

# The Changing Shape of Politics

Jonathan Wheatley

# The Changing Shape of Politics

Rethinking Left and Right in a New Britain

palgrave  
macmillan

Jonathan Wheatley  
Department of Social Sciences  
Oxford Brookes University  
Oxford, UK

ISBN 978-3-030-03939-4      ISBN 978-3-030-03940-0 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03940-0>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018960881

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer  
Nature Switzerland AG 2019, corrected publication 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the  
Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights  
of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction  
on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and  
retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology  
now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this  
publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are  
exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.  
The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and  
information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication.  
Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied,  
with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have  
been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published  
maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © Melisa Hasan

This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature  
Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# CONTENTS

|          |   |            |
|----------|---|------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction: British Politics in Turbulent Times</b>                | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Beyond Left and Right: The End of an Old Order?</b>                  | <b>27</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Patterns of Political Competition</b>                                | <b>45</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Towards a More Polarised Britain?</b>                                | <b>71</b>  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>The European Perspective</b>   | <b>95</b>  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Conclusion: Making Sense of It All</b>                               | <b>111</b> |
|          | <b>Correction to: Introduction: British Politics in Turbulent Times</b> | <b>C1</b>  |
|          | <b>Appendix A: Analysis of British Election Study (BES) Data</b>        | <b>125</b> |
|          | <b>Appendix B: European Political Parties</b>                           | <b>137</b> |
|          | <b>Appendix C: Cleaning and Preprocessing VAA-Generated Data</b>        | <b>143</b> |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Appendix D: Mokken Scale Analysis</b> | 149 |
| <b>Appendix E: Regression Results</b>    | 157 |
| <b>Bibliography</b>                      | 165 |
| <b>Index</b>                             | 171 |

# LIST OF FIGURES

|           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Fig. 1.1  | General elections. Scotland 1970–2017   | 8   |
| Fig. 1.2  | Elections to the Scottish Parliament 1999–2016. List vote   | 9   |
| Fig. 1.3  | General elections. Wales 1970–2017  | 12  |
| Fig. 1.4  | Elections to the Welsh Assembly 1999–2016. List vote  | 12  |
| Fig. 1.5  | Vote swings and Brexit  | 15  |
| Fig. 1.6  | United Kingdom 1992–2017  | 19  |
| Fig. 1.7  | France 1993–2017  | 20  |
| Fig. 1.8  | Germany 1990–2017   | 21  |
| Fig. 1.9  | Netherlands 1994–2017   | 22  |
| Fig. 1.10 | Denmark 1990–2015   | 23  |
| Fig. 1.11 | Sweden 1991–2014  | 24  |
| Fig. 3.1  | Positions of party voters BES 2016: <b>a</b> Economic dimension vs cultural dimension. <b>b</b> Economic dimension vs populist dimension. <b>c</b> Cultural dimension vs populist dimension | 60  |
| Fig. 3.2  | Positions of party voters WhoGetsMyVoteUK 2017  | 62  |
| Fig. 4.1  | <b>a</b> Party voters. England and Wales (BES Wave 13).<br><b>b</b> Party voters. Scotland (BES Wave 13)  | 76  |
| Fig. 4.2  | <b>a</b> Party voters. England and Wales (WhoGetsMyVoteUK).<br><b>b</b> Party voters. Scotland (WhoGetsMyVoteUK)  | 76  |
| Fig. 4.3  | % claiming homosexuality always/mostly wrong  | 86  |
| Fig. 5.1  | Party supporters in England, Denmark and France   | 103 |
| Fig. 6.1  | Turnout at UK elections (1970–2017)   | 122 |

# LIST OF TABLES

|           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Table 1.1 | Breakdown of the UK population by social grade and by party vote (1974–2010)                | 5   |
| Table 1.2 | Breakdown of the UK population by social grade and by party vote (2015–2017)                | 6   |
| Table 3.1 | Items and analysis on BES Wave 7 (2016)   | 48  |
| Table 3.2 | Items and analysis on WhoGetsMyVoteUK (2017)  | 51  |
| Table 3.3 | Items used for positioning party voters by dimension  | 59  |
| Table 4.1 | Comparison of party supporters along two dimensions (BES Waves 6 and 13)                    | 80  |
| Table 4.2 | Comparison of the distribution of BES respondents along two dimensions                      | 82  |
| Table 4.3 | Correlations between attitudes towards independence and other economic and social attitudes | 91  |
| Table 5.1 | Common EUvox items (EUvox data)   | 100 |
| Table 5.2 | Results of Mokken Scale Analysis (EUvox data)   | 101 |
| Table 5.3 | Party abbreviations   | 104 |
| Table A.1 | Reported vote versus education  | 126 |
| Table A.2 | Reported vote versus age group  | 126 |
| Table A.3 | Reported vote versus social grade   | 127 |
| Table A.4 | Reported vote versus education (Scotland)   | 127 |
| Table A.5 | Reported vote versus social grade (Scotland)  | 128 |
| Table A.6 | Opinion variables used from the BES in Mokken Scale Analysis                                | 129 |
| Table A.7 | Variables used from the BES used in regression analyses                                     | 134 |
| Table C.1 | Number of observations in each dataset (EUvox)  | 147 |
| Table D.1 | Mokken scale analysis, BES data, Wave 7 (2016)  | 152 |

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| Table D.2  | Mokken scale analysis, WhoGetsMyVoteUK data (May–June 2017)   | 153 |
| Table D.3  | Mokken scale analysis, BES data, Wave 13 (2017)   | 154 |
| Table D.4  | Mokken scale analysis, BES data, Wave 13 (2017), items common with Wave 6   | 155 |
| Table D.5  | Mokken scale analysis, BES data, Wave 6 (2015), items common with Wave 13   | 155 |
| Table E.1  | Regression results, economic dimension  | 158 |
| Table E.2  | Regression results, cultural dimension  | 158 |
| Table E.3  | Regression results 2017 (Labour vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 159 |
| Table E.4  | Regression results 2017 (Conservative vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 159 |
| Table E.5  | Regression results 2017 (LibDem vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 160 |
| Table E.6  | Regression results 2015 (Labour vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 160 |
| Table E.7  | Regression results 2015 (Conservative vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 161 |
| Table E.8  | Regression results 2015 (LibDem vote), Wave 13 (2017) data  | 161 |
| Table E.9  | Regression results 2017 (Labour vote), Wave 13 (2017) data, using only items shared with Wave 6 (2015) data       | 162 |
| Table E.10 | Regression results 2017 (Conservative vote), Wave 13 (2017) data, using only items shared with Wave 6 (2015) data | 162 |
| Table E.11 | Regression results 2017 (LibDem vote), Wave 13 (2017) data, using only items shared with Wave 6 (2015) data       | 163 |
| Table E.12 | Regression results 2015 (Labour vote), Wave 6 (2015) data   | 163 |
| Table E.13 | Regression results 2015 (Conservative vote), Wave 6 (2015) data   | 164 |
| Table E.14 | Regression results 2015 (LibDem vote), Wave 6 (2015) data   | 164 |