAR COHORTS.



Source: 1979 British Election Survey.

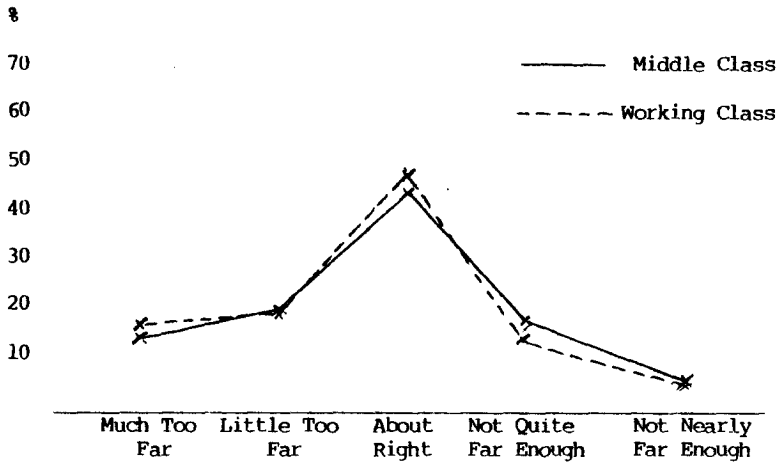
therefore, is look at certain aspects of social and cultural change (as highlighted from the 1979 data) with a view to providing some backing for Inglehart's hypothesis on intergenerational value conflicts. This can also be incorporated into other studies of the decline of the civic culture in Britain.

When the relevant sections of the 1979 data are examined it is not difficult to find intergenerational differences as pre-war and post-war cohorts react differently to questions on law and order and permissiveness. On some questions, such as importance of law and order in vote and whether voters think that pornography has gone too far, the difference is striking. For example, of those born before 1945, 43.1% felt that law and order was "extremely important". On the pornography question, 43% of those born before 1945 felt it had gone "much too far". But just 15.6% of those born after 1945 echoed this sentiment. On other questions the difference is not so striking but it is still present. For example on race equality, 5.1% of those born before 1945 felt that measures to encourage racial equality had gone "not nearly far enough". 12% of those born after 1945 shared this view. It could be suggested then that those born after 1945 seem to be more reluctant to defer to authority, and show more sympathy towards racial equality than those born before 1945. It would seem, superficially at least, that intergenerational differences in attitudes are present. It will, however, be necessary to look at the effect of education and social class in shaping peoples attitudes.

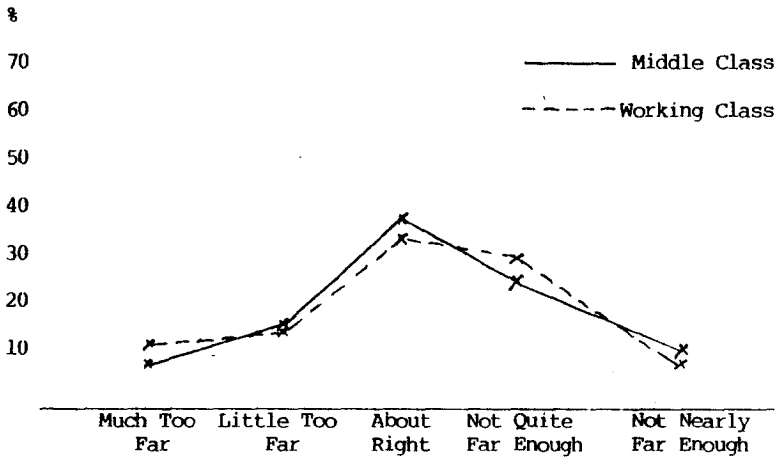
FIGURE TWO

GONE TOO FAR - RACE EQUALITY FOR CLASS

PRE WAR COHORTS



POST-WAR COHORTS



Source: 1979 British Election Survey.

On examination social class does not appear to be influential in shaping peoples attitudes toward law and order, moral issues, and equality. The difference still appears to be governed by age. The majority of those born before 1945 who are middle class (46%); and those born before 1945 who are working class (47%) felt that law and order was "extremely important" in their vote. This compares with 30% of those born after 1945 who are middle class and 29% of those born after 1945 who are working class who felt that law and order was "extremely important". On the question of racial equality much the same pattern is evident. Here, 6% of those born before 1945 who are middle class and 5% of those born before 1945 who are working class felt that measures to encourage race equality had gone "not nearly far enough". The corresponding figure for those, both middle class and working class, born after 1945 was 13%. (See figures 1 and 2) Attitude differences then, seem to cut across class lines. But should class be important in gauging attitude differences between pre-war and post-war cohorts? There is an abundance of evidence to show that class is declining in importance in British politics.(Franklin, 1985). It is less important for people born after 1945 and this is part of a more general decline in traditionalism in British politics and society. One way in which Inglehart's hypothesis became manifest was in the decline in the traditional bases of partisanship in several European countries. In Western Europe, class and religion are no longer the stable predictors of partisanship they once were. New cleavages and parties have emerged. The decline in class voting in Britain is part of this phenomenon, as is the decline in partisanship

in America. Accepting socialisation models therefore, we could say that in Britain less people are inheriting class and/or party characteristics from their parents. There is intergenerational conflict in the effect of class on voting behaviour. If conflict of this sort exists between generations, then it is likely that value conflicts will also exist between generations. They are, after all, part of the same phenomenon.

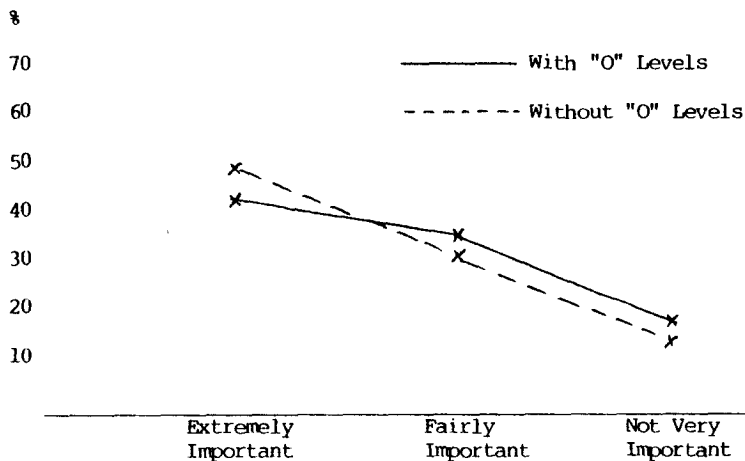
Inglehart tested his hypothesis by controlling for education as well as social class. Education is a crucial independent control. In most major studies conducted on political participation, those with a higher education are likely to be more active in politics and more aware of political issues. (Verba & Nie, 1972). Since 1945 educational opportunities have increased enormously. This is not just in the basic standard of education but also, since the 1960s, in higher and further education. The extent of the postwar expansion in education can best be appreciated if we consider that 44% of those born after 1945 have been educated to 'O' level standard or beyond, whereas only 10% of those born before 1945 have been educated to this standard and almost 60% have no qualifications at all. There are clearly marked differences between age groups and the level of education attained. Could this therefore, be responsible for the apparent post-war liberalisation of attitudes.

