

Is There a Rural-Urban Political Divide in Britain?

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Abstract

A rural-urban political divide, characterised by rural mistrust in politics, dissatisfaction with democracy, and support for authoritarian-populist leaders and parties, has been identified in many Western democracies. Yet there has been little investigation of the extent to which British public opinion is divided in this fashion. Using British Election Study data from 2016 and 2019 that combines large samples with finely-grained geographic identifiers, this paper investigates the possible presence and extent of a rural-urban divide in British political attitudes and values. We find that while rural Britons are more conservative on economic issues, and more supportive of the Conservative party than urbanites, the two groups have comparable levels of democratic satisfaction, political trust, and authoritarianism. As such, unlike in other Western democracies, we do not find any evidence that rural Britons are more resentful, dissatisfied, or “left-behind” compared to their urban counterparts.

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Introduction

Scholars and commentators seem to agree that Britain is politically divided. For Ford and Goodwin (2017) an ideological divide exists between socially liberal progressives and “left behind” conservatives; Jennings and Stoker (2016, 372) distinguish between “cosmopolitan areas of growth” and “backwater areas of decline”; for Goodhart (2017, 3), the nation is riven between “the people who see the world from Anywhere and the people who see it from Somewhere”.

Britain is not unique in this regard: the political landscapes of many other Western democracies are also shifting and polarizing, often in response to the common drivers of globalisation and increasing education (Ford and Jennings 2020, Hooghe and Marks 2018, Kriesi et al. 2006). One of the key features of these new political landscapes is the re-emergence of the classic rural-urban cleavage in politics, decades after this cleavage was thought to have diminished in political relevance (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Indeed, significant urban-rural differences have recently been noted in the United States (Cramer 2012, 2016; Munis 2020; Scala and Johnson 2017), Canada (Borwein and Lucas 2023), the Netherlands (Huijsmans et al. 2021), Switzerland (Maxwell 2020), France (Brookes and Cappellina 2023), as well as Europe-wide (Huijsmans and Rodden 2024; Kenny and Luca 2021; Mitsch, Lee and Morrow 2021).

Missing from these analyses is Britain. Although scholars have examined the emerging divide between prosperous and left-behind places (Gest 2016; Hobolt 2016; Jennings and Stoker 2016, 2017), there has been limited investigation of the extent to which British public opinion is divided along rural-urban lines. This is a curious omission, not only because there is ample evidence of geographically-based political divides in Britain, but also because Britain’s

early and deep experience with industrialisation would suggest a potentially salient urban-rural cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

The purpose of this paper is to provide such an investigation into the possible presence and extent of a rural-urban divide in British political attitudes and values. We aim for a comprehensive analysis using newly updated British Election Study data from 2016 and 2019. These large samples of British residents ($N > 30,000$) are bolstered with geographic identifiers that allow us to link respondents to small administrative areas in which they reside. In turn, these areas can be categorised as rural, urban, or “something in-between” using official data. We consider a wide range of political attitudes for evidence of a divide: at the most general level, people’s orientations to the political system; at the most specific: their attitudes to important issues of the time, such as the UK’s relationship with the European Union. We also consider ideological orientations and party preferences, the bread and butter of political behaviour.

On most dimensions of opinion, we generally find little difference between rural and urban residents of Britain. From 2016 to 2019 there are no sustained or substantial differences in political trust, support for and satisfaction with democracy, and authoritarian values. The two exceptions are economic ideology, where rural voters are substantially more right wing, and voting, where there is a rural preference for the Conservative party. As such, although we find that rural Britons are more conservative than their urban counterparts, there is no evidence (unlike in other Western democracies) that British ruralites are more resentful, dissatisfied, or “left-behind”.

Existing research on rural-urban political divides in Western democracies

The political significance of place, particularly the divide between the cities and the countryside, has long been of interest to scholars. For Lipset and Rokkan (1967), the urban-rural divide is one of the fundamental political cleavages that shaped party systems in Western democracies. After appearing to have faded in importance in the mid to late twentieth century, recent years have seen a revival of scholarly interest in rural urban political divides, fuelled by a conviction that these divides are playing a role in ongoing political realignments, such as the rise of populism.

In the United States, researchers have shown growing rural-urban differences in vote choice (Scala and Johnson 2017) and partisanship (Gimpel et al. 2020). They have also described the identities and resentments that provide such political force to these divides (Cramer 2012, 2016; Munis 2020). In the European context, political scientists have identified a link between rurality, support for right-wing populists (Brookes and Cappellina 2023; Fitzgerald and Lawrence 2011; Gavenda and Umit 2016; Strijker et al. 2015), and hostility to immigration (Huijsmans et al. 2021; Maxwell 2020). There is also substantial evidence that European ruralites show less trust in politics and are less satisfied with their democracies than urbanites (Kenny and Luca 2021; Lago 2021; McKay, Jennings and Stoker 2023; Mitsch, Lee and Morrow 2021). Finally, Huijsmans and Rodden's (2024) study of voting behaviour in 15 democracies finds evidence for growing rural-urban electoral divides in many cases. In sum, a large literature has identified a rural-urban divide in Western democracies in which rural residents are less trusting and satisfied in politics and more supportive of populist and radical-right actors.

Rural-Urban Divides in British Politics

In contrast to the wider comparative literature, there have been fewer attempts to measure and evaluate the presence and extent of urban-rural divides in contemporary British politics. One partial exception is electoral behaviour, where political geography (if not always the rural vs. urban cleavage specifically) has long been regarded as important (e.g., McAllister and Studlar 1992). For Lipset and Rokkan (1967), the 19th century opposition between the Conservative and the Liberal parties was shaped in large part by the contrasting interests of the landed aristocracy and the industrial bourgeoisie. Analyses of constituency-level data, however, suggest that other factors were at least as important, including confessional divides (Anglicanism vs. “Non-conformism”; Wald 1983) and class (i.e., the proportion of households employing servants; Waller 1994).

Nevertheless, even by the late 20th century, a rural electoral advantage for the Conservative Party (over the Labour Party) was still evident. Crewe and Payne’s (1976) model of the 1970 election shows a 4.5 percentage point advantage to the Conservatives in “agricultural” seats, holding other factors constant (see also Curtice and Steed 1982). Johnston et al’s (2004) analysis of survey data reveals that rurality was negatively associated with support for Labour from 1991 to 2001 compared to support for either Conservatives or Liberal Democrats. Closer to the present day, Jennings and Stoker (2017) demonstrate that support for Labour in urban-metropolitan and high-density constituencies generally increased between 2005 and 2017. The appearance of a growing rural-urban electoral divide in Britain is confirmed by Huijismans and Rodden’s 2024 analysis of voting data.

While there has been some research on rural-urban divides in British electoral choice, there has been less attention paid to rural-urban differences in the Brexit vote. And the conclusions of research on this topic are contradictory. Hobolt (2016, 1273) claims that “the

Remain side did better in the larger multicultural cities ... whereas the Leave side was strongest in the English countryside”. However, Johnston, Manley, Pattie, and Jones (2018) find little evidence of a rural (or urban) effect. Indeed only 56% of English voters in largely rural local authorities voted in favour of leaving the EU, compared with 53% of English voters as a whole (Wilson 2016).

