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***Parties and voters in Iceland.***

***A study of the 1983 and 1987 Althingi elections.***

A thesis submitted for a final examination  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Government  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
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*To Hjördís*



### Abstract

This thesis analyses the 1983 and 1987 Althingi elections in Iceland, a micro state with rich literary and historical traditions, including the Althingi which Icelanders claim to be the oldest parliament in the world. Three theoretical approaches - a party identification approach, a rational approach, and a social-structural approach - are used. A special effort is made to compare the Icelandic findings to voting behaviour in Norway and Sweden.

Direct party switching (23% in 1983 and 36% in 1987) is shown to be the main reason for the major changes in election results, while the impact of new voters and mobilization and demobilization of voters was small.

As in many European countries, voters often change party identification when they switch parties, thus limiting the usefulness of the party identification model. Nevertheless party identification, while weaker than in Scandinavia, serves to tie parties to voters, along with party membership, participation in primaries, and exposure to the press.

In accord with a rational approach, Icelandic voters have a cognitive map of the party system along left-right lines, as is the case in Scandinavia. Most voters can rank the parties on a left-right continuum, which is related to party choice, like and dislike for the parties and party leaders, and voters' stance on issues. A left-right issue factor is by far most strongly related to party choice, as in Scandinavia, while an urban-rural factor on which the ranking of parties is different, reduces the correspondence between the left-right spectrum and vote switching. While issue voting in Iceland is high, it is lower than in Norway and Sweden. The thesis argues, that the main reason is that Icelandic parties offer less clear and stable alternatives in elections.

Social-structural variables are generally weakly related to party choice. Class voting has decreased dramatically, and is much weaker than in Norway and Sweden.

The thesis is based on the first election surveys in Iceland, conducted by the author. Three data sets are used, based on random samples from the National Register: from 1983 (N=1003), from 1987 (N=1745), and a 1983-1987 panel (N=678).

### Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long time in the making. During my stay as a research student at the L.S.E. 1979-81 I began preparing the Icelandic Election Study project. The design of the election studies took place at the University of Iceland, where I have been lecturing since 1980. My former student and present colleague, Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson, was my research assistant in 1982-83 and made an invaluable contribution to the original survey design as well as the design of the 1987 study. His encouragement and constructive criticism have been of great help throughout the entire process. The election studies were carried out after the Althingi elections of 1983 and 1987. Much of the writing of the thesis itself took place during the summers and autumns of 1989 and 1990, when I had the good fortune to stay as a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and in the eastern town of Neskaupstadur, Iceland, during the summer of 1992. The final effort was made in the autumn of 1993, when as a visiting academic I enjoyed the superb hospitality of the Department of Government at the L.S.E.

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### Abbreviations of names of political parties

CiP	Citizen's Party (Borgaraflokkurinn)
CP	Communist Party (Kommunistaflokkurinn)
FP	Farmers' Party (Baendaflokkurinn)
HP	Humanist Party (Flokkur mannsins)
IP	Independence Party (Sjalfstaedisflokkurinn)
NP	National Party (Thjodarflokkurinn)
NPP	National Preservation Party (Thjodvarnarflokkurinn)
PA	People's Alliance (Althydubandalagid)
PP	Progressive Party (Framsoknarflokkurinn)
SDA	Social Democratic Alliance (Bandalag jafnadamanna)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Althyduflokkurinn)
ULL	Union of Liberals and Leftists (Samtok frjalslyndra og vinstri manna)
URE	Union of Regional Equality (Samtok um jafnretti og felagshyggju)
USP	United Socialist Party (Sameiningarflokkur althydu - Sosialistaflokkurinn)
WA	Women's Alliance (Kvennalistinn)

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

This thesis is a study of the elections to the Icelandic parliament, the Althingi, in 1983 and 1987. Iceland is really a micro-state with some 250,000 inhabitants, who in this century have developed a highly modern and affluent society, which in many ways resembles the other Nordic countries. The country was settled in the ninth and tenth centuries, mainly from Norway. The settlers founded a commonwealth without a king or executive power. Its central institution, founded in 930 AD, was the Althingi, which had legislative and judicial powers. In 1262 the country came under the Norwegian king, and later became a Danish dependency. The Althingi gradually lost its legislative power and was abolished in 1800, after having functioned mainly as a judicial body for centuries. In 1845 the Althingi was reestablished as an elected, consultative assembly to the Danish king. The 1874 constitution granted the Althingi legislative and financial powers, although the king retained an effective veto.

Iceland has been a parliamentary democracy since 1904, when the country obtained home rule and an Icelandic minister, responsible to the Althingi. In 1918 Iceland became a sovereign state, but remained in a union with Denmark until 1944, when the country became a republic and an elected president, largely without political powers, took over from the Danish king as the head of state.<sup>1)</sup>

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1) See O.Th. Hardarson (1987), p. 468.

### ***1.1 The outlines of the Icelandic party system***

In the 19th and early 20th century the question of Iceland's relationship with Denmark dominated Icelandic politics. The first political parties, which emerged at the turn of the century, were cadre parties, formed by rival political leaders and groups competing for the new ministerial power. The ideological differences between these parties, which frequently split and were restructured, concerned mainly the constitutional relationship with Denmark.<sup>2)</sup>

Between 1916 and 1930 a complete transformation of the party system took place, the independence question having largely been resolved in 1918. A system of four parties, based primarily on socio-economic cleavages emerged, and would dominate Icelandic politics for decades.

Two class-based parties emerged in 1916, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the Progressive Party (PP), claiming to represent the interests of workers and farmers respectively. The opponents of those two parties on the right joined forces in 1929, when the Independence Party (IP) was formed by a merger of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. In 1930, the communists split from the SDP and formed a separate Communist Party (CP), later to be succeeded by the United Socialist Party (USP), and then the People's Alliance (PA).

The SDP was founded as the political arm of the labour movement, and remained organizationally linked to the Icelandic Federation of Labour until 1942. The party represented reformist working-class politics, and grew

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2) See G.H. Kristinsson (1991), pp. 56-78.

steadily in strength during its first two decades, polling 21.7% in 1934 (see Table 1.1). After 1942, however, the party was the smallest of the four parties until 1987, polling on average around 15% of the vote. This stands in stark contrast to the development of the Social Democratic parties in Scandinavia, where they became the largest parties in their countries, and natural parties of government.

The party nevertheless frequently participated in government coalitions, the PP-SDP coalition 1934-38, the PP-IP-SDP coalition 1939-42, the IP-USP-SDP coalition 1944-47, the SDP-IP-PP coalition 1947-49, the PP-SDP-PA coalition 1956-58, and the IP-SDP coalition 1959-71, which was preceded by an SDP minority government 1958-59. In the period 1971-87, on the other hand, the party only took part in the PP-SDP-PA coalition 1978-79, and formed a minority government in 1978-79. The SDP radically changed its economic policies after the breakdown of the PP-SDP-PA coalition in 1958, rejecting the strongly state interventionist policies that had dominated Icelandic politics from the 1930s in favour of a more market-oriented approach and liberalization of foreign trade.<sup>3)</sup>

Since the formation of the four-party system the PP has been the second strongest party in electoral terms, polling around 25% on average in the 1931-1987 period. The party has always been overrepresented in the Althingi in relation to its vote share. This was especially evident in the 1930s due to an electoral system which favoured the rural areas.<sup>4)</sup>

3) See G.H. Kristinsson (1993), pp. 345-346.

4) The electoral system was based on the "first past the post" system 1845-1916. In 1916-1959, the electoral system



While the party has always been strongest among farmers and in the rural areas, it became quite successful in towns, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s. The party held the premiership continuously from 1927-42, first in a PP government, then in coalitions with the SDP and/or the IP. It took part in coalitions with the SDP and IP 1947-49, with the IP 1950-56, and with the SDP and the PA 1956-58. After having been in opposition for the next 13 years, the party was then involved in all government coalitions from 1971-87, with the exception of the short-lived SDP minority government of 1979-80.

Since its foundation the IP has always polled most votes in national elections, receiving on average around 39% in the 1931-1987 period. The party has combined elements of liberalism and conservatism, and emphasized nationalism and opposition to class conflict. In the 1930s, when the party was mostly in opposition, party policy was more strongly directed toward economic liberalism and private initiative, while after the war the IP increasingly accepted the welfare state and participated in coalition governments whose economic policies were strongly in favour of state intervention and protectionism. The party has always had a major working class following, in stark contrast to conservative and liberal parties in Scandinavia. While the party spent most of its first 15 years in opposition, only taking part in government coalitions 1932-34 and 1939-42, in 1944 the IP became natural party of government, being

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was a mixture of "first past the post" and proportional representation. In 1959, a system of eight multi-member constituencies with proportional representation was introduced.

continuously in government from 1944-1971, with the exception of the years 1956-59.

After 1971 the party experienced increasing difficulties: a serious leadership struggle developed within the party, its following at the polls dropped, and divisions increased between those who favoured liberal economic policies and those who wanted to retain a more state regulated economy, especially in agriculture and fisheries. The party spent half of the 1971-87 period in opposition, taking part in coalitions with the PP in 1974-78, and in 1983-87.

The People's Alliance (PA) is descended from the Communist Party (CP), and other breakaway groups from the SDP. The CP, which was an orthodox communist party and a member of the Comintern, met with moderate electoral success in the 1930s, winning three seats in the Althingi in 1937, when the party polled 8.5% of the vote. After the SDP refused to join the CP to form a Popular Front, the left wing of the SDP broke off in 1938 to join the CP in the United Socialist Party (USP), which in its first election in 1942, polled 16.1% of the vote, more than the SDP. In 1956 the SDP split again, and its left wing formed an electoral alliance with the USP, the People's Alliance, which became a formal political party in 1968 when the USP was dissolved. While the USP was not a Comintern member, the party was clearly pro-Soviet and most of its leaders had been prominent members of the CP. The USP took part in a coalition with the IP and the SDP in 1944-47, but that coalition broke down due to disagreements over foreign policy. The USP, and later the PA, strongly opposed the

American base in Keflavik and Iceland's membership of NATO, mainly on a nationalistic platform.

Since 1947, the PA and the IP have not joined forces in a government coalition, due mainly to disagreements on foreign policy.<sup>5)</sup> The PA took part in the PP-SDP-PA coalition 1956-58. The party increasingly moved in a reformist direction, and became a more acceptable coalition partner in the 1970s, taking part in coalitions 1971-74, 1978-79 and 1980-83. The party has nevertheless never held the vital portfolios of Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs or Justice, but was entrusted with the Finance Ministry for the first time in 1980.

The four-party system had its heyday from the early 1940s until the 1970s. The political system became highly elitist and the parties dominated most spheres of society. While the parties had all adopted a formal mass organization in the 1930s, they nevertheless remained in fact "network parties", based on personal ties,<sup>6)</sup> or "cadre parties", marked by strong clientelistic tendencies. They have been unprincipled on policy, and eager to take part in coalition governments, a necessary condition for success if the parties' aims are to distribute goods and favours, rather than pursue policy.<sup>7)</sup> The party leaders were influential in the strongly state-regulated economy and the state banks, and they had strong ties with interest organizations. The administrative

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5) Nevertheless, in 1980 Gunnar Thoroddsen, deputy leader of the IP, supported by three other IP MPs, formed a coalition government with the PA and the PP, while the IP parliamentary party remained in opposition. Since 1978, the PA has not made the removal of the US base in Keflavik a precondition for government participation, thus making a IP-PA government coalition a real possibility.

6) O.R. Grimsson (1978b).

7) See G.H. Kristinsson (1993), pp. 337-346.

bureaucracy was weak and dominated by ministers.<sup>8)</sup> The press "did not constitute an independent sphere of influence; it was simply yet another arm of the party leadership".<sup>9)</sup> The party leaders also dominated the cultural sector.

The educational system was almost entirely state controlled. As in other spheres, appointments were in the hands of those party leaders who formed the existing government, especially those who controlled the Ministry of Education. The appointments of teachers and headmasters of primary schools and secondary schools were often influenced by party considerations. Some of the largest publishing enterprises were established to serve party political interests; a few of the others were controlled by party leaders, e.g. the very active state-owned publishing house.<sup>10)</sup>

On the whole then, the parties were strong in the sense that party leaders were powerful, but they remained organizationally weak and weak on policy making.

Around 1970, the established power system started to show increasing signs of disintegration. The 1959-71 IP-SDP government had introduced some liberal economic policies, especially regarding trade, and clientelism in the economy became weaker as state regulation decreased. Increasing professionalization served to depoliticize the civil service and interest organizations became more independent of the political parties. Similarly, the parties' near-monopoly of political communication disappeared.<sup>11)</sup> Within the parties, the influence of the party leadership on nominations decreased, as primaries were increasingly used to select candidates for party lists.<sup>12)</sup>

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8) See *ibid.*, pp. 346-353.

9) O.R. Grimsson (1976), p. 20.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

11) See O.Th. Hardarson and G.H. Kristinsson (1987), p. 220.

12) S. Kristjansson and O.Th. Hardarson (1982), pp. 9-10.

The increasing pluralism of the 1970s coincided with the old parties' loosening grip on the electoral market. Tables I.1.1 and I.1.2 show that during the first formative years of the party system after the foundation of the modern parties, there had been considerable fluctuation in the parties' fortunes at elections, as indicated by the fact that the victorious parties' net gains<sup>13)</sup> in elections were usually around 10%. In 1931-37, a fifth party, the Farmers' Party, twice obtained representation in the Althingi with three MPs in 1934 and two in 1937.

The 1942-1967 period was characterized by remarkable electoral stability. Challenges to the four parties were infrequent and unsuccessful, except for the National Preservation Party which had two MPs elected in 1953. Net gains for the victorious parties in elections in this period were usually 2-6%. The standard deviations from the parties' mean results were only 1.5-2.3% (see Table I.1.2). While this does not necessarily indicate that voters did not switch parties,<sup>14)</sup> various indirect evidence suggests that voters were in fact extremely loyal to their parties during this period.<sup>15)</sup> It is at least evident, that the parties' risk on the electoral market was minimal.

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13) Net gains in an election are simply obtained by adding the percentage point changes for all parties gaining votes. This is a common indicator on net volatility, sometimes called the "Pedersen Index". See I. Crewe and D. Denver (eds.), (1985), p. 9.

14) This is further discussed in Chapter II. Crewe (in I. Crewe and D. Denver (eds.) (1985, p. 10)) points out, that a small, even zero, net volatility could be the result of considerable, but self-cancelling, change in the electorate, while in practice roughly parallel movement in both net volatility and overall party switching is the usual pattern.

15) See O.Th. Hardarson (1981).

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**Table I.1.1. Results of Althingi Elections 1916-1987.**  
**Percentages. Net gains.**

<i>Year</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Net gains</i>
1916		12.9	6.8		80.3	100	
1919		13.3	6.8		79.9	100	
1923	(53.6)	26.5	16.2		3.7	100	
1927	(42.5)	29.8	19.1		8.6	100	(12.0)
1931	43.8	35.9	16.1	3.0	1.2	100	(10.4)
1933	48.0	23.9	19.2	7.5	1.4	100	12.0
1934	42.3	21.9	21.7	6.0	8.1	100	9.6
1937	41.3	24.9	19.0	8.5	6.3	100	5.5
1942a	39.5	27.6	15.4	16.2	1.3	100	11.7
1942b	38.5	26.6	14.2	18.5	2.2	100	3.4
1946	39.4	23.1	17.8	19.5	0.2	100	5.7
1949	39.5	24.5	16.5	19.5	-	100	1.5
1953	37.1	21.9	15.6	16.1	9.3	100	9.3
1956	42.4	(15.6)	(18.3)	19.2	4.5	100	(11.1)
1959a	42.5	27.2	12.5	15.3	2.5	100	(11.7)
1959b	39.7	25.7	15.2	16.0	3.4	100	4.3
1963	41.4	28.2	14.2	16.0	0.2	100	4.4
1967	37.5	28.1	15.7	17.6	1.1	100	4.2
1971	36.2	25.3	10.5	17.1	10.9	100	10.9
1974	42.7	24.9	9.1	18.3	5.0	100	8.1
1978	32.7	16.9	22.0	22.9	5.5	100	19.4
1979	35.4	24.9	17.5	19.7	2.5	100	13.0
1983	38.7	19.0	11.7	17.3	13.8	100	16.6
1987	27.2	18.9	15.2	13.4	25.3	100	23.1

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 Due to an electoral alliance between the PP and the SDP in 1956, the figures do not show the "real" strength of the parties that year. As a result of this alliance the figures for net volatility in 1956 and 1959a are inflated. The IP figures in 1923 and 1927 are in fact for the Citizens' Party and the Conservative Party respectively. The PA figures 1931-37 are for the Communist Party, and the 1942-53 figures are for the United Socialist Party.  
 Net gain is calculated by adding gains (in percentages) for all parties (including minor parties separately) in each election.  
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**Table I.1.2. Mean support for the four old parties in Althingi elections during selected periods 1931-1987. Percentages.**

	Mean support	Standard deviation	Lowest support	Highest support
<b>Formation period</b> (1931-37, 4 elections)				
IP	43.9	3.0	41.3	48.0
PP	26.7	6.3	21.7	35.9
SDP	19.0	2.3	16.1	21.7
Communist Party	6.3	2.4	3.0	8.5
<b>Stability</b> (1942-67, 9-10 elections)				
IP	39.8	1.9	37.1	42.5
PP	25.9	2.3	21.9	28.2
SDP	15.2	1.5	12.5	17.8
USP/PA	17.4	1.7	15.3	19.5
<b>Volatility</b> (1971-87, 6 elections)				
IP	35.5	5.3	27.2	42.7
PP	21.7	3.8	16.9	25.3
SDP	14.3	4.9	9.1	22.0
PA	18.1	3.1	13.4	22.9
<b>Post-war period</b> (1946-87, 13-14 elections)				
IP	38.0	4.3	27.2	42.7
PP	23.7	3.6	16.9	28.2
SDP	14.9	3.4	9.1	22.0
USP/PA	17.7	2.4	13.4	22.9
<b>Total period</b> (1931-87, (19-20 elections)				
IP	39.3	4.4	27.2	43.8
PP	24.7	4.2	16.9	35.9
SDP	15.7	3.4	9.1	22.0
CP/USP/PA	15.4	5.2	3.0	22.9

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 The 1956 results for the PP and the SDP are omitted, due to the parties' electoral alliance that year. Thus the Ns for periods including the 1956 election are one lower for the PP and the SDP than for the IP and the PA.  
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The 1971-1987 period is very different. This is a period of great electoral volatility, both in comparison to the earlier period in Icelandic politics and to liberal democracies in general in the post-war period. Net gains in

elections are only once below the 10% mark, culminating in 19.4% in 1978, and 23.1% in 1987.<sup>16)</sup> There are great fluctuations in the electoral fortunes of the old parties - the SDP vote varies from 9-22%, the IP vote 27-43%, the PP vote 17-25%, and the PA vote 13-23%. The old parties' share of the electoral market decreases sharply, as many new parties put up candidates, some of them with some success. Five of these parties obtain parliamentary representation during the period, the Union of Liberals and Leftists in 1971 (5 MPs) and 1974 (2 MPs), the Social Democratic Alliance in 1983 (4 MPs), the Women's Alliance in 1983 (3 MPs) and in 1987 (6 MPs), the Citizen's Party in 1987 (7 MPs), and the Union for Regional Equality in 1987 (1 MP).

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16) An international comparison of net volatility, presented in I. Crewe and D. Denver (eds.) (1985), shows that net gains (or net volatility) in elections in 11 liberal democracies in the post-war period rarely reach the level of volatility in Iceland in 1971-87. In congressional elections in the USA 1948-82, net gains never exceed 8% (p. 29). In Canada in 1945-1980, net gains exceed 10% in 1949 (10.9%), in 1958 (14.7%), and in 1962 (16.7%) (p. 53). In Australia in 1946-83, net gains exceed 10% in 1946 (15.2%), and in 1949 (11.2%) (p. 77). In Great Britain in 1950-83, net gains exceed 10% in February 1974 (13.3%) and in 1983 (11.8%) (p. 102). In Ireland in 1948-82, net gains exceed 10% in 1948 (13.3%), in 1951 (14.1%), and in 1957 (11.1%) (p. 178). In West Germany in 1953-83, net gains exceed 10% in 1953 (22.9%), and in 1961 (12.1%) (p. 238). In Austria in 1949-83, net gains never exceed 6% (p. 269). In Italy in 1948-83, net gains exceed 10% in 1948 (21.7%), and in 1953 (13.2%) (p. 392). In Belgium in 1950-81, net gains exceed 10% in 1965 (15.2%), and in 1981 (12.5%) (p. 326). In the Netherlands in 1948-1982, net gains exceed 10% in 1967 (10.8%), 1971 (13.4%), in 1972 (12.2%), and in 1977 (12.7%) (p. 350). In Denmark in 1950-1984, net gains exceed 10% in 1950 (10.4%), 1960 (11.1%), 1968 (11.8%), 1973 (29.1%), 1975 (17.8%), 1977 (18.2%), 1979 (11.0%), 1981 (12.5%), and in 1984 (10.8%). Out of a total of 135 elections, net gains exceed 10% in 29 cases (21%). Net gains exceed 15% in only 8 out of the 135 elections (6%), while this is the case for three out of the six Icelandic elections in 1971-87. Only Denmark in the 1973-84 period shows a similar degree of net volatility, while net gains in the Netherlands in 1967-82 were also rather high.



Besides, a splintergroup from the IP in the South constituency had one MP elected in 1979.

Clearly, the four party system has been in a crisis for the last two decades. The old parties have lost much of the power they held in 1942-67. On the other hand, they remain organizationally weak, have increasingly suffered from internal disputes, and continue to have difficulties in forming consistent and comprehensive policy programmes.<sup>17)</sup>

## ***I.2. Theoretical background***

While an abundance of theories on voting behaviour have been put forward in the literature on electoral research in the last 50 years, three major approaches can be discerned - a social-structural or sociological approach, a psychological or party identification approach, and a rational or issue-oriented approach. The first two approaches were dominant in electoral research in the 1950s and in the 1960s, while the rational approach has become increasingly popular since the 1970s.

Ivor Crewe has summarized the main features of the social-structural paradigm:

It assumed that party systems and the voting alignments on which they were based were refractions of the country's social structure. Most electors voted not as the autonomous individuals beloved of liberal theorists but as members of a social group, or, more accurately, an organised community based on their class or religion but occasionally based on language, race, national origin or region. These communities supported an overlapping network of institutions, including but by no means confined to political parties, which inculcated loyalty to the community - and its party. Elections were an occasion on which political parties mobilised their pre-

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<sup>17)</sup> See S. Kristjansson (1993), pp. 381-398, and G.H. Kristinsson, H. Jonsson, and H.Th. Sveinsdottir (1991).

organised, deeply-rooted support; the vote was an opportunity to re-affirm one's communal loyalties. Social structures change but glacially; parties and their allied trade unions, churches and other associations have ample time to adapt to these gradual changes; hence it was hardly surprising that elections registered continuity rather than change in party systems and their mass base.<sup>18)</sup>

The psychological or party identification approach was first developed by the Michigan scholars in the 1950s, and introduced in the influential book *The American Voter* in 1960. The party identification model assumes

that most electors acquire an enduring allegiance (an "identification") to a major, established party; that this identification not only determines their vote but colours their general perception of the world of party politics; and that it is therefore self-reinforcing and self-strengthening over time. It persists long after the event or issue which originally provoked it has disappeared from the scene; indeed it tends to be bequeathed from one generation to the next. Thus party identification in the electorate gives the party system ballast, sustaining it against sudden gusts of public opinion or the storms of political crisis. Any one election will register a modest amount of change, perhaps enough to supplant the party in office, but the change reflects the strictly short-term forces released by the campaign. Over the long-term, party support reflects the distribution of party identification; single election results are short-lived and self-cancelling deviations from a stable "normal vote".<sup>19)</sup>

The basic assumption of the rational model is that "rational voting consists in supporting the party which is most likely to achieve the voter's political goals".<sup>20)</sup> While there remain differences within the rational approach on, for example, whether voters mainly make forward-looking judgements or retrospective evaluations of the existing

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18) I. Crewe in I. Crewe and D. Denver (eds.) (1985), p. 2.

19) *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

20) M. Harrop and W.L. Miller (1987), p. 145.

government's policies,<sup>21)</sup> an issue-oriented or ideological model of voting generally assumes that

the way people vote - and change their vote - can be explained in terms of the relationship between their own positions and the parties' (perceived) positions on major, divisive issues.<sup>22)</sup>

While considerable disagreement remains on the explanatory power of those three approaches to voting behaviour, it seems clear that all three have some validity. Their ability to explain voting also clearly varies a great deal between different political systems and at different periods of time. One of the major aims of this thesis is to explore the explanatory value of the three approaches to voting behaviour in the Icelandic setting in the 1980s.

We will examine the strength of party identification in the Icelandic electorate and its impact on voting behaviour, the extent to which Icelandic voters have a rational cognitive map of the party system, to what extent those perceptions and voters' stands on issues are related to electoral behaviour, and finally to what extent social-structural variables are related to voting.

Another aim of the thesis is to explore the reasons for the increased electoral volatility in Iceland since the 1970s in light of the three theoretical approaches. Two of the approaches, the social-structural approach and the party identification approach, would clearly predict relatively small volatility. If the vote is strongly influenced by social structures, which change slowly, or by party identification, which is transmitted from one generation to

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21) The latter approach is for example emphasized by V.O. Key (1966), and M. Fiorina (1981).

22) I. Crewe in I. Crewe and D. Denver (eds.) (1985), p. 134.

the next, we should in general expect small changes in election results. A rational model allows for much greater electoral change, even though a party system in which voters' preferences and parties' policies are relatively clear and stable could also show great electoral stability. A very high level of electoral volatility would on the other hand be expected in a period where increased issue voting was replacing a system of voter alignments in which party identification and/or social structures had been the major determinants of voting behaviour.

### ***1.3 The data***

This thesis is based on data from the first two Election Studies that were carried out in Iceland by the author immediately after the elections of 1983 and 1987. In 1983 a random sample of 1400 individuals (20 years and older on polling day) was selected from the National Register, on which the Electoral Register is based. From that total sample, 500 individuals were randomly selected among those living in the Reykjavik area for more extensive face-to-face interviews (202 variables), while the remainder of the sample was interviewed by telephone (87 variables) or, in a few cases, answered a post-questionnaire.<sup>23)</sup> Of the 1400 individuals originally selected, 132 were excluded from the sample (and no attempt made to interview them): 3 were deceased, 24 were foreign citizens, 25 were Icelanders living abroad, 30 were hospital patients, and 45 individuals

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23) Telephone ownership is almost universal in Iceland. The telephone interviews usually lasted around 20 minutes, while the face-to-face interviews lasted on average around an hour.

born in 1900 or before (aged over 83) were also excluded. Of those selected for face-to-face interviews 5 had moved outside the Reykjavik area. This left 1268 individuals in the net sample, thereof 445 in the sample for face-to-face interviews. Table I.3.1 shows the response rate in 1983 among those we tried to contact for interviews.

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**Table I.3.1. Response rate in the Icelandic Election Study of 1983.**

	<i>Face-to-face interviews</i>		<i>Telephone interviews</i>		<i>Total sample</i>	
Respondents	73.9%	(329)	81.9%	(674)	79.1%	(1003)
Refusals	20.9%	(93)	11.8%	(97)	15.0%	(190)
Not found	5.2%	(23)	6.2%	(51)	5.8%	(74)
Other	-	-	0.1%	(1)	0.1%	(1)
Net sample	100%	(445)	100%	(823)	100%	(1268)

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 The figures for telephone interviews include 77 individuals who were on an open-line telephone or whose telephone numbers we could not find, and were sent a mail questionnaire, 33 of which were returned.  
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The questionnaire for the face-to-face interviews in the Reykjavik area was much more extensive than for the telephone interviews. All questions included in the telephone interviews were also included in the face-to-face interviews, but a few had a different format (see Appendix A). The mail questionnaire was almost identical to the telephone questionnaires. In this thesis we do not use the face-to-face interviews subsample separately; those respondents are included in the total 1983 sample of 1003 respondents.

In 1987, we decided to try to re-interview the 1983 respondents, thus forming a panel. Of the 1003 respondents from 1983, 22 individuals were no longer on the National

Register. In addition, 43 individuals were living abroad or deceased, and 10 were hospital patients, leaving us with 928 individuals whom we tried to reach for the panel interviews. Table I.3.2 shows the response rate in the 1983-1987 panel.

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**Table I.3.2. Response rate in the 1983-87 panel. Telephone interviews.**

Respondents	73.6%	(683)
Refusals	15.4%	(143)
Not found	11.0%	(102)
Net sample	100%	(928)

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The 1987 answers of the panel respondents were connected to their 1983 answers. Due to interviewers' mistakes we were unable to connect the answers of 5 respondents. Our panel therefore consists of 678 individuals, who answered both in 1983 and 1987.

In the 1987 Election Study a new sample of 1500 was randomly selected from individuals who had reached the new voting age of 18, and were born 1907 or later. Of those selected 44 were foreign citizens, Icelanders living abroad, or deceased, and 25 were hospital patients. This gives us a net sample of 1431 individuals, whom we tried to contact for interviews. The response rate among the new 1987 sample is shown in Table I.3.3.

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**Table I.3.3. Response rate in new sample in 1987. Telephone interviews.**

Respondents	74.2%	(1062)
Refusals	14.2%	(203)
Not found	11.6%	(166)
Net sample	100%	(1431)

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The answers from the new sample in 1987 were combined with the 1987 answers from the panel respondents, thus giving us a total sample of 1745 respondents in 1987. As no new voters are included in the panel, and the 1987 new sample was selected at random, new voters are underrepresented in this total 1987 sample. We have therefore weighted the new voters from the new 1987 sample in the 1987 total sample; thus the N for the total sample in calculations in this thesis is 1845.

All interviews in 1987 were telephone interviews, conducted by the interviewers of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland.<sup>24)</sup>

When the distributions of gender, age, and region in the samples are compared to the actual distributions in the Icelandic populations, the deviations are small. The deviations in the reported party vote in the samples, as compared to the actual election results, are reported in Chapter II.