Education does seem to have an effect in that the better educated one becomes the more likely one is to show greater appreciation for

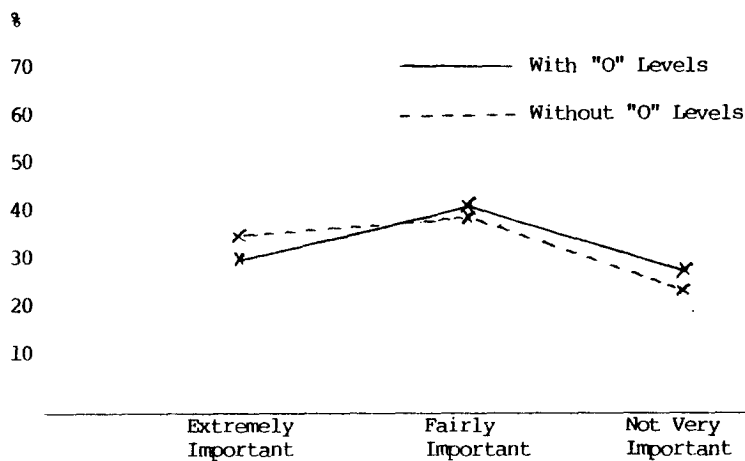
FIGURE THREE

IMPORTANCE OF LAW AND ORDER IN VOTE FOR EDUCATION

PRE-WAR COHORTS



POST-WAR COHORTS



Source: 1979 British Election Survey

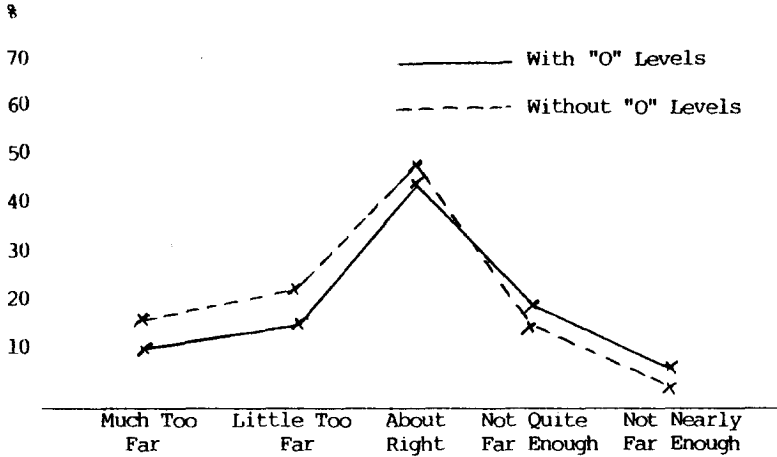
the rights of individuals, and the less deference will be shown to authority. But this does not override the effect of age. Both pre-war and post-war cohorts who have been educated to 'O' level standard show less deference to authority and are more favourable toward racial equality than their colleagues not educated to 'O' level standard. Figure 3 shows the effect of education on people's attitude toward law and order. It is evident that, even among those who do not have 'O' levels, those born after 1945 still put less emphasis on the importance of law and order in voting than those born before 1945. And the same is true of those who do have 'O' levels. Among those born after 1945 who do not have 'O' levels 32% said that law and order was "extremely important" in their vote. The corresponding figures for those born before 1945 and have 'O' levels and those born before 1945 and do not have 'O' levels were 42% and 49% respectively. The same pattern is evident on the question of race equality. Here, 13% of those born after 1945 and do not have 'O' levels felt that measures to encourage race equality had gone "not nearly far enough". 9% of those born before 1945 and have 'O' levels echoed this sentiment. (See figures 3 and 4) The difference in value of priorities between age groups and greater "liberalisation" of post-war cohorts is not purely the result of increased educational opportunities since 1945, but this factor did exert some influence.

Inelghart concluded, in his analysis, that intergenerational differences persisted even when education was used as a control. But Inglehart perhaps made too much of what he found by saying that it

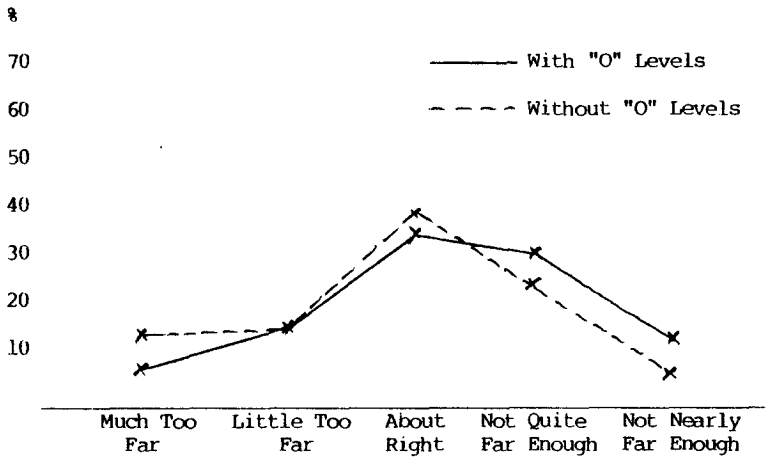
FIGURE FOUR

GONE TOO FAR - RACE EQUALITY FOR EDUCATION

PRE-WAR COHORTS



POST-WAR COHORTS.



Source: 1979 British Election Survey

would lead to a long term realignment of political attitudes in Europe. Intergenerational differences have perhaps contributed to the erosion of traditional political alignments in Europe, but as yet there has been no realignment. However, there is little doubt about the intergenerational differences in attitudes and some suggestions should be made by way of explanation. Inglehart has perhaps provided the basis for explaining the differences by pointing out that pre-war cohorts, socialised in a period of depression or war, would place greater emphasis on needs relating to economic security. Post-war cohorts, on the other hand, were socialised in a period of full employment, economic growth, and consumer affluence. Thus, taking economic security for granted, they would pursue goals relating to aesthetic or individualistic needs. Inglehart is not alone in making the point that economic and social conditions at the time or a person's formative years have an effect on that person's politics. Otto Kirchheimer (1957), when formulating his thesis on "catch-all" political parties, noted that post-war affluence was contributing to individualism and the erosion of traditional political alignments. Samuel Beer in Britain Against Itself (1982), is also quite explicit on this. In his analysis of attitudes in the 1960s he points quite clearly to a break with traditional values. He speaks of a decline in the civic culture which he defines as a mixture or balance between participant and deferential attitudes; between a consensus on the rules of the game, and disagreement on specific issues.(p.112) The civic culture as a concept, is seen as a set of psychological orientations to civic objects. In Britain, deference is seen as one

traditional aspect of the civic culture. Beer is of the opinion that new attitudes have not only influenced events, but have also transformed the political cultures of Western Europe. In the 1960s and 1970s it was noted that there was an increasing reluctance to defer to the authority of traditional institutions; there was a reluctance to accept the rules of the game; and an increase in protest and political consciousness as a result. But leaving academic contributions aside for the moment, one could point to Bob Dylan (1974) as having being responsible for making explicit in 1963 intergenerational differences in values. "The Times They are a 'Changin'" strongly reflects this political science debate of the 1960s and 1970s.