Despite the relative lack of research on the rural-urban divide in British politics, scholarly attention has turned toward other geographical divides that have become prominent recently. Most notable here is Jennings and Stoker’s (2016; 2017) account of two “Englands”, which shows that people residing in “cosmopolitan” areas hold more globalist, outwardly focused and progressive views, while those residing in “backwater” or “left-behind” areas are more politically conservative, less accepting of political change, and more supportive of restrictive immigration policies. (see also Goodhart 2017). This “two Englands” thesis is best seen as an example of a larger “transnational” cleavage (Hooghe and Marks 2018) that is emerging in many Western democracies and pitting the “winners” and “losers” of globalization against one another (Hobolt 2016; Kriesi et al. 2006).

Yet, despite the links between the older rural-urban cleavage and a newer transnational one, we should be cautious of subsuming the former into the latter. The areas that Jennings and Stoker identify as “cosmopolitan” are not necessarily the most urban of locations, and nor are “backwaters” necessarily rural. As indicated by their (2016) examples of Clacton (a backwater city) and Cambridge (a cosmopolitan city), the cosmopolitan vs. backwater (or transnational) cleavage plays out at an oblique angle to the urban-rural cleavage, at least in Britain. Urban areas may be left behind, while rural areas may be prosperous and connected with global markets (McKay, Jennings and Stoker 2021). Indeed, English local authority administrative data shows that rural areas are less income deprived, on average, than urban areas (ONS 2021).

More recent studies have in fact pushed back somewhat against accounts of a divide between left-behind and cosmopolitan places. Boswell et al. (2022) show that it is variations in deprivation measured in hyperlocal areas (i.e., housing estates), rather than broader locales, that are associated with the powerlessness and alienation that are the hallmarks of “left-behindedness”. Fieldhouse and Bailey (2023) argue that it is the demographic characteristics of small areas, rather than deprivation per se, that explains the electoral shifts seen in the post-Brexit era. Finally, McKay, Jennings and Stoker (2021) find differing and somewhat opposing effects of deprivation and rurality: while deprivation is associated with lower trust in politicians and feelings of economic deprivation, rurality is in fact linked with higher trust and feelings of social marginality.

In sum, there is little research that focus specifically on rural-urban political divides in contemporary Britain. This is a surprising omission because both the classic voting behaviour literature and the newer “two Englands” thesis suggest that political outcomes are affected by people’s places of residence. Indeed, if Lipset and Rokkan’s theory of the emergence of the rural-urban cleavage is correct, then Britain – which first experienced an industrial revolution – might be expected to have one of the longest standing and starkest rural urban divides with strong potential to influence the politics of the country.

Hypotheses

We ask in this paper whether there is a rural-urban political divide in Britain. To address this question, we require a comprehensive overview of different dimensions of British political behaviour. First are three measures assessing *orientations towards the system*: political trust, democratic satisfaction, and democratic support. Second are *ideological orientations*, the positions respondents hold on economic and social issues. Third are *electoral preferences*, i.e.,

respondents' preferences regarding the main political parties. Finally, we include *attitudes toward Brexit* – one of the fundamental political issues of the time. If there is a divide in British political attitudes between people who live in rural communities and those residing in urban areas, it should become apparent in this comprehensive set of measures. We describe our hypotheses below.

Much existing research on the rural urban divide in Europe has focused on orientations to the political system such as political trust and satisfaction with democracy, finding that rural Europeans have less trust and satisfaction in their political systems (Kenny and Luca 2021; Lago 2021; McKay, Jennings, and Stoker 2023; Mitsch, Lee and Morrow 2021). Zumbrunn and Freitag (2023) show that ruralites across 32 countries are more likely to support authoritarian political systems. We expect the same pattern in Britain:

H1: Rural Britons will show less system support (trust, satisfaction, and democratic support) than urban residents.

Ideological orientations have long been regarded as important forces that shape or “constrain” citizens' attitudes towards specific political issues (Converse 1964, Feldman 1988). Two main ideological scales are often used in British politics: an economic (or redistributive) dimension in which “socialist” values are opposed to “laissez-faire” values and a second, cultural dimension in which “authoritarian” values are opposed to “libertarian” values (Heath, Evans, and Martin 1994). We expect that ruralites are more conservative on both dimensions, i.e., have more right-wing economic orientations (e.g., Cramer 2012, 2016) and more authoritarian socio-cultural values.

H2: Rural residents will have more conservative ideological orientations than urban residents.

As discussed in the previous section, there is evidence that British electoral preferences are (and have long been) shaped by the divide between cities and the countryside, with support for the Conservative Party more likely in rural areas (Crewe and Payne 1976; Curtice and Steed 1982; Huijismans and Rodden 2024; Jennings and Stoker 2017; Johnston et al. 2004). We expect therefore:

H3: Rural residents will be more supportive of the Conservative party.

Finally, some authors have suggested that there was a rural preference for “Leave” in the Brexit vote of 2015 (Hobolt 2016; c.f., Johnston et al. 2018). We hypothesise that ruralites continued to be less receptive than urbanites regarding the UK’s membership of the European Union in the years following Brexit:

H4: Rural residents will be less supportive of the UK remaining a member of the EU.

Research design

Data

We use British Election Study (BES) survey data to test our hypotheses (Fieldhouse et al. 2021). We analyse two particular waves of BES data: wave 10, which was fielded in November and December 2016, and wave 17, which was fielded in November 2019. Wave 10 is the first wave of publicly released data (at the time the research was conducted) in which small area identifiers were included in the updated data release. Wave 17 was one of the last waves which

both included such identifiers and was fielded before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Both waves also included all of the opinion variables we require (see below).

Dependent variables

To measure public *orientations towards the political system*, we use three items from the BES: political trust, satisfaction with democracy, and support for authoritarian rule (i.e., rejection of democracy; see supplementary materials for question wording). We use the economic (left vs. right) and cultural (authoritarian vs. libertarian) values scales included in the BES to measure *ideological orientations*. Next, *electoral preferences* are measured using the standard vote choice question employed by the BES: “if there were a UK general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?” Responses of Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrats, and the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties (in their corresponding nations) were retained as recorded; other options were recoded as “other”. Finally, we measure *opinions regarding the UK’s membership of the European Union* using the following question: “if there was another referendum on EU membership, how do you think you would vote?”, with possible responses being “remain in the EU” or “leave the EU”.

Measuring rurality

We use official rural-urban classifications of small areas in Britain to measure rurality. Because these classifications both include multiple dimensions of geographical variation and differ somewhat between England and Wales and Scotland, we recode the available classifications to

a trichotomous scale of “rural”, “urban”, and an intermediate category we call “small town”.¹ We use small areal units as our units of aggregation: “middle layer super output areas” in England and Wales (average population 7,200) and “intermediate zones” in Scotland (average population 4,300).