#### ***1.4 The structure of the thesis***

The major aim of the thesis is to examine to what extent our three theoretical approaches, the social-structural approach, the party identification approach, and the issue-oriented approach, can explain voting behaviour in 1983 and 1987, as well as the increasing electoral volatility since the 1970s. While the analysis focuses mainly on Icelandic voters, we also make comparisons with other countries, mainly to Scandinavia, especially Norway and Sweden, as the party systems in those countries are much more comparable to

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24) The telephone interviews lasted on average 23 minutes.

the Icelandic system than, for example, the British or the American one.

The first task of the thesis is to analyse what happened in the elections of 1983 and 1987. In Chapter II we briefly analyse the election campaigns. We examine the impact of new voters, of mobilization and demobilization of voters, and of direct party switching on the election results. The patterns of party change, as well as alternative parties considered by voters, are analysed: those patterns can be seen as indicators of how the party system is structured in the minds of the voters, what parties are close and what parties are far apart. The extent to which alternative parties are considered by the voters when making up their minds can also be seen as an indicator of the potential volatility of the electorate. Another such indicator is how long before the election the voters made up their minds.

In Chapter III we examine the impact of party identification on Icelandic voting. We analyse how strength of party identification is related to voting and electoral volatility, and discuss whether our data can discern between life-cycle effects, generational effects, and period effects on partisanship. We further examine if, as in many European countries, Icelandic voters tend to change their party identification when they change their vote.

In Chapter III we also examine other ties between the parties and voters: party membership, participation in primary elections, exposure to the (party) press, and finally the impact of voters' personal acquaintance with MPs.



Chapters IV and V test the applicability of the rational model to Icelandic voting behaviour. In Chapter IV we focus on the voters' cognitive map of the party system: we examine how voters rank themselves and the parties on a left-right continuum, and to what extent own left-right position corresponds to the perceived left-right position of the parties. In order to explore the impact of the voters' cognitive map, we also examine the relationship of the left-right dimension to like and dislike of parties and party leaders, to voters' issue positions, and to vote switching.

In Chapter V we analyse issue voting. We explore the strength of the relationships between voters' stands on issues and party choice. We also examine the ranking of the parties' voters on individual issues, both in order to see what parties are close on what issues, and to see if the ranking in general corresponds to the left-right spectrum. We also present a factor analysis of the issues, giving us a few general issue dimensions, and examine their relationship to party choice.

In Chapter VI we test the social-structural approach in the Icelandic setting by examining the relationship of various background variables to voting and electoral volatility: age, gender, education, class, occupation, private or public sector employment, income and parental influence. A special attempt is made to assess whether class voting in Iceland has decreased in recent decades.

Finally, in Chapter VII we present the major findings of the thesis and discuss their bearing on our three theoretical approaches.

## **Chapter II: The elections of 1983 and 1987**

In this chapter we will analyse what happened in the Althingi elections of 1983 and 1987. We start in Section II.1 by giving a short analysis of the 1983 election campaign, including a description of the two new parties, the Social Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the Women's Alliance (WA). In Section II.2 we analyse the impact of new voters on the election outcome in 1983, as well as the impact of mobilization and demobilization and direct switching between the parties. In Section II.3 we analyse the voters' decision-making process in 1983, focusing on when the voters made up their minds and to what extent they considered voting for other parties. Section II.4 analyses the 1987 campaign, including the emergence of the Citizens' Party. Sections II.5 and II.6 then give analyses of the 1987 election comparable to the analyses of the 1983 election presented in Sections II.2 and II.3.

### ***II.1 The 1983 election campaign***

The crisis of the old four party system in Icelandic politics was very visible in the 1983 campaign.<sup>1)</sup> The outgoing Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition both came from the same party, the IP. In two constituencies, splintergroups from the IP and the PP put up candidates in competition with their party lists. Two new parties entered the political stage and seemed likely to gain parliamentary representation.

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1) The analysis of the 1983 election campaign is mainly based on newspaper coverage and an unpublished research report on the campaign by Sveinn Helgason (1990).

In 1978 the socialist parties, the SDP and the PA, had won their greatest victories ever, and formed a left-leaning coalition headed by the PP. That coalition was dissolved in the autumn of 1979 due to internal disputes. A fresh election was held in December 1979, in which the PA and the SDP lost votes, and the results of the four old parties were closer to their post-war norm. As usual, a coalition formation process followed the election, but when numerous attempts to form a coalition government proved unsuccessful the deputy leader of the IP, Gunnar Thoroddsen, supported by three parliamentary members of his party,<sup>2)</sup> formed a coalition with the PA and the PP. The leader of the IP, Geir Hallgrimsson (Prime Minister 1974-1978), strongly opposed this move, as did the bulk of the party; the IP as a party opposed the coalition.<sup>3)</sup> This led to vicious disputes within the party but Thoroddsen and his supporters nevertheless remained in the IP.<sup>4)</sup> As the PA and the PP jointly had 28 members in the Althingi, the Thoroddsen coalition had 32 supporters among the 60 Althingi members, the minimum needed for a working majority in both chambers.<sup>5)</sup>

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2) The three IP MPs were Fridjon Thordarson and Palmi Jonsson, who both got ministerial posts in the coalition, and Eggert Haukdal. A fourth MP from the IP, Albert Gudmundsson, also stated his neutrality towards the Thoroddsen government for the time being.

3) In the 1970s there had been a serious leadership struggle within the IP between Thoroddsen and Hallgrimsson, but it had been kept under control until 1980.

4) Actually, before the 1983 election, when Thoroddsen retired from politics because of old age, the three dissenters who had supported his coalition formation all won safe seats on IP lists through primaries and were subsequently re-elected to the Althingi as IP-members!

5) While all MPs were elected in the same election, the United Althingi elected 1/3 of the MPs by proportional representation to sit in the Upper House, while the remaining 40 MPs sat in the Lower House. As legislation had

In August 1982, the government introduced economic austerity measures in the form of provisional legislation.<sup>6)</sup> One of the Thoroddsen supporters, Eggert Haukdal, then declared that he no longer supported the government. The IP leader, Geir Hallgrímsson, demanded that the coalition resign, as it no longer had a working majority in the Althingi.<sup>7)</sup> Prime Minister Thoroddsen maintained that the coalition still enjoyed the support of a majority in the Althingi, and would carry on. Both were right, of course, as 32 members were needed for a working majority in both chambers, but 31 members (even only 30) would defeat a censure motion in the United Althingi.

The winter of 1982-83 was difficult for the Thoroddsen government. Lacking a working majority, and suffering from increasingly bitter internal disputes among the coalition partners, it lost control, most clearly indicated by the fact that when it left office, inflation was running at over 100 per cent. Nevertheless the government remained surprisingly popular among the electorate according to

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to pass through both houses a working majority of 32 (21 in the Lower House and 11 in the Upper House) was required. Censure motions, on the other hand, were voted on in the United Althingi. 30 MPs could thus defeat a censure motion.

6) The constitution gave ministers powers to issue provisional legislation on matters of great emergency, if the Althingi was not in session. This legislation would then be introduced at the next Althingi, which could confirm or reject it. If there was no vote on the legislation before the end of that session, the provisional legislation automatically became void. While this method had been commonly used by governments, e.g. to "handcuff" their own supporters, it was usually presupposed that a minister would issue such a legislation only if he was relatively confident that it would pass in the next Althingi. In principle though, a government without a working majority in both chambers could issue provisional legislation, ensure that it was never put to a vote in the next session of the Althingi, and then issue new provisional legislation at the end of the session, when the old provisional legislation became void!

7) *Morgunbladið*, August 25th 1982.

opinion polls by the daily newspaper *DV*. In October 60% of those stating an opinion supported the government, and in February the support had only declined to 55%.

During the winter two new parties emerged, the Social Democratic Alliance (SDA), and the Women's Alliance (WA). The *DV* polls soon indicated that both of them had realistic possibilities of having members elected to the Althingi in the coming election (See Table II.1.1).

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**Table II.1.1. Voting intentions 1982-1983 according to *DV*'s opinion polls. Only those who named a party are included. Percentages.**

	<i>Oct. 19th 1982</i>	<i>Feb. 16th 1983</i>	<i>April 18th 1983</i>
SDP	10.7	5.7	7.3
PP	22.8	22.1	17.9
IP	51.9	40.6	41.0
PA	14.5	13.9	15.0
SDA	-	12.1	10.9
WA	-	3.5	7.2
Others	-	2.2	0.6
Total	99.9	100.1	99.9

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On November 18th 1982, Vilmundur Gylfason declared in the Althingi that he was leaving the SDP in order to found a new party. He also introduced a parliamentary motion, proposing a separation of the legislative and executive powers by direct election of a Prime Minister, who would appoint his ministers for a fixed four-year term, thus proposing to change the Icelandic political system from a parliamentary to presidential government. Gylfason (born 1948), who was educated as a historian in England, had in the 1970s become one of the first investigative journalists in Iceland, fiercely attacking the Establishment in TV programmes and the newspapers. He became a candidate for the SDP in 1978 and was the main architect of the outstanding success of the

SDP in the elections that year. Under the slogan "SDP - a new party on an old base", the SDP presented many new, young candidates and tried to combine "new politics", emphasising various populist issues, an anti-establishment image, and new forms of participation such as primaries, with "old politics", including a commitment to welfare, industrial democracy, and a new anti-inflationary programme. Despite the fact that the 1978 SDP victory - the party doubled its share of votes from 9.1% to 22% - was generally credited to Gylfason's performance, he did not become a Minister in the PP-PA-SDP coalition 1978-79, but served as Minister of Education, Justice and Ecclesiastical affairs in the SDP minority government 1979-80. Always critical of his party's leadership, and having been involved in numerous intra-party disputes, his departure from the party came shortly after he had by a narrow margin lost his second challenge for the post of deputy leader at the SDP national convention.<sup>8)</sup>

The SDA was founded on January 15th 1983 and Gylfason was elected leader. Some of his supporters in the SDP had left that party in order to join the SDA, but many SDA members were young people, especially university students, who had not taken active part in politics before.

Besides the radical proposals for abolishing the parliamentary system of government, the SDA platform was in some aspects similar to the 1978 SDP platform, but with a stronger emphasis on market solutions and decentralization instead of clientelistic and corporatist politics. The party was clearly anti-establishment and all the old parties were accused of standing for corruption and stagnation. "We have

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8) See O.Th. Hardarson (1987), pp. 476-477.

a political philosophy which is basically opposed to the philosophy that the old political parties have in common", Gylfason declared.<sup>9)</sup>

Gylfason's departure and the foundation of the SDA were major blows to the SDP. The opinion polls gave the SDA a flying start, and indicated that the new party might win more votes than the SDP. The SDA campaign was on the other hand not very successful, partly because many of the candidates, especially in the rural constituencies, were clearly inexperienced and did badly in TV debates. While the final result of 7.3% and four members elected could be seen as a major breakthrough for a new party, especially in comparison to other new parties since the 1930s, Gylfason was deeply disappointed by the result.<sup>10)</sup>

The other new party in 1983 was the Women's Alliance, a separate party for women, which clearly had its roots in the increasing political activism of women and women's rights groups during the 1970s. In the local elections of 1982 women's lists had appeared in Reykjavik and the northern town of Akureyri and been quite successful. After some dispute among women activists on the wisdom of a similar attempt at the parliamentary level, a meeting of 500 women in Reykjavik on February 26th and 27th 1983 decided to put forward lists of candidates, and the Woman's Alliance was

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9) DV, January 20th 1983. My translation.

10) In a radio programme the day after the election with the leaders of all the political parties the author declared the SDA the greatest victor of the election. Without disputing that Gylfason, on the other hand, clearly felt like a loser! The WA representative on the programme was, however, obviously delighted with the party's 5.5% and three elected members.

founded on March 13th.<sup>11)</sup> This was followed by WA candidatures in three of the eight constituencies, including Reykjavik and the Southwest, two constituencies which contained over 60% of the electorate. The major characteristics of the new party have been analysed thus:

In its ideology, the Women's Alliance claims to take its point of departure from the common values and joint experience of women. Such values are said to have been systematically ignored through male dominance in the major decision making bodies in society and the exclusion of women from positions of influence. The Woman's Alliance aims at increasing the influence of women in politics, and males cannot take places on its lists. The Women's Alliance has been particularly concerned with social welfare issues and the problem of low wages in those occupations characterized as "women's jobs", for example in the public sector. To most voters - including its own - these emphases have firmly established the Women's Alliance on the left of the political spectrum, although its activists vehemently reject any such characterization as being irrelevant and outmoded.

The Women's Alliance comes closest to being the Icelandic equivalent of a "green party". It puts great emphasis on environmental protection, its foreign policies are strongly pacifist, and it maintains a decentralized party apparatus with the smallest possible amount of organizational hierarchy. In fact, it does not regard itself as a party at all, preferring to be seen as a grass-roots movement.

A number of different factors may have created the conditions for the emergence of a specific women's party in Iceland. A social basis for the party has been created in recent decades through a process of social change: young, well educated women have in increasing numbers become active in the labour market, not least in the public sector and service occupations, making demands for career opportunities and wages equal with males, and increasing the pressure for improved welfare measures for all households.

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11) Separate women's lists are not new in Icelandic politics. Such lists first appeared in the local elections of 1908 and were quite successful. In the at-large Althingi elections of 1922, where three members were elected for the whole country, the first woman to enter the Althingi was elected from a women's list. An attempt to repeat this in 1926 was unsuccessful, and women's lists first reappeared in 1982. See A. Styrkarsdottir (1979 and 1986).



However, since these conditions are hardly unique to Iceland, the decisive factors are probably to be found in the established party system. All of the parties were too slow in responding to the demands from the new women's movement for increased representation - prior to 1983 there had never been more than 3 women MPs at the same time in the Althingi. This was probably the combined result of the small number of seats each party could hope for in each constituency (in 1983 there were 60 seats in 8 constituencies), and a decentralized nomination process in which established local leaders could easily ward off threats from newcomers. More spectacular is the failure of the parties on the Icelandic left to integrate the new women's movement into their electoral base. This was not entirely for lack of trying - particularly in the case of the People's Alliance. In many respects the policy differences between the People's Alliance and the Women's Alliance are a question of different emphases rather than of conflicting policies. But through its participation in the Thoroddsen government 1980-83, the PA seems to have damaged seriously its credibility as the natural channel for new social grievances and opposition to the status quo. Both the women's list in Reykjavik in 1982 and the Women's Alliance in 1983 emerged against the background of the People's Alliance sharing governing responsibility - in the Reykjavik council 1978-82, and in the national government 1980-83.<sup>12)</sup>

It was clear in the campaign that the representatives of the old parties did not quite know how to deal with this new challenge from the WA. The main response was to try to ignore the party - or at least not attack it directly. The PA - which seemed most directly threatened by the new party - also followed this strategy but complained that the WA candidature was not really necessary, as most of the party's programme was already included in the PA platform.

For the four old parties, the election campaign started with the selection of candidates to the party lists, in many cases through primaries. This process, which took place from

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12) O.Th. Hardarson and G.H. Kristinsson (1987), pp. 222-223.

November 1982 to March 1983, created internal strife in all parties. The IP party leader, Geir Hallgrímsson, suffered a major blow in the IP primary in Reykjavík in November, in which he only managed to obtain the seventh seat on the party list - and subsequently lost his seat in the Althingi, as the party had only six members elected from Reykjavík in the 1983 election.<sup>13)</sup> In two constituencies disputes over candidate selection resulted in separate splintergroup lists; one in the West Peninsula constituency, headed by a former IP MP, and one in the North West constituency, headed by a sitting PP MP.<sup>14)</sup>

As usual, personalities and the government record played a large part in the election campaign at the expense of clear and consistent policy alternatives. The Opposition strongly criticized the Government's disastrous economic record. The IP declared the state of the economy the main issue of the election and promised to reduce inflation and cut both taxes and state expenditure. The SDP put most emphasis on long-term solutions to the problems of the economy, maintaining that the system of inflation indexing of wages should be abolished in return for a social contract securing a minimum wage, stability and general welfare.

The PP claimed that the economic crisis was largely due to external circumstances but also blamed its coalition

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13) Hallgrímsson did not resign as party leader until the autumn of 1983 when Thorsteinn Pálsson took his place. He served as Foreign Minister in the PP-IP coalition from 1983-1985 after which he left politics and became one of the three directors of the Central Bank of Iceland.

14) According to electoral law, a party is allowed to put up more than one list in a constituency (and votes for both lists are combined in the allocation of supplementary seats for the party). The PP agreed that its Northwest splintergroup could use the PP party name, while the IP refused its West Peninsula dissenters use of the IP label.

partner, the PA, for failing to respond to the economic problems and especially for not supporting an economic austerity bill proposed by Prime Minister Thoroddsen in February 1983 postponing inflation indexed wage increases. The PA, on the other hand, maintained that the Thoroddsen bill only cut wages without solving the economic problems. While the party said it was prepared to consider some changes in the system of index-linking it strongly opposed the "Reagan-Thatcher inspired" economic proposals of the IP, which would only increase unemployment.

Another prominent issue in the campaign was the "aluminum-issue", focusing on the disputes between the PA Minister of Industry, Hjorleifur Guttormsson, and Alusuisse, the owner of the only large aluminum plant in Iceland, concerning re-negotiation of Alusuisse's contract, including for example higher prices for electricity. Guttormsson was heavily criticized for his handling of the negotiations, and his general performance on the (lack of) development of power intensive industry through foreign investment, not only by the opposition parties - the IP and the SDP - but also by the PP, which claimed that this issue had been the source of bitter disputes in the Thoroddsen government. In the campaign the PA moved closer to its old hard-line position of the early 1970s, being highly critical of foreign investment and the development of heavy industry as a solution to the overwhelming dependency of the Icelandic economy on the export of fish and fish products. By hardening its position on this issue, the PA moved further from the other three old parties, and closer to the WA,

which strongly opposed foreign investment and the development of heavy industry in Iceland.

Housing policy was a third major issue in the campaign. This is an important issue in Iceland, as a large portion of the funding available to individuals buying a home comes from the State Housing Fund. Disputes on foreign policy were less prominent than had been the case in the early 1970s. The PA and the WA emphasized that a freeze should be put on all construction at the US base in Keflavik, and supported the idea that the Nordic countries should be declared a nuclear-free zone. The WA also declared that in principle it was opposed to both the Keflavik base and NATO, having been pressed by the pro-NATO parties to make its position clear.

A potential source of conflict between the old parties was resolved in February 1983, when the party leaders agreed on proposals for changes in the electoral system which reduced somewhat the overweighting of votes in rural constituencies and increased the number of MPs to 63, a change that took effect in 1987. While the changes were modest, as indicated by the fact that the Reykjavik and Southwest constituencies, containing over 60% of the electorate, can never control over 48% of the Althingi seats under the system, the party leaders' agreement put demands for more equal weighting of votes off the agenda. The SDA constitutional proposals did not include more equality of votes in Althingi elections, but Gylfason emphasized that a direct election of the Prime Minister meant that the "one man - one vote - one value" rule would be put into effect concerning the executive. All the old parties, on the other hand, completely rejected the SDA constitutional proposals.

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**Table II.1.2. Results of Althingi Elections 1971-1983.**  
**Percentage of valid votes (number of seats in the Althingi).**

	1971	1974	1978	1979	1983
IP	36.2(22)	42.7(25)	32.7(20)	35.4(21)	38.7(23)
PP	25.3(17)	24.9(17)	16.9(12)	24.9(17)	19.0(14)
PA	17.1(10)	18.3(11)	22.9(14)	19.7(11)	17.3(10)
SDP	10.5(6)	9.1(5)	22.0(14)	17.5(10)	11.7(6)
ULL	8.9(5)	4.6(2)	3.3(0)	-	-
SDA	-	-	-	-	7.3(4)
WA	-	-	-	-	5.5(3)
Others	2.0(0)	0.4(0)	2.2(0)	2.5(1)*	0.5(0)#
Total	100%(60)	100%(60)	100%(60)	100%(60)	100%(60)
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Total for old parties	89.1(55)	95.0(58)	94.5(60)	97.5(59)	86.7(53)

\* Two splintergroups from the IP account for 1.9 percent.  
The IP splintergroup in the South constituency had one elected member. He later joined the IP parliamentary block, and was reelected on the IP party list in 1983.

# An IP splintergroup in the West Peninsula.

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If we try to estimate the effect of the campaign on the election results by comparing the strength of the parties in the *DV* newspaper opinion polls (Table II.1.1) and their actual outcome in the election (Table II.1.2), three major trends emerge. First, the IP did much better in the opinion poll in October 1982 than in the 1983 opinion polls and in the actual election. While this may partly be a sign of a weak campaign, this pattern had been observed in earlier elections and can also indicate a measurement error in the opinion polls due to greater willingness of IP supporters to claim a voting intention for "their" party than is the case for potential voters of other parties.<sup>15)</sup> Second, it also

<sup>15)</sup> Another way of putting this hypothesis is to say that the IP tends to have fewer potential voters than the other parties among the undecided respondents, as many of them have yet not decided which of the "left" parties to vote for, but remain nevertheless unlikely to vote for the IP. This tendency may be particularly strong when the IP is in opposition.

seems clear that the SDP improved its position during the campaign at the expense of the SDA, even though the SDP result was disastrous compared to the 1979 election. Finally, the PA seems to have somewhat increased its strength during the campaign.

The main victors in the election on April 23rd were clearly the two new parties, SDA and WA, jointly obtaining 12.8% of the vote. The share of the four old parties, while still high at 86.7%, was the lowest since the emergence of the four-party system in the early 1930s.

Compared to the post-war period as a whole, none of the four old parties did particularly well. Even though the IP gained 3.3% from the 1979 election, the party was slightly below its post-war norm.<sup>16)</sup> The PA lost 2.4% compared to the party's 1979 result but remained close to its post-war norm. The main losers, however, were clearly the PP and the SDP.

## ***II.2 Movements in the 1983 election: How did the results come about?***

Changes in parties' electoral fortunes can stem from three sources:

1. Changes in the electorate: New voters, who have reached voting age since last election, and deceased voters.
2. Changes in non-voting: Mobilized voters, voting in the present election but not in the last one, and demobilized voters, who voted in the last election but not the present one.
3. *Direct switching* between the parties.

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<sup>16)</sup> The mean percentage for the IP in Althingi elections 1946-1979 is 38.9%. The party was above the mean in seven elections and below the mean in five elections.

In this section we will try to examine how these factors contributed to the actual results of the 1983 election. We will do this by analysing reported vote in 1983 and comparing it to the 1978 and 1979 vote as reported in the 1983 survey.

A note of caution concerning the reliability of the data is appropriate here. The problems of using recall data on voting behaviour are well known. Part of the population tends to forget or remember incorrectly how they voted in an election a few years ago. Moreover, incorrect reporting of past vote is not random but systematic: there is a tendency to exaggerate consistency in voting behaviour - people tend to give their current party preference as past vote. The extent of incorrect reporting varies. (As an example we can mention that in the Danish election survey, 12.7% of respondents in a panel study remembered their 1971 vote incorrectly when interviewed again in 1973.<sup>17)</sup> The overall effect of this systematic error is of course an overestimate of voting stability.

A second problem concerning the data is sampling error, which is most serious when the groups involved are small, e.g. first time voters and mobilized or demobilized voters.

In Table II.2.1 the actual results in the elections in 1978, 1979 and 1983 are compared to the reported vote in our survey.

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<sup>17)</sup> Borre et al. (1976).

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**Table II.2.1. Actual results and reported vote in 1978, 1979 and 1983. Percentages.**

	1978		1979		1983	
	Result	Report	Result	Report	Result	Report
SDP	22.0	18.0	17.5	17.5	11.7	12.5
PP	16.9	18.3	24.9	18.6	19.0	15.9
IP	32.7	41.2	37.3 <sup>1)</sup>	43.3 <sup>1)</sup>	39.2 <sup>2)</sup>	41.7 <sup>2)</sup>
PA	22.9	20.3	19.7	20.1	17.3	15.8
ULL	3.3	1.7				
SDA					7.3	7.8
WA					5.5	6.2
Others	2.2	0.4	0.6	0.4		
N=	(716)		(736)		(854)	

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 1) Including the IP splintergroups in the North East and in the South.

2) Including the IP splintergroup in the West Peninsula.  
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As was to be expected the table shows considerable discrepancies between the actual results and reported vote in our survey. The differences in 1983 are within the margins of sampling error, even though the possibility of a systematic error cannot be ruled out. In general the swings between the old parties are underestimated in the data; this can be seen in Table II.2.2.

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**Table II.2.2. Net gains/losses of the old parties 1978-1979 and 1979-1983. Percentages.**

	1978-79		1979-83	
	Election Results	Survey Data	Election Results	Survey Data
SDP	-4.5	-0.5	-5.8	-5.0
PP	8.0	0.3	-5.9	-2.7
IP	4.6	2.1	1.9	-1.6
PA	-3.2	-0.2	-2.4	-4.3

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 The discrepancies can stem from incorrect reporting of past vote, which is likely to be the major factor, sampling



error and the impact of 1978 and 1979 voters who have left the electorate in 1983.

The recall data fits best for the PA and SDP, and for the latter party especially. In both cases the data shows the actual trend of those parties' fortunes at the polls; in both cases the data also underestimates the support of those parties in 1978, when those parties reached their all-time peak.

The recall data reflects the electoral fortunes of the PP and the IP considerably less well. IP support is overestimated in all three elections. This seems also quite common in polls taken by various agencies, probably a result of some systematic error. The recall data does not reflect the victory of the PP in 1979 when the party recovered from its severe loss in 1978, gaining 8% more votes.

### **The impact of first time voters**

New voters are of particular interest. They are often supposed to be more volatile than older voters, not having yet formed clear attachments to the political system or developed a strong party identification. Thus, first time voters may be likely to follow the "electoral winds" to a greater extent than older voters.<sup>18)</sup>

To what extent can the impact of new voters account for the changes in the 1983 election? Table II.2.3 shows how the new voters' choices differed from those of the older ones and the impact of the new voters on the overall result.<sup>19)</sup>

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18) See e.g. J.G. Blumler, D. McQuail and T.J. Nossiter (1975), p. 1.9, and J.G. Blumler, D. McQuail and T.J. Nossiter (1976), pp. 22-30.

19) The table shows only those who revealed the party voted for in 1983. The proportion who claimed not to have voted

The new voters, who are 20-23 years of age, constitute 10% of the respondents in the table.

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**Table II.2.3. The impact of new voters 1983. Percentages.**

	<i>New voters</i>	<i>Older voters</i>	<i>All voters</i>	<i>Effect of new voters*</i>	<i>Actual net gain/loss#</i>
SDP	8.3	13.0	12.5	-0.5	-5.8
PP	15.5	16.0	15.9	-0.1	-5.9
IP	40.5	41.8	41.7	-0.1	1.4
PA	13.1	16.1	15.8	-0.3	-2.4
SDA	15.5	7.0	7.8	0.8	7.3
WA	7.1	6.1	6.2	0.1	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9		
N=	(84)	(770)	(854)		

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 \* The figures in this column show how the inclusion of new voters changes each party's share of the vote; the party's share among older voters is simply subtracted from its share among all voters.

# The figures in this column show net gain/loss in the 1983 election: each party's actual share of votes in 1979 is subtracted from the party's share in 1983.  
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On the whole the new voters do not vote very differently from older voters. The only party which has much greater success among the new voters than the older ones is the SDA, mainly at the expense of the SDP and, to a lesser extent, the PA. Without the new voters, the SDA would have received 7.0% of the vote instead of 7.8%, and the SDP would have increased its share from 12.5% to 13.0%. It is noteworthy that only the two new parties gain by the addition of new voters to the electorate; all the old parties lose.

The data gives support to the suggestion that new voters tend to follow the "electoral winds" to a greater extent

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was higher among first time voters (8.4%) than older ones (6.5%) and 5.3% of first time voters said they cast a blank ballot, while 2.4% of the older ones did so. Refusals to answer the question were much more frequent among older voters (5.5%) than younger ones (1.1%). 1.1% of first time voters and 0.3% of older voters did not remember their 1983 vote.

than older ones, but the trend is relatively weak. In all cases but one (the IP) the impact of new voters can explain part of the parties' gains and losses but other factors obviously constitute the bulk of the explanation.

A further test of the assumption that younger voters are more likely to jump on the bandwagon in elections can be made by looking at the recall data of voting in 1978 and 1979.

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**Table II.2.4. New voters in 1978 and 1979 compared to all voters. Percentages.**

	1978		1979	
	New voters	All voters	New voters	All voters
SDP	28	18	13	18
PP	11	18	16	19
IP	33	41	50	43
PA	29	20	22	20
Others	0	2	0	0
Total	101	99	101	100
N	(80)	(713)	(32)	(736)

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The percentage distribution for new voters should be interpreted with caution, especially in 1979 when the number of new voters among the respondents (as in the electorate) is very low. Nevertheless, an interesting pattern emerges when the new voters are compared to the voters as a whole.

The new voters do indeed seem to follow the electoral winds to a greater extent than others. The large victories of the SDP and the PA are clearly reflected among the new voters, while the recalled vote of the whole sample underestimates their share by 4-5%. The losses of those parties in 1979 are also clearly reflected among young voters. Correspondingly, the trends for the IP and PP are more

clearly reflected among the new voters than others in 1978 and 1979.

On the whole our data supports the suggestion that new voters are more likely to have supported the victorious parties in elections than are other voters.

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**Table II.2.5. Results and net gains/losses 1978, 1979 and 1983. Comparison of the actual result, recalled vote of the whole sample and recalled vote of new voters. Percentages.**

	<i>SDP</i>			<i>PP</i>			<i>IP</i>			<i>PA</i>		
	<i>'78</i>	<i>'79</i>	<i>'83</i>	<i>'78</i>	<i>'79</i>	<i>'83</i>	<i>'78</i>	<i>'79</i>	<i>'83</i>	<i>'78</i>	<i>'79</i>	<i>'83</i>
Result	22	18	12	17	25	19	33	37	39	23	20	17
Sample	18	18	13	18	19	16	41	43	42	20	20	16
New vot.	28	13	8	11	16	16	33	50	41	29	22	13
<i>Net gain/loss</i>												
Result		-4	-6		8	-6		4	2		-3	-3
Sample		0	-5		1	-3		2	-1		0	-4
New voters		-15	-5		5	0		17	-9		-7	-9

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### **Mobilized and demobilized voters**

In recent decades around 10% of Icelandic voters have not used their vote in Althingi elections, most of them by not turning up at the polling booth. In addition, a few have returned a blank or void ballot (2.5% of total votes cast in 1983, 1.1% in 1987). The Icelandic turnout is among the highest in the world.

