

Values And Voter Survey 2005

Cultural Dynamics Strategy And Marketing Ltd And Campaign Strategy Ltd

Part 2: How The Political Parties Map Across Values

This section begins our report on a February 2005 survey of 1010 nationally representative adults, designed to understand the values of people in relation to their identification with current political parties. The CATI survey was carried out by BMRB in late February with 1010 adults randomly selected and weighted to UK demographics for age, sex, socioeconomic group and region.

In the previous section we have introduced the concept of Motivational Groups as a way of understanding values systems. We also discussed how Values Modes help us understand the values of individuals, how societies as a whole change, and the way they are likely to change in the future.

In our survey we have not asked about voting intention but political identification. The question posed was:

“Which political party do you identify with most strongly?”

Identification is a deeper thing than the behaviour of voting. People will often say that really I feel I’m a ... (e.g. Tory) ... but this time I think I might vote Labour or LibDem ... or not vote at all. (In fact our surveys suggest people normally do vote, if they vote, according to which party’s values they most identify with).

The Nature Of Identity

For the majority of people the changes between Values Modes occur without them being understood. Instead our language leads us to assume we are “just growing up”. Or we may think, and say, “The conditions of my life have changed, I’m richer (or poorer)” or “I’ve got kids now – it’s time to change”.

When this happens it is likely that we have satisfied a whole series of needs up to this point, have changed Motivational Groups at least once and changed our Values Mode several times - in some cases many times.

These movements can be confusing to the individuals involved and those around them. It can seem that their “identity” – who they think they are, and who others think they are – is constantly shifting and difficult to pin down.

One of the easiest ways of agreeing identity, between the self and others, is to use a range of markers that are recognized by both sides. These markers seem “common-sense” and in fact form the basis of most communications. A few of these common sense factors are:

- Age
- Sex
- Income Level
- Being from London (or the North or any region)
- Education level
- Colour of skin
- Religion

These are the types of indicators we use to create our own identity and which others use to assign an identity to us.

We can see immediately that the Values Modes will cut right across these traditional ways of thinking and help us think more clearly about the common-sense indicators. For example we can now understand why all 25 year olds are not the same: they are in different Values Modes. A 25 year old Now Person, out partying and working to advance in his fifth job since leaving school (which he wants to change to be able to afford a faster car next year), is very different from the Certainty First kid he sat next to in school who has been working in the same job since he left school and has saved his relatively low – but steady - income and is now looking to put a sizable deposit down on a house for him and his steady girlfriend.

This insight applies to all socially accepted indicators.

Our research over the years has revealed that the single strongest indicator of self-identity is “being a parent”.

We measure over 30 different forms of self identity and find that factors like income level and religion are in constant decline while indicators like “my values and principles” (second highest) and “my emotions and feelings” (third highest) are increasing.

So where does “my political convictions” fall in this spectrum of choices?

Top three identity indicators

- 42% Being a Parent
- 25% My values and principles
- 19% My emotions and feeling

Bottom three identity indicators

- <3% Being European
- <3% My social class
- <3% My political convictions

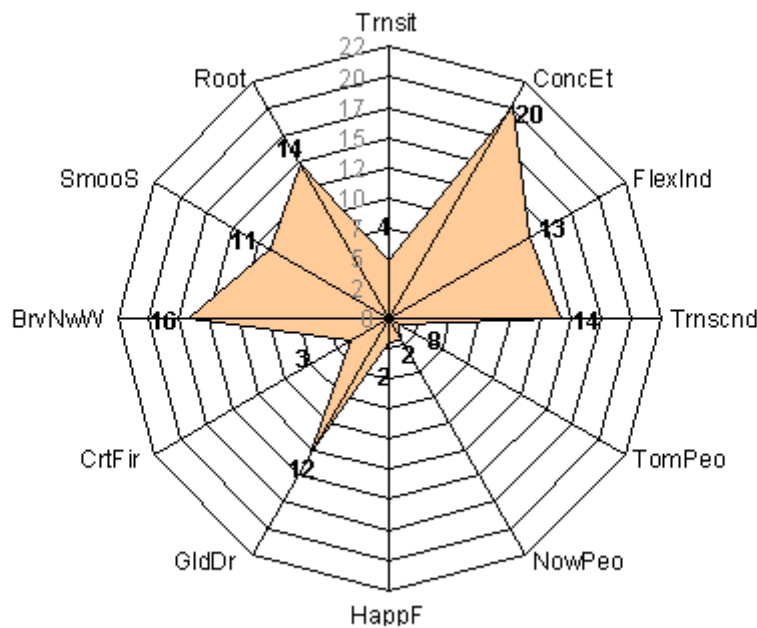
Out of 30 choices, “my political convictions” ranks 30th. Dead last. Only 2.5% of the population choose this indicator as being important to their identity.