Empirical strategy

We proceed by examining the link between rural residence and each of our dependent variables separately. We generally use linear regression models, with the exception of electoral preferences, where we use multinomial logit.² Given that data from the three nations differ according to a variety of factors (e.g., our measures of rurality, the party systems, and perhaps even the salience of political issues), we analyse the three national samples separately. Fortunately, each wave of the BES has a sufficiently large sample ($N > 30,000$) that separate analysis of the Scottish and Welsh samples is feasible.

Since we ask whether there is a rural-urban divide in British public opinion, we should define what counts as a “divide”. For the purposes of our analysis, a public opinion divide is a *significant, substantial, and sustained* gap in political attitudes or behaviour observed between rural and urban residents. By significant, we refer to statistical significance: we think that an opinion divide should produce a significant group difference, both with and without demographic covariates. As such, we use regression models to provide both simple differences

¹ Note that we do not distinguish between urban cores and peripheries (e.g., Gest 2016), as we focus on the rural-urban divide, not other geographic dimensions. See the supplementary materials for further details.

² Many methodologists (e.g., Angrist and Pischke 2009) advocate the use of linear models for ordinal or even dichotomous variables when engaging in descriptive or causal inference.

in means between rural and urban residents as well as the differences in means after adjusting for demographic covariates.³ The latter are important because a rural urban divide should, in our view, not simply be a product of the compositional differences of rural and urban areas. Significance, however, is not sufficient, especially given the large samples available in the BES. We therefore require the gap between rural and urban residents to also be large in substantive terms. For our purposes, this means that the rural (vs. urban) “effect” should be among the largest demographic effects observed for each particular dependent variable. Finally, any divide worth its name should be sustained: it should exist over a period of time. For the purposes of this paper, we require a divide to be an urban-rural gap that is significant and substantial in both the November/December 2016 and November 2019 BES samples.

Analysis and findings

Orientations towards the system

[Table 1 showing trust in MPs, England, Wales & Scotland]

We begin our analysis by focusing on citizens’ orientations towards the political system itself. Table 1 shows our analyses of trust in MPs in England & Wales and Scotland, in 2016 and 2019. Living in a rural area has little to no effect on political trust. There is a significant,

³ We include the following demographic covariates: gender, ethnicity, education, age, income, employment status, religious identity, and occupational grade. In the analyses of electoral and EU preferences, we also include the economic and cultural values scales used earlier as dependent variables.

positive effect in both England and Wales in 2016, but not a sustained one: the effect vanishes three years later, likely due to the re-alignments in trust caused by Brexit (Gaskell et al. 2020). Neither is the 2016 trust gap robust to including demographic covariates, indicating that compositional factors such as average age and proportion Anglican explain much of the trust gap observed in 2016. In Scotland, the trust effect is of a similar magnitude to that in England (covariate-adjusted), but is statistically insignificant, if stable over time.

These results differ from existing research showing that rural areas in Europe suffer from lower political trust (Kenny and Luca 2021, Lago 2021; Mitsch, Lee and Morrow 2021). If anything, we find that there is a small positive effect of rurality on political trust in England and Wales in 2016.

[Table 2 showing satisfaction with democracy, England, Wales & Scotland]

Next, we consider satisfaction with the way democracy is working, our second measure of public orientations to the political system. Results (shown in Table 2) are once again weak. There is little evidence of an urban rural divide in satisfaction with democracy. In 2019, rural Welsh residents become less satisfied than their urban counterparts, although rural Scottish residents become (marginally) more satisfied. There are no changes in England.

[Table 3 showing support for strong leader, England, Wales & Scotland]

Finally, we examine support for a strong, undemocratic leader, a measure of (low) support for democracy (Table 3). We see significant effects of rurality in both England and Scotland in 2016. However, these effects have the opposite sign in the two samples: a negative effect in England (i.e., ruralites are less likely than urbanites to support strong leaders) versus a positive

effect in Scotland. Scottish rural residents therefore conform more to the expected pattern of rural authoritarianism (Zumbrunn and Freitag 2023) than English or Welsh rural residents. However, neither of these effects are sustained in 2019. Nor are they particularly substantial in comparison with other demographics: even in England, the negative effect of rural residence on support for an undemocratic leader is smaller than the negative effects of being a student, being white, having a university degree, having an income in the upper tertile, or holding a managerial, administrative or professional occupation.

Ideological orientations

[Table 4 showing economic values, England, Wales & Scotland]

Our analysis of the economic dimension of political attitudes is shown in Table 4. We see a significant and sustained effect of rurality in England, with rural residents more economically right wing than urban residents. This urban-rural gap is evident in both November 2016 and November 2019. It is also substantial in magnitude: the effect size of .16 to .20 is among the largest observed in Table 4, with only upper tertile income and occupational grade A/B being a more substantial correlate of economic conservatism. The gap is observable in Wales (in 2016) and Scotland (in 2019) as well, although it is smaller in magnitude and is not sustained across the two points of time in either nation.

The economic conservatism of rural England in contrast to both urban England and – to a lesser degree – rural Wales and Scotland, may be rooted in the relative prosperity of these areas. In a table in the supplementary materials, we show that rural residents of England report significantly higher income than urban English residents (higher also than Welsh or Scottish residents). There are no significant differences between rural and urban self-reported income

in Wales and Scotland. A similar story of relative rural prosperity emerges from ONS analysis of deprivation by English local authority (ONS 2021).

[Table 5 showing cultural values, England, Wales & Scotland]

Turning to the cultural dimension of values (Table 5), we see that English ruralites are less authoritarian than their urban counterparts in 2016, mirroring their lower support for an undemocratic leader. However, by 2019 there is no discernible gap at all. Neither is the 2016 gap that substantial: the effect (-.05 to -.08) is much smaller than the gap between white and non-white respondents (-.18) or between the religious and non-religious (.16 to .34). Rural Welsh residents are also somewhat less authoritarian than their urban counterparts, but only weakly so. In Scotland, in contrast, rural residents tend to be more authoritarian than urbanites. In sum, we have little evidence of a sustained and substantial rural-urban divide in authoritarian values. Indeed, if anything, rural residents of England and Wales are less authoritarian than urban residents, contrary to our expectations.

Electoral preferences

[Figure 1 showing electoral preferences in England]

We next consider electoral preferences. Given the complexity of these results, with separate analyses by nation with three or more significant parties in each, we present our findings graphically, with more detailed tables presented in the supplementary materials. Figure 1 shows the effects of rural (versus urban) residence on the probability of selecting any of the three main parties in England.

We see a significant effect of rurality on electoral choice in England, with ruralites less likely to support Labour and the Liberal Democrats and more likely to support the Conservatives. These gaps hold even when we factor in both demographic and ideological differences between residents of rural and urban areas. The gaps are also sustained over time, with similar effects evident in 2016 and 2019. These gaps are moreover substantial: the Conservative party enjoys around ten percentage points more support among rural respondents; the Labour party suffers a deficit of five to ten percentage points less support among rural respondents; and the Liberal Democrats around five percentage points less. This effect of rurality is among the most important predictor of vote choice of any of the extensive set of demographics we include in our models (see the supplementary materials). For example, in the pre-election survey of England in November 2019, the rural effect of -0.75, on preferring Labour over Conservative, is larger than the effect of any other demographic indicator, bar youth (i.e., age 18-39; effect size: 1.19).