Various behaviour patterns and reasons can lie behind a stable figure of 10% abstention in Althingi elections. This figure could indicate that a small part of the electorate never uses its vote for various reasons; for example disaffection with the political system or the parties, disinterest in politics generally, or even because of Downsian rationality. If this were the case, it could mean that a part of the electorate were in a sense alienated from

the political system. On the other hand, some people might abstain *occasionally*, for instance for personal reasons of various kinds or because they want to punish their own party without going as far as voting for a new one.

The size of the non-voting population and its sub-populations, consistent and occasional non-voters, is obviously important for democratic theory. But the latter group can also be of importance for parties' gains and losses in elections. Mobilization and demobilization of voters - their movements in and out of the voting population in successive elections - can have considerable effects on election results. These effects are likely to be greatest when there are great fluctuations in turnout, as was the case in Iceland in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>20)</sup> When turnout is high and stable, as in the last decades, the effects are likely to be smaller. Nevertheless they can make a difference, especially if the group of occasional voters constitutes a large part of the non-voting electorate in each election.

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**Table II.2.6. Voting or non-voting (abstaining or turning in a blank or void ballot) 1978, 1979 and 1983. Percentages.**

Voted in all three elections.....	84	(678)
Voted in two elections.....	11	(87)
Voted in one election.....	4	(29)
Voted in none of the elections.....	2	(14)

Total.....	101	(808)
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Excluded from the table are 50 respondents for whom information was missing for at least one election, and 145 who were not eligible to vote in all three elections.

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Analysis of the non-voting population, based on the electoral records, is not available for Iceland. Our survey,

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<sup>20)</sup> See S. Kristjansson (1977), Section II.1.

on the other hand, gives some indication of the composition of the non-voting population. Table III.2.6 shows how our respondents recalled whether they had voted or not in the 1978, 1979 and 1983 elections.

The data is likely to underestimate non-voting to some extent. First, permanent non-voters may be more likely to refuse to take part in an electoral survey than others<sup>21)</sup> and, second, there may be some tendency among the respondents to claim they voted even if they did not.<sup>22)</sup> Nevertheless, it is interesting that the figures in the table are almost identical to figures presented by Holmberg for the Swedish elections 1973, 1976 and 1979 although his figures are based on an analysis of abstentions in the voting records.

We can also obtain some information on non-voting by looking at the answers to a different question, where people were asked in a general way how frequently they used their vote in Althingi elections. This general question and the questions on recalled vote occurred at different places in the questionnaire. In Table II.2.7 the answers to this question are related to recalled voting behaviour.

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21) Of our respondents, 6.7% claimed they had abstained in 1983 while 11.7% of voters abstained in the election. 2.7% of the respondents claimed they returned a blank ballot, while 2.2% of registered voters returned blank or void ballots in the election. This could imply that abstainers are less willing or able to take part in an electoral survey or they wrongly claim to have voted.

22) Holmberg (1981, p. 32) reports e.g. that in the Swedish election study after the 1979 election, 27% of 98 respondents who had abstained nevertheless claimed they had voted, while less than one percent of those who had voted claimed they had abstained.

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**Table II.2.7. How often do you use your vote by recalled voting behaviour 1978, 1979, and 1983. Percentages.**

RECALLED VOTING BEHAVIOUR					
USES VOTE	Voted in all/gives party	Voted in all/fails to give party	Abstained in one or two elections	Abstained in all three elections	Total
Always	91	79	31	7	80
Usually	9	21	62	21	18
Seldom	0	-	7	36	2
Never	-	-	-	36	1
Total	100	100	100	100	101
N=	(622)	(56)	(116)	(14)	(808)

-----  
 Respondents in column 2 claim to have voted in all three elections but fail to mention party voted for in at least one election. - Respondents in column 3 claim to have voted in one or two elections but abstained, or returned a blank or void ballot in the other. - Excluded from the table are 50 respondents for whom no information was available for at least one election and 145 who were not eligible to vote in all three elections.

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*Q: Some people always vote in Althingi elections, and some people never vote. If you consider the period since you came of voting age, do you think you have always voted in Althingi elections, usually voted, seldom, or never?*  
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The answers to both questions suggest that a considerable share of the electorate are occasional non-voters, or 15-20%. Table II.2.7 shows that, of those who reported that they did not vote for a party in at least one of the three elections on which they were specifically asked about voting behaviour, 31% nevertheless claimed they always had voted, when asked in a general way. This may indicate that a larger part of the electorate is in fact occasional non-voters than the tables suggest<sup>23)</sup>. In any case it is clear

23) It is also very likely that the size of the consistently non-voting part of the electorate is underestimated in our data, e.g. for the reasons given above. Besides, it is likely that non-voters are a larger proportion of those individuals for whom information on voting behaviour is missing for at least one of the elections than among those included in the tables.

that occasional non-voting can make a difference in election results and mobilization and demobilization of voters thus deserve a separate analysis.

**Table II.2.8. Effects of mobilization and demobilization in the 1983 election. Percentages.**

	<i>Demob- ilized</i>	<i>Mobil- ized</i>	<i>1983 vote</i>	<i>1983+ dem.</i>	<i>1983- mob.</i>	<i>1983+ d.- m.</i>	<i>EFFECTS</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Mob.</i>	<i>Both</i>
							(7)	(8)	(9)
SDP	21.1	8.7	12.5	12.9	12.7	13.1	-0.4	-0.2	-0.6
PP	21.1	17.4	15.9	16.1	15.8	16.1	-0.2	+0.1	-0.2
IP	42.1	26.1	41.7	41.7	42.6	42.6	0.0	-0.9	-0.9
PA	15.8	13.0	15.8	15.8	16.0	16.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2
SDA		15.2	7.8	7.5	7.4	7.1	+0.3	+0.4	+0.7
WA		19.6	6.2	5.9	5.4	5.2	+0.3	+0.8	+1.0

N= (38) (46) (854) (892) (808) (846)

Col.1 and 2: Demobilized and mobilized voters in the table are only those who revealed the party voted for in one election and said they abstained or returned a blank or void ballot in the other.

Col.3: Reported vote in the 1983 election.

Col.4: Col.3 + Col.1.

Col.5: Col.3 - Col.2.

Col.6: Col.3 + Col.1 - Col. 2 (i.e. the result if the mobilized had not voted and the demobilized had voted in the same way as in 1979).

Col.7: Col.3 - Col.4.

Col.8: Col.3 - Col.5.

Col.9: Col.3 - Col.6.

The mobilized and demobilized voters in our data are not large groups; mobilized voters constitute 5.4% of the 1983 vote. If demobilized voters were added to the 1983 vote its size would increase by 4.4%. Nevertheless the table shows that movements in and out of the voting population do have some effects.

Any demobilization is beneficial to the two new parties by definition. Had the demobilized voters voted for their old parties, the SDA's and the WA's share of the vote would have decreased by 0.3% each. Two of the old parties suffer



from demobilization, the SDP and the PP, the parties that suffered greatest losses in the election.

Each of the six parties could on the other hand potentially gain by mobilization. The data indicates, however, that it was mainly the two new parties, the major victors of the election, that were successful in mobilizing 1979 non-voters, especially the WA. Without the mobilized voters the WA's share of the vote would have dropped by 0.8% and the SDA's share by 0.4%. Somewhat surprisingly, the data indicates that the IP, which in fact gained 1.4% in the election<sup>24)</sup>, suffered most from mobilization; without the mobilized voters the party would have increased its share by 0.9%.

The main conclusion is that all the old parties lost by movements in and out of the voting population, while the new and victorious parties gained. Without those movements the SDA's share of votes would have decreased by 0.7%, and the WA's by 1.0%. The WA was particularly successful in mobilizing 1979 non-voters.

### **Direct switching between the parties**

The single factor likely to cause greatest swings in election outcomes is direct switching between the parties. When turnout is stable at around 90%, large swings are impossible without some direct switching.

Nevertheless a sizeable amount of direct party switching (gross volatility) may not necessarily be reflected in swings in elections as measured in net gains and losses of

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<sup>24)</sup> But it should be borne in mind that the recall data shows a total loss of 2.0% for the IP 1979-1983.

the parties (net volatility). Movements between the parties can cancel each other out, so it is theoretically possible that every voter may switch parties in an election without any changes in the parties' shares of the vote.<sup>25)</sup>

While it is likely that the increased net volatility in Icelandic elections in the 1970s is a reflection of increased direct party switching, this can not be tested by survey data. On the other hand, it is clear that the great swings that occurred in elections in the 1970s could not have taken place without considerable party switching.

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**Table II.2.9. Electoral behaviour 1978, 1979 and 1983.**  
**Percentages.**

Voted for the same party three times .....	60
Voted for the same party twice, did not vote for a party in one election .....	6
Voted for one party, did not vote for a party in two elections .....	3
Voted for same party 1979 and 1983 but another 1978...	6
Voted for same party 1978 and 1983 but another 1979...	3
Voted for same party 1978 and 1979 but another 1983...	13
Voted for two different parties, abstained once.....	4
Voted for three different parties.....	2
Did not vote for a party in any of the elections.....	2

Total: 99  
 (N=733)

*Summary:*

Voted for same party in all elections.....	60
Did not change party, but did not vote in every election.....	9
Voted for two parties.....	26
Voted for three parties.....	2
Did not vote for a party in any election.....	2

Total: 99  
 (N=733)

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 Excluded from the table are 125 who did not describe their voting behaviour in all three elections and 145 who were not eligible to vote in all three elections.  
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<sup>25)</sup> Assuming that no party has over 50% of the vote.

Table II.2.9 shows the amount of party switching in elections from 1978-1983 as recalled by our respondents. As mentioned previously, it is likely that the recall data underestimates the movements that actually took place.

According to their recall, 28% of those who reported their voting behaviour in all three elections (see Table II.2.9) changed party at least once. This figure is likely to be somewhat too low.

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**Table II.2.10. Answers to the question: "Do you always vote for the same party?" by recalled electoral behaviour 1978-1983. Percentages.**

<i>PARTY VOTED FOR</i>	<i>RECALLED BEHAVIOUR</i>						<i>Total</i>
	<i>Voted for same party</i>	<i>Changed party</i>	<i>Did not vote in all elections</i>	<i>Voted, Did not vote in what</i>	<i>Did not vote in any election</i>	<i>No in-formation</i>	
Always same	64	3	29	13	30	40	41
Usually the same	32	63	38	44	10	31	40
Usually different	4	34	33	43	60	29	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(442)	(180)	(114)	(54)	(10)	(45)	(845)

ETA= .55

-----  
 Excluded from the table are 145 respondents who were not eligible to vote in all three elections and 8 who did not answer the general question.

-----  
*Q: Some people always vote for the same party in Althingi elections, while some people usually vote for different parties. Have you always voted for the same party in Althingi elections, have you usually voted for the same party, or have you usually voted for different parties?*  
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Some indication of the reliability of the recall data can be obtained by comparing the results in Table II.2.9 to the respondents' answers to a general question: they were asked if they always voted for the same party, usually for the same party or usually for different parties (see Table

II.2.10). The general question was not in the same part of the questionnaire as the questions on past vote.

The answers to the general question seem at first to indicate greater volatility than the data on recalled vote: only 41% of those who were eligible to vote in the three elections claim they have always voted for the same party, while 60% of those who give sufficient information on voting behaviour on all three elections claim to have voted for the same party on all occasions.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the two questions are not entirely commensurable; the general question relates to all Althingi elections in which the respondent has taken part, while the recall questions ask specifically about the three last elections. Thus, a higher degree of volatility might be expected in response to the general question.

Second, there is a good correspondence between the recall data and the general description of own voting behaviour among those who report a party vote in all three elections (Col. 1 and 2;  $ETA=.59$ ). Very few respondents contradict themselves in answering the two questions.<sup>26)</sup> The main reason for higher volatility on the general question is that a third of those who recall having voted for the same party in the last three elections say also that they do not always vote for the same party.

Third, occasional non-voters are not as volatile as party switchers, according to the general question, but more

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26) The 3% of party switchers, who claim they always have voted for the same party, clearly contradict themselves and the 4% of those who report having voted for the same party in all three elections, but also say they usually vote for different parties, come close to a contradiction.

volatile than those who claim to have voted for the same party 1978-83.

Finally, 87% of those who claim they voted in all elections from 1978-1983, but do not recall a party voted for on at least one occasion, and 60% of those for whom information is missing for at least one election, do not say they usually vote for the same party.<sup>27)</sup>

Our data indicates that more than half of the voters are potential party switchers. 23% of those who recall party voted for 1979-83 claim they actually switched parties (see Table II.2.13). This figure is likely to be too low, both because of recall error, and because the answers to the general question indicate that those respondents for whom information on the party voted for in at least one election is missing are more volatile than those who report a party vote for all three elections. Thus, direct party switching can potentially explain quite large swings in election results.

Table II.2.11 shows that the four old parties had varying success in keeping the loyalty of their 1979 voters. The SDP suffered the worst losses in 1983 and the table reveals that the party lost four of every ten of their 1979 voters. The PP and the PA, which also lost in 1983, kept the loyalty of around 70% of their 1979 voters, but the IP, which gained in 1983, was clearly most successful in this respect: four of every five IP voters in 1979 also voted for the party in 1983. An interesting question is whether this simply

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27) The fact that only 13% of those who claim to have voted in all three elections, but do not recall a party vote at least once, say they always vote for the same party makes it more likely that they simply don't remember the party voted for.

reflects the fact that the IP was winning in 1983, or if this is a more general phenomenon, i.e. that IP voters tend in general to be more loyal to their party than voters of the other three old parties.

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**Table II.2.11. Party switching 1983: What happened to the 1979 vote? Percentages.**

1983 VOTE	1979 VOTE						
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	Trotsky- ites	Not el- igible	Did not vote
SDP	59	2	3	3	-	7	5
PP	4	71	1	3	-	13	10
IP	14	8	82	5	-	35	16
PA	2	6	1	67	100	13	8
SDA	12	4	5	6	-	13	9
WA	3	2	3	12	-	6	12
Did not vote	6	6	5	4	-	13	40
Total	100	99	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(129)	(135)	(318)	(148)	(3)	(97)	(77)

-----  
 Excluded from the table are 96 respondents for whom voting behaviour in 1979 or 1983 was missing.  
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**Table II.2.12. Party switching 1983: Where did the 1983 vote come from? Percentages.**

1979 VOTE	1983 VOTE					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA
SDP	83	5	6	3	33	12
PP	3	87	4	7	13	9
IP	10	4	88	2	33	29
PA	4	5	3	86	20	50
Trotskyites	-	-	-	3	-	-
Total	100	101	101	101	99	100
N=	(92)	(111)	(299)	(115)	(45)	(34)

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 Excluded from the table are those who did not vote in 1979 or 1983, those who were not eligible to vote in 1979, and 96 respondents for whom voting behaviour in 1979 or 1983 was missing.  
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Table II.2.12 contains the same information as Table II.2.11, except that now the base for the percentages is the 1983 vote. The table thus reveals the profile of the parties' 1983 voters - and answers the question: Where did the 1983 voters come from?

It should be noted, that in Table II.2.12 both mobilized voters and new voters in 1983 are excluded. Between 11 and 16 per cent of the old parties' total vote came from those two groups, but 30-31% of the new parties' total vote. 20% of the SDA's total vote came from new voters and 18% of WA's total vote came from mobilized voters.

The table shows that, among the voters who voted for a party both in 1979 and 1983 and voted for one of the old parties in 1983, 83-88% came from their 1979 stock. The two new parties, the SDA and the WA, obviously had no 1979 voters, so for them the table simply shows how large a proportion of the voters they gained from other parties came from each of the old parties. This composition of their vote is of particular interest. On what fronts were they especially successful?

Both of the new parties had some success on all fronts, but they did not attract voters from all the four old parties to the same extent. If that was the case, the profiles of the new parties should simply reflect the proportional strength of the old parties in 1979 - which they do not.

First, the new parties were not as attractive to voters of the IP and the PP as they were to voters of the socialist parties. Even though 33 and 29% of the SDA's and WA's votes respectively came from the IP, this simply reflects the fact

that the IP is a large party - in 1979 43% of the respondents in Table II.2.12 voted for the IP, so IP voters are clearly underrepresented in the new parties' profiles. The same is the case for the PP; in 1979 18% of those respondents voted for the party, while only 13% of the SDA vote and 9% of the WA vote comes from 1979 PP voters.

Second, when the strength of the old parties is borne in mind, the SDA is by far most successful among former SDP voters: while 17% of our respondents in Table II.2.12 voted for the SDP in 1979, 33% of the SDA voters come from SDP's 1979 vote. Nevertheless it is clear that the SDA is not only a splintergroup from the SDP in electoral terms: two of every three voters whom the SDA gained from the other parties did not come from Gylfason's former party.

Third, former PA voters are strongly overrepresented among WA voters. 50% of the voters the WA gains from other parties come from the PA, while 20% of the respondents voted for the PA in 1979.

In Table II.2.13 the effect of party changes between 1979 and 1983 are summarized. Only those who reported the party voted for in both elections are included.

The figures must of course be interpreted with great caution but, according to the table, direct party changes cause the SDP greatest losses; the party's net loss is 4.2% of those voters who revealed a party choice both in 1979 and 1983. Two thirds of the party's net loss is due to voters who have been attracted to the two new parties,<sup>28)</sup> mainly to

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28) It should be borne in mind that the old parties can of course only lose votes to the new parties, while they both lose and gain votes from the other old parties. Thus the table on net gains reveals a different picture from e.g. Table II.2.11 on the destination of the 1979 vote.



the SDA (2.2%), but the party's net loss to the WA (0.6%) is also greater than its loss towards the IP (1.3%) if the relative sizes of the WA and IP are taken into account.

-----  
**Table II.2.13. Party vote 1979 by party vote 1983. Total percentages.**

1979	1983					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA
SDP	10.9	0.7	2.6	0.4	2.2	0.6
PP	0.4	13.8	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.4
IP	1.3	0.6	37.7	0.3	2.2	1.4
PA	0.6	0.7	1.2	14.2	1.3	2.4
Trotskyites	-	-	-	0.4	-	-

(N=695)

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**Net gains or losses of the parties due to party change 1979-1983.**

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA
Net gain	PP -0.3	SDP 0.3	SDP 1.3	SDP -0.2	SDP 2.2	SDP 0.6
or	IP -1.3	IP -1.0	PP 1.0	PP 0.5	PP 0.9	PP 0.4
loss	PA 0.2	PA -0.5	PA 0.9	IP -0.9	IP 2.2	IP 1.4
	SDA -2.2	SDA -0.9	SDA -2.2	SDA -1.3	PA 1.3	PA 2.4
	WA -0.6	WA -0.4	WA -1.4	WA -2.4		
			Tr. 0.4			

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**Net effect of party change**

	-4.2	-2.5	-0.4	-3.9	6.6	4.8
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 Excluded from the table are 96 respondents, for whom voting behaviour in 1979 or 1983 was missing, 97 who were first time voters in 1983, 38 mobilized voters in 1983, 46 demobilized voters in 1983, and 31 respondents who abstained or turned in a blank ballot both in 1979 and 1983.  
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A similar pattern emerges for the PP, which only gains (slightly) from its switches with the SDP. The PP loses on the other hand relatively less to the new parties, as around half of its net losses are due to switches with other old parties.

The IP - which was winning in the election - gains from all party switches between old parties, but it is interesting that the party gains only slightly more from its switches with the SDP than with the PP or the PA. The IP loses on the other hand some votes to the two new parties, and as those slightly override the net gains from the old parties IP suffers a small net loss from all party changes in the data.

The PA loses on most fronts. Even though the party gains 0.5% on its switches with the PP, and attracts the 1979 Trotskyite voters, its total net loss is 3.9%. Interestingly enough, the PA's net loss to the IP (0.9%) is the main reason that the party suffers a small net loss (0.2%) in its changes with the old parties, but most of the PA's total net loss due to party switching stems from its voters going to the new parties (3.7 out of 3.9% net loss). The PA loses almost twice as many voters to the WA as to the SDA.

Finally, as the two new parties can only benefit from party switching, their profiles in Table II.2.13 simply reflect their profiles in Table II.2.12.

The discussion so far has focused on the effects of party switching, mobilization and demobilization, and the impact of new voters. Table II.2.14 summarizes those results, and enables us to compare the relative contribution of each of the three factors on the election result.

Not surprisingly, direct party switching is by far the strongest factor explaining changes in electoral outcomes. According to the table, about 80-90% of the net losses of the SDP, PP, and PA is due to the effects of direct party switching. On the other hand, mobilization and

demobilization contribute most to the net loss of the IP in the table, but it should be borne in mind that the total loss of the IP in the data is only 1.4% - much less than that of the other old parties - and in fact our data fails to reflect that the IP actually gained in the election.

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**Table II.2.14. Party vote 1983: Effects of party switching, mobilization and demobilization and first time voters.**

	Vote 1979	Party switching	Mobilization, demobilization	New voters	Sum	Vote 1983
SDP	17.5	-4.2	-0.6	-0.5	12.2	12.5
PP	18.6	-2.5	-0.1	-0.1	15.9	16.0
IP	43.3	-0.4	-0.9	-0.1	41.9	41.7
PA	20.1	-3.9	-0.2	-0.3	15.7	15.8
SDA	0.0	6.6	0.7	0.8	8.1	7.8
WA	0.0	4.8	1.1	0.1	6.0	6.2

-----  
 The figures in Col.5 (Sum) are obtained simply by adding or subtracting the figures in Col.2-4 from the figures in Col.1. Col.6 (Vote 1983) shows the share of each party in the sample. The discrepancies between Col.5 and 6 are due to rounding error and the fact that the percentages in the columns are not calculated from exactly the same figures.  
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### ***II.3 The decision-making process 1983: When did the voters decide? Did they consider other parties?***

We have seen that direct party switching is the major explanation of the parties' gains and losses in the 1983 election. So far we have concentrated our analysis on the voters' actual voting decisions as reported in our survey. Now we shall turn to the decision-making process: When did the voters decide what party to vote for? What other parties did they consider - if any?

Analysis of such questions throws further light on what happened in the election - and what *could* have happened.

Such an analysis can, first, give us a new indicator on the potential volatility of the electorate. How large a

proportion of the voters did consider voting for another party?

Second, we get some indication of the destinations of the "floating" voters? Are they evenly distributed among the parties, or do some parties attract them more than others? What parties are most successful during the election campaign?

Third, we get some information on the *potential* of the parties. How many voters considered voting for a given party but did not do so? What would the result have been if those voters had in fact voted for the party?

Fourth, we get a new indicator of the voters' perceptions of the party system. What parties are close together in the minds of the voters - what parties are seen as realistic alternatives?

Table II.3.1 shows when the voters of the six parties made their final voting decision. While the relationship between party voted for and decision time is in general weak ( $ETA=.14$ ),<sup>29)</sup> some clear patterns nevertheless emerge.

If we look at the proportion of each party's voters who did not consider voting for another party, the two new parties discern them clearly from the four old ones - not surprisingly. Around half of the voters of the old parties did not consider voting differently, while only a fourth of the SDA voters and just over a third of WA voters did not consider voting for another party.

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29) Using time of decision as the dependent variable, forming a scale from 1 (decided on polling day) to 6 (did not consider another party).

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**Table II.3.1. When did the 1983 voters decide what party to vote for?**

**A. Column percentages**

	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>SDA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>All</i>
Did not consider another party	49	56	56	53	23	38	51
More than a month before	2	13	11	8	22	13	11
8-30 days before	7	2	6	7	17	4	7
One week before	14	9	7	5	17	9	9
During the last week	15	5	8	11	11	19	10
On polling day	14	15	11	15	11	17	13
Total	101	100	99	99	101	100	101
N=	(101)	(130)	(347)	(131)	(65)	(53)	(827)

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**B. Cumulative percentages**

	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>SDA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>All</i>
Did not consider another party	49	56	56	53	23	38	51
More than a month before	51	69	67	62	45	51	62
8-30 days before	57	72	74	69	62	55	68
One week before	71	80	81	74	78	64	77
During the last week	86	86	89	85	89	83	87
On polling day	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=	101	130	347	131	65	53	827

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Of the 854 respondents who revealed party choice in 1983 27 who did not answer the question on voting decision are missing from the table.

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*Q: Did you ever consider voting for another party? (If yes):  
How long before the election did you make a final decision?*

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If we look, on the other hand, at how many had made up their minds a month or more before polling day, a different pattern emerges. Three of the old parties have in common that two out of every three of their voters had come to a final decision before the election campaign really started: the PP (69%), the IP (67%), and the PA (62%). This was the case for only about a half of the voters of the two new parties and the SDP, which of course means that those three

parties gained half of their voters during the election campaign.

Relatively few voters say they made up their minds 8-30 days before polling day, or 2-7% of each party's voters, with the notable exception of the SDA: 17% of the SDA's voters say they decided in that period. This may indicate that the last week of the campaign was a bad one for the SDA - which is in accord with the feeling of many observers at the time.

The last few days seem on the other hand to have been successful for the SDP and in particular for the WA. 36% of the WA's and 29% of the SDP's voters claim to have made the final decision less than a week before the election. The corresponding figures for the other parties are 26% for the PA, 22% for the SDA, 20% for the PP, and 19% for the IP. Thus, the most "floating" voters were not evenly distributed among the parties.

Table II.3.1 also gives us a new indicator on the potential volatility of the electorate. 49% of the voters said they had considered voting for another party. This is compatible with the data presented in Section II.2; there we saw that 60% claimed to have voted for the same party 1978, 1979 and 1983 (Table II.2.9) while 41% said they always voted for the same party in an answer to a general question (Table II.2.10).

While only half of the electorate did not consider voting for another party, 62% had made up their mind a month or more before the election, i.e. before the election campaign really started. 32% came to a final conclusion in the last

seven days; 13% say they made the final decision on polling day. Obviously the election campaign is important.

Let us turn to what could have happened in the election. An analysis of which other parties the voters considered while making up their minds can give us an indication of the potential maximum each party could have reached in the election.

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**Table II.3.2. Potential maximum vote of the parties 1983.**

Vote 1983	Number of parties also considered:				Max. vote	Percentages		Ratio: Max.vote/ 1983 vote
	One	Two	Three			Voted 1983	Max. vote	
SDP	107	62	21	7	197	12.5	22.3	1.78
PP	136	52	7	2	197	15.9	23.3	1.47
IP	356	65	14	2	437	41.7	49.4	1.18
PA	135	44	13	4	196	15.8	22.1	1.40
SDA	67	79	19	4	169	7.8	19.1	2.45
WA	53	48	14	5	120	6.2	13.6	2.19

N= (854) (350) (44) (8) (885) (854) (885)

-----  
 406 respondents named 1-3 parties they considered voting for. Of those 31 did not vote, returned a blank ballot or information on their 1983 vote is missing. Thus the number of respondents goes up to 854 for maximum vote. Second preferences of four voters, who considered voting for the IP splintergroup in the West Peninsula, are omitted from the table.

Maximum vote for each party is calculated by simply adding the number of respondents who claimed to have considered voting for the party to the number of respondents who said they did in fact vote for the party in 1983.

-----  
 Table II.3.2 shows, that the parties' relative gains from attracting all voters who considered voting for them are very different. The two new parties, the SDA and the WA, would have more than doubled their share of the votes. The SDP would almost have doubled its share, while the PA and the PP would have increased their share by almost 50%. Such an addition of "potential" voters would relatively increase

the size of the largest party, the IP, to a much smaller degree.

Why do the parties differ in this respect? Various explanations are possible and need not be the same for all parties. Let us consider two here.

First, the explanation could be related to the political performance of the parties. Most voters may be inclined to vote for "their" party in accordance with the party identification model. If, on the other hand, voters of a party are dissatisfied with the performance of their own party their doubts could be reflected both in a high proportion considering voting for someone else and in a late final decision on how to vote.

Second, this difference could be a reflection of an electorate in which a relatively large proportion of voters is either without party identification or has a weak one. If that were the case, the observed differences between parties could of course also stem from those voters' perceptions of the performance of the parties - in other words, the electoral winds - but the explanation could also be of a more structural nature; a large part of the "floating" voters may not have developed an identification with any one party, but nevertheless developed some identification with a group of parties or just an antagonism towards one or more parties. If this were the case, this underlying structure would influence the destinations of the "floating" voters, which were then not only determined by the electoral winds. Some parties would always tend to get a relatively small



share of those who decide late; in fact the contenders for the "floating" vote would not really be all parties.<sup>30)</sup>

Voters' considerations of voting for another party can also tell us something about the fronts in the election campaign: what parties were fighting for the same votes?

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**Table II.3.3. Party considered by 1983 vote. Only those who revealed a party voted for 1983 and considered one other party. Percentages.**

	1983 vote						
Considered voting for	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	All#
SDP	-	18	37	6	13	4	22
PP	13	-	22	20	16	9	18
IP	38	35	-	8	35	17	28
PA	10	25	6	-	10	48	14
SDA	27	16	28	24	-	22	24
WA	13	6	8	41	26	-	15
Total	101	100	101	99	100	100	
N=	(48)	(51)	(119)	(49)	(31)	(23)	

-----  
 # This column gives the proportion of respondents who mentioned each party when those who voted for that party are excluded. N thus varies from 202 (IP) to 298 (WA), and the percentages do not of course add up to 100.