We can perhaps bring the various strands of intergenerational value differences and civic culture together before looking again at the 1979 data. Almond and Verba (1963) stated: "the whole story of the emergence of the civic culture is told in Britain". They said that the civic culture in Britain was characterised by a mixture or balance between participant and deferential attitudes. In 1971 Inglehart suggested that in Europe there was a decline in deferential or acquiescent values, noticeably among people born after 1945. The decline was not as marked in Britain but this could be explained by the fact that, if a civic culture was more deeply entrenched in Britain than elsewhere in Europe, attacks on that culture would have to be stronger to be effective. The decline in the civic culture in Britain could be said to have been generated by changing values among

people born after 1945. To the extent that the 1979 data is reliable, it does verify to some extent, the view that there has been a relative decline in deferential or acquiescent values among people born after 1945. Thus if Sarlvik thought there had been a rightward shift in electors attitudes, then it could be suggested that this shift would be less marked among people born after 1945. The relationship between certain attitudes and party voted for is suggestive of this. The correlation between the importance of law and order in vote and party voted for was .061 for those born before 1945, and .002 for those born after 1945. Also, the correlation between the return of the death penalty and party voted was for, .121 for those born before 1945 and .096 for those born after 1945. The differences, however, are by no means conclusive. More detailed analysis would have to be carried out in order to provide a serious empirical base for the decline of the civic culture in Britain. There is a problem however, in that without survey material designed specifically to look at intergenerational value differences, key variables and concepts such as deference, authority, and equality, are not easily identified. Thus the results from the 1979 data are only suggestive of differences which might prevail.

Table One.

IMPORTANCE OF LAW AND ORDER IN VOTE

Period Born	Extremely Important	Fairly Important	Not Very Important
1886-1926 -	53.3	31.1	12.6
1927-1945 -	38.9	36.3	22.8
1946-1961 -	30.4	38.7	27.9

Table Two.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD BRING BACK DEATH PENALTY

Period Born	Very Imp. Yes	Fairly Imp. Yes	Doesn't Matter	Fairly Imp. No.	Very Imp. No.
1886-1926 -	50.7	22.9	1.6	8.1	9.3
1927-1945 -	42.5	22.6	4.8	10.5	14.4
1946-1961 -	36.2	27.7	4.7	11.2	16.9

Table Three

GONE TOO FAR - PORNOGRAPHY

Period Born	Much Too Far	Little Too Far	About Right	Not Quite Far Enough	Not Nearly Far Enough
1886-1926 -	60.8	22.3	11.8	.1	.9
1927-1945 -	31.2	33.2	27.9	2.3	1.4
1946-1961 -	15.6	25.5	45.9	5.9	3.1

Table Four

GONE TOO FAR - RACE EQUALITY

Period Born	Much Too Far	Little Too Far	About Right	Not Quite Far Enough	Not Nearly Far Enough
1886-1926 -	14.3	18.6	41.0	13.9	4.3
1927-1945 -	10.7	15.5	41.2	19.8	6.0
1946-1961 -	7.7	15.8	32.0	27.9	12.0

Source: 1979 British Election Survey.

THE 'GENDER GAP' IN BRITISH VOTING:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE 1983 ELECTION STUDY

by

Patricia Findlay

There are two main reasons for analysing the 1983 British general election data with a particular focus on the sex of the respondents. Firstly, various widely held generalisations on sex differentiated voting patterns exist, which need to be either backed up by evidence or repudiated. Secondly, recent American articles, using the data from the 1980 Presidential election and the 1982 Congressional elections, have highlighted a trend towards significant sex-related differences in voting behaviour in the United States. This analysis will look more closely at these two phenomena, before going on to examine the 1983 data in light of these findings.

Many analyses of electoral behaviour have focussed on differences in the way in which men and women cast their vote in elections. As Evans (1980) points out, "traditionally political science has painted a sombre picture of female political attainment". There is a relatively widely held view that women as a whole are less likely to participate in almost all spheres of political activity than are men, and are less likely than men to show any interest in political matters. Further, it has also been argued that women are more inclined to vote for right wing parties than are men, and to hold right wing beliefs. (Evans cites many examples of political science

analyses which put forward these claims). It is not the intention of this paper to use to 1983 data to substantiate or repudiate all of these claims. In any case, they have been critically assessed by Evans, in her overview of the literature, in which she argues that the political character of women has been totally misrepresented in political science, due to its emphasis on differences between male and female voters which do not actually exist, and its failure to give adequate consideration to, and explanations of, those sex-related differences in voting behaviour which do exist. Rather, an attempt will be made here to assess the view that women are more inclined to hold right wing views and vote for right wing political parties than are men, by looking at the level of Conservative voting in the 1983 election, and to some extent in the 1979 election, and at the way in which males and females differed with respect to the major issues involved in the election.

However, it is useful to pay some attention to any differences which may exist in rates of voting turnout between men and women, since the level of female voting, as well as the direction of their voting, will have consequences for the political system (in so far as voting can be said to affect the political system). Evans cites American studies which do indicate that women are less likely than men to vote, but not by any substantial amount - findings indicate that women were around 2% less likely than men to vote in 1972, and 4% in 1968 and 1970. Further, it can be argued on the basis of the study by Campbell et al (1965), and on the basis of more recent work by

Lansing (1974), that the differential between male and female voter turnout is decreasing, since female non-voting has been the product of specific conditions which have affected females, rather than their sex. Campbell et al have argued that female non-voting in the past has been influenced by the lower access of women to education, and the lower levels of women employed in non-agricultural employment. In their study, they found that the employment of women in the non-agricultural sector tends to have an effect on voting independently of education, tending towards the equalisation of male and female turnout rates. Thus, there are grounds for arguing that as educational and employment opportunities for women have been changing, the differential between male and female turnout rates has been diminishing, and, as Norris (unpublished) has argued on the basis of recent American data, it may even be the case that the differential has disappeared. Considering that women constitute more than half of the population and that they vote to the same extent as men, women thus form the majority of the voting public, and therefore the direction of female voting has become increasingly important in its effects on the political system as a whole.