[Figure 2 showing electoral preferences in Scotland]

[Figure 3 showing electoral preferences in Wales]

Electoral choice results for Scotland and Wales are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Instead of the Liberal Democrats, we include the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Results from both nations are otherwise similar to those we have found in England. Labour suffers from a small deficit in rural areas, with Conservatives enjoying a fairly substantial advantage of 5-8 (Scotland) and 10-12 (Wales) percentage points. There is no significant rural-urban gap in support for either of the nationalist parties. Overall, rurality is among the most consequential predictors of vote choice in Scotland and Wales, as it is in England. The rural effect with respect to the choice between Labour and Conservative in November 2019 in Wales is -1.05, which

was eclipsed in magnitude only by the effect identifying as White (-1.40). In Scotland the comparable effect was -1.02, which was the single most important demographic predictor of Labour vs Conservative choice.⁴ In sum, we continue to see a robust and sustained rural advantage to the Conservative party in all three countries, echoing earlier analyses by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Crewe and Payne (1976).

Attitudes towards Brexit

[Table 6 showing EU opinion, England, Wales & Scotland]

The final set of opinions we examine are public preferences on the major political issue of the time: the relationship between the UK and the EU. The results of our analyses are presented in Table 6. In neither England nor Wales is there a rural-urban gap in attitudes to the EU in 2016. By 2019, however, a significant and substantial gap has emerged – particularly in England, with ruralites more in favour of sticking to the “leave EU” decision. In Scotland, the bivariate models show significant preferences for “Leave” in rural areas in both 2016 and 2019. In all three countries, these rural effects are, however, diminished in magnitude when demographic and ideological controls are added to the models. This is likely due to rural areas being older and whiter than urban areas and these demographic groups tending to favour Brexit.⁵ As such, it appears that the rural-urban cleavage became aligned over the period from 2016 to 2019 with

⁴ White ethnicity is a more potent predictor (effect size: -1.29) of the probability of choosing SNP over Conservative.

⁵ See the supplementary materials for a summary of the demographic patterns across England & Wales and Scotland.

the Brexit divide, which – in turn – emerged as the main dividing line in British politics in the election of 2019 (Fieldhouse and Bailey 2023).

Conclusion

A large body of research has shown substantial and growing urban-rural divides in public opinion and political behaviour in several Western democracies. In an effort to understand whether such a divide exists in Britain, we have analysed a comprehensive set of political opinions, using large survey samples from two points in time, and finely-grained indicators of rural vs. urban residence.

Our analysis reveals relatively little evidence for a rural-urban divide in Britain. On the major dimensions by which citizens are oriented to the political system – political trust, satisfaction with their democracy, principled commitment to democracy itself – we find no significant, substantial, and sustained gap between urban and rural Britain. These patterns are generally observed across all three national samples (England, Wales and Scotland), with small effects that either lack significance, are not robust to including demographic covariates or are inconsistent over time. On this score, Britain differs from a number of other cases where rural areas are less trusting in government and less satisfied with democracy (e.g., Kenny and Luca 2021; Lago 2021; Mitsch, Lee and Morrow 2021).

Yet there is evidence for rural-urban divides on other political opinions. Ruralites are more economically right wing than their urban counterparts – especially in England, but less so in Wales and Scotland. This stands in contrast to social conservatism (i.e., authoritarian-libertarian values), where there are no sustained and robust effects (and, if anything, English ruralites appear less authoritarian than English urbanites). There are also differences in partisan allegiances, with ruralites favouring the Conservatives and urbanites preferring Labour, as we

would expect from existing analyses of electoral behaviour (e.g., Crewe and Payne 1976; Johnston et al, 2004; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). This partisan gap is evident across all three samples, although it is weaker in Scotland than it is in England or Wales. Finally, there is evidence that a rural-urban gap emerged between 2016 and 2019 in one of the foremost political issues of the last decade, the relationship between the UK and the EU.

These latter developments appear to have aligned the rural-urban cleavage with the Brexit divide that has become the main orienting dimension in British politics (Fieldhouse and Bailey 2023). Given that these shifts in the British electoral geography are widely believed to be linked with a shift from economic to cultural issues (Ford and Goodwin 2017) and from class divides to the transnational cleavage (Hobolt 2016), it might be wondered if the rural-urban cleavage in Britain is simply another manifestation of this same divide. Are rural areas just part of the left-behind, “losers of globalisation” electorate? Our results in fact indicate that they are not. On cultural issues, ruralites are often less – not more – authoritarian than urbanites (at least in 2016; by 2019 there was no difference) and are less likely to support an undemocratic leader. Neither are they less satisfied with democracy (Welsh rural residents in 2019 aside) or less trusting of MPs. Rural Britain simply does not show many of the behavioural attributes of what we might call “left behindness.”

Yet it is arguably the cleavage between left-behind and prosperous places that is now more consequential in British politics (Hobolt 2016; Gest 2016; Jennings and Stoker 2016, 2017; Fieldhouse and Bailey 2023). The rural-urban divide simply is not the major political cleavage that it appears to be in several other countries. The case of Britain therefore suggests that the re-emergence of the rural-urban divide may not be a universal phenomenon sweeping across Western democracies. Rather, it seems possible that this re-emergence has national, not international origins, even as some of the facilitating factors are international forces like globalisation. With research on this topic growing rapidly, the challenge for scholars is to

conduct more comparative studies that identify when and where rural-urban cleavages become activated (see, e.g., McKay, Jennings and Stoker 2023 for one of the few examples).

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Table 1: Rural-urban differences in trust in MPs