-----  
 The proportional distribution of respondents' recalled vote 1) in the table above and 2) in the total sample was as follows:

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	All	N
1) (Table)	15%	16%	37%	15%	10%	7%	100%	(321)
2) (Total sample)	13%	16%	42%	16%	8%	6%	101%	(854)

-----  
 While the table has to be interpreted with caution, as the number of respondents supporting each party is low (especially for the SDA and WA), some clear patterns emerge. Voters of the various parties are not equally attracted to other parties. The relative size of the parties has to be

30) Such an underlying structure would also lead to a systematic bias in opinion polls before elections, as such polls usually assume that the division between parties of those voters who are undecided is the same as those who reveal what party they are going to vote for.

kept in mind (see bottom section of the table). The proportion of each party's voters who considered another party can be compared to the figures in the last column, giving the proportion of all voters who considered that party and excluding those who voted for it. While for example 38% of SDP voters who considered voting for one other party mentioned the IP, 28% of those who voted for SDP, PP, PA, SDA or WA and considered voting for one other party mentioned the IP.

Of those who considered voting for one other party, and did not vote for the SDP, 22% mentioned the SDP as their second choice. But voters of different parties were attracted to the SDP to a very different degree. The party was by far most popular among IP voters; 37% of this group considered voting for the SDP. 18% of PP voters considered voting for the SDP, as did 13% of SDA voters. The SDP was clearly least attractive to PA and WA voters; the party was only mentioned by 6 and 4% respectively.

18% of those who did not vote for the PP mentioned that party as a second choice. PP's attraction to other parties' voters varied much less than in the case of the SDP. The PP was most popular among IP and PA voters (22 and 20%), while only 9% of WA's voters considered voting for the PP.

Only 28% of those who did not vote for the IP considered voting for the party, while 37% of those who considered voting for one other party, and 42% of the total sample, voted for the IP. The IP attracted the voters of three parties to a similar degree, SDP (38%), PP (35%), and SDA (35%). The IP appealed much less to the voters of the WA (17%) and the PA (8%).

14% of those who did not vote for the PA mentioned the party as a second choice. Its attraction was mainly felt by the voters of two parties: 48% of the WA's voters considered voting for the PA while 25% of PP voters did so. 10% of SDP and SDA voters mentioned the PA but only 6% of IP voters.

As we saw in Table II.3.2, when the relative sizes of the parties are taken into account, the two new parties were most popular among those who considered voting for another party. 10% of those included in Table II.3.3 actually voted for the SDA, while 25% of those who did not vote for the party considered doing so. The SDA's appeal to other parties' voters varies less than does that of other parties: the party was most popular among voters for the IP (28%) and the SDP (27%) and least popular among PP voters (16%).

15% of those who did not vote for the WA considered doing so and the variations in the party's appeal are large. 41% of PA voters who considered voting for one other party had the WA in mind when coming to a decision. A corresponding figure for SDA voters was 26%, while the WA's appeal to other parties' voters was much weaker (6-13%).

The clearest pattern emerging from this analysis is that the PA and WA were competing for the same voters. WA was also, to a lesser degree, competing with the other new party, the SDA, while the attraction of WA to the voters of the IP, SDP and PP was relatively small and vice versa. The PA seems to be closer to the PP than the SDP in the minds of the voters, while the opposite positions of the IP and PA are clearly reflected in the very small affection these voters show for each other's party.

The IP and the SDP are also clearly fighting for the loyalty of the same voters. SDP voters are only slightly more attracted to the IP than are the voters of the PP and the SDA but IP voters are much more inclined to vote for the SDP than the PP.

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**Table II.3.4. Total percentage choosing each pair of alternatives. Only those revealing a party choice, and mentioning one other party they considered voting for.**

	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>SDA</i>	<i>WA</i>
SDP	-	5	19	2	5	2
PP	-	-	14	7	4	2
IP	-	-	-	3	14	4
PA	-	-	-	-	5	10
SDA	-	-	-	-	-	4

(N=321)

-----

Table II.3.4 shows the total percentage of the voters who form each "pair" of parties. Of the 321 voters who considered voting for one other party 5%, for instance, either voted for the SDP and considered voting for the PP or vice versa. While the relative size of the parties has to be kept in mind when the "closeness" of parties in the voters' mind is considered, this table shows directly the amount of voters considering each pair of alternatives.

And despite the patterns that emerge it should be borne in mind that the battle for the voters' loyalties are fought on all fronts - even between the IP and the PA.

#### **II.4 The 1987 election campaign**

Two major factors characterized the 1987 election campaign. The outgoing government was fairly popular and had a strong record on economic policy. The positions of the governing parties, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, had weakened, however, as reflected in electoral losses in the local elections in the spring of 1986, and their generally below average ratings in the opinion polls. The government had started out with a policy package aimed primarily at bringing down inflation and included a temporary ban on inflation indexing of wages and collective bargaining. As the external conditions of the economy - that is, fish catches and prices - improved from the near-crisis situation of 1982-83 to relative prosperity in 1986, some of the austerity measures were relaxed. Early in 1986 the government struck a deal with the trade union leadership, compensating the unions for accepting wage restraint by providing various social measures. The result was relative peace and quiet in industrial relations and considerable success in the fight against inflation, but the price of success was increasing public debt.<sup>31)</sup>

Between January and March 1987 the election campaign proper gradually took off and focused mainly on the government record. Opinion polls showed that while the government parties had lost support, they seemed able to maintain their majority. These polls indicated that the SDP and the WA would gain considerably in the election, as can be seen in Table II.4.1, which shows reported voting

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<sup>31)</sup> See O.Th. Hardarson and G.H. Kristinsson (1987). This article gives a more detailed analysis of the election campaign than is presented here.

intentions among respondents stating a preference in the regular opinion polls of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland.<sup>32)</sup>

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**Table II.4.1. Voting intentions May 1986-April 1987. Only those who revealed a party choice. Percentages.**

	May 1986	Nov. 1986	5-12 Mar. 1987	27 Mar.- 3 Apr. 1987	10-14 Apr. 1987	18-21 Apr. 1987
IP	39.8	33.6	38.9	26.5	29.6	28.1
CiP	-	-	-	16.6	12.2	11.3
PA	15.9	15.4	15.8	14.2	11.9	13.0
PP	15.4	17.3	13.8	12.9	14.6	16.6
SDP	15.5	24.1	18.0	15.3	15.5	14.0
WA	9.0	8.7	7.2	10.8	12.1	12.8
Others	4.4	0.8	6.2	3.5	4.1	4.2
Total	100.0	99.9	99.9	99.8	100.0	100.0

-----

In March the whole election campaign was turned upside down. On Thursday March 19th, eight days before the final date for submitting nominations, an independent newspaper revealed that the IP minister Albert Gudmundsson had been guilty of tax evasion while he served as Minister of Finance (1983-1985) and that party leader Thorsteinn Palsson had privately demanded his resignation as Minister of Industry. Later the same day Palsson confirmed the paper's story, but said that as Gudmundsson was abroad on official business further comments on his political future would be delayed to the coming week-end. One of the most dramatic weeks in Icelandic politics followed.

Gudmundsson returned home on Saturday and it soon became clear that the party demanded his resignation from government, but wanted him to hold his first seat on the party's list in Reykjavik. On Tuesday Gudmundsson resigned,

<sup>32)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

but seemed prepared to remain on the IP list, despite pressure from his supporters for a separate candidature. The same evening Palsson declared on television that Gudmundsson would never again become a minister for the IP.

The following day the Citizens' Party was founded, and enthusiastic Gudmundsson supporters managed in only two days to propose lists in all constituencies and submit them on Friday night - an organizational miracle. Opinion polls taken the following weekend showed support of 16 to 17% for the new party while the IP had dropped to 25 to 26%. This dramatic sequence of events dominated the media for two or three weeks, putting the 'normal' campaign in the shadows. It was really only after the week-long Easter holiday that the 'real' campaign started again - with five days to go to the election.

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**Table II.4.2. Election results 1983 and 1987. Percentages of valid votes (number of Althingi seats).**

	1983	1987
Independence Party	38.7 (23)	27.2 (18)
Citizens' Party	-	10.9 (7)
Progressive Party	19.0 (14)	18.9 (13)
Social Democratic Party	11.7 (6)	15.2 (10)
People's Alliance	17.3 (10)	13.4 (8)
Women's Alliance	5.5 (3)	10.1 (6)
Social Democratic Alliance	7.3 (4)	0.2 (0)
Union for Regional Equality	-	1.2 (1)
Humanist Party	-	1.6 (0)
National Party	-	1.3 (0)
IP splinter group in W.Peninsula	0.5 (0)	-
Total	100% (60)	100% (63)

-----  
 Numbers in brackets give the number of MPs. The number of MPs was increased from 60 to 63 between 1983 and 1987.  
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The results on election day - shown in Table II.4.2 - were the greatest blow to the established party system so far and in particular a disaster for the IP. The four established parties between them only managed three-quarters of the votes - by far their lowest share since the foundation of the four-party system in the 1930s. The IP and the PA suffered their worst defeats ever. The joint share of the government parties, the IP and the PP, fell from 57.7% in 1983 to 46.1% in 1987 and the government lost its majority in the Althingi. The great winners in the election were the challengers to the established four-party system, and three of them won seats in the Althingi.<sup>33)</sup> Never before had a challenger to the four-party system managed to win over 10% of the votes - let alone two at the same time. Nor had one been able to, as the WA now managed, increase its share of votes following its initial success.<sup>34)</sup> In the next section we analyse the voter movements that led to these dramatic results.

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33) It should be noted, that the Social Democratic Alliance, which lost almost all its following in 1987 and the four members it had in 1983, was really not the same party in 1987 as in 1983. In 1986 three of its Althingi members had joined the SDP, and one the IP. The party had essentially been abolished in 1987, although some grass-root activists nevertheless put up lists in two constituencies using the name of the party.

34) The Union for Regional Equality, which had one member elected, only put up a list in the Northeast constituency, and received 12.1% of the votes there. This candidacy was led by a elderly local leader of the Progressive Party, an MP of long standing, representing farmers and the more sparsely populated areas within the constituency, who had put forward a strong claim for first place on the party list but was rejected.



## II.5 Movements in the 1987 election: How did the results come about?

In this section we will try to estimate how new voters, voters' mobilization and demobilization, and direct party switching contributed to the 1987 election results. First we shall, however, look at how accurately our data reflects the outcome and the net changes that occurred. Table II.5.1 shows how the reported vote of our total sample in 1987 and of our panel respondents corresponds to the actual results.

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**Table II.5.1. Reported vote in 1987 election by total sample and panel compared to actual results. Percentages.**

	Actual results	Total sample	Panel
SDP	15.2	15.6	14.9
PP	18.9	17.0	16.5
IP	27.2	30.0	31.2
PA	13.4	13.1	12.6
SDA	0.2	0.3	0.2
WA	10.1	12.5	12.6
Humanist Party	1.6	1.5	1.1
Union for Reg. Eq.	1.2	1.3	1.1
National Party	1.3	1.4	1.6
CiP	10.9	7.2	8.3
Total	100.0	99.9	100.1
N=	(152722)	(1539)	(564)

-----

Table II.5.1 shows that the IP (+2.8%) and the WA (+2.4%) are overrepresented in the survey of the total sample, while the CiP (-3.7%) and PP (-1.9%) are underrepresented. Discrepancies for other parties are 0.4% or less. The panel does not deviate greatly from the total sample.

Our data contains several measurements of the 1983 election results. We have the 1983 vote as reported by the total sample in 1983 and by the total sample in 1987. In addition we have the 1983 vote as reported by the panel both in 1983 and in 1987. In the latter case the same respondents are reporting the same behaviour, so the results should be

identical if the reports are accurate at both time points. But, as we indicated earlier, some discrepancies should be expected and that is indeed the case, as can be seen in Table II.5.2.

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**Table II.5.2. Reported vote 1983 by total sample 1983, panel 1983 and 1987 and total sample 1987, compared to actual results. Percentages.**

	Actual result 1983	Total sample 1983	Panel report 1983	Panel report 1987	Total sample 1987
SDP	11.7	12.5	12.9	12.4	14.4
PP	19.0	15.9	14.9	15.6	16.7
IP#	39.2	41.7	40.9	44.3	42.0
PA	17.3	15.8	15.7	15.2	17.1
SDA	7.3	7.8	8.3	5.0	3.5
WA	5.5	6.2	7.3	7.6	6.2
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.1	99.9
N=	(129962)	(854)	(591)	(540)	(1228)

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# Including the IP splintergroup in the West Peninsula 1983.  
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There are some discrepancies between the actual result in 1983 and the reported vote of the total sample in the 1983 election study, but as we noted in Section II.2 these are within the margins of sampling error. The greatest deviations in the panel results concern, first, the IP: in 1983 40.9% claimed to have voted for the IP, but in 1987 44.3% claimed to have done so. The other striking deviation is that while 8.3% of the panel claimed in 1983 to have voted for the SDA, only 5% did so in 1987. This trend is even stronger if we compare the 1983 and 1987 total samples: 7.8% of the 1983 sample said they voted for the SDA, while only 3.5% of the 1987 sample "admitted" having done so. This is to be expected, as people are likely to be somewhat reluctant to say they voted for a party generally considered "dead" at the time of interviewing. The other discrepancies

between the reported vote by the 1983 total sample and the 1987 total sample are within margins of sampling error, the greatest being increased overestimation of the SDP vote from 12.5% to 14.4%.

**Table II.5.3. Vote in 1983 as reported by the panel respondents in 1983 and 1987. Percentages.**

	1983-REPORT							
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	Abst.	NA
1987-REPORT								
Same party	67	73	84	69	47	72	-	-
Other party	17	14	5	12	45	14	27	39
Abst./blank	3	3	2	4	2	7	58	7
No answer	13	10	8	15	6	7	15	54
Total	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(76)	(88)	(242)	(93)	(49)	(43)	(59)	(28)

The column "Abstained" shows those who said they did not vote or turned in a blank ballot. The column NA (No answer) shows those who refused to answer the question or said they did not know which party they voted for.

*Panel respondents' reported 1983 vote - summary:*

Reports same party 1983 and 1987.....	64.3
Reports different parties 1983 and 1987.....	11.4
Reports party 1983 but abstention 1987.....	2.8
Reports party 1983 but no answer 1987.....	8.7
Reports abstention 1983 but gives party 1987.....	2.4
Reports abstention both in 1983 and 1987.....	5.0
Reports abstention 1983 but no answer 1987.....	1.3
No answer in 1983 but gives party 1987.....	1.6
No answer in 1983 but reports abstention 1987.....	0.3
No answer both in 1983 and 1987.....	2.2
Total.....	100.0
N=	(678)

Table II.5.2 reveals that while 591 (87.2%) of the panel respondents reported a party voted for in the 1983 survey, only 540 (79.6%) of them revealed in 1987 what party they had voted for in 1983. Table II.5.3 shows to what extent the answers of the panel respondents to this question were consistent in the two interviews.

71.5% of the panel respondents are consistent in the sense that in both interviews they report the same party as the party they voted for in 1983, or they claim to have abstained in the 1983 election, or they refuse to answer or say they don't remember their 1983 vote in both interviews.

11.4% are inconsistent in the sense that they simply report different parties as the party they voted for in 1983, and 5.2% are inconsistent in the sense that in one of the interviews they name the party voted for in 1983 but in the other interview they claim to have abstained in that election. Thus 16.6% of the total panel clearly gives an incorrect answer in one of the two interviews.

The remaining respondents, 11.9%, give a party or claim abstention in one of the interviews but refuse to declare or do not remember the 1983 vote in the other. In most of these cases the respondents had given a party (8.7%) or claimed abstention (1.3%) in the 1983 interview but do not remember or refuse to answer in the 1987 interview. Those respondents are obviously not inconsistent. Thus we can say that 83.4% of the panel give consistent answers in both interviews.

The consistency of the voters of different parties varies greatly. Only 5% of the IP voters (as reported in 1983) claim to have voted for another party when asked again in 1987, while corresponding figures for the SDP, PP, PA and WA are 12-17%. This largely explains why the IP's share in the 1987 panel report (540 respondents) is 44.3%, while only 40.9% in the 1983 panel report (591 respondents) as shown in Table II.5.2. By far the greatest inconsistency is shown by SDA-voters (as reported in 1983); only 47% of those

"admitted" in 1987 to have voted for the SDA in 1983, while 45% claimed in 1987 to have voted for another party in 1983.

As we mentioned in Section II.2, recall errors are generally not random but related to current behaviour. In Table II.5.4 we compare the panel's recall of the 1983 vote and its voting behaviour in 1987.

Of the panel respondents who report the same party as party voted for in 1983 in both interviews, 65% vote for that party in 1987 while 31% switch to another party. Very few claim to have abstained in 1987 or do not know or refuse to give a party vote.

Those who give a different 1983 party in the two interviews are of most interest here; we would expect their recall error to be related to their 1987 vote. Of the 77 respondents in this group, 22 (29%) had voted for the SDA in 1983 according to their 1983 report.

As expected, a large portion - 29 - of those 77 respondents (38%) report in 1987 that they voted for the same party in 1983 and 1987, while their 1983 report indicates that they did in fact change parties. 8 of those 29 (28%) had reported an SDA vote in 1983. This is the known recall error, where respondents make past behaviour consistent with current behaviour, and leads to underestimation of electoral volatility in our case. Those 29 individuals who "lie themselves consistent" constitute 4% of the total sample.

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**Table II.5.4. Voting behaviour in 1987 compared to reported 1983 vote by panel respondents in the 1983 and the 1987 surveys. Percentages.**

*Report same 1983 party vote in 1983 and 1987:*

Vote for same party 1983 and 1987	65%	(42%)
Vote for different parties 1983 and 1987	31%	(20%)
Did not vote/blank vote in 1987	2%	(1%)
Refuse/don't know 1987 vote	2%	(1%)
Total	100%	(64%)
N=	(463)	-

*Report different 1983 party vote in 1983 and 1987:*

Votes 1987 for 1983 party as reported 1987:	38%	(4%)
Votes 1987 for 1983 party as reported 1983:	25%	(3%)
Votes 1987 for neither 1983 party as reported 1983 or 1987	31%	(4%)
Did not vote/blank vote in 1987	4%	(0%)
Refuse/don't know 1987 vote	3%	(0%)
Total	101%	(11%)
N=	(77)	-

*Report 1983 party in 1983 but claim 1983 abstention or refuse/say don't know 1983 party in 1987:*

Votes 1987 for 1983 party as reported 1983	19%	(2%)
Votes for different parties 1983 and 1987	14%	(2%)
Did not vote/blank vote in 1987	8%	(1%)
Refuse/don't know 1987 vote	59%	(7%)
Total	100%	(12%)
N=	(78)	-

*Report 1983 party in 1987, but claim 1983 abstention or refuse/don't know 1983 party in 1983:*

Votes 1987 for 1983 party as reported 1987	44%	(2%)
Votes for different parties 1983 and 1987	41%	(2%)
Did not vote/blank vote in 1987	7%	(0%)
Refuse/don't know 1987 vote	7%	(0%)
Total	99%	(4%)
N=	(27)	-

*Claim 1983 abstention or refuse/don't know 1983 vote both in 1983 and 1987:*

Give party voted for in 1987	40%	(4%)
Did not vote/blank vote 1987	20%	(2%)
Refuse/don't know 1987 vote	40%	(4%)
Total	100%	(10%)
N=	(60)	-

-----

Numbers in brackets give the size of each group as a percentage of the total sample (678 respondents).  
 -----

More surprisingly perhaps, 19 of those 77 respondents (25%), vote for the same party in 1987 as they reported voting for 1983 in the survey that year but recall in 1987

that they voted for another party in 1983. Those respondents "lie themselves inconsistent" in the 1987 interview. Recall error of this kind leads of course to an overestimate of volatility. This group constitutes 3% of the total panel.

27 (31%) of the 77 respondents who reported different 1983 vote in 1983 and 1987 claimed to have voted for a third party in 1987, while 3 claimed to have abstained and 2 refused to answer or did not remember their 1987 vote. While it is perhaps most likely that those respondents did in fact change party from 1983-1987, it is impossible to know if some of them were in fact giving random answers. On the whole it seems nevertheless that this group which shows recall error is much more volatile than those who report the same 1983 party in both interviews; only 25% of the former group voted for the same party in 1983 and 1987, if we believe their 1983 report, while 65% of the latter group did so. The overall effect of recall bias on volatility is on the other hand small, as we have errors in both directions.

78 individuals who gave the party voted for in 1983 claimed to have abstained in 1983 or refused to answer or did not know in the 1987 interview. Most of those respondents (59%) refused to reveal their 1987 vote; the change is simply that while they were prepared to reveal their party in 1983 they were not prepared to do so in 1987. Among the 26 respondents in this group (33%) who gave the party voted for in 1987, 58% voted for the same party in 1983 and 1987, while 42% changed parties.

Only 4% of the total panel claimed abstention or refused to answer or did not remember the 1983 vote in the survey that year but recalled a 1983 party in the 1987 interview.

85% of this group gave the party voted for in 1987. Just over half claimed to have voted for the same party in both years.

Finally, 10% of the panel sample claimed in both interviews that they had abstained in the 1983 election or refused to reveal the party for which they voted. 40% of this group gave the party voted for in 1987, while 20% claimed to have abstained in 1987, and 40% refused to name the party voted for that year.

With these limitations of the data in mind, we can now proceed to analyse the movements in the electorate that lead to the changes in election results from 1983-1987. We will use the voting behaviour in 1983 and 1987 as recalled by respondents in 1987 but check those results with the panel data where appropriate.

### **The impact of first time voters 1987**

In Section II.2 we saw that in 1983 the first time voters did not vote very differently from the older ones. Nevertheless the inclusion of the young voters had some impact on the election result in that year; the young voters followed the electoral winds to a slightly greater degree than older voters, thus increasing the net gains and losses of the winners and the losers in the election.

In the 1987 election the minimum voting age had been lowered from 20 years of age to 18 years. Thus an unusually large proportion of new voters entered the electorate in that election, as people from 18-23 years of age were able to vote for the first time. Table II.5.5 shows to what extent the vote of the first time voters deviated from the



vote of the older ones and the effect on the overall gains and losses in the election.<sup>35)</sup>

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**Table II.5.5. The impact of new voters in 1987. Percentages.**

	New voters	Older voters	All voters	Effect of new voters*	Actual net gain/loss#
SDP	12.6	16.2	15.7	-0.5	3.5
PP	14.8	17.2	16.9	-0.3	-0.1
IP	32.6	29.6	30.0	0.4	-11.5
PA	14.8	12.9	13.1	0.2	-3.9
SDA	1.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	-7.1
WA	12.6	12.5	12.5	0.0	4.6
HP.	3.0	1.3	1.5	0.2	1.2
URE	1.5	1.2	1.3	0.1	1.2
NP	1.5	1.4	1.5	0.1	1.3
CiP	5.2	7.5	7.2	-0.3	10.9
N=	(221)	(1314)	(1535)		

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 \* The figures in this column show how the inclusion of new voters changes each party's share of the vote; the party's share among older voters is simply subtracted from its share among all voters.

# The figures in this column show net gain/loss in the actual 1987 election; each party's share in 1983 is subtracted from the party's share in 1987.  
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The first time voters in 1987 did not deviate greatly from older voters. Moreover, the weak trend of first time voters to follow the electoral winds to a greater extent than the older voters, observed in 1983, is not repeated here. The SDP, which gained 3.5% in the election, did worse among first time voters than the older ones and the same is true of the new Citizens' Party, which gained 10.9%. The Women's Alliance gained 4.6%, but first time voters only contributed to that victory to the same extent as older

<sup>35)</sup> The table shows only those who revealed a party voted for in 1987. A much higher proportion of first time voters (8.3%) than older voters (3.2%) claimed not to have voted, while the proportions returning a blank ballot were similar in these two groups (1.3 and 1.1%). Refusals to answer the question were much more frequent among older voters (12.3%) than younger ones (4.5%). None of the younger voters did not remember his vote, while this was the case for 0.3% of the older ones.

voters. Three of the losing parties, the IP, PA and SDA, did in fact better among first time voters than older ones. The major conclusion must be that the inclusion of new voters in 1987 has only a marginal effect on the changes that took place in the election, just as was the case in 1983. The simple hypothesis that the young are more prone to follow electoral winds than older voters, which is supported to a limited extent by the 1983 data, is contradicted by the 1987 results. The young may be more volatile than older voters - a point to which we will return - but their voting behaviour in these two elections was similar to that of older voters and it is too simplistic to expect them to be more likely to jump on the bandwagon in an election campaign.

#### **Mobilized and demobilized voters in 1987**

The turnout in the 1987 election was 90.1%, while it had been 88.3% in 1983. Table II.5.6 shows the turnout in those two elections among our respondents.

According to the table 89.9% of the total sample voted in the 1983 election and 95.2% did so in 1987. 92% of the panel claim to have voted in 1983 and 94.7% in 1987. The turnout is probably somewhat overestimated,<sup>36)</sup> but the broad picture is in accord with the result presented in Table II.2.6, showing voting and non-voting 1978-1983. Mobilized voters constitute 7.5% of the 1987 vote according to the total sample (6% according to the panel) and the corresponding figure in 1983 was 5.4%. If the demobilized voters were added to the 1987 vote its size would increase by 1.9% (3.1%

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<sup>36)</sup> The general reasons for this are discussed in Section II.2.

according to the panel); the corresponding figure in 1983 was 4.4%.<sup>37)</sup> As these groups are small they are very unlikely to have had a great effect on the overall result.

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**Table II.5.6. Turnout in 1983 and 1987 by total sample 1987 and panel respondents. Percentages.**

	<i>1987 sample</i>	<i>Panel</i>
Voted both in 1983 and 1987	88.1	89.0
Voted in 1983, but not in 1987	1.8	3.0
Voted in 1987, but not in 1983	7.1	5.7
Voted neither in 1983 nor 1987	2.9	2.2
Total	99.9	99.9
N=	(1324)	(593)

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 Excluded from the table are those who were too young to vote in 1983 and those who refused to answer or said "don't know" to the question either in 1983 or 1987. The 1983 vote for the total sample is as reported in the 1987 interview, but as reported in the 1983 interview for the panel.  
 -----

The effect of demobilization is small (see Table II.5.7). If the demobilized voters had voted in the same way as they did (or claimed to have done) in 1983 the IP would have gained 0.2% and the WA and the CiP lost 0.2% each. The impact of mobilized voters is also small; it is greatest for the IP, which would have increased its share by 0.9% had the mobilized voters abstained as they did in 1983, and in that case the WA would have obtained 0.5% less of the voters than it in fact did. In general the impact of movements between voting and non-voting on the election results is small.

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<sup>37)</sup> The number of mobilized voters is expected to be higher than the number of demobilized voters because a higher proportion of first time voters in 1983 uses their vote in 1987 (95.5% according to the panel) than in 1983 (84.8%). But this does not of course account for the differences between the sizes of the two groups among the total sample 1987 and the panel; this is most likely due to recall error in the total sample.

except for the IP, which loses 0.9% due to these changes, and the WA, which gains 0.7%.<sup>38)</sup>

**Table II.5.7. Effects of mobilization and demobilization in the 1987 election. 1987 total sample. Percentages.**

	Dem.	Mob.	1987	1987+	1987-	1987+	EFFECTS		
	(1)	(2)	vote	dem.	mob.	d.-m.	Dem.	Mob.	Both
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
SDP	17.4	16.0	15.6	15.7	15.6	15.7	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
PP	17.4	16.0	17.0	17.0	17.1	17.1	0.0	-0.1	-0.1
IP	43.5	20.2	30.0	30.2	30.7	30.9	-0.2	-0.7	-0.9
PA	17.4	12.8	13.1	13.2	13.1	13.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
SDA	4.3	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
WA	0.0	20.2	12.5	12.3	12.0	11.8	+0.2	+0.5	+0.7
HP.		3.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	+0.1
URE		1.1	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1
NP		4.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2	0.0	+0.2	+0.2
CiP		6.4	7.2	7.0	7.2	7.1	+0.2	0.0	+0.1
Total	100.0	100.2	99.9	99.9	99.9	100.0			
N=	(23)	(94)	(1539)	(1562)	(1445)	(1468)			

Col.1 and 2: Demobilized and mobilized voters in the table are only those who revealed the party voted for in one election and said they did not vote or turned in a blank or void ballot in the other.

Col.3: Reported vote in 1983 election.

Col.4: Col.3 + Col.1.

Col.5: Col.3 - Col.2.

Col.6: Col.3 + Col.1 - Col.2 (i.e. the result if the mobilized had not voted and the demobilized had voted as they did in 1983).

Col.7: Col.3 - Col.4.

Col.8: Col.3 - Col.5.

Col.9: Col.3 - Col.6.

<sup>38)</sup> The impact of mobilization and demobilization in the panel deviates somewhat from the figures in the total sample presented in Table II.5.7. The total impact of mobilization and demobilization in the panel is as follows (the figures from the total sample in brackets): SDP +0.1 (-0.1), PP +0.4 (-0.1), IP -1.0 (-0.9), PA -0.2 (-0.1), SDA 0.0 (-0.1), WA 0.0 (+0.7), HP. +0.2 (+0.1), URE +0.2 (+0.1), NP +0.1 (+0.2), CiP +0.3 (+0.1). The most significant deviation is that according to the panel the WA did not gain from movements between voting and non-voting, while the results for the IP are similar and the impact on other parties small in both cases. It is hard to estimate which dataset is likely to be more accurate; recall error should be smaller in the panel, but the margins of sampling error for the panel (N=678) are larger than for the total sample (N=1845).

### Direct switching between the parties in 1987

The net gains for the victorious parties in the 1987 election were 23.1% as compared to 16.6% in 1983, 13.0% in 1979, and 19.4% in 1978. Thus the swing in 1987 was the biggest since the formation of the modern Icelandic party system. Until then the 1978 swing had been by far the largest. We have seen that the impact of new voters, mobilization and demobilization can only account for those changes to a very limited extent. The bulk of the explanation must therefore lie in direct switching between the parties.