What this is telling us is that “politics as usual” is not a significant factor in people’s lives today.

Inside this bald statement, however, we get some real differences among those who *do* feel their political convictions are an important component of their identity. It is the nature, or more truthfully the Values Modes, of these people that is keeping politics alive and kicking to them, while it simply annoys most other people

The following is a breakdown of the Values Modes of the people who claimed that politics *was* one of the three most important parts of their identity.

The numbers indicate the index number. The best way of interpreting the strength of a Values Modes orientation towards a political party is to use an index system that measures the number of people within a Values Mode who have their political convictions as one of the three most important parts of their identity, divided against the numbers of people in that Values Mode that have been measured in the general population.



It is immediately obvious that two Motivational Groups are more attuned to “politics as usual”. The two most moralistic (Brave New World) and ethical (Concerned Ethicals) Values Modes lead the way.

The Concerned Ethicals and the Brave New World Values Modes are in many ways mirror images of each other, but in different Motivational Groups. They both have strong judgemental views on how society should operate – they like rules. In extended studies we have found these two Modes to be representative of the older way of viewing politics, with the Brave New World representing the more authoritarian “right-wing” style of politics and the Concerned Ethicals representing more of the traditional libertarian “left –wing” style.

This is only a small part of the population. What about the rest?

Which Party do you most identify with?

The 2005 survey measured the strength of each mainstream party in terms of its total numbers of these core 'voters' and, more importantly, the nature of that support in terms of the values of the supporters.

The research shows that Labour has the largest affiliation base - those most likely to identify with the party of choice - of around 29% of the adult population.

The Conservative party has the second highest affiliation base, 20%, which is about 45% less than Labour.

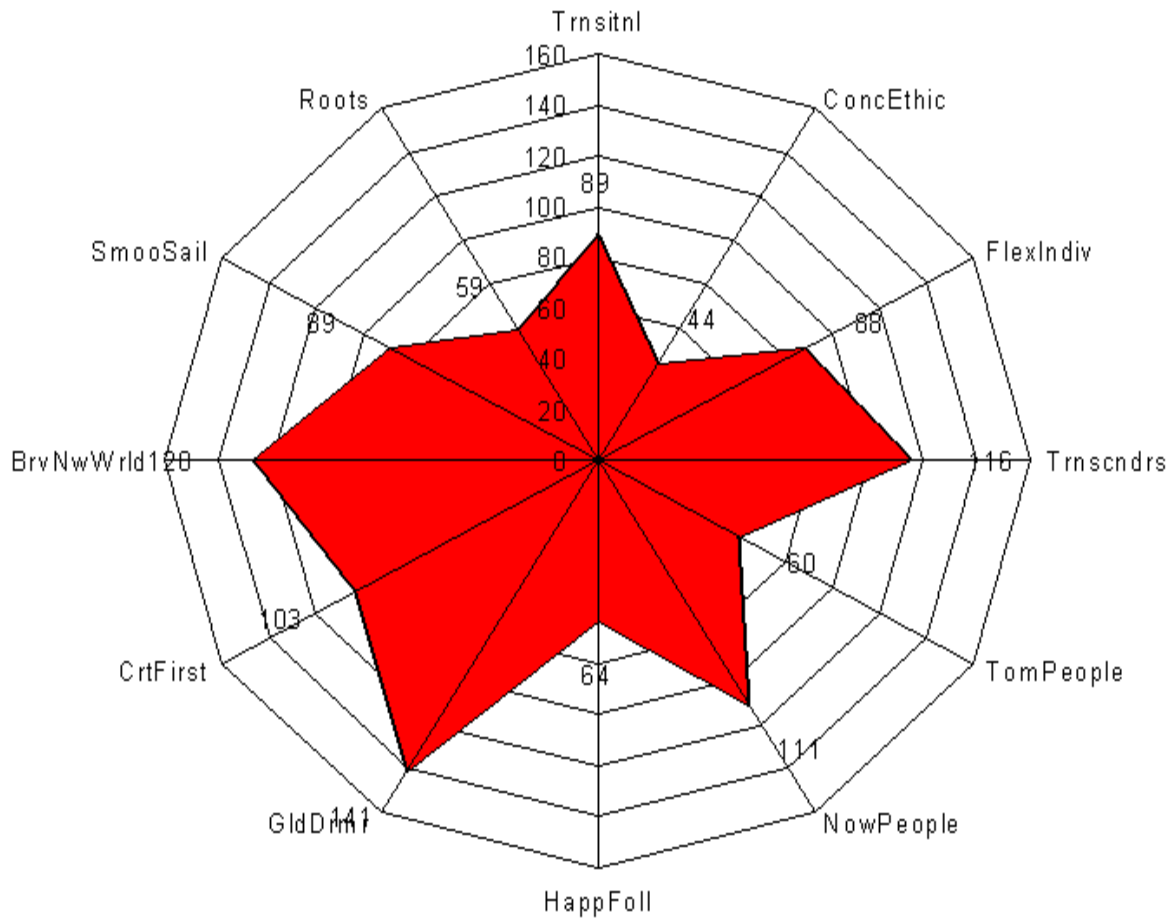
The Liberal Democrats have the third highest affiliation base 13.5% - less than half the size of the Labour core.