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	3.35***	3.02***	2.69***	2.52***	3.15***	2.86***	2.57***	2.68***	3.08***	2.54***	2.53***	2.39***
	(.01)	(.06)	(.01)	(.05)	(.04)	(.27)	(.04)	(.24)	(.03)	(.20)	(.03)	(.18)
Rural	.11**	.06	.00	.03	.27**	.15	-.14	-.12	.08	.08	.06	.08
	(.04)	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.10)	(.10)	(.08)	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)
Small town	.10**	.06	-.05	.00	-.21	-.23*	-.16	-.16	.11	.06	-.04	-.01
	(.04)	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.11)	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.08)	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)
Female		-.01		-.06***		.07		.00		.04		-.13**
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
White		-.03		-.17***		.20		-.32		.08		-.16
		(.04)		(.03)		(.23)		(.21)		(.17)		(.14)
Has degree		.16***		.26***		.22*		.29***		.18**		.35***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.09)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Age: 18-39		-.12**		.09**		-.15		-.04		.14		.12
		(.04)		(.03)		(.13)		(.12)		(.10)		(.09)
Age: 40-59		-.13***		-.05		-.32**		-.09		-.12		-.16
		(.04)		(.03)		(.12)		(.11)		(.09)		(.09)
Income: Middle tertile		.16***		.06*		.02		.10		.21**		.17*
		(.03)		(.02)		(.09)		(.09)		(.07)		(.07)
Income: Upper tertile		.29***		.14***		.07		.28*		.31***		.22*
		(.03)		(.03)		(.16)		(.12)		(.09)		(.09)
Income: Refusal/DK		-.09**		-.18***		-.35***		-.15		-.01		-.02
		(.03)		(.02)		(.09)		(.08)		(.07)		(.07)
Employ. status: Student		.31***		.51***		.80***		.63***		.33**		.55***
		(.05)		(.05)		(.16)		(.16)		(.11)		(.11)
Employ. status: Retired		.08*		.08*		.07		.10		.33***		.10
		(.04)		(.03)		(.13)		(.11)		(.10)		(.09)
Employ. status: Unemployed		-.05		.18***		-.13		-.15		-.04		.31*
		(.05)		(.05)		(.21)		(.16)		(.14)		(.13)
Employ. status: Other		-.19***		-.04		-.18		-.18		-.16		.07
		(.04)		(.03)		(.12)		(.11)		(.09)		(.09)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.36***		.19***		.33***		.20*		.37**		.34**
		(.02)		(.02)		(.09)		(.08)		(.12)		(.12)
Religion: Catholic		.22***		.12***		.70***		.07		-.04		-.04
		(.04)		(.04)		(.16)		(.15)		(.09)		(.09)
Religion: Other Christian		.47***		.32***		.18		-.02		.34***		.06
		(.04)		(.04)		(.14)		(.14)		(.07)		(.07)
Religion: Other		.12**		.13***		.23		-.20		.04		-.12
		(.04)		(.03)		(.12)		(.12)		(.10)		(.09)
Occupational grade: A/B		.32***		.23***		.28*		.15		.32***		.23**
		(.03)		(.03)		(.12)		(.10)		(.08)		(.08)
Occupational grade: C1		.19***		.14***		-.03		.11		.21**		.06
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.09)		(.07)		(.07)
Occupational grade: C2		.05		.02		.08		-.03		-.06		.07
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.10)		(.08)		(.08)
Resid. std. dev.	1.60	1.57	1.48	1.44	1.40	1.36	1.30	1.28	1.34	1.30	1.32	1.29
Adj. R2	.00	.04	.00	.04	.01	.06	.00	.04	.00	.06	-.00	.04
N	24104	24083	27432	26578	1979	1978	2002	1956	3328	3320	3250	3166

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Table 2: Rural-urban differences in democratic satisfaction

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	2.46***	2.35***	2.04***	1.99***	2.35***	2.11***	2.00***	2.07***	2.19***	1.88***	1.86***	1.60***
	(.01)	(.03)	(.01)	(.03)	(.02)	(.15)	(.02)	(.16)	(.02)	(.12)	(.02)	(.11)
Rural	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02	-0.00	-0.03	-0.05	-0.15**	-0.11*	.06	.04	.08*	.07
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Small town	-.04*	-.06**	-.02	-.01	-.05	-.05	-.10	-.11	.01	-.06	.01	.01
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Female		.06***		.06***		.12**		.08*		.16***		.10**
		(.01)		(.01)		(.04)		(.04)		(.03)		(.03)
White		-.06**		-.10***		.17		-.22		.10		.06
		(.02)		(.02)		(.13)		(.13)		(.10)		(.09)
Has degree		-.07***		-.00		-.17***		.00		-.17***		-.05
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.03)		(.03)
Age: 18-39		.03		.05**		-.02		.04		.04		.08
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Age: 40-59		.01		.03		-.06		.13		-.02		.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Income: Middle tertile		.06***		.06***		.23***		.08		.14***		.18***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Income: Upper tertile		.10***		.09***		.15		.11		.12*		.19***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.09)		(.08)		(.06)		(.05)
Income: Refusal/DK		-.04*		-.08***		.00		-.00		.08*		-.02
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Employ. status: Student		-.08**		.04		.07		.37***		-.09		.05
		(.03)		(.03)		(.09)		(.10)		(.07)		(.07)
Employ. status: Retired		-.02		.01		-.04		.12		-.01		.10
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Employ. status: Unemployed		-.10***		-.02		-.40***		-.40***		.01		.09
		(.03)		(.03)		(.12)		(.10)		(.08)		(.08)
Employ. status: Other		-.17***		-.11***		-.15*		-.08		-.27***		-.04
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.22***		.14***		.17***		.09		.38***		.34***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.07)		(.08)
Religion: Catholic		.12***		.14***		.21*		.00		.01		.04
		(.02)		(.02)		(.09)		(.10)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: Other Christian		.20***		.21***		.04		.14		.35***		.18***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.08)		(.04)		(.04)
Religion: Other		.09***		.12***		.09		-.21**		.06		.04
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Occupational grade: A/B		.07***		.04*		.04		-.13*		.05		-.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Occupational grade: C1		.06***		.02		-.01		.01		.04		-.02
		(.02)		(.02)		(.05)		(.06)		(.04)		(.04)
Occupational grade: C2		.04*		-.02		-.05		-.04		.09*		-.00
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.05)		(.05)
Resid. std. dev.	.83	.82	.84	.83	.75	.73	.79	.78	.77	.75	.78	.76
Adj. R2	.00	.03	.00	.02	-.00	.04	.00	.03	-.00	.06	.00	.02
N	22705	22684	26059	25246	1874	1873	1904	1862	3198	3191	3138	3057

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Table 3: Rural-urban differences in support for an undemocratic leader