As has been stated earlier, it is widely held that women tend to vote for right-wing parties in greater numbers than do men. This is to some extent true - Rose (1974) argues that in the 1974 British general election, women were 2.5% more prone to vote for the Conservative Party. However, it is misleading to argue that this gap is explicable in terms of women's sex alone. Such an interpretation

has been clarified somewhat by Butler and Stokes (1974) for the elections of 1964-70, and by Rose's study of the 1974 election. Rose has argued that the gap in Conservative voting between the sexes results from differences in the age profile of men and women. Women in general live longer than men (although this may now be changing), and thus the proportion of older women in the female population is greater than the proportion of older men in the male population. At the time these studies were carried out, older voters were more likely to favour the Conservative Party, and thus the proportion of women voting Conservative was likely to be greater than the proportion of men. This is not to argue that old age in itself leads to a greater likelihood of voting Conservative - rather, as Butler and Stokes and Rose have argued, at the time of their study, those older groups of electors in existence had been socialised into their political attitudes before the Labour Party was a viable alternative to the Conservatives. In the timescale of British politics, the Labour Party is a relatively new party, and it may have been that as the Liberal Party declined and the Labour Party arose to take their place as the alternative major party, previous Liberal voters turn their allegiance to the Conservatives as a reaction to the perceived disruption of the Labour Party. Thus, as Butler and Stokes have argued, only the 1945 and post 1950 cohorts of electors could be identified as groups whose partisan attachments were less strongly affected by an earlier electoral history and Labour's late start as a major party.

Such a view has been substantiated, to some extent, by Ivor Crewe (1983) in an article in *The Guardian*, in which he argues that the 'gender gap' in voting, as this phenomenon has been named, disappeared in the 1979 election, with men and women voting Conservative in almost equal proportions. This would accord with the view that pre-Labour Party socialisation did account for the higher proportions of females voting Conservative, and would imply that this cohort of older electors had left the electorate. However, on the basis of an analysis of the 1983 election data, Crewe argued that the previous trend in sex-differentiated voting went into reverse in 1983, with women voting proportionately less Conservative than men.

The finding that women tend to vote for parties of the right in smaller proportions than men has also been evident in recent American studies of the voting behaviour of men and women. Norris (unpublished) that a gap between female and male support for the Republican Party appeared in the 1980 Presidential election, and has persisted through to the 1982 Congressional elections. According to Miller (1983-4), there have been various reasons put forward for this gap in voting for the two main parties: the gap may be a reaction to the Presidency of Reagan, and thus have no longer term implications for the direction of female voting; it may be a consequence of the upsurge in feminist activity in the United States since the 1960s; or it may be a reaction to the struggle for the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment.

American research into the 'gender gap' has focussed on the two-party vote as the base line for assessing the impact of political cleavages. Both Miller and Norris have found that the gender gap persists, even after controlling for the effects of marital status, age, education, income, race, region and employment. Marital status, however, does have some effect, since the gap is smaller among married respondents than it is among those who are single or divorced. For Miller, these indicate that the gap may be a response to contemporary political and social conditions in the USA.

Norris and Miller's analyses cannot be looked at in any great detail here. For our purposes, however, it is useful to look at their conclusions on the phenomenon of the gender gap. Norris argues that women have in the past been consistently more liberal on political and social issues, and that this is now being reflected in voting patterns. Thus, the image of Carter did play a role in increasing male support for Reagan, while it appears to have had less of an effect on women. She indicates that there is some evidence to suggest a partisan shift, in which women have moved more towards the Democrats, although she warns that it is too early to give any definitive evaluation on the future of the gender gap. Miller's conclusions follow a similar vein. He argues that the difference between men and women on issues, (a difference which is more important on certain types of issues, such as those relating to physical violence, women's rights and social concerns, than on others), indicates that the gender gap is not simply a response to Reagan. He

contends that there are basic value differences between men and women, particularly on 'caretaker' concerns such as government spending on education, health, the environment, and social welfare policies to deal with unemployment, standards of living, the treatment of minorities etc. differences which may be rooted in long-term differential socialisation of men and women, and which may be reflected in a more stable shift in partisan loyalties.

Thus, we have some evidence that women in the States are moving towards the left in their voting behaviour. This accords with Crewe's findings which imply that not only have women begun to vote for non Conservative parties to the same extent as men, but that they have surpassed men in their voting for these parties. At first glance this might suggest that similar forces to those at work in the USA in determining female voting patterns are in existence in the United Kingdom. Intuitively, there are some explanations which would tend to support such a conclusion. The increase in the employment of women in non-agricultural employment outside the home in the post-war period may have heralded a shift in their political attitudes towards support for labour-oriented parties. Further, it can be argued that the effects of recession have been especially disadvantageous for women, as females have been more prone to redundancy (three times the rate of men, according to Department of Employment estimates), and as services such as community care and child care facilities have been withdrawn. However, this must be offset against the fact that many new jobs in the growth sectors in industry, in particular the

electronics related industries, have gone disproportionately to women, (although this may be changing as the 1980s progress, as technological changes reduce the need for large numbers of mainly female operatives). It is now proposed to look at the 1983 data to see which forces are at work in influencing female voting patterns.

Analysis of the 1983 General Election Data

The table below indicates the phenomenon which Crewe has pointed out: that women were proportionately less likely than men to vote Conservative in 1983. While men were only slightly less likely to vote Conservative in 1983 than they had been in 1979, there appears to have been a 5.5% reduction in the level of female support for the Conservatives over the time period.

Table 1: Party Vote of Males and Females in 1979 and 1983 Elections.

	1979		1983	
	% Con.	N	% Con.	N
Males	46.4	340	45.1	660
Females	49.0	392	43.5	698

As has been argued earlier, previously age has had an effect on levels of Conservative voting which has been wrongly attributed to sex. In order to control for the effect of age, and further, to see how the male/female differential in voting is affected by the age of males and

females, levels of Conservative voting were broken down in terms of the year in which respondents were born, for both the 1979 and 1983 data. On combining the mean Conservative vote for each particular year for each set of data, a pattern emerged in which particular cohorts of electors, grouped in terms of the year of their birth, showed different levels of Conservative voting. On the basis of these identifiable trends in Conservative voting, three main cohorts emerged, composed of firstly, those respondents born in the years up to, and including, 1915; secondly, respondents born in the years from 1916 to 1951; and thirdly, those respondents born between 1951 and 1961. The 1983 data also contained a group of respondents born between 1962 and 1965. The main Conservative vote for these groups is contained in the tables below.

Table 2 - Mean Conservative vote per Age Cohort in 1979

<u>1979</u>	<u>Up to 1915</u>	<u>1916-1950</u>	<u>1951-1961</u>
Mean	0.546	0.475	0.396
N	304	990	235

Table 3 - Mean Conservative vote per Age Cohort in 1983

<u>1983</u>	<u>Up to 1915</u>	<u>1916-1950</u>	<u>1951-1961</u>	<u>1961-1965</u>
Mean	0.528	0.441	0.411	0.411
N	411	1745	620	297

We can see from these tables that the younger cohorts of voters were less likely to vote Conservative in both elections. The relationship

between Conservative voting and year born was controlled for sex, in order to see whether this age relationship held for both males and females. The results of this are outlined in the following tables.