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**Table II.5.8. Electoral behaviour 1979, 1983, and 1987.**  
**Panel respondents. Percentages.**

Voted for the same party three times	44
Voted for the same party twice, did not vote for a party in one election	9
Voted for one party, did not vote for a party in two elections	4
Voted for same party 1983 and 1987 but another 1979	6
Voted for same party 1979 and 1987 but another 1983	5
Voted for same party 1979 and 1983 but another 1987	14
Voted for two different parties, abstained once	10
Voted for three different parties	7
Did not vote in any of the elections	2
Total	101
N=	(555)

#### Summary:

Voted for same party in all elections	44
Did not change party but did not vote in every election	13
Voted for two parties	35
Voted for three parties	7
Did not vote for a party in any election	2
Total	101
N=	(555)

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 Excluded from the table are 57 who did not describe their voting behaviour in all three elections and 66 who were not eligible to vote in 1979.  
 -----

Table II.5.8 shows the amount of party switching from 1979 to 1987 according to our panel and can be compared to Table II.2.9, which shows party switching from 1978-1983.<sup>39)</sup>

The table indicates that electoral volatility was much higher 1979-1987 than in 1978-1983. Only 44% of the panel report having voted for the same party 1979-1987, while 60% of the 1983 sample did so for the elections from 1978-1983. 35% voted for two parties and 7% for three parties in the 1979-1983 period, while the corresponding figures for 1978-1983 were 26% and 2%.

Another indication of increased volatility can be found by comparing the party switch from 1983-1987 to the switching from 1979-1983, and this is done in Table II.5.9. The table is based on the 1979 and 1983 vote as reported by the total sample in 1983, the 1983 and 1987 vote as reported by the total sample in 1987, and how the panel reported its 1983 vote in 1983 and its 1987 vote in 1987. By comparing the results of the total 1987 sample and the panel we get an estimate of the recall error in the total sample.

Let us first note how small the deviations of the total sample in 1987 from the panel results are. If we only look at those who give a party in both elections 63.6% of the total sample claims to have voted for the same party 1983-1987, while 61.3% of the panel does so. The expected recall error of "lying oneself consistent" only raises the proportion of consistent voting 1983-1987 by 2.3%. In this case the 1987 recall seems fairly accurate.

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<sup>39)</sup> The 1979 and 1983 vote in Table II.5.8 is as reported in 1983 and the 1987 vote as reported in 1987. Voting in 1978, 1979 and 1983 in Table II.2.9 is on the other hand only based on the recall in 1983, thus possibly underestimating volatility to a greater extent.

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**Table II.5.9. Party switching 1979-1983 and 1983-1987.**  
**Percentages.**

	1979-1983 1983 sample	1983-1987 1987 sample	1983-1987 Panel
Voted same party	68.2	56.1	54.6
Switched parties	20.7	32.1	34.4
Vote + abstention	3.8	1.7	2.9
Abstention + vote	6.3	7.1	6.3
Two abstentions	1.0	3.0	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	(783)	(1319)	(581)

*Only those who give a party in both elections:*

Voted same party	76.7	63.6	61.3
Switched parties	23.3	36.4	38.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	(696)	(1163)	(517)

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 Excluded from all samples are those who did not describe their voting behaviour in both elections. The 95 respondents who were not eligible to vote in 1979 are also excluded from the 1983 sample, as are the 279 not eligible to vote in 1983 in the 1987 sample.  
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If we compare the total 1983 and 1987 samples, the proportion of party switchers rises from about 23% in 1983 to about 36% in 1987.<sup>40)</sup> The net gain increase in the election results, from 16.6% in 1983 to 23.1% in 1987, is

40) The number of party switchers must be regarded as rather high, especially in 1987. Heath et al. (1991, p. 20) report that the number of party switchers in Britain in 1964 and 1970 was 16-18%, in 1974, 1979, and 1983 22-24%, and 19% in 1987. For Sweden Holmberg (1984, p. 25) reports that in 1954 and 1958 only 7% switched parties, but vote switching increased in the 1960s, and reached 16% in 1970 and 1973, and 18-20% in 1976, 1979, 1982, and 1985 (1985 figure given in Holmberg and Gilljam (1987), p. 89). In Norway 18% switched parties in 1969, 24-25% in 1973 and 1977, while the figure was down to 19-20% in 1981 and 1985 (Aardal and Valen (1989), p. 162). In Canada 22% switched parties in 1974, 27% in 1979, and 21% in 1980 (Crewe and Denver (1985), p. 59), while in Australia the figures were 24% in 1969 and 9% in 1977 (*ibid.*, p. 83-85). In Denmark just over 20% switched parties in 1971, around 40% in 1973, around 25% in 1975, and just under 20% in 1979 and 1981 (*ibid.*, p. 381).

clearly a reflection of increased gross volatility in the electorate as a whole.

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**Table II.5.10. Party switching 1987: What happened to the 1983 vote? 1987 total sample (panel for SDA). Percentages.**

	1983 vote					
1987 vote	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA <sup>41)</sup>	WA
SDP	65	4	8	4	26	7
PP	6	69	7	8	2	4
IP	9	4	65	2	22	7
PA	3	4	1	61	4	14
SDA	-	-	0	-	-	-
WA	7	7	4	16	17	64
HP	1	1	1	2	2	-
URE	-	4	0	1	2	3
NP	1	2	0	2	4	-
CiP	4	5	12	1	20	3
Did not vote	2	2	2	2	-	-
Total	98	102	100	99	99	102
N=	(170)	(200)	(498)	(201)	(46)	(74)

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41) The figures for the SDA in the table are not from the total sample 1987 but from the panel, using 1983 vote as reported that year. Due to the large recall error for the SDA in 1987 (only 3.5% said they voted for SDA 1983, although the party obtained 7.3% in the election) the panel figures are likely to be much more accurate. The number of panel respondents who reported SDA vote in 1983 is 46, while only 43 respondents in the much larger 1987 sample recalled voting for the SDA in 1983. The deviations between the panel and the total sample regarding the 1987 vote of 1983 SDA voters are large. Of the 43 1983 SDA voters in the total sample, 40% claimed to have voted for the SDP in 1987, none for the PP, 12% for the IP, 7% for the PA, 26% for the WA, 2% for the HP, 5% for the NP, 7% for the CiP and 2% said they did not vote in 1987.

The panel results regarding the destination of the other parties' 1983 vote deviate on the other hand little from those of the total sample. In 45 of the 55 entries for those parties in the table the deviation is 2% or less. In 7 cases the deviation is 3%, and in 3 cases greater; while 61% of 1983 PA voters in the total sample claims to have voted for the PA again in 1987, 65% of the panel does so; while 4% of 1983 WA voters in the total sample reports a PP vote in 1987, none does so in the panel; and while none of the 1983 WA-voters in the total sample claims not to have voted in 1987, 5% in the panel failed to do so. Taking into account the recall error and the small size of the panel (e.g. only 40 1983 WA voters) these deviations can be considered small.



Excluding the SDA, all parties kept the loyalties of 61-69% of their 1983 voters. The 1983 parties that gained in the 1987 election, the SDP and the WA, retain 65% and 64% of their 1983 vote, respectively. In 1983, when the SDA lost, it kept 59% of its 1979 vote. The PP, which lost 0.1% in the election, keeps 69% of its 1983 vote, but it had kept 71% of its 1979 vote in 1983, when it lost 5.9%. The PA, which lost 3.9% in the election, keeps 61% of its vote but had kept 67% of its 1979 vote in 1983 when the party lost 2.4%. The IP, which lost 11-12% in the election, keeps 65% of its 1983 vote, but in 1983 when the party gained slightly it kept 82% of its 1979 voters, by far the highest proportion in that election. As the IP keeps its 1983 voters to a similar extent as the other parties despite heavy losses in the 1987 election, this must indicate that the IP is less successful in gaining votes than the others.

Table II.5.11 contains the same information as Table II.5.10, except that now the base for the percentages is the 1987 vote. The table therefore presents the profiles of the parties' 1987 voters - and answers the question: Where did the 1987 voters come from?

The major discrepancies between the two sections of the table are regarding the proportion of 1983 SDA voters in each of the parties' 1987 profiles. As we noted earlier the recalled SDA vote in 1983 was much too low in the 1987 interviews on which Section A of the table is based. Thus the proportions of SDA voters are higher - in some cases much higher - in Section B than in Section A of the table and because of this the other proportions tend in general to be somewhat lower in Section B than in Section A. By using

both sections we should nevertheless get a fair picture of the major switches that took place between the parties from 1983-1987.

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**Table II.5.11. Party switching 1987: Where did the 1987 vote come from? Total sample 1987. Percentages.**

**A. Based on total 1987 sample. 1983 vote as recalled in 1987.**

1983 vote	1987 vote								
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP
SDP	59	5	4	3	9	(17)	-	(15)	8
PP	4	68	2	5	10	(8)	(62)	(31)	11
IP	21	17	89	3	15	(25)	(15)	(8)	72
PA	4	8	1	80	24	(42)	(8)	(31)	2
SDA	9	-	1	2	8	(8)	-	(15)	4
WA	3	2	1	7	34	-	(15)	-	2
Total	100	100	98	100	100	100	100	100	99
N=	(188)	(202)	(360)	(154)	(137)	(12)	(13)	(13)	(83)

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**B. Based on panel respondents. 1983 vote as reported in 1983.**

1983 vote	1987 vote					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP
SDP	57	4	2	3	10	7
PP	1	66	2	7	11	5
IP	17	22	86	4	10	61
PA	7	5	2	75	16	5
SDA	16	1	6	3	13	21
WA	1	2	1	7	41	2
Total	99	100	99	99	101	101
N=	(75)	(83)	(165)	(68)	(63)	(44)

-----

On the whole, the table shows more volatility than was evident in 1983 (see Table II.2.12). A lower percentage of the 1987 vote for three of the old parties (among voters who voted for a party both in 1983 and 1987) came from their old stock than was the case in 1983.

The proportion of voters from own old stock decreased most for the SDP from 1983 to 1987, as was to be expected

because the party lost in 1983 and gained in 1987. In 1987 less than 60% of the SDP vote came from 1983 SDP voters, while the corresponding figure in 1983 was 83%. The voters gained by the SDP in 1987 came mainly from the IP (as was the case in 1983) and the SDA.

1983 PP voters constitute almost 70% of the 1987 PP vote in Table II.5.11. The PP lost only 0.1% in 1987 but in 1983, when the party lost 5.9%, the corresponding figure was 87%. The PP gains in 1987 came mainly from the IP, while in 1983 the party gained a similar amount of voters from the SDP, the IP and the PA. This means that former IP voters were least attracted to the PP in that year, when the size of the parties is taken into account.

The PA lost both in 1987 (-3.9%) and 1983 (-2.4%). In 1983 86% of its voters (who voted both in 1979 and 1983) came from its stock of 1979 voters, while in 1987 75-80% came from the party's 1983 stock. The PA made small gains from the other old parties in 1987 as in 1983, but in both elections it was relatively more attractive to former PP voters than voters of the IP and the SDP. Bearing in mind the small size of the WA in 1983 it is clear that the PA was relatively most attractive to 1983 WA voters: 7% of the PA vote in 1987 came from the WA, which made large gains from the PA in 1983. The PA, like the PP, obtained on the other hand very little of the 1983 SDA vote.

The IP lost heavily in 1987 while it made small gains in 1983. On both occasions the IP gained very little from other parties. Almost 90% of its vote among those who had voted for a party in the previous election came from its own stock both in 1983 and 1987.

The WA almost doubled its vote in the 1987 election. Only 34-41% of its 1987 vote among those who voted both in 1983 and 1987 came from its own stock. As in 1983, the WA gained considerably from all other parties, but the party was relatively least attractive to IP voters in 1987 as in 1983 and most attractive to PA voters, even though the latter tendency was not as strong in 1987 as in 1983.

The profile of the new party, the Citizens' Party, is of great interest. The discrepancy between the total sample and the panel regarding the 1983 SDA vote is greatest for the CiP profile. According to the total sample only 4% of the CiP vote came from the SDA while the panel figure is 21%. According to both samples the bulk of the CiP vote came from the IP (61-72%) and the CiP was least attractive to WA and PA voters.

In Table II.5.12 the effects of direct switching between the parties in the 1987 election are summed up. Only those who reported party vote for both elections are included.

As the 1983 vote in Table II.5.12 is based on the 1987 recall of the total sample, the impact of party switching from the SDA is underestimated in the table.<sup>42)</sup>

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42) According to the panel the net gain for the SDP in 1987 from party switching with the SDA was 2.3% (1.5% in the total sample as presented in the table), 1.9% for the IP (0.4%) and 1.7% for the CiP (0.3%). There are other discrepancies between the panel and the total sample regarding net gains/losses. In Table II.5.12 we have 39 net changes between parties (78 entries in the table, as each net change is entered twice, once as a gain, once as a loss). Of these 39 cases, the deviation of the panel from the total sample is 0.0 in 7 cases, 0.1 in 11 cases, 0.2 in 9 cases, 0.3 in 2 cases, 0.4 in 4 cases, and 0.5 or more in 6 cases. Three of the six largest deviations are those already mentioned including the SDA while the other three are: According to the panel the net gain for the WA from switching with the PA was 0.9% (1.9% in the table), the PP lost 0.2% from its switches with the PA according to the

**Table II.5.12. Party vote 1983 by party vote 1987, as recalled by the total sample in 1987. Total percentages.**

		1983 vote					
1987-vote		SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA Total
SDP		9.5	0.6	3.4	0.7	1.5	0.4 16.1
PP		0.9	11.8	3.0	1.4	-	0.3 17.4
IP		1.4	0.7	27.7	0.3	0.4	0.4 30.9
PA		0.4	0.7	0.4	10.6	0.3	0.9 13.3
SDA		-	-	-	0.1	-	- 0.1
WA		1.0	1.2	1.7	2.8	0.9	4.0 11.6
HP		0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.1	- 1.1
URE		-	0.7	0.2	0.1	-	0.2 1.2
NP		0.2	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	- 1.1
CiP		0.6	0.8	5.2	0.2	0.3	0.2 7.3
Total		14.2	16.9	42.0	16.9	3.7	6.4 100.1
(N=1163)							

**Net gains or losses of the parties due to party change 1983-1987.**

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP
SDP	x	0.3	-2.0	-0.3	-1.5	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.6
PP	-0.3	x	-2.3	-0.7	0.0	0.9	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.8
IP	2.0	2.3	x	0.1	-0.4	1.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	5.2
PA	0.3	0.7	-0.1	x	-0.2	1.9	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.2
SDA	1.5	0.0	0.4	0.2	x	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3
WA	-0.6	-0.9	-1.3	-1.9	-0.9	x	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
HP	-0.2	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1	0.0	x	x	x	x
URE	0.0	-0.7	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.2	x	x	x	x
NP	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2	0.0	x	x	x	x
CiP	-0.6	-0.8	-5.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	x	x	x	x
Total	1.9	0.5	-11.1	-3.6	-3.6	5.2	1.1	1.2	1.1	7.3

Excluded from the table are 259 respondents for whom voting behaviour in 1983 or 1987 was missing, 267 who were not eligible to vote in 1983, 94 mobilized voters in 1987, 23 demobilized voters in 1987 and 39 respondents who abstained both in 1983 and 1987.

According to the table 63.6% of those who voted both in 1983 and 1987 voted for the same party in both elections, while the corresponding figure in 1983 was 76.6% (see Table II.2.13). 13.9% switched between the four old parties, the SDP, the PP, the IP and the PA (11.6% in 1983), 8.7%

panel (but gained 0.7% in the table), and the WA gained 0.8% from the IP according to the panel (1.3% in the table).

switched between the four old parties and the WA (4.8% in 1983), 3.7% moved from the SDA (2.2% to the four old parties, 0.9% to the WA, and 0.6% to the new parties), 9.7% changed from the four old parties to the new parties (the Citizens' Party, the Humanist Party, the Union for Regional Equality and the National Party), and 0.4% moved from the WA to the new parties. So while 2.3% of the 13% increase in the proportion of party switchers is due to increasing movements between the four old parties from 1983-1987, the bulk of the increase is due to increasing movements to and from the WA and from the four old parties to the four parties that put up candidates for the first time in 1987.

Direct party changes cause the IP greatest losses, 11.1%. The party suffers a net loss from its switches with all parties except the SDA. Half (5.2%) of the net loss is to the Citizens' Party, but the losses to the PP (2.3%), the SDP (2.0%), and the WA (1.3%) are also worth mentioning.

The PA suffers a net total of 3.6% loss due to direct party switching. The party loses 1.9% to the WA, 0.7% to the PP and 1.0% to the four new parties. The PP gains slightly from party switching according to the table. It gains mainly from the IP but loses to the WA, the CiP and the URE. The SDA gains 1.9% from party switching, mainly from the IP and the SDA. The WA gains on most fronts but its greatest gains come from the PA. As the new parties can only gain from party switching their profiles in Table II.5.12 simply reflect their profiles in Table II.5.11 (A).

Table II.5.13 summarizes the impact of party switching, mobilization, demobilization and new voters on changes in the 1987 election.

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**Table II.5.13. Party vote 1987: Effects of party switching, mobilization and demobilization and first time voters. 1987 total sample.**

	New voters	Mob./ demob.	Party switch	Total	Survey change*	Election change**
SDP	-0.5	-0.1	1.9	1.3	1.3	3.5
PP	-0.3	-0.1	0.5	0.1	0.4	-0.1
IP	0.4	-0.9	-11.1	-11.6	-12.2	-12.0
PA	0.2	-0.1	-3.6	-3.5	-3.5	-3.9
SDA	0.1	-0.1	-3.6	-3.6	-3.2	-7.1
WA	0.0	0.7	5.2	5.9	6.5	4.6
HP	0.2	0.1	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.6
URE	0.1	0.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2
NP	0.1	0.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.3
CiP	-0.3	0.1	7.3	7.1	7.2	10.9

-----  
 \* The proportion of the sample which recalled voting for the party in 1983 subtracted from the proportion reporting a vote for the party in 1987.

\*\* Actual net gains or losses in the 1987 election.

Due to rounding error and the fact that the percentages in the columns are not calculated from exactly the same base figures the total column does not always equal the column showing survey change.

-----

Just as in 1983 (see Table II.2.14), direct party switching is by far the strongest factor accounting for the changes in election results. Over 90% of the losses of the IP, PA and SDA accounted for in the table are due to direct party switching, as are almost 90% of the gains made by the WA and the overwhelming proportion of the gains made by the four new parties. The PP's gains from party switching is on the other hand so small that it is almost outweighed by the (small) losses the party suffers from mobilization, demobilization and the impact of new voters. The losses the SDP suffers from those same factors decrease the party's gain of 1.9% from party switching down to 1.3% total gain, but as our survey underestimates the gains made by the SDP in the election the impact of party switching on the SDP's electoral fortunes in 1983 are underestimated in the table.

It is quite clear that the large swings both in 1983 and 1987 are mainly due to direct switching of voters between parties.

#### **II.6 The decision-making process 1987: When did the voters decide? Did they consider other parties?**

We have seen that the proportion of voters who changed parties from 1983-1987 increased from 23.4% to 36.4% compared to 1979-1983. Now we will examine if similar changes can be observed in the decision-making process of the voters: do the voters make their decision closer to election day and does a larger proportion consider voting for other parties? Is the increasing frequency of switching parties a reflection of a general tendency in the electorate to be more volatile or did only a higher proportion of a potential party changers actually switch parties in 1987 than in 1983?

If we compare the results in Table II.6.1 to Table II.3.1 we see that the electorate is more volatile in 1987 than in 1983 in the sense that more voters considered voting for more than one party and more voters made their decision on or close to polling day. In 1983 51% of all voters did not consider voting for another party but in 1987 only 39% failed to do so. In 1983 32% made their decision seven days or less before they voted - including 14% who decided on polling day. In 1987 39% made their decision in the last seven days - including 19% who decided on polling day.



-----  
**Table II.6.1. When did the 1987 voters decide what party to vote for? Total 1987 sample.**

**A. Column percentages**

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP	All
Did not consider another party	44	43	44	39	33	(9)	(42)	(18)	21	39
More than a month before	10	11	8	9	10	(7)	(10)	(-)	5	9
8-30 days before	10	8	14	13	14	(-)	(16)	(22)	41	14
One week before	6	9	9	6	6	(18)	(-)	(-)	9	8
During the last week	13	10	10	12	19	(9)	(27)	(33)	9	12
On poll.day	18	19	16	20	18	(58)	(5)	(27)	15	19
Total	101	99	99	99	100	(101)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(101)
N=	239	261	459	199	192	24	19	22	110	1530

-----

**B. Cumulative percentages**

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP	All
Did not consider another party	44	43	44	39	33	(9)	(42)	(18)	21	39
More than a month before	54	54	52	48	43	(16)	(52)	(18)	26	48
8-30 days before	63	62	66	62	57	(16)	(68)	(40)	67	62
One week before	69	71	74	68	63	(34)	(68)	(40)	76	69
During the last week	82	81	84	80	82	(42)	(95)	(73)	85	82
On poll.day	100	100	100	100	100	(100)	(100)	(100)	100	100
N=	239	261	459	199	192	24	19	22	110	1530

-----

Of the 1539 respondents who revealed party choice in 1987, 9 did not answer the question on voting decision and are omitted in the table.

-----

*Q: Did you consider voting for another party? (If yes): How long before the election did you make a final decision?*

-----

The relationship between time of decision and party choice is weak in 1987 (ETA=.16) as it was in 1983 (ETA=.14). Nevertheless, there are differences between the four old parties and other parties in both elections.

The proportion of the four old parties' voters who did not consider voting for another party decreased from 49-56% in 1983 to 39-44% in 1987. A somewhat lower proportion of WA voters did not consider another party in 1987 (33%) than had done so in 1983 (38%). The proportion of voters for major parties not considering another party was lowest among CiP voters in 1987 (21%), but had been lowest among SDA voters in 1983 (23%).

In 1983 two of every three voters for the PP, IP and PA had made their decision more than a month before polling day, while this was the case for around half of voters for the SDP, SDA and WA. In 1987 only half of the voters of the four old parties had decided at this point in time while the corresponding figure for the WA is 43%. The Citizens' Party has to be considered separately here, as its sudden birth happened in the last week before the final date to submit nominations, which is four weeks before polling day. While 8-14% of the voters for the other major parties say they made their final decision 8-30 days before the election, 41% of CiP voters made up their mind in that period. Bearing in mind that the CiP was a new party, a relatively small proportion of its voters decided to vote for the party in the last week of the campaign, which reflects the losses of the CiP in opinion polls during the campaign (see Table II.5.1).

The last few days of the 1987 campaign seem on the other hand to have been particularly successful for the WA, as was the case in 1983. 37% of WA voters in 1987 claimed to have made their final decision within a week of polling day (36% in 1983) while the corresponding figure (1983 figures in

brackets) for the PA is 32% (26%), 31% for the SDP (22%), 29% for the PP (20%), 26% for the IP (19%) and 24% for the CiP.

We have seen that the number of voters who considered voting for another party than they finally did increased from 49% in 1983 to 61% in 1987. Table II.6.2 shows what could have happened in the election. It shows the percentage each party would have obtained if it had managed to get the votes of all electors who considered voting for it.

-----  
**Table II.6.2. Potential maximum vote of the parties 1987.**

	Voted for 1987	Con- sidered (one)	Con- sidered (two)	Max. vote 1987	Vote 1987 (%)	Max. vote (%)	Ratio: Max./'87 vote
SDP	241	104	149	494	15.6	31.7	2.03
PP	262	71	94	427	17.0	27.4	1.61
IP	462	98	37	597	30.0	38.4	1.28
PA	202	58	28	288	13.1	18.5	1.41
SDA	5	2	-	7	0.3	0.4	1.33
WA	192	173	80	445	12.5	28.6	2.29
HP	24	16	-	40	1.5	2.6	1.73
URE	19	4	-	23	1.3	1.5	1.15
NP	22	21	-	43	1.4	2.8	2.00
CiP	110	76	72	258	7.2	16.6	2.31

N= (1539) (623) (230) (1556) (1539) (1556)

-----  
853 respondents named one or two parties they considered voting for besides the one to which they actually gave their vote. Of those 17 did not vote in 1987 or refused to say what they voted for. As they are included in the figures for maximum vote the number of respondents used as a base figure for maximum vote is 1556 while the base figure for actual vote is 1539.

Maximum vote for each party is calculated simply by adding the number of respondents who claimed to have considered voting for the party to the number of respondents who said they did in fact vote for the party in 1987.

-----  
The table reveals that the relative impact of obtaining the maximum vote is quite different for the parties just as in 1983 (see Table II.3.2). The 1987 ratios showing how much each party's share would have increased by obtaining the

maximum vote are in general higher than in 1983, as a higher proportion of voters considered voting for more than one party in 1987. Nevertheless, a relatively clear pattern emerges when those two elections are compared.

In 1983 the two new parties, the SDA and the WA, would have gained most by obtaining the maximum vote: they would have more than doubled their share (2.45 and 2.19 respectively). In 1987 the benefits would have been greatest to the new Citizens' Party (2.31) and the Women's Alliance (2.29). Those parties won the greatest victories in 1987 as the SDA and the WA did in 1983.<sup>43)</sup>

But the ratio between actual vote and maximum vote is not simply a reflection of what parties were winning and losing in the elections. The four old parties show the same pattern regarding maximum vote both in 1983 and 1987 despite fluctuations in their electoral fortunes.

Of the old parties the SDP would have gained most by obtaining its maximum vote both in 1987 (2.03) and in 1983 (1.78). In 1983 the SDP lost almost 6% while it gained 3.5% in 1987.

The gains of the PP would have been the second greatest of the old parties both in 1983 (1.47) and in 1987 (1.61). In 1983 the PP lost almost 6% while its loss in 1987 was only 0.1%.

The party furthest to the left, the PA, lost both in 1983 (-2.5%) and 1987 (-3.9%). Its gains from obtaining its maximum vote would on both occasions have been the second lowest of the old parties, 1.40 in 1983 and 1.41 in 1987.

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<sup>43)</sup> The number of respondents voting for the other new parties and the SDA is really too small to seriously consider their ratios.

The party that is largest and furthest to the right, the IP, would have gained least of the old parties by obtaining its maximum vote both in 1983 (1.18) and in 1987 (1.28). In 1983 the IP gained 1.4% while it lost 11-12% in 1987.

This pattern seems to indicate that the "floating" voters are not simply following electoral winds. The growing potential in both elections is greater for the new parties (including the WA as "new" in 1987) than for the two old parties in the centre, especially the PP, and least for the two polar parties, especially the IP.

-----  
**Table II.6.3. Party considered by 1987 vote. Only those who revealed party voted for 1987 and considered one other party. Percentages.**

	1987 vote						
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	All*
Considered							
SDP	-	14	27	7	24	18	19
PP	8	-	17	10	18	13	14
IP	24	24	-	3	10	55	21
PA	4	10	2	-	35	5	10
SDA	1	-	-	-	1	-	0
WA	39	33	25	70	-	8	33
HP	5	2	2	3	3	-	3
URE	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
NP	7	5	2	4	3	2	3
CiP	12	13	25	4	6	-	14
Total	100	101	102	101	100	101	
N=	(96)	(97)	(166)	(71)	(91)	(67)	

-----  
 \* This column gives the proportion of respondents who mentioned each party when those who voted for that party are excluded. N thus varies from 449 (IP) to 548 (CiP) and the percentages do not of course add up to 100.

-----  
 The proportional distribution of the recalled vote of the respondents in the table compared to the total sample:

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP	All	N
TABLE:	16%	16%	27%	12%	0%	15%	2%	1%	2%	11%	102%	(615)
SAMPLE:	16%	17%	30%	13%	0%	13%	2%	1%	1%	7%	100%	(1539)

Table II.6.3 shows what other parties each party's voters were attracted to. It is important to keep the relative size of the parties in mind and the results can be compared to those of 1983 in Table II.3.3.

As in 1983 each party's voters are attracted to other parties to different degrees and on the whole a similar pattern emerges.

As in 1983 one in every five voters who did not vote for the SDP and considered more than one party gave SDP as second choice. The SDP had greatest appeal to IP voters in 1987 (27%) as in 1983 (37%) and least to PA voters (6-7%). 18% of the CiP voters considered voting for the SDP as did 24% of the WA voters - while in 1983 only 4% of WA voters named the SDP as a second choice.

14% of those who did not vote for the PP considered voting for the party. As in 1983 the attraction of the PP varied less among voters of other parties than was the case for the SDP, and in fact for all the old parties. In 1987 voters of the SDP were least attracted to the PP (8%), while its greatest attraction was among WA (18%) and IP (17%) voters.

Both in 1983 and 1987 the proportion considering IP among voters who considered more than one party and did not vote for the IP is much lower than the proportion voting for the IP, both among those considering more than one party, and the electorate as a whole. In 1987 only 21% of those who considered more than one party and did not vote for the IP, considered voting for the party. The party had by far the most attraction among CiP voters: 55% of those considered voting for the IP. Both in 1983 and 1987 the attraction of

the IP was much greater to SDP voters (38% and 24%) and PP voters (35% and 24%) than to PA voters (8% and 3%) and WA voters (17% and 10%).

Only 10% of those who did not vote for the PA in 1987 named the party as a second choice as compared to 14% in 1983. In both elections the profile is very clear. The PA is by far most attractive to WA voters both in 1983 (48%) and 1987 (35%) and then to PP voters (25% in 1983, 10% 1987). The PA has the least attraction for SDP (10% and 4%) and especially IP voters (6% and 2%) in both elections.

33% of those who did not vote for the WA and considered more than one party had the WA in mind as a second choice compared to 15% in 1983. The party has the same profile in both elections, the major difference being that a higher proportion considered voting for the party on all fronts in 1987. The party is by far most attractive to PA voters: while 41% of them considered the WA in 1983, 70% did so in 1987. The proportion of SDP voters considering the WA increased from 13% to 39% from 1983-1987, while the corresponding figures were from 6% to 33% for the PP and from 8% to 25% for the IP. In 1983 the WA competed to some extent with the other new party (26% of SDA voters considered voting for the WA), but this was not the case regarding the Citizens' Party in 1987: only 8% of its voters who considered more than one party had the WA in mind when making the decision.

The Citizens' Party has a clear profile. 25% of IP voters considered voting for the party, while 12-13% of the SDP and PP voters did so. Only 4-6% of PA and WA voters considered voting for the CiP.