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	2.64***	3.13***	2.44***	2.89***	2.70***	3.29***	2.44***	2.76***	2.40***	2.57***	2.28***	2.32***
	(.01)	(.05)	(.01)	(.05)	(.03)	(.22)	(.04)	(.22)	(.03)	(.16)	(.03)	(.16)
Rural	-.19***	-.15***	.02	.02	-.13	-.11	.04	.02	.15*	.12*	.00	-.04
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)
Small town	-.03	-.02	.06*	.04	-.22*	-.18*	-.13	-.12	.32***	.24***	-.06	-.05
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)
Female		.13***		.08***		.29***		-.04		.20***		.14**
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.04)		(.05)
White		-.34***		-.12***		-.58**		.13		-.10		.02
		(.03)		(.03)		(.18)		(.18)		(.14)		(.13)
Has degree		-.44***		-.52***		-.60***		-.67***		-.54***		-.56***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Age: 18-39		.08**		-.05		.20		.22		.06		.05
		(.03)		(.03)		(.11)		(.11)		(.08)		(.09)
Age: 40-59		.01		.00		.11		.10		.06		.09
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.10)		(.07)		(.08)
Income: Middle tertile		-.06**		-.03		-.03		-.11		.01		-.04
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Income: Upper tertile		-.20***		-.19***		-.28*		-.16		-.08		-.15
		(.03)		(.03)		(.12)		(.11)		(.08)		(.08)
Income: Refusal/DK		-.10***		-.09***		-.31***		-.18*		-.20***		-.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Employ. status: Student		-.42***		-.55***		-.23		-.31*		-.56***		-.36***
		(.04)		(.04)		(.12)		(.14)		(.09)		(.10)
Employ. status: Retired		-.07*		-.07*		-.03		.16		-.13		-.05
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.10)		(.08)		(.08)
Employ. status: Unemployed		-.15***		.02		.33*		-.18		.04		.18
		(.04)		(.05)		(.16)		(.15)		(.11)		(.12)
Employ. status: Other		-.14***		-.13***		-.09		-.03		.09		-.07
		(.03)		(.03)		(.09)		(.10)		(.07)		(.08)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.25***		.29***		.15*		.16*		.11		.27*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.10)		(.11)
Religion: Catholic		.23***		.17***		.42***		.02		.22**		.40***
		(.03)		(.03)		(.12)		(.14)		(.07)		(.09)
Religion: Other Christian		.18***		.17***		.02		.07		.31***		.35***
		(.03)		(.03)		(.11)		(.12)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: Other		.15***		.13***		-.06		.03		.16		.38***
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.11)		(.09)		(.09)
Occupational grade: A/B		-.28***		-.32***		-.15		-.45***		-.21**		-.25***
		(.03)		(.03)		(.09)		(.10)		(.06)		(.07)
Occupational grade: C1		-.20***		-.24***		-.07		-.42***		-.03		-.07
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.09)		(.06)		(.07)
Occupational grade: C2		-.01		-.00		.07		-.38***		.10		.20**
		(.03)		(.03)		(.08)		(.09)		(.06)		(.07)
Resid. std. dev.	1.27	1.22	1.32	1.27	1.07	1.02	1.21	1.15	1.07	1.01	1.20	1.14
Adj. R2	.00	.07	.00	.08	.00	.09	.00	.09	.01	.10	-.00	.09
N	22346	22326	26304	25483	1822	1821	1904	1865	3153	3146	3132	3052

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Table 4: Rural-urban differences in economic conservatism

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	2.18***	1.66***	2.27***	1.79***	2.04***	1.63***	2.16***	2.11***	2.10***	1.72***	2.12***	1.70***
	(.01)	(.03)	(.01)	(.03)	(.02)	(.14)	(.02)	(.14)	(.02)	(.10)	(.02)	(.10)
Rural	.20***	.16***	.23***	.18***	.12*	.13**	.06	.07	.03	.06	.15***	.12**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Small town	.09***	.07***	.16***	.12***	.01	.01	-.08	-.08	.00	-.02	.05	.04
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.06)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Female		.08***		.07***		.18***		.06		.13***		.13***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.04)		(.04)		(.03)		(.03)
White		.11***		.16***		.11		-.20		.15		.11
		(.02)		(.02)		(.12)		(.12)		(.09)		(.08)
Has degree		.04**		-.04***		-.06		-.09*		-.05		-.05
		(.01)		(.01)		(.04)		(.04)		(.03)		(.03)
Age: 18-39		.16***		-.02		.17*		.06		.14**		.10
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Age: 40-59		.02		-.03		-.03		-.03		-.06		.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.05)		(.05)
Income: Middle tertile		.13***		.14***		.15***		.10*		.08*		.11**
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Income: Upper tertile		.33***		.33***		.35***		.30***		.25***		.34***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Income: Refusal/DK		.11***		.14***		.14**		.03		.13***		.13***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Employ. status: Student		.11***		-.11***		.28***		.21*		.10		.06
		(.02)		(.03)		(.08)		(.09)		(.06)		(.06)
Employ. status: Retired		.04*		.13***		.08		.17*		-.06		.17***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Employ. status: Unemployed		-.03		-.09**		-.36***		-.15		-.01		-.14
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.09)		(.07)		(.08)
Employ. status: Other		-.09***		-.09***		-.13*		-.12*		-.19***		-.10*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.04)		(.05)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.15***		.16***		.14**		.20***		.30***		.39***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.06)		(.07)
Religion: Catholic		-.01		.07**		-.13		-.01		-.03		-.10
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.09)		(.04)		(.05)
Religion: Other Christian		.16***		.19***		-.00		.09		.20***		.18***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.08)		(.03)		(.04)
Religion: Other		.07***		.07***		-.04		-.04		.24***		.01
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Occupational grade: A/B		.25***		.20***		.15**		.16**		.11**		.09*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.04)		(.04)
Occupational grade: C1		.14***		.13***		.07		.11*		.03		.06
		(.02)		(.02)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Occupational grade: C2		.03		.04*		.01		.06		-.03		-.02
		(.02)		(.02)		(.05)		(.06)		(.04)		(.04)
Resid. std. dev.	.78	.75	.79	.76	.65	.62	.72	.71	.66	.64	.70	.67
Adj. R2	.01	.08	.01	.07	.00	.09	.00	.05	-.00	.06	.00	.07
N	21640	21619	25244	24451	1795	1794	1852	1811	3070	3064	2983	2913

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Table 5: Rural-urban differences in authoritarianism

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	3.64***	3.92***	3.55***	3.77***	3.66***	3.93***	3.59***	3.65***	3.37***	3.49***	3.40***	3.41***
	(.01)	(.03)	(.01)	(.03)	(.02)	(.15)	(.03)	(.14)	(.02)	(.12)	(.02)	(.12)
Rural	-.05*	-.08***	.03	-.03	-.11	-.11*	.03	-.04	.15**	.02	.10*	.01
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)
Small town	.06**	.01	.12***	.05**	-.18**	-.16*	-.07	-.11	.24***	.09	.09	.07
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.07)	(.06)	(.07)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Female		.10***		.06***		.17***		.03		.10***		.08*
		(.01)		(.01)		(.04)		(.04)		(.03)		(.03)
White		-.18***		-.02		-.33*		.23		.03		.14
		(.02)		(.02)		(.13)		(.12)		(.10)		(.09)
Has degree		-.38***		-.43***		-.54***		-.51***		-.50***		-.46***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.03)		(.04)
Age: 18-39		-.25***		-.28***		-.07		-.03		-.23***		-.27***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Age: 40-59		-.01		-.00		.02		.00		-.03		.01
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Income: Middle tertile		.02		.01		.16**		-.01		.00		-.01
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Income: Upper tertile		-.04*		-.05**		.02		-.11		-.05		-.08
		(.02)		(.02)		(.09)		(.07)		(.05)		(.06)
Income: Refusal/DK		.01		.01		.03		.03		-.10*		-.03
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Employ. status: Student		-.65***		-.67***		-.47***		-.69***		-.69***		-.52***
		(.03)		(.03)		(.09)		(.09)		(.07)		(.07)
Employ. status: Retired		.00		.04		.17*		.14*		.04		.04
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.06)
Employ. status: Unemployed		-.22***		-.11***		.07		-.34***		-.14		.15
		(.03)		(.03)		(.11)		(.10)		(.08)		(.09)
Employ. status: Other		-.06***		-.05*		-.04		.03		.03		-.09
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.34***		.36***		.22***		.28***		.50***		.38***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.05)		(.07)		(.08)
Religion: Catholic		.27***		.26***		.23**		.22*		.15**		.27***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.09)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: Other Christian		.26***		.31***		.14		.23**		.47***		.40***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.08)		(.04)		(.04)
Religion: Other		.16***		.19***		.00		.16*		.14*		.15*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Occupational grade: A/B		-.16***		-.20***		-.15*		-.35***		-.15**		-.22***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.05)		(.05)
Occupational grade: C1		-.11***		-.13***		-.01		-.33***		-.05		-.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.05)		(.06)		(.04)		(.05)
Occupational grade: C2		.02		.04*		.09		-.11		.07		.11*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.04)		(.05)
Resid. std. dev.	.87	.78	.89	.79	.76	.69	.82	.74	.80	.69	.85	.76
Adj. R2	.00	.19	.00	.21	.00	.17	-.00	.20	.01	.25	.00	.20
N	21488	21469	24730	23947	1772	1771	1819	1779	2957	2951	2822	2752