The strength of a Values Modes orientation towards a political party is assessed using an index system that measures the number of people who support the Party against the number that has been measured in the general population.

For example the Concerned Ethicals are only 2.1% percent of the people who identify with Labour but are 4.8% of the national population. When these two figures are indexed (44) it can immediately be seen that Concerned Ethicals are under-represented in the numbers feeling an affinity with Labour.

If Labour wanted to increase its vote among these people, it would need to understand the values and life orientations of this Values Mode develop policies to attract them and then communicate those policies in ways that would be heard and seen by them.

Values Modes Who Identify With The Labour Party 29%



The Labour Party is starting with an Affinity Base about 50% larger than the Conservatives and more than double the base of people who identify with the LibDems. The Labour Party has a profile that suggests it has a much wider base of appeal to the British population than any of its competitors.

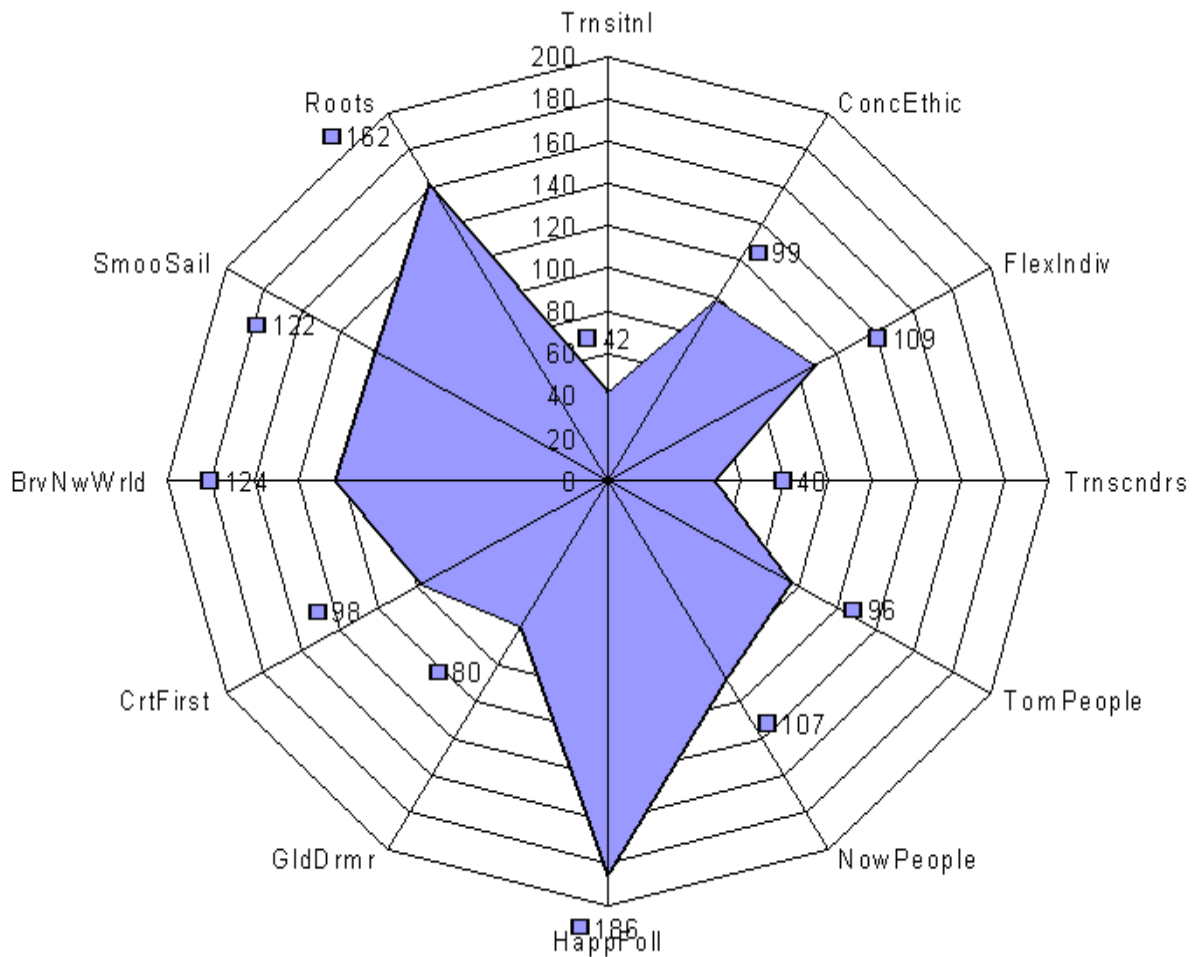
It has above average indices in each of the three Main Motivational Groups: 116 Transcender (Pioneer), 141 Golden Dreamer (Prospector), 128 Brave New World (Settler). The core of the Labour support is truly reflective of the Labour Party in 2005, a mixture of New Labour and old Labour.