Table-4 - Mean Conservative Vote of Males and Females by Age Cohort in 1979

<u>1979</u>	<u>Up to 1915</u>	<u>1916-1950</u>	<u>1951-1961</u>	
Mean	0.515	0.466	0.389	Male
N	130	489	113	
Mean	0.569	0.483	0.402	Female
N	174	501	122	
	0.546	0.475	0.369	
	n=304	n=990	n=235	

Table 5 - Mean Conservative Vote of Males and Females by Age Cohort in 1983

<u>1983</u>	<u>Up to 1915</u>	<u>1916-1950</u>	<u>1951-1961</u>	<u>1962-1965</u>	
Mean	0.525	0.435	0.459	0.439	Male
N	177	819	318	148	
Mean	0.528	0.445	0.363	0.374	Female
N	233	923	300	147	
	0.527	0.440	0.413	0.407	
	n=410	n=1742	n=618	n=295	

Illustrating this data in graph form gives a clearer indication of the

main voting trends between 1979 and 1983. Figure 1 shows the change in female support for the Conservative Party over the time period for each of the three age cohorts; figure 2 shows the patterns of male Conservative support, while figure 3 shows the levels of Conservative support from men and women as a whole.

Figure 1 - Swings Among Women Voters by Age Cohort

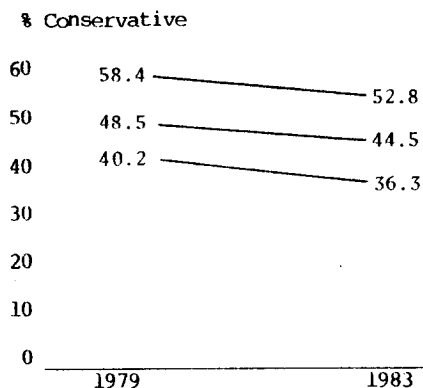


Figure 2 - Swings Among Male Voters by Age Cohort

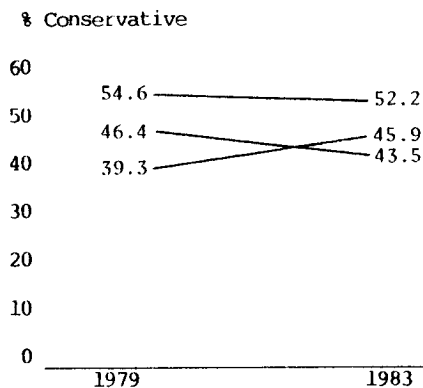


Figure 3 - Male and Female Swings for all Age Cohorts Combined

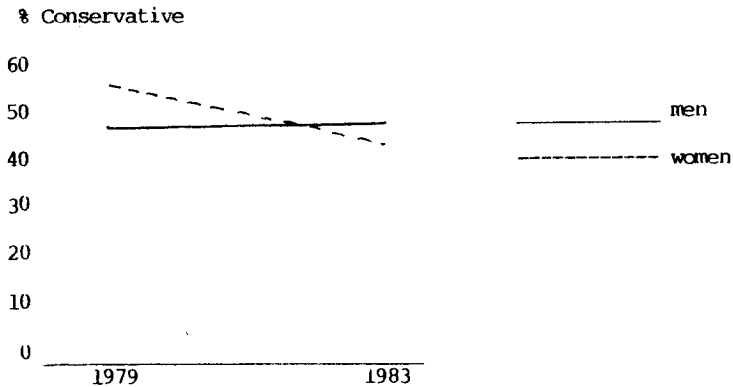


Figure 3 clearly indicates that the gap between female and male support for the Conservatives is not substantial. However, the way in which the gap has come into existence is of interest: women within each age cohort have become substantially less supportive of the Conservatives in terms of voting, while the drop in male support has been slight. What is most striking from these diagrams is the change in the levels of support given to the Conservatives by younger males: from 1979 to 1983 these young males were the only group to increase their support for the Conservatives, thus moving from being the least supportive to being more supportive of the Conservatives than even the middle aged cohort of men.

There is also a substantial cohort effect on voting: as one moves from younger to older cohorts the rate of Conservative voting increases, for all cohorts excluding young males. Young women, however, did not show a change similar to that of young males, with

their support for the Conservative Party decreasing slightly over the period. The decrease in young female support for the Conservative Party was slightly less than the drop in support for the oldest group of women respondents.

Therefore, although the overall gap between men and women voters was small, had the vote of young males followed the direction of other males in 1983, men would have voted less Conservative than women. Thus, the 'gender gap' can be seen as a result of an overall decline in female support for the Conservatives, but also as a result of the increase in young male support for the Conservatives, which increased the level of Conservative voting for men overall.

On the basis of these findings relating to the sex and age of respondents, it appeared necessary to create a new variable which focussed on males in the relevant age group, in order to facilitate some analysis of the possible reasons for the changed voting behaviour of this group. The remainder of this paper will attempt to assess the behaviour and attitudes of young males in relation to other voters. In particular, it will attempt to analyse young males in relation to young females, who, due to their age, are a closely comparable group, arguably subject to many of the same influences. Thus, females in this age cohort were grouped together and treated as a new variable, for the purpose of analysing the determinants of their voting behaviour. Table 6 looks at the relationship between the new variables and Conservative voting.

Table 6 - Levels of Conservative voting by young males and females in 1979 and 1983.

	1979 % Con	1983 % Con
Young males	38.9 n=44	45.3 n=211
Young females	40.2 n=49	36.7 n=164
Sample Population as a whole	52.3 n=801	44.3 n=1358

It is clear that young males and young females have changed their voting direction somewhat: while young females have become slightly less likely to vote Conservative, young males have become significantly more so. In order to explain these swings, the effect of social class, personal characteristics and issue preferences will be looked at. Before doing this, however, some attention must be paid to the problems of comparability between the 1979 and 1983 data.

The 1979 and 1983 Data

There are various problems in comparing the 1979 and 1983 election data, most of which result from the depth and complexity of coverage of the 1979 data compared with the 1983 election study. While the 1979 survey paid detailed attention to the many and varied factors influencing a respondent's class position, relatively few such factors were investigated in 1983 - thus, no questions were asked on the social class and party preferences of the respondent's parents,

even though the influence of political socialisation in the family does appear to be important in influencing voting choice; no questions were asked on the respondent's income, or on their perceptions of their own class and that of their peers. The 1983 data was similarly deficient in gauging respondents' attitudes to political issues of the day: while respondents in 1979 were asked whether a range of issues were important in determining their vote, what their opinions were on specific issues, and which party they believed to be best at dealing with the issue, respondents in 1983 were questioned on a far more limited set of issues, and in far less depth. Such differences make comparisons between both sets of data more difficult, and the particular limitations of the 1983 data similarly limit this analysis.