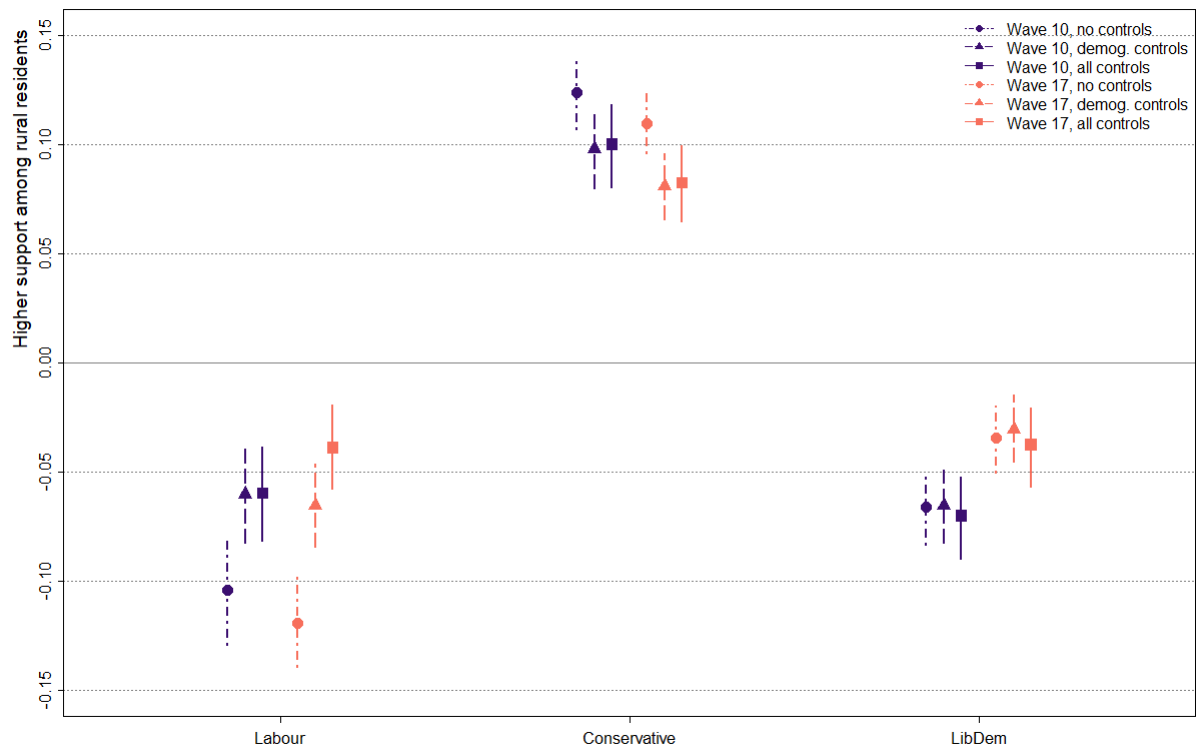
***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Table 6: Rural-urban differences in EU leave preference

	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17		Wave 10		Wave 17	
Intercept	.95***	-.66***	.92***	-.76***	.96***	-.63**	.92***	-.61**	.67***	-.73***	.63***	-.59***
	(.01)	(.05)	(.01)	(.04)	(.03)	(.21)	(.03)	(.20)	(.02)	(.15)	(.02)	(.15)
Rural	.01	-.03	.18***	.06**	.04	.04	.13*	.07	.17***	.02	.20***	.12**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.04)
Small town	.11***	-.00	.20***	.05*	-.07	-.11	-.10	-.05	-.00	-.11*	.11*	.10*
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Female		-.11***		-.13***		.00		-.24***		-.06		-.14***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.05)		(.04)		(.03)		(.03)
White		.27***		.20***		.21		-.23		.16		.13
		(.03)		(.02)		(.15)		(.15)		(.11)		(.10)
Has degree		-.17***		-.16***		-.15**		-.13*		-.09*		-.18***
		(.02)		(.01)		(.06)		(.05)		(.04)		(.04)
Age: 18-39		-.16***		-.26***		-.26**		-.20**		-.25***		-.12
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Age: 40-59		-.06**		-.11***		-.03		-.10		-.05		.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Income: Middle tertile		-.07***		-.06***		.02		-.06		-.07		.06
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.05)		(.04)		(.05)
Income: Upper tertile		-.13***		-.14***		-.04		-.33***		-.08		.03
		(.02)		(.02)		(.10)		(.08)		(.06)		(.06)
Income: Refusal/DK		-.05**		-.04*		.05		.03		.03		-.00
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.04)		(.05)
Employ. status: Student		-.13***		-.00		-.01		.15		.28***		.02
		(.03)		(.03)		(.10)		(.10)		(.08)		(.08)
Employ. status: Retired		.07**		.07***		.05		.07		.03		.15*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.07)		(.06)		(.06)
Employ. status: Unemp.		-.01		.03		.28*		.19		.34***		.16
		(.04)		(.03)		(.13)		(.10)		(.09)		(.10)
Employ. status: Other		.06**		.04*		.23**		.14		.12*		.08
		(.02)		(.02)		(.08)		(.07)		(.05)		(.07)
Religion: CoE/Anglican		.04**		.06***		-.10		.04		.15*		.12
		(.02)		(.01)		(.06)		(.05)		(.08)		(.08)
Religion: Catholic		-.04		-.07**		.00		.13		-.10		-.08
		(.02)		(.02)		(.10)		(.10)		(.05)		(.06)
Religion: Other Christ.		-.07**		-.14***		-.01		.02		-.06		.09
		(.03)		(.02)		(.09)		(.08)		(.04)		(.05)
Religion: Other		.00		-.00		-.04		-.06		-.04		-.04
		(.03)		(.02)		(.08)		(.08)		(.07)		(.07)
Occ. grade: A/B		-.16***		-.12***		-.22**		.01		-.07		-.26***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.07)		(.05)		(.05)
Occ. grade: C1		-.09***		-.07***		-.14*		-.07		-.08		-.18***
		(.02)		(.02)		(.06)		(.06)		(.05)		(.05)
Occ. grade: C2		.01		.02		-.08		-.02		.04		-.12*
		(.02)		(.02)		(.07)		(.06)		(.05)		(.05)
Authoritarian values		.38***		.38***		.39***		.42***		.37***		.30***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.03)		(.02)		(.02)		(.02)
Economic values		.13***		.23***		.10**		.25***		.10***		.15***
		(.01)		(.01)		(.03)		(.03)		(.02)		(.02)
Resid. std. dev.	1.00	.90	.96	.81	.85	.75	.87	.73	.83	.75	.85	.76
Adj. R2	.00	.20	.01	.29	-.00	.20	.00	.30	.00	.19	.01	.21
N	23698	19314	26810	21676	1950	1612	1965	1617	3271	2711	3170	2517