Its votes are likely to come from a group of people holding values based around two dynamics: getting ahead (New Labour) and holding onto what they have (old Labour). Gordon Brown has taken care of this constituency very well over the last eight years and has retained their support during that time. Tony Blair, on the other hand, has created situations that have caused him to lose support with the most ethical of the Values Modes (the Concerned Ethicals) and with the Values Modes most likely to dislike controversy (Tomorrow People, Happy Followers and the Smooth Sailing).

The potential “banana skin” for the Party is that the Values Modes most important to them (the Golden Dreamers, Brave New World and the Now People) are the most likely to hold off making a decision until the day of the election and are easily swayed by perceptions of success and failure. They are more media sensitive than most other Values Modes and will be quite likely to wait for the “best choice” to be presented to them, just as they do with any other decision.

The other two large Parties must find a way to make in-roads into this value set if they are to do well enough to change the Government.

Values Modes Who Identify With the Conservative Party 20%



The Conservative Party supporters have a very different profile and therefore the Party has a very a different set of needs to satisfy to ensure their supporters turn out on election day. They are very over represented in three of the most Settler Values

Modes: Roots (indexed at 162), Brave New World (124) and Smooth Sailing (122). This defines their 'core values'.

The highest indexed Values Mode, the Happy Followers, introduce a slightly different dynamic but do not significantly alter the basic thrust of the Conservative profile. The Happy Followers really are natural followers; they will find the safest way to keep on the road to their dreams. They will follow the naturally cautious Settlers if that is the safest way to their dreams, or they will follow the Now People if that will get them there. These are the supporters who will be most affected by the internal fighting among the Parliamentary Party; they don't like confrontation.

Significantly the Happy Followers may just be the most likely to not vote for the Party they most identify with, if they perceive that it is likely to let them down by not helping them achieve their dreams, usually through "ambitious programmes of change". The Happy Followers are not revolutionaries.

Conservative supporters are more likely to be focused on traditional values than the supporters of any other party. They will oppose most changes in culture: from the EU to foxhunting to immigration. This is a values orientation, not an issues orientation. They often feel that "forces" in society are eroding traditional values and they tend to feel they are slowly but surely losing their Britishness, or, more specifically, their Englishness.