Respondents Social Class

It has long been recognised that social class has played an important role in determining voting choice in Britain. The Labour Party presents itself as the representative of the working class and the trade unions, while the Conservative Party is commonly viewed as being more aligned with the middle class and business interests. While many other factors affect voting choice, Butler and Stokes have argued that class is one of the most significant for a large proportion of the electorate, even though the relation of class to party is not static. Even if the influence of social class has been declining in recent years, it is unlikely that its effect has been completely

eliminated. However, it can be hypothesised that young people will be less affected by class factors than others, since they are less likely to have stable class ties: their income and occupational status will generally be less fixed than those of older voters. Further, as Butler and Stokes point out, the "relative impressionability of the young" may mean that they are likely to be more open than others to the influence of important political issues and events at the time of their entry into the electorate.

In order to estimate the respondents social class, a factor analysis was carried out on the variables in each data set which represented the respondent's housing situation, whether or not they were employed, whether their occupation was manual or non-manual, whether or not they were a member of a trade union, and whether or not they had received any further education. The variables which loaded most heavily on the factor were those representing housing, occupational status and further education, shown in Table 7 below, and these were taken as an estimate of social class, in order to look at the effects of class on voting. It was felt that due to the limitations of the 1983 data referred to earlier, other potential estimates of social class were unattainable, and thus although this estimate may not be wholly satisfactory, it is argued that it is a reasonable approximation.

Table 7 - Factor Loading on new variable representing estimated social class in 1979 and 1983.

	1979		1983	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Manual Occupation	-0.766	-0.168	-0.788	0.143
Housing	0.719	0.074	0.707	0.076
Education	0.665	0.115	0.596	0.157
TU member	-0.168	0.812	-0.173	0.832
Employed	0.185	0.655	0.323	0.644

On carrying out a regression analysis using the estimated class variable it was found that for young males the effect of class on voting had decreased between 1979 and 1983, with the regression coefficient falling from 0.313 in 1979 to 0.247 in 1983 ($r^2 = 0.098$; 0.061), while for the rest of the population as a whole the effect of class had increased from 0.268 in 1979 to 0.338 in 1983. For young females, the effect of class remained the same, around 28.8% in both years. The decreasing importance of class on young male voting behaviour may be a result of other influences on their voting behaviour becoming more important, and these other influences may account for their changed voting direction.

Table 8 Regression coefficients of effects of class on voting in 1979 and 1983.

Variable : Estimated Social Class

1979

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>RSQU</u>	<u>Constant</u>
Young male vote	0.14	0.31	0.09	0.28
Young female vote	0.13	0.29	0.08	0.28
Conservative vote	0.13	0.27	0.07	0.47

1983

Young male vote	0.11	0.25	0.06	0.31
Young female vote	0.12	0.29	0.08	0.25
Conservative vote	0.17	0.34	0.11	0.44

Respondent's Characteristics

It is necessary to take into account the personal characteristics of respondents in order to see whether the voting of young males and females differs depending on different characteristics.

It is useful to look at the effect of further education on voting choice. Since a far greater proportion of males attend universities and polytechnics than females, if further education was important in determining voting choice, then it is more likely to have more impact on male than female voters.

The effect of further education on voting choice appears to have changed between 1979 and 1983. As shown in Table 9, in 1979, those young males who had attended universities or polytechnics were 11% less likely than young males without further education to vote Conservative, while young females voted Conservative to the same degree whether or not they had attended universities or polytechnics. In 1983 this reversed, with young males with further education becoming markedly more Conservative than young males without further education of this sort, while the rest of the population with further education became slightly less Conservative. Young females with further education changed little over the period, although a substantial drop in Conservative voting took place among those girls with no further education.

Table 9: Level of Conservative voting of young males and females with and without further education in 1979 and 1983.

	1979 % Con	1983 % Con
Young males with further education	28.6	57.9
Young males without further education	39.6	44.2
Young females with further education	40.0	40.0
Young females without further education	40.2	35.5

It cannot necessarily be assumed that a university or polytechnic education is the determinant of these changes in voting patterns. To make such an assumption would require a far more detailed analysis of the background and characteristics of those who attend universities or polytechnics, in order to isolate the effects of these from the direct effects of such further education. Even if one assumed that such backgrounds and personal characteristics were the same for those with further education in both election studies, the effects of university or polytechnic education cannot wholly account for the changes in young male voting between 1979 and 1983, since Conservative voting also increased substantially among young males without further education, and in any case, the proportion of young males who attend universities or polytechnics is small. If the above assumption is made, (and intuitively there is no real reason to believe that those respondents with further education in 1979 differed markedly in background and characteristics from those respondents with further education in 1983), the figure can also be seen as an indication that further education of this sort may also have influenced young females in a Conservative direction since they are 4.5% more likely to vote

Conservative than other females, although the difference between educated and non-educated females is nowhere near as large as it is for young males. Although no definite conclusion can be drawn on the effects of education in a university or polytechnic, the shift in partisan loyalties of those respondents with further education may suggest that the influence of these further education bodies is variable over time, while the figures for both election studies may throw some doubt on the neutrality of further education.

Being a member of a trade union has in the past lessened the likelihood of voting Conservative. When looking at its effects on the voting choice of young males and females, one might expect trade union membership to have a greater effect on young males than on young females, since trade unions are for the most part male-dominated organisations, and in many cases female participation in trade union affairs is not encouraged.

Table 10: Levels of Conservative voting among employed young male and female trade union members and employed non trade union members in 1979 and 1983.

	1979	1983
	% Con	% Con
Young male trade union members	27.5	35.7
Young male non trade union members	53.5	59.5
Young female trade union members	38.5	40.0
Young female non trade union members	31.4	45.3

From the table we can see that young male trade union members were less likely than young males non-union members to vote Conservative, in both 1979 and 1983, by similar amounts in both years. While young

female trade union members were less likely than their non-unionised female counterparts to vote Conservative in 1983, such a relationship did not hold in 1979, when unionised young females were more Conservative than others. Two potentially important points emerge from these figures. Firstly, the effect of trade union membership on voting choice appears to have been much greater for young males than young females in both years. This could be seen as an indication that even where women are trade union members, they are less involved in trade union practices and activities than are men, and thus are less likely to be influenced by their trade union membership. Other studies of women in trade unions have paid attention to this phenomenon of women's isolation from official trade unions. (Pollert, 1981). Secondly, the level of Conservative voting increased for all groups, particularly for young male trade unionists and young female non-union members.