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**Table II.6.4. The parties' popularity as a second choice among each party's voters. Deviations from percentage of all voters considering each party.**

	SDP	PP	Voted for		WA	CiP	All#
Considered			IP	PA			
<i>SDP</i>							
1983	-	-4%	+15%	-16%	-18%	-	22%
1987	-	-5%	+8%	-12%	+5%	-1%	19%
<i>PP</i>							
1983	-5%	-	+4%	+2%	-9%	-	18%
1987	-6%	-	+3%	-4%	+4%	-1%	14%
<i>IP</i>							
1983	+10%	+7%	-	-20%	-11%	-	28%
1987	+3%	+3%	-	-18%	-11%	+34	21%
<i>PA</i>							
1983	-4%	+11%	-8%	-	+34%	-	14%
1987	-6%	0%	-8%	-	+25%	-5%	10%
<i>WA</i>							
1983	-2%	-9%	-7%	+26%	-	-	15%
1987	+6%	0%	-8%	+37%	-	-25%	33%
<i>CiP</i>							
1987	-2%	-1%	+11%	-10%	8%	-	14%
N 1983:	(48)	(51)	(119)	(49)	(23)		
N 1987:	(96)	(97)	(166)	(71)	(91)	(67)	

-----  
 # This column gives the percentage of respondents who mentioned each party when those who voted for that party are excluded. The figures in the column are the same as in Tables II.3.3 and II.6.3. Those two tables give the percentages from which the deviations in this table are calculated.  
 -----

Table II.6.4 may give a clearer picture of the other parties' popularity among each party's voters. The table shows to what extent the percentage of each party's voters considering a given party deviates from the percentage considering that given party among all voters who considered voting for another party. The table thus reveals for example that in 1983 the SDP was considered by 4% fewer PP voters than among all voters who did not vote for the SDP but considered doing so (i.e. 18% of PP voters considered voting for the SDP, while the corresponding figure for all voters



was 22%). Table II.6.4 thus summarizes Tables II.3.3. and II.6.3.

The strongest link between two parties emerging from this analysis is between the PA and the WA, and this is true for both elections. The WA is by far the most popular second choice among PA voters and vice versa. The table also reveals a positive link between IP voters on the one hand and SDP and PP voters on the other (and of course a strong positive relationship between the IP and the CiP). The IP is on the other hand obviously an unpopular choice among PA and WA voters and vice versa. There is clearly a negative relationship between the SDP and the PA and also, although this is weaker between the SDP and the PP. The PP is much more popular as a second choice among PA voters than are the SDP and the IP.

-----  
**Table II.6.5. Total percentage choosing each pair of alternatives 1987. Only those revealing party choice and mentioning one other party they considered voting for.**

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	HP	URE	NP	CiP
SDP	-	4	11	2	0	10	1	0	2	4
PP	-	-	8	3	0	8	0	0	1	3
IP	-	-	-	1	0	8	1	0	1	13
PA	-	-	-	-	0	13	1	0	0	1
SDA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
WA	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	2
HP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
URE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
NP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

(N=615)

-----

Table II.6.5 shows the total percentage of voters who considered each pair of parties. Of the 615 respondents who considered voting for one other party, 4% for instance voted for the SDP but considered voting for the PP or vice versa. As the size of the parties is different the figures do not

tell us directly the relative attractiveness between pairs of parties but the table shows the proportion of voters considering each pair of alternatives. Thus the table reveals for instance that a considerable proportion (8%) of the voters considering more than one party had the WA and IP in mind, even though - as we saw before - these two parties were relatively unpopular choices among each party's second choices.

### **Chapter III: Voters' ties to the parties**

Political parties are a basic characteristic of liberal democracies: the parties are the structured alternatives voters face in elections. Some voters develop formal or informal ties to a party and may support "their" party very strongly, while other voters feel little or no loyalty towards any party. In this chapter we will analyse the ties between Icelandic voters and parties. In Section III.1 we deal with party identification, in Section III.2 with party membership, in Section III.3 with participation in primary elections, in Section III.4 with exposure to the (party) press, and finally in Section III.5 with personal acquaintance with members of the Althingi.

#### **III.1 Party identification**

The key concept in the psychological model of voting behaviour is *party identification*, a concept introduced by the Michigan scholars Angus Campbell and Warren Miller in the 1950's. In the classic work, *The American Voter*, party identification is described thus:

Generally this tie is a psychological identification, which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support. Most Americans have this sense of attachment with one party or the other. And for the individual who does, the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior.<sup>1)</sup>

*Direction* of party identification refers to what party an individual supports or identifies with; *strength* refers to the degree of support.<sup>2)</sup>

1) Campbell et al. (1964), pp. 67-68.

2) The initial question in the Michigan surveys was: "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a

Both direction and strength of party identification seems to be important in explaining American voting behaviour. Many Americans retain their party identification over long periods of time, even though they do not consistently vote for "their" party's candidates. The model sees this in terms of various "short-term effects" which can cause the voter to deviate from his "normal" behaviour. While many of the original model's assumptions on American voting behaviour have been seriously questioned in the last two decades, Niemi and Weisberg conclude, that

partisanship is stable enough for the party identification concept to remain meaningful as a long-term component of the vote decision. Party identification is not totally stable, but it is sufficiently so as to preserve its preeminent status in understanding voting.<sup>3)</sup>

The usefulness of the concept of direction of party identification has on the other hand been criticized in European electoral research, as it has been shown that voters in e.g. Holland,<sup>4)</sup> Britain and Sweden usually change their party identification when they change their choice of a party in elections.<sup>5)</sup> The differences between American and British voters may be explained

by referring to ballot differences: Americans develop party loyalties as they vote for several different offices at the same election, while British citizens cast a vote for only a single office and so are less likely to distinguish

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Democrat, an Independent, or what?" (If Rep. or Dem.): "Would you call yourself a strong (Rep. or Dem.) or not a very strong (Rep. or Dem.)?" (If Independent): "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?" Party identification thus formed a seven-fold scale. *Ibid.*

3) Niemi, R.G. and H.F. Weisberg (1993b), pp. 275-276.

4) Thomassen, J. (1993), pp. 263-266.

5) S. Holmberg (1981), pp. 176-177.

between their current party and their current vote.<sup>6)</sup>

While Richardson has argued that partisanship may be prevalent for particular types of parties (traditional cleavage based parties), even in Europe,<sup>7)</sup> the predominant view has been that the Michigan model's basic assumption, that party identification is a more lasting characteristic than the choice of party, has at best a somewhat limited validity in the European parliamentary systems. If voters simply change party identification when they change party at the polling booth we have a tautological relationship: direction of party identification is simply party choice.

This does not mean that the strength of party identification is not also important in Europe. A party system where few voters identify with the parties would be expected to be more volatile than a party system where many or even most voters consider themselves as strong supporters of parties. Various parties in the same party system can also differ in this respect and this can have important consequences, presuming of course that the strength of party identification is related to other political variables.

In our surveys we asked about party identification in the following manner: *Now I would like to ask you about your attitudes towards the political parties. I would like to remind you that any information you may give is strictly confidential. Many people consider themselves supporters of political parties. Do you in general consider yourself as a*

---

6) Niemi, R.G. and H.F. Weisberg (1993), p. 213. Butler and Stokes in *Political Change in Britain* (1969) were first to report that party identification might be less stable in other countries than in the United States and gave the above explanation.

7) B.M. Richardson (1991).

*supporter of any political party or organization?* Those who considered themselves a party supporter were then subsequently asked: *Would you say you are a very strong, rather strong or not a very strong supporter (of a given party)?* Those who did not consider themselves a party supporter were on the other hand asked: *Do you nevertheless feel somewhat closer to any one party or organization than to others?* Thus the answers form a five-fold scale of party identification.<sup>8)</sup> Table III.1.1 shows strength of party identification by age.

Even though 3% fewer of our respondents consider themselves party supporters in 1987 than in 1983 the changes in the strength of party identification are small. Almost half of the respondents consider themselves as party supporters in both elections, almost a third do not but feel nevertheless closer to some party, and about one in every five voters has no party identification at all.<sup>9)</sup>

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8) The exact wording here is from the 1983 study. In 1987 the wording was slightly different. (See Appendices B and C).

9) While the overall changes reported here are small our panel data shows that changes on the individual level are greater. Of 618 panel respondents 34% claimed to be a party supporter both in 1983 and 1987 while 15% said on both occasions that they were closer to a party and 8% claimed no party identification both in 1983 and 1987. Thus 57% of the panel gave the same strength of party identification 1983 and 1987. 22% of the panel respondents moved between the "supporter" and "closer to" categories and 13% between "closer to" and "no party identification". 8% moved between "supporter" and "no party identification".

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**Table III.1.1. Strength of party identification by age in 1983 and 1987. Percentages.**

**A. 1983 election:**

PARTY IDENTIFI- CATION	AGE							All
	20-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-83	
Very strong	3	3	6	11	12	9	16	7.8
Rather strong	17	19	19	29	22	22	29	21.9
Not very strong	14	16	20	17	24	26	23	19.7
Closer to	39	36	36	28	24	28	21	31.5
No party ident.	27	25	20	15	19	14	11	19.0
Total	100	99	101	100	101	99	100	99.9
N=	(94)	(165)	(256)	(165)	(135)	(99)	(80)	(994)

ETA=.21 (with strength of party identification dependent)  
 -----

**B. 1987 election:**

PARTY IDENTIFI- CATION	AGE							All
	18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-80	
Very strong	8	5	8	12	15	21	18	11.1
Rather strong	17	22	19	21	22	14	17	19.1
Not very strong	15	13	14	16	19	20	22	16.0
Closer to	31	39	36	32	26	29	22	32.3
No party ident.	29	21	22	20	19	17	21	21.6
Total	100	100	99	101	101	101	100	100.1
N=	(241)	(257)	(404)	(309)	(194)	(175)	(115)	(1695)

ETA=.14 (with strength of party identification dependent)  
 -----

**Summary:**

	AGE							
	18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-80	All
<i>Party supporters:</i>								
1983	34	38	45	57	58	57	68	49.4
1987	40	40	41	49	56	55	57	46.2
<i>Closer to a party:</i>								
1983	39	36	36	28	24	28	21	31.5
1987	31	39	36	32	26	29	22	32.3
<i>No party identification:</i>								
1983	27	25	20	15	19	14	11	19.0
1987	29	21	22	20	19	17	21	21.6

Those figures indicate that party identification in

Iceland is somewhat weaker than in Denmark and Sweden

although the general pattern is similar. In the early 1970's 51-56% of the voters in Denmark were party supporters, 31-35% felt closer to a party, while 10-16% had no party identification.<sup>10)</sup> In Sweden the percentage of party supporters dropped from 65% in 1968 to 58% in 1979, while the number of those who felt closer to a party rose from 28% to 33%, and those with no party identification from 7% to 9% in the same period.<sup>11)</sup>

The table shows that strength of party identification is clearly related to age. While in 1983 only 34% of the youngest voters (20-23 years old) claimed to be party supporters 68% of the oldest (70-83) did so. In 1987 this gap was considerably narrower: 40% of the youngest (18-23) said they were party supporters, while 57% of the oldest did so. The overall relationship tends to be linear but can not be considered strong. It is also noteworthy that, while the proportion with no party identification decreases clearly with age in the 1983 data, this is not the case in 1987 where the proportion is around 20% for all age groups except for the youngest voters.

The pattern of increasing strength of party identification with age is common in electoral research,<sup>12)</sup> and is in accord with the psychological school's *life-cycle* theory, which claims that strength of party identification

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10) O. Borre et al. (1976). The figures presented here are based on table 1, p. 100, but the category "don't know, missing information" is omitted in our calculations.

11) S. Holmberg (1981), p. 180.

12) P.R. Abramson (1983, p. 106) claims it is "One of the most well-documented findings of political-attitude research". In Sweden in 1979, for instance, 40% of the youngest (18-21) were party supporters, while the corresponding figure was 70-80% among those over sixty. (Holmberg (1981), p. 182).



tends to increase as an individual grows older. The data does on the other hand also fit to a contending theory, which has gained increasing support in recent years, claiming that the pattern is a result of *generational* differences; that younger generations simply form weaker identifications than the preceding generations did, and those younger generations will maintain those weaker party identifications through their lives. While both theories are in accord with data from one time point, showing partisanship increasing with age, the theories have different and very important consequences for the future. If the generational theory is correct the overall strength of partisanship in an electorate showing this pattern is going to weaken in the future (unless new generations form stronger links to the parties). This is likely to increase electoral volatility and thereby the risk for parties in elections. If on the other hand the life-cycle theory is correct the observed patterns do not give us any reason to expect increasing volatility in the electorate.

While various criticisms of the life-cycle theory in recent years clearly indicate that it cannot be taken at face value,<sup>13)</sup> our data does not allow any rigid test of the two contending theories here. Such a test needs time series data, preferably based on panel studies. Our data may nevertheless give some indications concerning the validity of the two theories. Let us first look at the changes in our panel. Table III.1.2 shows the strength of party identification as reported by the panel respondents in both

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13) See e.g. Abramson (1983, pp. 105-119, Holmberg (1981), pp. 182-186 and Jennings and Niemi (1975).

1983 and 1987, using the 1983 age groups. Thus we have answers from the same respondents in each group at two points in time. The obvious limitations are both the short time span, four years, and the small size of the age groups, resulting in a large margin of sampling error.

**Table III.1.2. Strength of party identification in 1983 and 1987 by age in 1983. Panel respondents. Percentages.**

	AGE IN 1983							
PARTY IDENTIFI- CATION	20-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-83	All
<i>Very strong</i>								
1983	3	4	5	10	17	14	21	8.4
1987	3	4	8	13	20	10	14	9.5
<i>Rather strong</i>								
1983	20	18	23	33	24	21	21	23.5
1987	27	26	19	25	13	25	24	22.0
<i>Not very strong</i>								
1983	9	16	20	16	19	25	17	17.6
1987	17	10	16	17	19	21	28	16.7
<i>Closer to a party</i>								
1983	42	39	36	29	25	27	28	33.5
1987	34	31	38	27	33	27	10	31.2
<i>No party identification</i>								
1983	25	23	16	12	15	14	14	17.0
1987	19	30	20	18	15	17	24	20.6
N=	(64)	(110)	(168)	(116)	(79)	(52)	(29)	(618)

*Summary:*

*Party supporters:*

1983	32	38	48	59	60	60	59	49.5
1987	47	40	43	55	52	56	66	48.2

Only those panel respondents who answered the question on party identification both in 1983 and 1987 are included in the table.

The total proportion of party supporters in the panel decreased from 49.5% to 48.2% from 1983-1987, compared to a decrease from 49.4% to 46.2% if the two total samples are compared (see Table III.1.1). The greatest change in party support in the panel occurs among the youngest voters, who were 20-23 years old in 1983. At that time 32% of this group claimed to be party supporters as compared to 47% in

1987.<sup>14)</sup> The table also shows a small increase in party supporters (38% to 40%) among the panel respondents who were 24-29 years old in 1983, while in the age groups from 30-69 there is a *decrease* of party supporters of 4-8%. According to the table the proportion of party supporters among the oldest increased from 59% to 66%, but it must be borne in mind that this group contains only 29 respondents in the panel.<sup>15)</sup> If we compare the total samples the proportion of party supporters was lower in 1987 than in 1983 among all voters over thirty, including the oldest age group.

The other side of the coin is that the number of voters without party identification decreased among the youngest panel respondents (from 25% to 19%) while it increased among voters who were 24 years or older in 1983.

The data seems to support the life-cycle theory in a very limited way: only for the youngest voters. The increase in partisanship evident among the panel respondents who were in their early twenties in 1983 is not evident among older voters. On the other hand a small *general decrease in partisanship* can be observed. This is of course contrary to the life-cycle theory, nor is it in accord with the generational model, which assumes that each generation's partisanship stays the same for its lifetime having been

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14) The increase in party supporters among this group is bigger in the panel than in the total samples. Party supporters in the 20-23 age group in the total sample 1983 was 34%, while they constituted 40% of the total 1987 sample's 24-29 age group (which includes the panel respondents who were 20-23 years old in 1983). The greater increase in the panel is probably due to the small number of respondents (64). Nevertheless, both data sets show a considerable increase in only four years.

15) The success rate in getting a second interview in 1987 was, as expected, rather low among the respondents who had been 70-83 years old in 1983.

formed at an early stage in the generation's life. What we seem to have here is what can be called a *period effect*,<sup>16)</sup> some political factors that are having impact on all age groups in the 1983-1987 period.

A comparison of the two total samples from 1983 and 1987 gives a similar picture. Table III.1.1 shows that among the new voters (under 24 years of age) the strength of partisanship weakened in the sense that the proportion of voters with no party identification increased from 27% in 1983 to 29% in 1987. On the other hand a higher proportion of first time voters in 1987 (40%) claimed to be party supporters than in 1983 (34%). Thus the proportions of both party supporters and voters without party identification increased from 1983-87 while the proportion of voters claiming they are closer to a party decreased.

While Table III.1.1 shows the strength of partisanship in different age groups in the total samples from 1983 and 1987, a better base for comparing generational changes in those four years can be obtained by using birth cohorts, as is done in Table III.1.3. These include respondents born in 1906-1963, the years of birth covered by both samples.

Table III.1.3 generally supports the results of our panel data. Among the voters who were in their early twenties in 1983 the proportion of party supporters increased from 33% in 1983 to 40% in 1987, while the proportion of voters without party identification decreased from 27% to 21%. In the four other birth cohorts the number of party supporters decreased by 2-5% in three and stayed the same in one, the proportion without party identification stayed the same

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16) See e.g. S. Holmberg (1981), pp. 184-185.

among those born 1948-57 and increased by 1-4% in the three older cohorts.

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**Table III.1.3. Strength of partisanship 1983 and 1987 in different birth cohorts. Total samples.**

	YEAR OF BIRTH				
	1958-63	1948-57	1938-47	1928-37	1906-27
<i>Party supporters:</i>					
1983	33	43	51	55	61
1987	40	41	48	55	56
<i>Closer to a party:</i>					
1983	40	35	32	27	25
1987	39	36	32	26	26
<i>No party identification:</i>					
1983	27	22	17	18	14
1987	21	22	20	19	18
N 1983	(152)	(272)	(199)	(143)	(206)
N 1987	(257)	(404)	(309)	(194)	(290)

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 In this table, respondents in the 1983 sample who are born from 1901-05 are excluded, as are respondents in the 1987 sample who are born from 1964-69.  
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On the whole the data indicates that in these four years there was a marked increase in the strength of partisanship among those who were in their early twenties in 1983. The process of forming partisan ties, which clearly begins before the age of twenty, is still going on at that age. This is in accord with the life-cycle theory, but can also be in accord with a generational theory, depending on when the formation of a generation's partisanship is expected to take place.

Second, the data does not support the life-cycle theory for voters over thirty: as no increase is seen in strength of partisanship among those voters, the theory gets no support as an explanation of the general pattern of strengthened partisanship with increasing age. While it is

clearly true that a longer time span is needed to fairly test the life-cycle theory, the data suggests rather that different generations form different levels of strength of partisanship. The data also suggests that the strength of partisanship can change in all age groups; even though the decrease in partisanship from 1983-87 is rather small it is consistent in different age groups and therefore more likely to be a true period effect than a random change due to sampling error.

Strength of party identification is also clearly related to electoral volatility, as can be seen in table III.1.4.

Two things are of particular interest in the table. First, those with weaker or no party identification were much more likely to change parties in both elections. In the 1983 election 23% of all respondents claimed to have switched parties from 1979-83, while the proportion of party switchers was only 7-12% among party supporters, 36% among those who felt closer to a party, and 58% among those with no party identification. While the overall party switching in 1987 was considerably higher - 36% of all respondents changed party - the pattern was largely similar: 17-20% of party supporters changed party while 55% of those who felt closer to a party and 65% of those with no party identification did so. The overall increase in electoral volatility from the 1983 to the 1987 election is a reflection of increased volatility in all party identification groups.

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**Table III.1.4. Party switching 1979-1983 and 1983-1987 by strength of party identification. Only those revealing party choice in both elections. Total samples. Percentages.**

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

VOTING 1979-83	Very strong	Rather strong	Not very strong	Closer to	None	All
Same party	93	88	89	64	42	77
Between old#	1	4	4	20	36	12
To new##	6	8	7	16	22	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(68)	(185)	(161)	(207)	(73)	(694)

VOTING  
1983-87

Same party	83	80	80	46	35	64
Between old#	2	5	8	25	26	14
From/to new##	15	15	12	30	39	22
Total	100	100	100	101	100	100
N=	(157)	(263)	(209)	(354)	(144)	(1127)

*Proportion of party switchers changing between the four old parties:*

1983	14%	33%	36%	56%	62%	52%
1987	12%	25%	40%	45%	40%	39%

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 Strength of relationship when voting is dichotomous variable (same party/switched party):

1983: ETA=.39 (vote dep.), ETA=.34 (party ident. dep.)

1987: ETA=.40 (vote dep.), ETA=.36 (party ident. dep.)

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 # Switched between two of the four old parties.

## All other party switches. In 1983 those are only switches from the four old parties to the two new parties, the SDA and the WA. In 1987 they include switches to the new parties, the HP, URE, NP and CiP, but also to and from the SDA and the WA.

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 Second, a relationship emerges between the strength of party identification on the one hand and the tendency to change between the four old parties on the one hand or to move to or from a new party on the other. As party identification grows stronger a smaller proportion of the party switchers within each group tends to change to an old

party. This may indicate that not only do party identifiers find it more difficult in general to change parties, but also that they find it easier to change to a new party than to change to one of the old "enemies". We will return to this point later in this section.

**Table III.1.5. Electoral behaviour by party identification 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

*1983 election:*

Vote 1983	Party identification								Total
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	Other unknown	None	
SDP	89	1	2	1	0	4	14	10	11
PP	1	82	1	2	0	0	21	13	14
IP	1	6	85	0	0	0	14	25	38
PA	1	2	0	80	5	0	21	5	14
SDA	5	3	5	3	86	0	4	12	7
WA	0	0	2	7	0	92	11	7	6
Blank/void	0	1	1	4	0	0	11	8	3
Did not vote	3	5	4	3	9	4	4	20	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(87)	(124)	(355)	(145)	(22)	(24)	(28)	(158)	(943)

*1987 election:*

Vote 1987	Party identification								All
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Other unkn.	None	
SDP	90	1	2	1	3	-	18	13	15
PP	3	87	3	3	1	-	19	18	16
IP	1	-	87	-	3	2	15	19	29
PA	-	1	1	88	7	-	14	6	13
SDA	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	0	0
WA	-	1	1	2	80	-	13	12	12
HumP	2	1	-	2	-	-	6	2	2
URE	-	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	1
NP	-	2	0	1	-	-	-	4	1
CiP	2	3	4	-	1	98	5	8	7
Blank/void	1	1	1	-	1	-	4	3	1
Didn't vote	2	1	2	2	4	-	6	14	4
Total	101	102	101	101	101	100	101	100	101
N=	(179)	(181)	(436)	(175)	(162)	(50)	(99)	(283)	(1586)



But let us first consider the relationship of direction of party identification and voting. To what extent did those who identify with a party also vote for it?

Table III.1.5 clearly reveals that those who identify with a party do indeed have a very strong tendency to vote for that party. In both elections 80-90% of identifiers voted for "their" party and the figures are even higher for the WA in 1983 (92%) and for the CiP in 1987 (98%).<sup>17)</sup> The proportion of party identifiers who turned in a void or blank ballot or abstained in those elections was 0-9%; in eight of these twelve cases 2-5%. In 1983 4-13% of party identifiers voted for a party they did not identify with. Those figures tended to be a little higher in 1987; 8-16% of five parties' identifiers voted for another party while only 2% of CiP identifiers did so.

While the number of party identifiers "deserting" their party is small, a few patterns emerge. First, a clear link is revealed in the table between the PA and the WA. In 1983 7% of PA identifiers voted for the WA and in 1987 7% of WA identifiers voted for the PA.

Second, in 1983 the WA's appeal to the old parties' identifiers was much narrower than the appeal of the other new party, the SDA. The only addition to the votes of 7% of PA identifiers that the WA managed to get was 2% of IP identifiers, while the SDA obtained 3-5% of the identifiers of all four old parties. In 1987 the CiP obtained the votes

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<sup>17)</sup> It must of course be borne in mind that the 1983 base figures (N) for the SDA, WA, and other/unknown party identification are very small and the percentages for those groups have therefore to be interpreted with extreme caution. The figures for SDA and WA are very small because relatively few of those parties' voters identify with the party (see Table III.1.6).

of 2-4% of the identifiers with SDP, PP and IP, thus showing wider appeal than the WA in 1983, but narrower than the SDA. Bearing in mind that the CiP got 12% of the 1983 IP vote (see Table II.5.10) its share among IP identifiers must be considered small.

Third, it is noteworthy that 4% of PP identifiers in 1987 voted for the URE-list headed by an old PP local leader in the Northeast constituency.

Considering those who claim "other" or "unknown" party identification,<sup>18)</sup> the great underrepresentation of the IP among this group in both elections stands out as particularly interesting.

The voting behaviour of those with no party identification is clearly different from the electorate as a whole, both in 1983 and 1987. First, a higher proportion of this group claimed to have turned in a blank or void ballot or abstained than was the case for the whole electorate: 28% as compared to 10% of the total sample in 1983 and 17% as compared to 5% of the total sample in 1987 did so.

Second, the party choice of this group differs considerably from the total sample. If we compare the share of each party's votes among those with no party identification (who revealed the party voted for) to the parties' share in the total sample the SDA in 1983 is by far the most successful: the party obtained 17% of the votes of

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18) The category "other/unknown" includes those respondents who identified with a political group other than the parliamentary parties, those who identified with more than one party, and those who said they identified with a party, but refused to reveal what party.

those with no party identification while its corresponding share in the total sample was 8%.<sup>19)</sup>

Two parties clearly perform worse in both elections among those with no party identification than among the total electorate. In 1983 the IP received 35% of the votes cast for a party by those without party identification (-7% compared to the total sample) and the PA received 7% in this group (-9%). The corresponding figures in 1987 were 23% (-8%) for the IP and 7% (-8%) for the PA.

The remaining parties, the SDP, PP and the WA in both elections and the CiP in 1987, did similarly well or better among those with no party identification than among the electorate as a whole (0-5% better).

This pattern does not simply reflect who was winning and losing in the elections (as it should if those without party identification were simply more likely to follow the electoral winds than others). In some instances the losing parties do considerably worse among those without party identification than among others; this is the case for the PA both in 1983 and 1987 and the IP in 1987. But the losses of the SDP and PP in 1983 were not due to less support for those parties among those with no party identification than among others. And the IP gained slightly in 1983 although its vote among those without party identification was considerably lower than among the total electorate, just as was the case in 1987 when the party lost heavily.

The only case of a winning party doing much better among those without party identification than among others is the

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<sup>19)</sup> These figures are not the same as in the Table III.1.5; here those who turned in a blank or void ballot or abstained are not included.

SDA in 1983. The other major winners, the WA in 1983 and 1987 and the CiP in 1987, did only slightly better among those without party identification than among others and the SDP had the same support in both groups in 1987.

This seems to indicate that the most volatile part of the electorate, those without party identification, do not simply follow the electoral winds - they do not simply jump on the bandwagon at election time. More complex factors are at work and the fact that the polar parties in the party system, the IP and the PA, are greatly underrepresented among this group at both elections may suggest that underlying structures in the party system alignments may play a part here.

The differences that we have observed result in very different profiles of the parties' voters, as can be seen clearly in Table III.1.6.

The most marked difference in the parties' profiles is between parties fighting their first election and others. While the bulk of the old parties' voters - and WA voters in 1987 - also identified with "their" party, only 28% of SDA voters in 1983, 42% of WA voters in 1983 and 46% of CiP voters in 1987 did so.

What is particularly interesting is that a relatively large number of voters who cast their vote for a newcomer to the electoral arena retain a party identification with another party. Thus 42% of the SDA voters in 1983, 32% of the WA voters in 1983 and 27% of CiP voters in 1987 identified with one of the other major parties. The old parties - and the WA in 1987 - on the other hand only obtained 2-10% of their votes from other parties'

identifiers. The IP had the least appeal in both elections to identifiers of other parties: only 2% of the party's vote came from their ranks in both elections.

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**Table III.1.6. Party identification by party voted for in 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

1983 election:

Party identification	Vote 1983					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA
SDP	72	1	0	1	6	0
PP	1	75	2	2	6	0
IP	7	3	86	0	24	13
PA	1	2	0	86	6	19
SDA	0	0	0	1	28	0
WA	1	0	0	0	0	42
Other/unknown	4	4	1	4	1	6
None	15	15	11	6	28	21
Total	101	100	100	100	99	101
N=	(107)	(136)	(354)	(135)	(67)	(53)

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 1987 election:

Party identification	Vote 1987					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP
SDP	70	2	1	-	-	3
PP	1	62	-	1	1	5
IP	4	5	83	1	2	17
PA	1	2	-	78	2	-
WA	2	1	1	6	69	2
CiP	-	-	0	-	-	46
Other/unknown	8	8	3	7	7	5
None	15	20	12	8	19	23
Total	101	100	100	101	100	101
N=	(231)	(255)	(454)	(198)	(187)	(106)

The profile of the WA clearly changed from 1983-1987. While its 1983 profile resembles the 1983 profile of the SDA, and the 1987 profile of the CiP, in 1987 the WA profile had become similar to the profiles of the SDP and the PP.

If we look at the profiles of the old parties - and the WA in 1987 - the major difference between the two polar

parties in the system (IP and PA) on the one hand and the parties closer to the centre on the other is that the polar parties obtain a higher percentage of their vote from own identifiers (78-86%) than is the case for the others (62-75%). The polar parties were unpopular among those with no party identification as we have seen - only 6-12% of their vote came from this group - while 15-20% of SDP and PP votes in both elections, and WA votes in 1987, came from this part of the electorate. The parties fighting their first election received the highest share of their votes from voters without party identification: 28% of the SDA vote in 1983 came from this group, 21% of WA voters in 1983 and 23% of CiP voters in 1987.