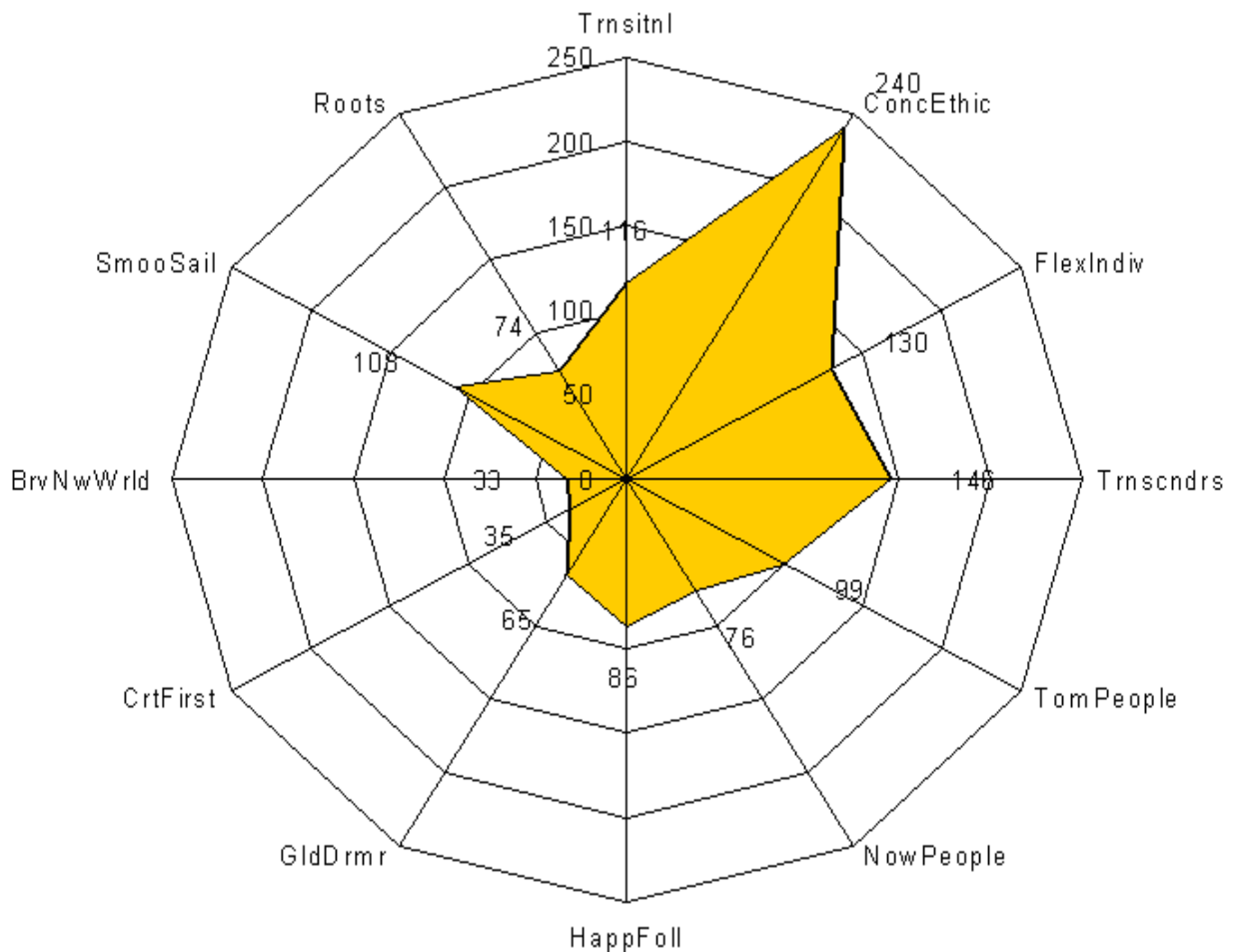
Another two dynamics are at work in this profile. These are causing a stress within the Tory supporter base, which is reflected in the policies of the Party as they attempt to get their vote out on Election Day.

The first dynamic is based around the Pioneer Group Values Modes, The Concerned Ethical and the Flexible Individualists. This is the libertarian wing of the party, wanting freedom from all external interference in their lives; wanting less rather than more government.

The second dynamic is centred on the Prospector Group, the Values Modes, the Now People and the Happy Followers. This is the 'Middle England' of 2005. These Values Modes are key to any political party that wants to control Parliament in the coming years. These people are essentially non-political (see previous map) and more concerned with getting the best out of the lives they are leading, with the least amount of effort possible, than they are with politics.

The Conservative Party needs to attract more people with this value set if they are ever to regain the power they had in the 20th Century. The core issue for the Conservative Party is how to "transform British politics". They need to increase their appeal to the Prospectors in a manner that leads to the Now People and Tomorrow People (the role models for other Prospector Groups) to identify with the Party. The immediate problem for the Conservatives is that the more they politicize everyday issues, the more they alienate significant proportions of this highly important Group.

Values Modes Who Identify With The Liberal Democrats 14%



The Liberal Democrats have the most coherently defined of all the Party profiles. It has a very simple and powerful Values Modes dynamic. The two most important Pioneer Groups - the Concerned Ethicals and the Transcenders - are both over indexed at very significant levels.