It is reasonable to expect that personal exposure to unemployment would lead to a reduction in levels of Conservative support. There are contradictory expectations on whether unemployment would affect young males and females differentially: since females are more exposed to unemployment than males, this may explain the difference in male and female voting choice. However, for many young females, marriage is seen as an alternative to unemployment, and thus the effect of unemployment may be diminished for them.

Table 11: Levels of Conservative voting by young males and females, employed and unemployed, in 1979 and 1983.

	1979 % Con	1983 % Con
Unemployed young males	13.3	32.6
Employed young males	47.0	48.4
Unemployed young females	40.0	32.6
Employed young females	34.4	43.6

Personal exposure to unemployment worked in the direction one would expect: 32.6% of unemployed young males and 32.6% of unemployed young females voted Conservative in 1983, that is, less than the average for young males and females. However, considering that only 13.3% of unemployed young males voted Conservative in 1979, with 40% of unemployed young females voting Conservative, it is clear that while young unemployed females in 1983 were less likely to vote Conservative than they had been in 1979, unemployed young males were a good deal more likely to vote Conservative in 1983. Thus, in the time period, the Conservatives appear to have increased their support from the young male unemployed, but lost the support of some of the female unemployed.

For those in employment, it could be argued that manual occupations would be more likely to decrease young male support for the Conservatives, since the manual occupations of males tend to be regarded as more traditionally working class than manual occupations for women, such as secretarial employment, which due to their white collar nature are often not regarded as wholly working class.

Table 12 Level of Conservative voting by young males and females in manual and non manual occupations in 1979 and 1983.

	1979	1983
	% Con	% Con
Young males - manual	26.8	38.1
Young males - non manual	50.0	53.3
Young females - manual	23.5	29.9
Young females - non manual	40.8	47.0

From the table we can see that those in manual employment were less likely to vote Conservative, although the effect was not felt so much by young males.

There is no obvious reason to expect that young males and females would be differentially affected by marital status or religion, and the data confirmed this. Differences in marital status do not appear to have affected the voting behaviour of either young males or young females (the categories of divorced and separated people were too small for analysis). As may have been expected, Conservative support was lower than average for those young males and females who belonged to the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of Scotland. With regard to ethnicity, little could be deduced from the figures obtained, since splitting the young male and female sample into various ethnic groups made the size of each group too small for analysis.

Similarly, it can be argued that the effects of home ownership on voting choice are likely to be similar for females and males, and, as expected, in 1979 both young males and the rest of the population were

less likely than the average to vote conservative if they rented their homes, and more likely to vote Conservative if they owned their homes. The same relationship held in 1983.

Thus, there is some evidence to indicate that the Conservatives have benefited from increased support from young male trade unionists, unemployed young males and those young males with further education. It is clear that the influences which affect young people are working differentially for males and females.

Issues

Following from the American studies, an attempt was made to see which issues were important for each population group, and to assess how influential these issues were on voting choice. For the 1979 data, regression analysis indicated that the most important issues for young males were the need for policies to redistribute income and wealth in favour of ordinary working people, the right to buy one's council house, trade union law and nuclear expansion. Young females appeared to be more influenced by the buying of council houses, race relations, aid to the Third World and trade union law, while the rest of the population seemed to be influenced by the issue of redistributive policies, council house ownership and trade union law. The differences in the issues affecting the vote of our various groups were not substantial, although the importance of the various issues taken together was greater for young males than for others.

Table 13: Regression Analysis of the Influence of Issues in the 1979 Election

In Equation Variables:	<u>Dependent Variables</u>					
	Young male vote		Young female vote		Con vote	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Redistribution of income	-0.37	-0.40	-0.12	-0.13	-0.31	-0.30
Purchasing of council houses	0.22	0.21	0.19	0.19	0.22	0.19
Trade Union law	0.16	0.17	0.14	0.15	0.18	0.17
Aid to third world	0.01	0.01	-0.18	-0.19	-0.08	-0.08
Nuclear expansion	0.13	0.14	0.11	0.12	0.07	0.07
Race Relations	-0.74	-0.08	0.14	0.15	-	-
	R sq = 0.30		R sq = 0.18		R sq = 0.21	

- = too small to put in table

In 1983, two main issues emerged for all the groups of respondents. In response to a question on which were the two most important issues in determining their vote, respondents focussed on unemployment and arms and nuclear weapons, and to a lesser extent on prices and inflation and the National Health Service. The table below details the percentages of respondents who mentioned these issues as important.

Table 14: Issues most often mentioned as important by respondents in 1983

	Unemployment	Arms	Prices/Inflation	NHS
Young males	76.4%	45.7%	17.0%	6.1%
Young females	74.1%	35.5%	20.2%	12.1%
Men	68.2%	40.4%	18.8%	9.8%
Women	67.2%	29.5%	18.7%	12.4%

The issue of unemployment was more important for young males and females than for other groups. This can be explained by the fact that unemployment appears to be prevalent among the younger age group in our sample - 36.8% of the 22-32 age group were unemployed, as opposed to 31% of the age group above them. Within this age group, unemployment was higher for young females than for young males. Lower unemployment among young males could explain their being more likely to vote Conservative, while higher levels of unemployment may have made females less Conservative. However, young men were the most likely to see unemployment as an important issue. Therefore, an alternative explanation for the gap in young male and female voting may be that young males were more inclined than young female to see the Conservative Party as the best party to reduce unemployment. However, this does not appear to have been the case, as is shown in Table 15. Of those young males who mention unemployment as being important, 24.9% saw the Conservatives as the best party to tackle the problem, while 28.1 of young females and 28% of the rest of the population showed a preference for the Conservatives on this issue. Thus, it is difficult to argue that attitudes to unemployment account for the differences in young male and female voting.

Table 15 - Young male and female preferences of the best party to reduce unemployment in 1983

	<u>% who saw Conservatives as the best party</u>	
	<u>Of those who mentioned unemployment</u>	<u>Of those who did not mention unemployment</u>
Young males	24.9	53.2
Young females	27.5	44.5

Of those who mentioned arms and defence as an important issue, 70.2% favoured the Conservatives as the best party for defending the country. Both young males and females were, however, a little less likely to see the Conservatives in this light, although the difference between them is not great (young males were 67.6% in favour of the Conservatives, while young females were 67.9% in favour). Thus, there is little evidence to suggest that attitudes to armaments and defence accounts for the differences in the voting behaviour of these 2 groups. (Similarly, young females were no more likely than young males to mention peace as an important issue in determining their vote).

Taking these four issues together, regression analysis as shown in Table 16, indicated that unemployment was the most important issue determining the vote of young males, young females and the population as a whole. While unemployment influenced young male voting by 28%, and the rest of the population by 30%, it had less influence on the votes of young females (around 18%). Inflation had a significant effect on the votes of young males, but not on the other groups, whereas the National Health Service was more important for young females and the population as a whole than it was for young males. It seems unlikely, from this analysis that the change in young male voting from 1979 to 1983 can be explained wholly in terms of the issues contained in the 1983 data set.