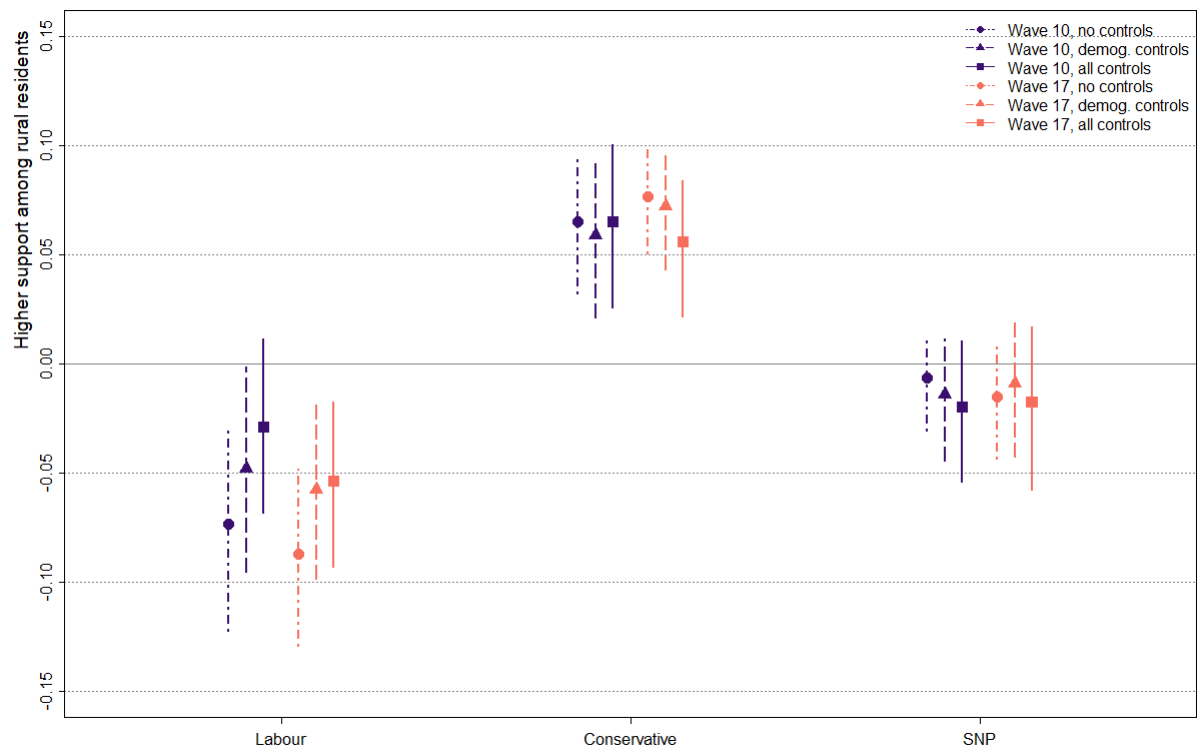
***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05, analyses are weighted

Figure 1: Electoral preferences, England



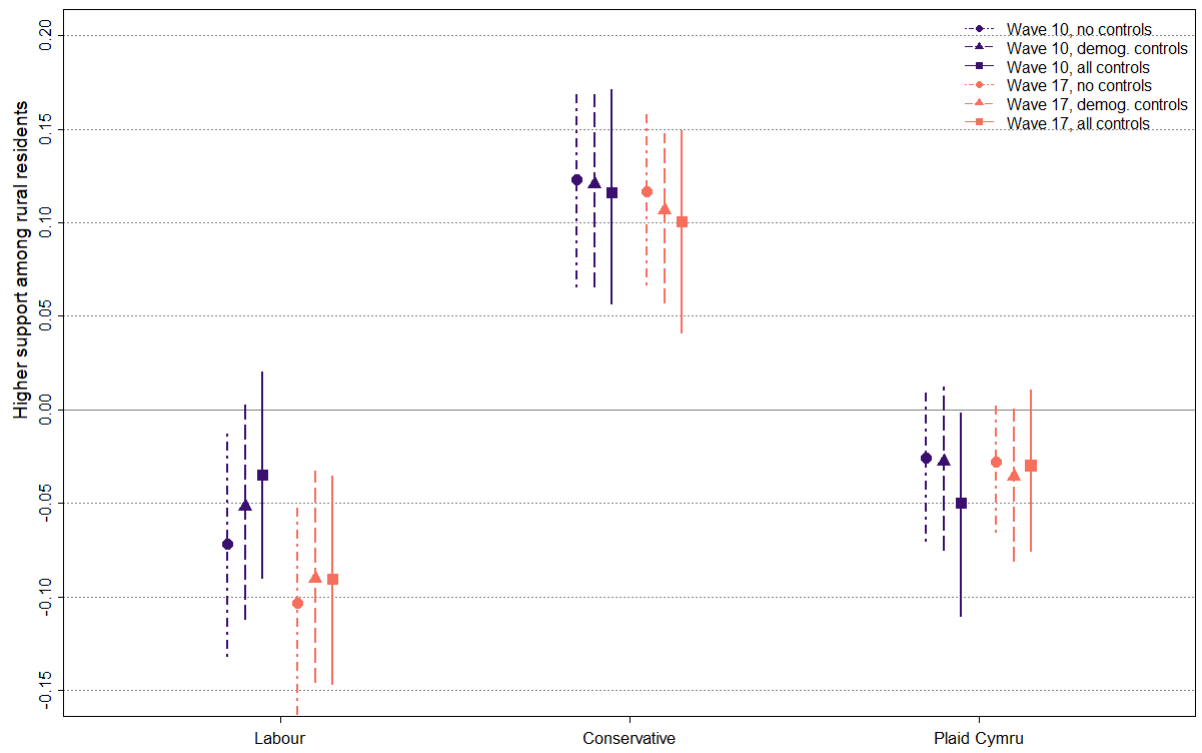
Note. The figure shows the differences between rural and urban residents in predicted probabilities of supporting each of three parties. Positive probabilities indicate a rural advantage for that party; negative probabilities, an urban advantage. Predicted probabilities based on a multinomial logit model; full results from the models with full controls are reported in the supplementary materials

Figure 2: Electoral preferences, Scotland



Note. See note for Figure 1

Figure 3: Electoral preferences, Wales



Note. See note for Figure 1