The parties differ in the extent to which their voters also identify with the party. What stands out is that in those two elections only parties fighting their first election obtained a considerable share of voters who retained identification with another party and that the PA and the IP were by far the least successful in obtaining the votes of those with no party identification.

Let us next examine whether the parties differ in respect to how *strongly* their *identifiers* support their party. Is the partisanship of those who identify with parties which obtain relatively less of their votes from own identifiers weaker than the partisanship of those who support parties which get most of their votes from own identifiers? In other words: Are the parties not only different in how large a proportion of their voters identifies with the party but also in how strong the partisan feeling is among those who identify with the party?

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**Table III.1.7. Strength of party identification by party identified with 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

1983 election:

Strength of party identification	Party identified with					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA
Very strong	8	11	11	7	5	8
Rather strong	28	23	30	26	19	38
Not very strong	17	33	25	28	10	4
Closer to	47	33	33	38	67	50
Total	100	100	99	99	101	100
N=	(88)	(123)	(359)	(145)	(21)	(24)
Chi-sq:28.86 (sign=.0168)						

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 1987 election:

Strength of party identification	Party identified with					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP
Very strong	16	15	16	19	8	26
Rather strong	18	19	31	29	27	26
Not very strong	21	35	23	20	15	15
Closer to	45	32	30	33	49	33
Total	100	101	100	101	99	100
N=	(181)	(183)	(438)	(176)	(164)	(51)
Chi-sq:59.35 (sign=.0000)						

Mean 1983:	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	SDA	Total
	1.98	2.13	2.20	2.03	2.04	1.62	2.11
N=	(88)	(123)	(359)	(145)	(24)	(21)	(760)

F-probability=.0790/ETA=.11/Scheffe(.05-level):No two groups sign. diff./LSD(.05):PP and IP sign. diff. from SDA.

Mean 1987:	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Total
	2.04	2.17	2.32	2.34	1.95	2.44	2.21
N=	(180)	(183)	(438)	(176)	(163)	(50)	(1193)

F-probability=.0003/ETA=.14/Scheffe(.05):IP sign. diff. from WA/LSD(.05):IP,PA,CiP sign. diff. from WA,SDP.

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 The scale for calculating the means is: 4=very strong, 3=rather strong, 2=not very strong, 1=closer to.  
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While the different strength of partisanship among the identifiers of the various parties must be considered as generally weak both in 1983 (ETA=.11) and 1987 (ETA=.14) some interesting patterns nevertheless emerge.<sup>20)</sup>

We have already seen that the share of own identifiers was lowest in the vote of parties fighting their first election, 28-46%. While the very small base of SDA and WA identifiers in 1983 (and even CiP identifiers in 1987) - resulting in a large margin of sampling error - must be

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<sup>20)</sup> In Table III.1.7 we have calculated whether the difference in means of partisanship are significantly different. The F-test indicates that in 1983 there was not a significant difference between the parties at the .05 level, while the difference was significant in 1983. Different significance tests can be used to estimate if individual parties are significantly different and they give different results. In 1987, using the .05-level, the conservative Scheffe test indicates that only the IP and WA were significantly different, while LSD (least significant difference) and Duncan indicate that IP, PA and CiP were significantly different from both WA and SDP, the Student-Newman-Keuls test, Tukey (honestly significant difference), and Tukey's alternate test indicate that IP is significantly different from both WA and SDP, and PA from WA, and the modified LSD indicates that IP and PA are significantly different from WA. In 1983 the LSD indicates that PP and IP are significantly different from SDA, Duncan gives a significant difference between IP and SDA, while the other significance tests indicate no significant differences between two parties.

The different significance tests here use variously stringent criteria. But as all significance tests are very sensitive to group size (e.g. in 1987, Scheffe gives only significant difference between IP and WA even though the means for PA and CiP are higher than for IP) it is wise to consider also the strength of relationship (e.g. ETA). If the same (weak) patterns for small groups repeat themselves in different surveys, this is probably a result of a real difference, even though the difference in each survey is not significant due to the smallness of groups. This nature of significance tests has to be considered when relationships are weak, even though it is probably more common to interpret very weak relationships as meaningful only because they are statistically significant - while the fact is that almost any relationship becomes significant if sample size is big enough!

In Table III.1.7 we include two significance tests, Schuffe, the most conservative, and LSD, one of the least stringent. The tests should be used with other indicators in assessing the data.



borne in mind, the table shows that in 1983 the relatively few SDA and WA voters who identified with those parties also had relatively weak party attachments, as was to be expected. In 1983 SDA identifiers showed markedly weaker attachment to the party than was the case for the other parties: 67% of its identifiers only felt closer to the party. The attachment of WA identifiers in 1983 was also weak: half of the party's identifiers only felt closer to the party as was the case for one of the old parties, the SDP, while this group constituted only a third of the identifiers of the other three old parties, the IP, PP and PA.

A real surprise in Table III.1.7 is the strength of party identification reported by CiP identifiers in 1987: only 33% of those feel closer to the party and the mean strength (2.44) is the highest for any party in the two elections. This is contrary to the expectation that strong party identification develops slowly. The rapid decline of CiP support in opinion polls after the 1987 election also indicates that the strong attachments measured in 1987 did not last. It may be suggested, that the extraordinary circumstances that surrounded the birth of the CiP in 1987 may have served to raise the feelings of CiP supporters but what we have here is clearly not a measurement of what is usually implied by the concept of strong party identification.

If we look at the four old parties - and the WA in 1987 - a clear distinction emerges between the SDP and the WA on the one hand and the IP, PP and PA on the other. Around half of the SDP and WA identifiers only feel closer to their

parties (means=1.98-2.04), while the corresponding figures in both elections was around a third for the IP (means=2.19 and 2.33), the PP (means=2.13 and 2.17) and the PA (means=2.03 and 2.34).<sup>21)</sup> The WA 1987 profile of strength in partisanship among the party's identifiers is very similar to its 1983 profile even though in 1987 69% of the party's vote came from own identifiers as compared to 42% in 1983.

The total pattern that emerges is that party attachments to parties fighting their first election is weak in the sense that a low proportion of their voters identifies with the party (28-46%) and in two cases (the WA and SDA in 1983) also in the sense that the attachments to the party is weak among identifiers, while the latter is not the case for the CiP in 1987.

The voter alignments to the SDP in both elections and the WA in 1987 are relatively weak: 69-72% of their vote came from own identifiers and around half of those identifiers only felt closer to the party. While a similar proportion of the PP vote comes from own identifiers (62-75%) the alignments of PP identifiers were stronger: one of every three only felt closer to the party. The polar parties in the party system have the strongest voter alignments: 78-86% of their votes came from own identifiers and a third of the identifiers only felt closer to their party.

Let us finally consider whether our data gives any suggestions as to whether there exists any analytical distance between the concepts of *direction of party*

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<sup>21)</sup> The relatively low mean for the PA in 1983 is mainly due to the fact that among those who said they were party supporters relatively few claimed to be very strong supporters.

*identification* and *voting* among Icelandic voters. Do they simply change party identification if they change party?

It must be kept in mind that the data has some limitations when it comes to answering this question. Although we have two samples from 1983 and 1987 with relatively large numbers of respondents those samples have two limitations. First, they only contain reported party identification at the time of the interview and therefore can not answer the question as to whether the respondents have changed their party identification between elections. Second, the vote in the previous election - four years earlier - is as reported at the time of the interview, thus subject to recall error.

The panel does not have these limitations. Here we have both party identification and 1983 vote as reported in 1983 and 1987 vote and party identification as reported in 1987. The major limitation of the panel data is on the other hand its relatively small size ( $N=678$ ). We will analyse both sets of data. Table III.1.8 is based on the total samples in 1983 and 1987 and shows how voting in the present and previous election corresponds to present party identification, among those who identified with a party at the time of the interview and reported their vote in both the present and previous election.

Table III.1.8 shows that a large majority of party identifiers in both elections reported that they had voted for their own party both in the present and previous elections. 80% of the identifiers did so in 1983 but only 69% in 1987. This drop was to be expected, as the overall volatility in 1987 was greater than in 1983. In both

elections 8% of the party identifiers reported voting for their own party in the previous election but not in the present one. Those voters seem to behave in accordance with the Michigan model, retaining identification with their old party while voting for a new one.

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**Table III.1.8. Voting 1979 and 1983 compared to party identification 1983. Total sample 1983. Voting 1983 and 1987 compared to party identification 1987. Total sample 1987. Percentages.**

*1983 election:*

Party identification 1983 same as vote '79 and '83	80
Party ident. 1983 same as vote '83 but not '79	10
Party ident. 1983 same as vote '79 but not '83	8
Party ident. 1983 neither same as vote '79 nor '83	2
Total	100
	(N=602)

*1987 election:*

Party identification 1987 same as vote '83 and '87	69
Party ident. 1987 same as vote '87 but not '83	19
Party ident. 1987 same as vote '83 but not '87	8
Party ident. 1987 neither same as vote '83 nor '87	4
Total	100
	(N=919)

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 From the 1983 sample the table includes only those who in 1983 identified with one party and reported the party voted for both in 1979 and 1983 (60% of the total sample). From the 1987 sample the table includes only those who in 1987 identified with one party, and reported party voted for both in 1983 and 1987 (50% of the total sample).  
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10% of the identifiers in 1983 and 19% in 1987 reported voting in accordance with their declared party identification in the present but not in the previous election. These voters have either adopted a new identification in accordance with their present voting behaviour (the 4% who both identified with and voted for a new party (SDA or WA) in 1983 and the 5% in 1987 who

identified with and voted for HP, URE, NP or CiP obviously had made such an adoption) or their vote in the previous election deviates from their "normal" vote.

Table III.1.9 shows changes in both voting behaviour and party identification 1983-1987 among our panel respondents. In order to enable a comparison to Table III.1.8 we also show how voting behaviour in 1983 and 1987 corresponds to party identification in 1987.

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**Table III.1.9. Voting and party identification 1983-1987.**  
**Only those who report party voted for and identify with one**  
**party both in 1983 and 1987. Panel respondents. Percentages.**

1983-1987:

Changed neither party vote nor party identification	66
Changed party identification but not party vote	2
Changed party vote but not party identification	12
Changed both party vote and party identification	20

Total	100
	(N=369)

Party identification 1987 same as vote '83 and '87	69
Party ident. 1987 same as vote '87 but not '83	21
Party ident. 1987 same as vote '83 but not '87	8
Party ident. 1987 neither same as vote '83 nor '87	2

Total	100
	(N=369)

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 The table includes only those in the panel who reported vote 1983 and identified with one party in the 1983 interview and reported vote 1987 and identified with one party in the 1987 interview (54% of the panel respondents).  
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The differences between Table III.1.8 - based on the total 1987 sample giving party identification in 1987 and vote in 1983 and 1987 - and Table III.1.9 - based on the 1987 panel respondents who identified with one party in 1987 and reported the party for which they voted both in the 1983 and 1987 interviews - are small when we compare voting behaviour in 1983 and 1987 to party identification in 1987

(lower section of Table III.1.9). The difference is that the proportion reporting that their party identification in 1987 is the same as their 1987 vote but different from their 1983 vote is 2% higher among panel respondents (21%), while the proportion voting in accordance with the 1987 party identification neither in 1983 nor 1987 is 2% higher in the panel than in the total sample. Those differences are clearly within the margins of sampling error.

The other part of Table III.1.9 is more interesting, as it gives us new information not included in Table III.1.8. As we have both party identification and voting behaviour in both elections we can see directly what changes took place.

66% of the panel respondents *neither changed party nor party identification* 1983-1987. This figure is lower than the proportion reporting that their vote in 1983 and 1987 is in accordance with the 1987 party identification because 8 individuals had changed their party identification but not their voting behaviour between the two elections. In 1987 7 of those 8 identified with the party they voted for both in 1983 and 1987 while one changed party identification while still voting for the party identified with in 1983. Those 7 individuals seem to have retained an old party identification while having changed their voting behaviour but later adopted a new party identification corresponding to their new voting behaviour. For them party identification seems a somewhat more lasting characteristic than voting behaviour.

The proportion of voters in the panel who *changed their vote* from 1983-1987 *but retained their party identification*, is 12%. This figure is higher than the 8% who reported their

party identification in 1987 to be the same as their vote in 1983 but not in 1987. These voters are included in the 12% figure<sup>22)</sup> but in addition we have 12 individuals (3%) who did not change party identification 1983-1987 and voted in accordance with that identification in 1987 but not in 1983. Those 12 individuals' voting behaviour fits the Michigan model; in terms of the model those 12 "deviated" in their vote in 1983 but returned to "normal" in 1987.<sup>23)</sup>

20% (72 respondents) of the panel *changed both party vote and party identification* 1983-1987. Most of them (15% or 57 respondents) voted in accordance with party identification both in 1983 and 1987, thus simply changing party identification with their vote. 2% (9 individuals) voted according to party identification in 1987 but not in 1983, 1% (3 respondents) voted according to party identification in 1983 but not in 1987, and 1% (3 respondents) voted in neither election in accordance with their party identification.

Our panel results can be compared to Swedish panel data from 1973-76 and 1976-79 on the basis of which Soren Holmberg concludes for Sweden:

The direction of party identification is therefore not to the same extent as in USA a useful instrument for analysis of voting behaviour in Sweden. It measures actual voting to far too great an extent, and therefore is measurewise far too close to what is to be explained.<sup>24)</sup>

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22) Except 3 respondents who changed both party vote and party identification from 1983 to 1987, and who in neither election voted in accordance with party identification, but whose 1987 identification was in accordance with 1983 vote.

23) Also included in this category are 5 individuals, who voted in neither election in accordance with party identification 1987, but nevertheless identified with the same party both in 1983 and 1987.

24) Holmberg (1981), p. 177. My translation.

In both of the Swedish panels 78% neither changed party vote nor party identification while this was the case for 66% of the respondents in the Icelandic panel. 4-5% of the Swedish panels changed party but not party identification as compared to 12% in the Icelandic one, 5-7% of the Swedes changed their identification but not party while only 2% of the Icelanders did so, and 11-12% of the Swedish panels changed both party and party identification while the corresponding figure in the Icelandic panel was 20%.

In the 1973-76 Swedish panel 15% changed party identification while 18% changed party vote. In the 1976-79 Swedish panel 17% changed party identification and 17% changed party vote. In the Icelandic panel on the other hand 22% changed party identification while 32% changed their vote from 1983-87. Thus the behaviour of the Icelandic voters seems to fit the Michigan model somewhat better than that of the Swedish voters. But, as in Sweden, a higher proportion of vote switchers changed their party identification than retained it. In the Swedish 1973-76 panel 61% of party switchers also changed party identification while 71% in the 1976-79 panel did so. In the Icelandic panel 62% of party switchers also changed party identification but only 49% simply moved their identification with their vote in the sense that they voted in accordance with party identification both in 1983 and 1987.

The Icelandic party system in the 1980s was not only different from the Swedish one in the 1970s in that the overall volatility in Iceland was much higher but also in the fact that both in the 1983 and 1987 elections in Iceland



new parties were quite successful. It is possible that voters view new competitors with their old party differently than the old enemies, i.e. that they find it easier to vote for a new party while retaining party identification for their old party.

The data from the total 1983 sample seems to fit this hypothesis. Of the 76 respondents who switched to the two new parties, the SDA and the WA, only 29% had adopted a party identification for their new party while 46% still identified with the party they voted for in 1979, 21% reported no party identification, and 4% said they identified with an old party that they had not voted for in 1979. While the data from 1983 does not allow us to calculate comparable figures for switches to the old parties, it is likely that a higher percentage of those also adopted an identification with the party they switched to in the election.<sup>25)</sup>

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25) In the 1983 total sample 29% of the switchers to new parties also identified with the party they voted for. All those voters had obviously adopted a new party identification. This is not the case for switchers to old parties. In 1983 47% of the switchers to old parties identified with the party they voted for in 1983 while 16% identified with the party they voted for in 1979 and 39% reported no party identification. This does **not** mean that 47% of the switchers to old parties had changed their party identification and only 16% retained it, mainly because those who maintained identification with the same party 1979-83 and voted in accordance with party identification in 1983 but not in 1979 are included in the 47%.

This can be seen clearly if we compare the results from the 1987 total sample and the panel results. In the 1987 total sample 46% of switchers to old parties identified with the party they voted for in 1987 while only 18% identified with the party they voted for in 1983, and 29% reported no party identification. In the panel, on the other hand, 27% of vote-switchers to the old parties in 1987 had retained their 1983 party identification.

The patterns for switchers to old parties in the total samples of 1983 and 1987 are very similar. If the behaviour that created those patterns (which we cannot describe for 1983 but only for 1987 by using the panel) is similar in

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**Table III.1.10. Party identification 1983-87 of switchers in the 1987 election. Panel respondents. Percentages.**

*Switchers to new parties 1987 (HP,URE,NP,CiP):*

Identify with same party 1983 and 1987	32
Identify with old party 1983 and another old 1987	2
Identify with old party 1983 and new in 1987	35
No party identification 1983, with new in 1987	9
Identify with old party 1983, no party ident. 1987	7
No party identification 1983, with old party 1987	4
No party identification 1983 and 1987	12
Total	101
	(N=57)

*Switchers to old parties 1987:*

Identify with same party 1983 and 1987	27
Identify with different parties 1983 and 1987	39
No party identification 1983, with party 1987	15
Identify with party 1983, no party ident. 1987	10
No party identification 1983 and 1987	10
Total	101
	(N=82)

*Switchers to WA in 1987:*

Identify with same old party 1983 and 1987	11
Identify with an old party 1983, with WA 1987	53
Identify with old party 1983, no party ident. 1987	25
No party identification 1983, with WA 1987	8
No party identification 1983 and 1987	3
Total	100
	(N=36)

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 Only those panel respondents who reported vote in both elections and switched parties are included in the table. Those whose party identification was "other/unknown" in either election are excluded.  
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Our panel data allows us to test directly if switchers to new parties in 1987 were less prone to adopt a new party identification than switchers to old parties. Table III.1.10 shows changes in party identification 1983-87 among

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both elections switchers to new parties have adopted identification with the party they voted for in 1983 to a considerable less degree than the switchers to old parties in 1983.

switchers to new parties (HP, URE, NP, CiP), old parties (SDP, PP, IP, PA) and to the WA.

Table III.1.10 shows that 44% of switchers to new parties identify with their new party (35% who have changed their identification from an old party in 1983 and 9% who had no party identification in 1983) while - as we saw before - the corresponding figure in 1983 was 29%. In 1987 only 32% of switchers to old parties still identified with the same old party they identified with in 1983,<sup>26)</sup> while in 1983 46% of switchers to new parties still identified with the party they voted for in 1979. Switchers to new parties thus adopted a party identification with their new party to a considerable greater degree in 1987 than in 1983.

The table also reveals that the differences between switchers to new and old parties in 1987 are small. 27% of switchers to old parties retained their party identification as compared to 32% of switchers to new parties. This is a small difference, especially in light of the small number of respondents on which the percentages are based.

If we look only at those who identified with a party both in 1983 and 1987, 41% of switchers to old parties retained their party identification while 46% of switchers to new parties did so. The panel data does not support the hypothesis that switchers to new parties are more likely to retain their old party identification than switchers to old parties.

What stands out in Table III.1.10 is switches to the WA. While the number of respondents in this group is admittedly

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26) 16 of 18 individuals in this group voted according to party identification in 1983.

very small, only 11% of these switchers retained their old party identification (or 17% if we look only at those who identified with a party both in 1983 and 1987).

Our overall conclusion must be that while the *direction* of party identification in Iceland does not simply measure voting behaviour, the fact that more voters who switch their vote change their identification than retain it seriously limits the usefulness of the concept in the Icelandic context. This does not of course apply to the concept of *strength* of party identification, which is clearly related to electoral volatility.

### ***III.2 Party membership***

Party members are often seen as the core of modern mass parties. The party activists who may take part in forming policies, choosing leadership, running the election campaign, etc. will be formal members of their party. Party members could also be expected to be more loyal to their party in the polling booth than other supporters or identifiers.

Party systems have however differed considerably with regard to mass membership of the parties. American parties have for instance usually had few formal members although they have mobilized many voters in primary elections. In Western Europe, where high party membership was common, membership has generally declined in recent decades. Individual parties within the same party system have also differed in terms of the members/voters ratio and membership has been of different nature, e.g. direct or indirect.

The four old Icelandic parties are all formally mass parties organized in a similar way.<sup>27)</sup> In all cases membership is direct. While the parties have claimed certain membership figures, no independent evidence has been available on the size of their membership.

In this section we will examine the party membership of Icelandic voters. How large a part of the electorate are formal members of the parties? Do the parties differ in this respect? Are party members more loyal supporters than others?

In our surveys we asked those respondents who supported a party or felt closer to a party if they were members of that party. In 1983 those identifiers who were not party members were further asked: *Would you consider becoming a member?* In 1987 the follow-up question was not asked. The results are presented in Table III.2.1.

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**Table III.2.1. Are you - or would you consider becoming - a member in the party you identify with? Total samples 1983 and 1987. Percentages.**

	1983	1987
Members of party identified with	20	20
Not members of party identified with	62	57
No party identification	19	22
Total	101	99
N=	(967)	(1641)
Of party identifiers who are not members:		
-Would consider becoming members	31	N.A.
-Would not consider becoming members	69	N.A.
Total	100	
N=	(548)	

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27) See e.g. O.R. Grimsson (1978b), O.Th. Hardarson (1987), and G.H. Kristinsson (1991).

The proportion of party members is the same in 1983 and 1987 and they are clearly a minority in the electorate: only one in every five voters claims to be a formal member of a political party. As we have seen before the same proportion, about one in every five, has no party identification at all while about three in every five identify with a party without being a member. In this last category, according to the 1983 survey, one in three would consider becoming a member, the other two would not. Thus the parties certainly have potential recruits but it is noteworthy that half of their identifiers would not consider becoming members according to the 1983 figures. Even if all those who said they would consider becoming members actually joined a party only 40% of the electorate would be party members.

How are the party members divided between the parties, and to what extent do our figures fit the membership figures claimed by the parties?

The estimates based on our survey figures correspond broadly to the overall membership pattern indicated by the parties' own figures even though there are some discrepancies (see Table III.2.2). Our results suggest that SDP's and PP's membership figures are exaggerated, that more voters consider themselves PA members than the party's records show - and the IP claimed increase in membership between 1982-86 is not substantiated by the survey data.<sup>28)</sup>

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<sup>28)</sup> Party officials of the PP and SDP acknowledge that their records are not very accurate and might well be inflated. Membership dues are either not collected, or only collected irregularly, so a name registered in the party records can easily stay there for years without the person taking any part in party activity. This is also the case for the IP, while the PA records are probably more accurate and membership dues collected more stringently. The claimed increase in IP members from 1982-86 may at least partly stem

The major characteristic of the Icelandic party membership pattern is however confirmed: the IP is more successful than the other parties in mobilizing their support into formal membership of the party. Between 47% (1987) and 57% (1983) of all formal party members belong to the IP although the party obtained 27.2% of the votes in 1987 and 38.7% in 1983.

**Table III.2.2. Party membership of respondents in 1983 and 1987 compared to the parties' claimed membership in 1982 and 1986.**

	Party members in sample		Membership estimate based on sample		Membership claimed by the parties	
	1983	1987	1983	1987	1982	1986
SDP	21 (11%)	39 (12%)	3200	3600	5000	5000
PP	33 (18%)	47 (15%)	5000	4400	6-9000	N.A.
IP	107 (57%)	153 (47%)	16100	14200	15-20000	25-26000
PA	23 (12%)	46 (14%)	3500	4300	3000	3000
SDA	2 (1%)		300			
WA	3 (2%)	18 (6%)	500	1700		
CiP		15 (5%)		1400		
Others		4 (1%)				
Total	189 (101%)	322 (100%)				

Others in 1987 are the Humanist Party (1), the Union of Regional Equality (2) and the National Party (1). The estimate of party members in the electorate is calculated simply by multiplying each party's number of party members by the ratio: total electorate/size of the sample - for 1983 150.977/1003, and for 1987 171.402/1845. The claimed membership figures in 1982 and 1986 are based on information from the parties' headquarters (See O.Th. Hardarson (1983 and 1987)).

Table III.2.3 shows the profiles of the parties' voters in terms of membership.

from people "recruited" for participation in a primary election, who after the primary nevertheless do not consider themselves as party members. CiP identifiers who had been members of the IP are of course included in the IP figures from 1986.

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**Table III.2.3. Membership and party identification by party voted for in 1983 and 1987. Percentages. Total samples. Percentages.**

Party voted for in 1983							
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	SDA	Total
Member of							
-party voted for	20	23	27	17	6	3	21
-other party	2	-	0	1	6	6	1
Not member but identifies with							
-party voted for	52	52	58	71	37	24	55
-other party	11	10	3	5	31	38	10
No party identif.	15	15	11	6	21	29	13
Total	100	100	99	100	101	100	100
N=	(107)	(135)	(349)	(132)	(52)	(66)	(841)
Party voted for in 1987							
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Total
Member of							
-party voted for	17	18	32	22	9	13	22
-other party	1	1	1	1	2	8	2
Not member but identifies with							
-party voted for	54	45	52	57	61	33	51
-other party	12	15	3	11	9	23	10
No party identif.	16	21	12	8	19	23	16
Total	100	100	100	99	100	100	101
N=	(216)	(244)	(438)	(190)	(180)	(104)	(1372)

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We saw earlier, in Table III.1.6, what proportion of each party's vote came from its own identifiers, identifiers of other parties and voters without party identification. The IP and the PA obtained the highest proportion from their own identifiers, the SDP, PP and WA in 1987 somewhat lower, and the SDA and WA in 1983 and CiP in 1987 obtained the lowest share from own identifiers. Table III.2.3 shows on the other hand how each party's vote is composed of the party's members, members of other parties, identifiers of the party and other parties who are not party members, and voters without party identification.<sup>29)</sup>

<sup>29)</sup> The percentage of own identifiers in each party's vote can be calculated in Table III.2.3 by adding own members and identifiers who are not members. Similarly, by adding other



In both elections the IP stands out as the party which gets the highest share of its vote (27-32%) from own members while the corresponding figures for the other old parties, the SDP, PP and PA, are 17-23%. Party members constitute a much lower share of the new parties' vote as might be expected, but it should be noted that 13% of the Citizens' Party's vote in 1987 came from own members compared to 3 and 6% for the SDA and WA respectively in 1983 - probably a reflection of the strong grass-root mobilization of Gudmundson's supporters in the 1987 campaign.

While the proportion of own members in the WA vote increases from 1983-87 from 6% to 9%, the share of own identifiers in the WA vote increase from 43% to 70%. In 1987 the share of members in the WA vote is still much lower than is the case for the old parties while its share of identifiers is similar to that of the PP and the SDP. Thus in a relatively short time the WA voters have to a high degree started to identify with their party although the process of becoming party members is developing at a much slower rate.

Of course, relatively few party members vote for another party. Nevertheless, 6-8% of the votes for parties putting up candidates for the first time came from members of other parties (SDA and WA in 1983 and CiP in 1987) while this

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parties' members and identifiers who are not members we get the percentage of other parties' identifiers in each party's profile. The percentages in Table III.2.3 do not correspond exactly to the figures in Table III.1.6, as a few more respondents are missing in Table III.2.3, and due to rounding error but the discrepancies are very small.

figure was down to 2% for the WA in 1987, which is similar to the old parties.

As we saw before, the IP and the PA stand out in that they obtain relatively little from voters identifying with other parties and from voters without party identification. But while these parties have in common a large share of voters from own identifiers, they differ in that a much higher proportion of the IP identifiers are party members. PA identifiers are also less inclined to join the party according to the 1983 figures.<sup>30)</sup>

We have seen that the parties differ in terms of membership, but to what extent are the members really the core of the parties' supporters? We will discuss this question in the remainder of this section by examining party membership in relation to strength of party identification and vote switching.

Table III.2.4 reveals a strong relationship between the strength of party identification and party membership. As party identification becomes stronger the proportion of party members increases and the pattern is similar both in 1983 and 1987. The 1983 figures also show that among those voters who are not party members the inclination to join a party decreases sharply as party identification grows weaker. The party members are clearly the core of the parties in the sense that they identify more strongly with their party than others. The two variables are, however, by no means identical. Almost a third of those who consider themselves "very strong supporters" are for instance not

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<sup>30)</sup> In 1983 64% of PA identifiers said they would not consider becoming members while the corresponding figure for the SDP was 53%, SDA 50%, IP 46%, PP 45% and WA 29%.

party members and only 35-40% of "rather strong supporters" are party members.

**Table III.2.4. Party membership by strength of party identification 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

*Strength of party identification*

<i>1983 election</i>	<i>Very strong</i>	<i>Rather strong</i>	<i>Not very strong</i>	<i>Closer to</i>
Party members	69	40	20	8
Would consider becoming members	16	32	19	22
Would not consider becoming m.	15	28	61	71
Total	100	100	100	101
N=	(75)	(202)	(184)	(278)

ETA=.48 (membership dep.), ETA=.48 (party ident. dep.)

<i>1983 election<sup>31)</sup></i>	<i>Very strong</i>	<i>Rather strong</i>	<i>Not very strong</i>	<i>Closer to</i>
Party members	68	38	19	7
Not party members	32	62	81	93
Total	100	100	100	100
N=	(77)	(213)	(194)	(301)

ETA=.44 (membership dep.), ETA=.43 (party ident. dep.)

<i>1987 election</i>	<i>Very strong</i>	<i>Rather strong</i>	<i>Not very strong</i>	<i>Closer to</i>
Party members	68	35	21	6
Not party members	32	65	79	94
Total	100	100	100	100
N=	(186)	(323)	(268)	(477)

ETA=.48 (membership dep.), ETA=.47 (party ident. dep.)

31) This section of table is included to enable direct comparison with the 1987 figures. The Ns are somewhat higher than in the first section of the table, where those for whom there is no response (mainly "don't knows") on the question if they would consider joining a party are omitted.

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**Table III.2.5. Mean strength of party identification by party membership and party identified with in 1983 and 1987. Total samples.**

*Party identified with in 1983*

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	SDA	Total
Party members	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.0	(3.7)	(3.5)	2.9
N=	(21)	(33)	(107)	(23)	(3)	(2)	(189)

(F-prob=.3346/ETA=.17/Scheffe(.05) and LSD (.05): No two parties significantly different).