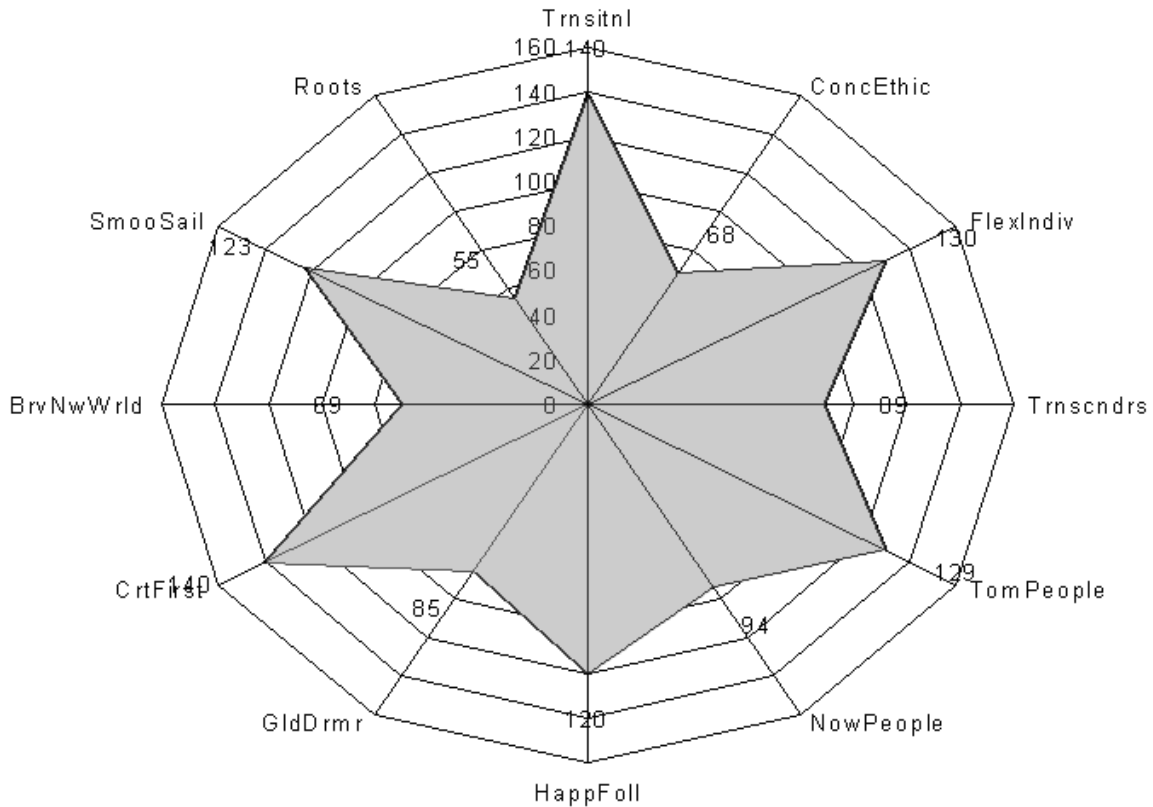
The LibDems attract the Values Modes that could be called the conscience of the country. The Party's stance over the Iraq has solidified its appeal to its core supporters. The LibDems do not have to try to cut taxes to retain their supporters, as the other two main Parties have to do.

The challenge for the LibDems is to extend their appeal to other Motivational Groups, especially the Prospectors. The large Now People Values Mode must be addressed if they are to extend their appeal and hope to maintain their electoral momentum over the next 5 years.

Any extension of their appeal will force the LibDems to examine their core values and methods of communication. Their challenge is to retain the solid core of people who identify with them while attracting other people who may have a quite different set of values.

Last, and most certainly not least, we have the people who don't identify with any of the main parties in this election.

Those who don't identify with any political party



This chart immediately shows the nature of the problem facing all the main political parties: they are not connecting with the people who are the most likely to be feeling OK about their lives. (This is discussed in more detail in Part 3.)

And it's not through lack of trying. Not just the Big Three but all the parties (including the Scottish Nationalists, Plaid Cymru, the Greens, UKIP) have made consistent efforts to get their particular message across. And still this group of people have found those widely differing messages to have no connection with the core of their life – no resonance with their values.

The challenge for all parties is that these people are essentially non-political - more concerned with getting the most out of the lives they are leading with the least amount of effort possible than engaging with a system they find at best irrelevant and, at worst, intrusive. The most disengaged groups are those from the 'relaxed' Value Modes (see Part 1), and these are also likely to be least bothered about it.