Table 16 - Regression coefficients of issue variables, 1983

In Equation Variables:	Dependent Variables					
	Young male vote		Young female vote		Con vote	
	B	BETA	B	BETA	B	BETA
Unemployment	-0.28	-0.28	-0.16	-0.18	-0.30	-0.30
Arms	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.05
Prices/Infl	0.24	0.20	0.06	0.05	0.14	0.11
NHS	-0.09	-0.06	-0.18	-0.13	-0.26	-0.16
	R sq = 0.14		R sq = 0.06		R sq = 0.14	

In a final attempt to look at the influences on voting in 1983, Conservative voting was looked at in relation to estimated social class, the four most important issues, general attitudes to government and the respondent's appraisal of the best policies, leaders and parties for people like themselves. The respondent's attitude to government in general was gauged by looking at the responses to five questions on the role of government. Respondents were asked whether governments, in their dealings with political opponents, should stick firmly to their beliefs or try to meet opponents half way; whether they should involve trade unions and business in economic decision making or keep them at arm's length; whether governments can do much to create prosperity, and finally, whether, in its dealings with the rest of the world, Britain should stick resolutely to its own position or meet other countries half way. Also taken into consideration was the respondent's perception of which parties had the best policies, the best leaders, and appeared as the best party for people like them.

It can be argued that these general attitude variables are important in bringing to attention the political 'mood' of the

respondent, rather than his or her attitudes to specific policy issues. Similarly, the best party, policy and leaders variables are important, in that they reflect the overall political persuasion of the respondent, and do not force the respondent to attempt to reconcile their varied and probably conflicting policy preferences with those of any one political party.

With respect to the five variables representing attitudes to government, young males showed fairly substantial differences from young females and the rest of the population. As shown in Table 17, they were more likely than young females and the rest of the population to think that governments should stick to their beliefs; they were significantly more likely (5.4% more than young females and 5% more than the rest of the population) to say that governments should be tough in times of difficulty, and also that governments should stick to their own position in international relations (Young males = 39.7%, young females = 31% and others = 32.8%). Although they were 4.6% more likely than young females to say that people themselves had to create prosperity, the rest of the population were more than 6% more likely than young males to hold their view. On involving trade unions and business in economic decision making, young males were less likely to say that these major interests should be kept at arm's length, but only by a small amount. These figures appear to indicate that young males take a more stern approach to the role of government, and approach which may accord with many of the principles of 'new right' Conservatism. Only the figures on the

involvement of business and trade unions deviate from the general direction of the young male responses, although by such a small amount that they do not significantly detract from this conclusion.

Table 17 - Attitudes to Government by young males and females in 1983

	Young Males	Young Females
Govts. should be tough	59.1%	53.7%
Govts. should stick to their beliefs	58.2%	47.2%
Govts should not involve business and TUs	28.6%	30.8%
Govts. can't create econ prosperity	51.3%	46.7%
Govts. should not compromise in int. relns.	39.7%	31.0%

Our three main groups were similar in their attitudes to which party had the best leaders. On the best party for people like themselves, young females and males were less likely than others to prefer the Conservatives. Young males were the most supportive of the Conservative Party as having the best policies, with others slightly behind, but with young females around 8% behind.

Factor analysis was used to give one measure of general attitudes to government (Table 18) and one measure to summarise preferences for the best party (Table 19). The factor loadings given were calculated for the survey population as a whole, since there was no significant difference in the loadings when calculated solely for the young male and then young female respondents. Along with the class factor and the most important issues, these were used to evaluate the determinants of young male and female voting.

Table 18 - Factor loadings of general attitudes variables

	Fact 1
Govts. caring or tough	0.417
Govts. involving tus/bus	0.350
Govts. and econ prosperity	0.350
Govts. sticking to beliefs	0.345
Govts. and int. relations	0.329

Table 19 - Factor loadings of party preferences variables

	Fact 1
Best policies	0.385
Best people	0.371
Best leaders	0.364

As Table 20 shows, the importance of estimated class in determining voting choice of young males was lower than for any other group (11% for young males, 16% for young females and 17% for others). It is likely that class would affect younger voters less since they are less likely to have stable class ties. The effect of unemployment as an issue was more important for young males (13%), while its effect on the other groups were far less significant. The same results held for the issue of inflation. Young females were virtually unaffected by the variables representing the general attitudes to government, while these variables accounted for 15% of the young male vote, and 18% for the vote of the rest of the population. The variables representing overall party preference were high for all groups, although the effect was significantly higher for young females and the rest of the population (young males = 52%, young females = 61%, others = 68%). Although these variables were most

important in determinign voting choice, it is necessary to remember that these variables will have been contaminated by actual party vote, since people are likely to ascribe the most favourable rating to the party they actually voted for.

Table 20 - Regression coefficients of issue, class and attitude variables on voting in 1983.

In Equation Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Young male vote		Young female vote		Con. vote	
	B	BETA	B	BETA	B	BETA
Attitudes	0.07	0.15	0.02	0.05	0.09	0.18
Party prefs	-0.24	-0.52	-0.26	-0.61	-0.34	-0.68
Unemployment	-0.13	-0.13	-	-	-0.08	-0.07
Arms	0.02	0.02	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.02
Prices/infl	0.17	0.14	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.03
NHS	0.04	0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.08	-0.05
Class	0.05	0.11	0.07	0.16	0.09	0.17
	R sq = 0.486		R sq = 0.474		R sq = 0.738	

- = too small to put in table

Conclusion

I have argued that the 'gender gap' in Britain is more the result of switches to Conservative by young male voters, although women as a whole have decreased their support for the Conservative party. This accords with the conclusions of Norris, that the gap in USA is as much a switch to the Republicans by men as it is a move to the Democrats by women. It is difficult, on the basis of this analysis, to account for the change in young male voting. The effect of class on the votes of young males has declined, leaving more room for other factors to influence their voting choice (cf. Franklin, 1985). However, it is difficult to identify what these influences actually are. The

fact that our final regression, containing all of our relevant variables, produced a variance explained of 73.8% for the rest of the population, but only explained 48.6% of the variance for young males and 47.4% for young females, indicates that there are other forces at work in determining the vote of young people and determining that vote differentially between the sexes, which have not been taken into account. It may be that those issues which were impossible to analyse on the basis of the 1983 data, account for some of the change in young male voting. It may also be the case, however, that the variables representing general attitudes to government provide some indication of the reasons behind the divergence of young male voters. Thus, for whatever reasons, young male voters may be more susceptible to the ideas of the 'new right' or the 'new conservatism', while young female voters have resisted such influences. Far more detailed analysis would be necessary to prove or disprove this speculation, and until such analysis is undertaken, it is impossible to say whether sex-related differences in voting are likely to be a long term feature of British politics, and what consequences such a feature would have for the British political system.

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