Identifiers who are not party members

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	SDA	Total
1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.9	
N=	(66)	(89)	(248)	(121)	(21)	(18)	(563)

(F-prob=.0883/ETA=.13/Scheffe(.05): No two parties sign. diff./LSD(.05): IP sign. diff. from SDA, SDP).

All identifiers

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	SDA	Total
2.0	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.1	
N=	(87)	(122)	(355)	(144)	(24)	(20)	(752)

(F-prob=.1326/ETA=.11/Scheffe(.05): No two parties sign. diff./LSD(.05): SDA sign. diff. from PP, IP).

Party members (2.9) vs. not party members (1.9): F-prob=.0000/ETA=.43.

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*Party identified with in 1987*

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Total
Party members	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.1
N=	(39)	(47)	(150)	(46)	(17)	(15)	(315)

(F-prob=.2125/ETA=.15/Scheffe and LSD(.05): No two parties sign. diff.).

Identifiers who are not party members

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Total
1.8	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.9	
N=	(132)	(129)	(276)	(124)	(140)	(34)	(838)

(F-prob=.0286/ETA=.12/Scheffe(.05): No two parties sign. diff./LSD(.05): IP sign. diff. from SDP and PP, PA sign. diff. from SDP).

All identifiers

	SDP	PP	IP	PA	WA	CiP	Total
2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.5	2.2	
N=	(171)	(176)	(426)	(171)	(157)	(49)	(1153)

(F-prob=.0007/ETA=.14/Scheffe(.05): IP sign. diff. from WA /LSD(.05): WA and SDP sign. diff. from IP, PA, CiP).

Party members (3.1) vs. not party members (1.9): F-prob=.0000/ETA=.46.

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 Scale for strength of party identification: 4=very strong, 3=rather strong, 2=not very strong, 1=closer to.  
 -----

But while party members are clearly stronger party supporters than non-members, is there a difference between

the individual parties in how strongly their identifiers support the party? Table III.2.5 shows the mean strength of party identification among each party's identifiers in 1983 and 1987 both among party members and identifiers who are not party members.<sup>32)</sup>

The overall patterns in Table III.2.5 are similar both in 1983 and 1987. While there are differences in the strength of party identification between party members and identifiers who are not party members ( $ETA=.43$  and  $.46$ ), the relationship between strength of partisanship and party is weak within the two membership categories ( $ETA=.12$  to  $.17$ ). Nevertheless, in both elections the strength of party identification is greater among identifiers of IP and PA who are not party members than is the case for the SDP, PP and WA. The difference is too small to be statistically significant on the Scheffe-test. The parties do not vary greatly in how strongly members or identifiers who are not members support their party.

A similar pattern can be observed if we examine the relationship between party membership and vote switching.

Table III.2.6 shows that party members were less likely to switch parties than identifiers who are not party members both in 1983 and 1987 - and in both elections those without party identification were by far most likely to switch parties. The table also reveals that the increased overall volatility from 1983 to 1987 is a reflection of increased volatility among *both* party members and non-members.

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<sup>32)</sup> The means for all identifiers in Table III.2.5 are slightly different from the means in Table III.1.7 as the identifiers for whom information on party membership is missing are omitted here.

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**Table III.2.6. Party switching 1979-1983 and 1983-1987 by party membership. Total samples. Percentages.**

1979-83				1983-87		
	Same party	Party change	N	Same party	Party change	N
Party members	92	8	(170)	86	14	(285)
Other identif.	76	24	(443)	62	38	(659)
No party id.	42	58	(72)	35	65	(144)
Chi-sq=70.92 (sign=.0000) ETA=.32 (change dependent)				Chi-sq=110.47 (sign=.0000) ETA=.32 (ch.dep.)		
<i>Party members:</i>						
SDP	100	0	(21)	85	15	(34)
PP	97	3	(30)	93	7	(45)
IP	91	9	(95)	95	5	(130)
PA	100	0	(20)	93	7	(40)
Chi-sq=5.01 (sign=.1712) ETA=.17 (change dependent)				Chi-sq=4.35 (sign=.2263) ETA=.13 (ch.dep.)		
<i>Identifiers who are not party members:</i>						
SDP	79	21	(53)	63	37	(100)
PP	83	17	(71)	69	31	(94)
IP	82	18	(191)	79	21	(201)
PA	78	22	(92)	77	23	(92)
Chi-sq=.98 (sign=.8164) ETA=.05 (change dependent)				Chi-sq=10.46 (sign=.0151) ETA=.15 (ch.dep.)		

The latter part of the table tests whether there are differences between the old parties within the membership categories. Party members of the different parties did not show a significantly different tendency to switch parties either in 1983 or 1987. The same is the case for identifiers who are not members in 1983; in 1987, however, the difference is significant: a higher proportion of SDP and PP identifiers change party than is the case for the IP and the PA.

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**Table III.2.7. Party switching 1983 and 1987 by strength of party identification and party membership. Total samples. ANOVA and MCA.**

*Party switching 1979-83 and 1983-87 is coded 0 (did not switch parties) and 1 (did switch parties). Thus, the party switching means in the table show directly the percentage of party switchers in each group.*

*Party switching 1979-83:*

<i>Party identification</i>	<i>Party members</i>	<i>Not party members</i>	<i>All</i>
Very strong	.06 (47)	.10 (20)	.07 (67)
Rather strong	.04 (73)	.18 (110)	.13 (183)
Not very strong	.15 (34)	.10 (125)	.11 (159)
Closer to	.19 (16)	.37 (188)	.36 (204)
No party ident.	.00 (0)	.58 (72)	.58 (72)
All	.08 (170)	.28 (515)	.23 (685)

Significance (F) of main effects:

Strength of party identification=.000

Party membership=.039

Significance (F) of 2-way interactions:.151

*MCA table:*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Unadjusted deviations</i>	<i>Adjusted deviations</i>
Very strong party ident.	(67)	-.16	-.12
Rather strong	(183)	-.11	-.10
Not very strong	(159)	-.13	-.13
Closer to	(204)	.12	.11
No party id	(72)	.35	.33
		ETA=.39	BETA=.36
Party members	(170)	-.15	-.06
Not party members	(515)	.05	.02
		ETA=.21	BETA=.08

Multiple R=.393

Multiple R squared=.155

*continued...*

*Party switching 1983-87:*

<i>Party identification</i>	<i>Party members</i>	<i>Not party members</i>	<i>All party identifiers</i>
Very strong	.13 (109)	.23 (47)	.16 (156)
Rather strong	.08 (103)	.28 (160)	.20 (263)
Not very strong	.14 (49)	.21 (156)	.20 (205)
Closer to	.50 (22)	.54 (288)	.54 (310)
No party id	.00 (0)	.65 (144)	.65 (144)
All	.14 (283)	.43 (795)	.35 (1078)

Significance (F) of main effects:

Strength of party identification=.000

Party membership=.000

Significance (F) of 2-way interaction=.324

*MCA table:*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Unadjusted deviations</i>	<i>Adjusted deviations</i>
Very strong party ident.	(156)	-.19	-.13
Rather strong	(263)	-.15	-.13
Not very strong	(205)	-.16	-.16
Closer to	(310)	.19	.16
No party ident.	(144)	.30	.26
		ETA=.40	BETA=.35
Party members	(283)	-.21	-.09
Not party members	(651)	.07	.03
		ETA=.26	BETA=.12

Multiple R=.416

Multiple R squared=.173

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In a previous section (Table III.1.4) we examined the relationship between strength of party identification and party switching and found it largely similar to the relationship between party membership and party switching, which is not surprising as party membership is strongly related to strength of party identification.<sup>33)</sup> In Table III.2.7 we use analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple

<sup>33)</sup> Among party identifiers the relationship between strength of party identification (on a scale 1-4) and party membership (1,2) was in 1983 ETA=.43 (N=785) and in 1987 ETA=.47 (N=1254), using the strength of party identification as a dependent variable. For all voters the relationship between strength (scale 1-5) and membership (1,2) was in 1983 ETA=.47 (N=964) and in 1987 ETA=.52 (N=1623). If party membership for all voters is coded 1=party member, 2=identifier, but not member, and 3=no party identification (a category identical to 5=no party identification of the strength of party identification variable) the 1983 ETA=.74 (N=964) and the 1987 ETA=.77 (N=1623).



classification analysis (MCA) to show the impact of both party membership and strength of party identification on party switching.

Strength of party identification and party membership can together explain 16% of the variance in party switching in 1983 and 17% in 1987. As indicated by the BETAs the independent impact of the five-fold variable of strength of party identification is greater in both elections than is the impact of the dichotomous variable of party membership.<sup>34)</sup> The overall patterns for both elections are similar.

First, it is clear that party members are less likely to switch parties than non-members. Of party members, 8% in 1983 and 14% in 1987 switched parties, while the corresponding figure for non-members was 28% in 1983 and 43% in 1987.

Second, the strength of party identification is clearly important, but the five-fold variable shows basically three groups in terms of switching behaviour, as the differences between the first three categories - of very strong, rather strong, and not very strong supporters - are small. Those three categories constitute the group which shows by far the least tendency to switch parties: 7-13% did so in 1983 and

---

<sup>34)</sup> The reason for the different strength of relationship can be seen by comparing the different groups. Most party members are also supporters (154), while only 16 party members say they only feel closer to a party. Over 40% of the non-members feel on the other hand only closer to a party (188 of 443). As the tendency of party members to switch is on the whole only slightly less than of party supporters, but those who only feel closer to a party show by far the greatest tendency to switch, the relationship between switching and strength of party identification is greater as the most homogeneous group of switchers is basically a sub-group of non-members.

16-20% in 1987. Those who only feel closer to a party are much more likely to switch (36% did so in 1983 and 54% in 1987) while the group most likely to switch is those without party identification (58% switched in 1983, 65% in 1987).

Third, within each category of strength of party identification party members are less likely to switch than non-members in seven cases out of eight.<sup>35)</sup> Thus, party members are less likely to switch than non-members, even when the strength of party identification is taken into account.

In this section we have shown that the party members - only 20% of the electorate - are indeed the core of party support in the sense that party members both identify more strongly with the parties than non-members and they are less likely to switch parties. But informal party identification is also important - many of the voters who strongly support their own party and show only a weak tendency to switch parties are not party members.

We have also shown that among members of the various parties the variations in strength of support and tendency to switch parties are not great. The same is true for non-members who identify with the various parties. But as the proportion of members in the IP vote is higher than for the other parties, and the proportion of own identifiers in the IP and the PA vote is higher than for the other parties, those two parties - and especially the IP - seem to have stronger ties to their voters than the others. Using the same criteria we can conclude that the new parties have

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<sup>35)</sup> The only exception is among "not very strong" supporters in 1983.

weakest ties to their voters, even though the strong increase in identification with the WA from 1983-87 should be noted.

It should also be emphasized that while party membership and the strength of party identification are important for electoral volatility those factors can only account for a small proportion of the variation. And the increase in party switching from 23% in 1983 to 35% in 1987 is not due to any decrease in membership which did not in fact change. Neither can it be explained by declining strength of party identification, despite some decrease in its strength from 1983-87. While the overall pattern of relationship between party switching and the two partisanship variables are similar in both elections, we observe increased volatility in 1987 in all partisanship groups except one. Partisanship is a slightly better predictor of volatility in 1987 than in 1983 but it cannot explain the overall increase in party switching, which is probably due to some period effect.

### ***III.3 Participation in primaries***

The involvement of the general voter in the candidate selection in elections varies greatly between parties and political systems. In recent decades open primaries have been widely used in American politics. While the exact rules for participation vary among US states, voters can usually take part in the parties' candidate selection without being formal party members.

In parliamentary democracies open primaries are non-existent, except in Iceland. Candidature is either decided

by party organs or by primaries confined to party members.<sup>36)</sup>

The oldest known example of a primary election in Iceland is from 1914.<sup>37)</sup> While various forms of primaries had occasionally been used in Icelandic politics, especially by the IP and PP, this form of candidate selection became increasingly popular in the early 1970s and has been used by all the four old parties to some extent. The IP and the PP have used primaries in most Althingi elections since this time. They are sometimes open to all voters (or party supporters) and sometimes closed, i.e. confined to party members.<sup>38)</sup> In 1975 the SDP adopted a party rule making open primaries compulsory. While the PA was the party most sceptical of using primaries, it has increasingly used closed primaries for candidate selection during the last 10-15 years.

The use of primaries can have great impact on the political system, e.g. on the type of candidates selected, personification of politics, ideology and party discipline. But the nature of candidate selection can also be an important part of the relationship between voters and parties.

In this section we will examine primary participation in Iceland. How large a part of the electorate takes part? Are the parties different in this respect? Is primary participation confined to the hard core of party supporters

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36) A. Ranney (1981), pp. 77-80.

37) See H. Gudmundsson (1979), p. 28.

38) The distinction between an open and a closed primary is not clear-cut due to the loose definitions of party membership (see footnote 28 in this chapter).

and party members? Is primary participation related to electoral volatility?

In the 1983 survey respondents were asked if they had ever taken part in a primary election. The results are presented in Table III.3.1 which also shows the participation rate in the primaries before the elections of 1983 and 1987.

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**Table III.3.1. Participation in primary elections. Total samples. Percentages.**

<i>Have you <b>ever</b> taken part in a primary? (asked 1983)</i>		<i>Participated in 1983</i>	<i>Participated in 1987</i>
Yes	46	29	19
No	54	71	81
Total	100	100	100
N=	(998)	(992)	(1814)

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While 29% took part in a primary election before the 1983 election and 19% in 1987,<sup>39)</sup> almost half of the voters claimed in 1983 that they had at some time participated in a primary. Table III.3.2 shows what proportions of different political groups had ever taken part in a primary in 1983.

Primary participation has not been confined to a narrow group of voters. Table III.3.2 shows that all the different groups in the table have participated in primaries to a considerable extent, even though clear differences emerge. It should nevertheless be underlined that the table does not distinguish between regular and occasional (even only one

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39) Svanur Kristjansson has gathered the actual figures for primary participation in 1983 and 1987. According to his (unpublished) figures, 39,364 individuals (26% of registered voters) took part in primaries in 1983, while 27,489 (16%) did so in 1987. Our figures are slightly higher, partly as non-voters (who have a low participation rate in primaries) are underrepresented in the samples. The oldest voters, who are excluded from our samples, are also likely to have a low participation rate in primaries.

time) participation. Thus we would expect stronger relationship with the political variables in any one election.

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**Table III.3.2. Have you ever taken part in a primary? By party voted for 1983, strength of party identification, party membership and vote switching 1979-83. Total 1983 sample. Percentages.**

*Have you ever voted in a primary? (Asked 1983)*

	Yes	No	Total	N
<i>1983-vote</i>				
SDP	59	41	100	(107)
PP	42	58	100	(136)
IP	62	38	100	(354)
PA	30	70	100	(134)
SDA	33	67	100	(67)
WA	28	72	100	(53)
Did not vote/blank ballot	24	76	100	(94)
Total	47	53	100	(945)
Chi.sq=87.92 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.31				
<i>Party identification</i>				
Very strong	71	29	100	(78)
Rather strong	59	41	100	(218)
Not very strong	46	54	100	(195)
Closer to a party	36	64	100	(311)
No party identification	37	63	100	(188)
Total	46	54	100	(990)
Chi.sq=51.35 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.23				
<i>Party membership</i>				
Party member	78	22	100	(189)
Identifier but not party member	39	61	100	(597)
Total	48	52	100	(786)
Chi.sq=87.05 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.34				
<i>Vote switching 1979-83</i>				
Voted for same party 1979 and 1983	56	44	100	(533)
Voted for diff. parties 1979 and 1983	39	61	100	(161)
Total	52	48	100	(694)
Chi.sq=13.99 (sign=.0002) /ETA=.15				
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Around 60% of SDP and IP voters had participated in a primary while the corresponding figure for the PP is 42% and only 30% for the PA, as was to be expected. The two new parties did not hold primaries for the 1983 election but

almost a third of WA (28%) and SDA (33%) voters had at some time participated in a primary. 24% of those who did not vote or turned in a blank ballot claimed to have voted at some time in a primary, further indicating that this group is not a group permanently alienated from the political system.<sup>40)</sup>

As party identification grows stronger the proportion which has taken part in a primary increases, but over a third of those who have the weakest identification - those who either only feel closer to a party or have no party identification - have taken part in candidate selection through primaries. The highest participation rate (78%) is among party members.

While a higher proportion (56%) of voters who did not change parties from 1979-83 had at some time taken part in a primary, 39% of the switchers had also done so.

Tables III.3.3 and III.3.4 show the relationship of primary participation in 1983 and 1987 to the same political variables.

When we compare the relationship between primary participation and the political variables the overall pattern for those having at some time taken part (Table III.3.2.) is to a large extent repeated for participation in 1983 (Table III.3.3) and in 1987 (Table III.3.4). The fact that primary participation in 1987 was much lower (19%) than in 1983 (29%) is mainly reflected in a lower participation rate in most categories.

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<sup>40)</sup> See our earlier discussion on non-voters in Section II.2.

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**Table III.3.3. Did you take part in a primary before the 1983 election? By party voted for 1983, strength of party identification, party membership and vote switching 1979-83. Total 1983 sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Participation in 1983 primary</i>			
	Yes	No	Total	N
<i>1983-vote</i>				
SDP	42	58	100	(107)
PP	26	74	100	(136)
IP	46	54	100	(356)
PA	13	87	100	(135)
SDA	13	87	100	(67)
WA	11	89	100	(53)
Did not vote/blank ballot	10	90	100	(94)
Total	30	70	100	(948)
Chi.sq=107.34 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.34				
<i>Party identification</i>				
Very strong	58	42	100	(78)
Rather strong	47	53	100	(218)
Not very strong	25	75	100	(196)
Closer to a party	19	81	100	(313)
No party identification	17	83	100	(189)
Total	29	71	100	(994)
Chi.sq=95.88 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.31				
<i>Party membership</i>				
Party member	63	37	100	(189)
Identifier but not party member	22	78	100	(599)
Total	32	68	100	(788)
Chi.sq=109.34 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.38				
<i>Vote switching 1979-83</i>				
Voted for same party 1979 and 1983	39	61	100	(534)
Voted for diff. parties 1979 and 1983	19	81	100	(162)
Total	34	66	100	(696)
Chi.sq=21.79 (sign=.0002) /ETA=.18				
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**Table III.3.4. Did you take part in a primary before the 1987 election? By party voted for 1987, strength of party identification, party membership and vote switching 1983-87. Total 1987 sample. Percentages.**

*Primary participation in 1987*

	Yes	No	Total	N
<i>1987-vote</i>				
SDP	28	72	100	(240)
PP	25	75	100	(261)
IP	26	74	100	(460)
PA	16	84	100	(201)
WA	6	94	100	(190)
CiP	17	83	100	(110)
Others	14	86	100	(70)
Did not vote/blank ballot	5	95	100	(93)
Total	20	80	100	(1625)
Chi.sq=59.29(sign=.0000)/ETA=.19				
<i>Party identification</i>				
Very strong	46	54	100	(188)
Rather strong	26	74	100	(323)
Not very strong	21	79	100	(270)
Closer to a party	12	88	100	(544)
No party identification	7	93	100	(363)
Total	19	81	100	(1688)
Chi.sq=150.83(sign=.0000)/ETA=.30				
<i>Party membership</i>				
Party member	57	43	100	(330)
Identifier but not party member	11	89	100	(936)
Total	23	77	100	(1266)
Chi.sq=288.70(sign=.0000)/ETA=.48				
<i>Vote switching 1983-87</i>				
Voted for same party 1983 and 1987	28	72	100	(735)
Voted for diff. parties 1983 and 1987	14	86	100	(422)
Total	23	77	100	(1157)
Chi.sq=25.64(sign=.0002)/ETA=.15				

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An exception to this can, however, been observed if we look at the parties' participation rates in 1987. In 1983 the PP voters with 26% participation in primaries were far behind IP (46%) and SDP (42%). In 1987 the PP rate hardly went down (25%), making the party similar to the IP (26%) and the SDP (28%). While the PA had the lowest participation

in both elections, its rate went up from 1983 (13%) to 1987 (16%), bringing the party much closer to the other old parties in terms of primary participation.

The strongest relationship in all three tables is between primary participation and party membership. This relationship is strongest in 1987 ( $\text{ETA}=.48$ ) when participation is down; while primary participation 1983-1987 decreased from 22% to 11% among party identifiers who were not party members it only slipped from 63% to 57% among party members. Party members are thus not only the group most likely to take part in primaries - their participation rate also seems most robust.

Let us finally consider to what extent those voters who took part in primaries in 1983 and 1987 actually voted for the party list they had put their mark on by ranking candidates in a primary election. Table III.3.5 shows the voting behaviour of those who took part in the four old parties' primaries in 1983 and 1987.

Participants in the closed PA primary 1987 remained most loyal to the party in the election as 90% gave the PA their vote.<sup>41)</sup> In terms of loyalty the IP came second (83-86%), the PP third (79-80%) and the participants in the SDP primaries showed least loyalty: 73-75% of them voted for the SDP in the elections.<sup>42)</sup>

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41) It should though be noted that N is only 35 for the PA in 1987, resulting in a large margin of error, not to mention the 12 PA respondents in 1983.

42) One of the most consistent criticisms of primary elections, especially open ones, has been that they allow opponents of a party to decide its list of candidates or even organize the victory of the least "dangerous" candidate! While our rate of "defections" does not rule out such an explanation - and in a close primary the "defectors" could have made the difference - a closer look at the data makes this seem unlikely. A large part of the "defectors"

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**Table III.3.5. Election vote by primary vote in 1983 and 1987 among those who voted in the old parties' primaries. Total samples. Percentages.**

	SDP	Voted in the primary of			Total
		PP	IP	PA	
<i>1983 election vote:</i>					
SDP	73	-	3	-	15
PP	8	79	4	-	13
IP	6	10	83	(8)	59
PA	4	7	1	(83)	6
SDA	2	-	3	-	3
WA	2	3	2	-	2
Did not vote	4	-	2	(8)	3
Total	99%	99%	98%	(99%)	101%
N=	(48)	(29)	(180)	(12)	(269)
<i>1987 election vote:</i>					
SDP	75	8	1	5	21
PP	5	80	1	-	20
IP	5	3	86	-	38
PA	1	1	-	90	11
WA	8	1	2	-	3
CiP	1	3	8	-	4
Others	3	3	2	6	3
Did not vote	1	1	1	-	1
Total	99%	100%	101%	101%	101%
N=	(74)	(73)	(129)	(35)	(311)

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 Of all participants in the four old parties' primaries in 1983 (269) 81.1% voted for the party in which primary they had taken part, 11.4% voted for another old party, 4.9% voted for a new party and 2.6% did not vote. Of the 1987 participants (311) 82.5% voted for the party in which primary they had taken part, 7% voted for another old party, 9.7% voted for WA or a new party and 1% did not vote.  
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In this section we have seen that primary participation has been widespread in Iceland, both in the sense that almost half the electorate has taken part at one time or another and that participation is not confined to particular

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are e.g. voters who either only feel closer to a party or have no party identification. In 1983 this group constituted 30% of all primary participants and 53% of the defections. In 1987 the group constituted 27% of primary participants and 62% of the defections. Defections seem therefore more likely to be simply a result of a change of mind of voters weakly committed to the parties rather than an organized effort of strongly committed opponents.

groups even though clear differences emerge. Voters with strong party identification and especially party members are more likely to participate than others. Primary participants are less likely to switch parties but the relationship can not be considered strong. While all the old parties are to some extent tied to their voters through primary participation, those ties have clearly been most pronounced in the case of the IP and the SDP and least so in the case of the PA.

#### ***III.4 Exposure to the (party) press***

Icelanders claim to have had one of the highest literacy rates in Europe for centuries. Newspapers and magazines were important media of political communication in the period of independence politics in the 19th and early 20th century. Newspaper editors argued for different paths on the way to independence from Denmark, a debate often marked by complex legalistic arguments. Sometimes the papers favoured individual candidates for Althingi elections and when cadre parties emerged in the Icelandic political system at the turn of the century most papers supported a particular party.<sup>43)</sup>

With the emergence of the modern parties and especially with the consolidation of the four-party system in the 1930-1942 period the major newspapers became linked to the political parties either formally or informally. The political system became highly elitist and the parties dominated most spheres in society, including political

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<sup>43)</sup> See O.R. Grimsson and Th. Broddason (1977), pp. 200-201 and O.R. Grimsson (1978a).

communication.<sup>44)</sup> Three parties owned their newspapers: the SDP owned *Althydubladid* (founded 1919), PP owned *Timinn* (a weekly from 1917, a daily from 1938), and *Thjodviljinn* (1936) was the paper of the Communist Party, later supporting the Socialist Party and then the PA. *Morgunbladid* (founded 1913) - which became by far the largest paper in the country and is now printed in around 50,000 copies in a country with an electorate of ca. 180,000 - had played an important part in the early 1920s in unifying the right wing elements in Icelandic politics which had been divided between various cadre parties and factions based on independence politics.<sup>45)</sup> The paper supported the final consolidation of the right in the form of the IP from the party's foundation in 1929. The oldest daily, *Visir* (founded 1910), also supported the IP, which at times owned the paper. All the papers were highly partisan, presenting the party line, smearing political opponents and usually not printing any dissenting point of view, not to mention articles by opponents. Icelandic State Broadcasting (founded 1930) was heavily influenced by the political party leaders (e.g. through the Radio Council) and its neutrality rule was interpreted as being apolitical, i.e. minimizing political coverage. For all practical purposes the parties monopolized political communication through the newspapers.<sup>46)</sup>

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44) O.R. Grimsson (1976) gives a detailed analysis of the elitist features of the four-party system.

45) See H. Gudmundsson (1979). A loose alliance of opposition MPs which was formed in 1923 without a name was e.g. called "the Morgunbladid Party" by its opponents (p. 86).

46) As a case in point we can mention, that in 1943, when all the political parties agreed to dissolve the union with Denmark, and declare Iceland a republic, the dissenting minority which protested that this should wait until after

In the early 1970s mass communication, like many other spheres of society, became more pluralistic as the grip of the parties weakened. The state radio and state television (the latter founded in 1966) increasingly aired programs with political content, discussions and critical commentary. *Visir* had become increasingly independent of the IP and after a feud on the paper in 1975 the independent *Dagbladið* was founded. Both papers were basically independent of parties but favoured centre-right editorial policy and competed in the evening market for several years before merging again as *Dagbladið Visir* or *DV* in 1981. From the late 1960s *Morgunblaðið* had also slowly become more independent of the IP, while still supporting the party. In 1986, after the abolition of the state monopoly on broadcasting, a private television station, *Channel 2*, was founded and several private radio stations went on the air. All those developments led to increasing pluralism and the erosion of party control over the media. Increasingly the politicians had to take journalists seriously as the Fourth Estate. They had - sometimes painfully - to operate in an often hostile media environment over which they had little control.

While we have no direct evidence to the effect, it is likely that the parties' monopoly of the news media from the 1930s to around 1970 served to strengthen or keep their voter alignments intact, resulting in the low electoral volatility from 1942-1967. Similarly, it is likely that the increasingly open and critical media market since the early

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Second World War had finished found it very difficult to have their views printed in the media.

1970s has played its part in the increasing electoral volatility of the two last decades.

The impact of the media on human attitudes and behaviour has been widely discussed in last decades and been the subject of extensive scholarly research. While it is clear that the power of the media to mould human behaviour has often been exaggerated (its limitations as an agent of socialization - and its possibilities to trigger events - became for instance obvious in Eastern Europe in 1989), the debate has not led to any universally accepted general theories of the impact of the media - and it is doubtful if such a theory will ever be formed. A narrower approach which would attempt to measure the impact of a particular type of media on particular types of attitudes or behaviour is likely to be more fruitful. Nevertheless, electoral studies focusing on the media's impact on voting behaviour, for instance have not been able to reach any general conclusions.<sup>47)</sup> Such impact seems to vary depending on the location and time and research of this kind is always difficult, especially if we attempt to establish a causal link. If we observe for instance that the readers of a partisan newspaper overwhelmingly vote for the party which the paper supports we still do not know whether the paper persuaded its readers or if the readers simply selected the paper that broadly represented the views they had in the first place. If the latter were mainly the case we would

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<sup>47)</sup> Many comments on the political impact of the media focus e.g. on how television has changed electoral politics. While this is obviously the case: politicians communicate through TV, the style of election campaigns has changed, etc., this tells us nothing about the impact of the medium *per se* on voters' decisions.

nevertheless expect the paper to reinforce those views to some extent, thus having some political impact even though we could not measure the persuading impact itself.

In this section we will examine to what extent there still exist ties between parties and voters in the Icelandic electorate through the newspapers, i.e. to what extent the political position - or support for a particular party - of a newspaper is reflected in the political profile of its readers. While we would expect those ties to have weakened in recent decades, we have no evidence to test that hypothesis; we can only observe the situation in the 1980s.

In our surveys we asked the respondents how often they saw each daily paper: daily, often, seldom or never. Table III.4.1 shows to what extent the voters of the different parties were exposed to each newspaper in 1983 and 1987.

The first thing to note in Table III.4.1 is the very different circulation of the Icelandic newspapers. *Morgunbladid*, by far the strongest, was seen daily by 55-60% of voters; around 75% saw the paper daily or often. Second is the independent evening paper, *DV*, seen daily by 40-42% of voters; around 70% saw the paper daily or often. Far behind are the small party newspapers; daily readers of the PP's *Timinn* constituted 11-15% of voters while the corresponding figure for the PA's *Thjodviljinn* was 11-13%. The rural PP newspaper, *Dagur*, published in the northern town of Akureyri was seen daily by 7% of voters in 1987, but the paper's circulation is mainly confined to the Northeast and Northwest constituencies, where it is quite strong. Smallest is the SDP's paper, *Althydubladid*, which was seen daily by 3-4% of Icelandic voters.



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**Table III.4.1. Exposure to the daily newspapers by party voted for in 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

	Daily	Sees newspaper		Never	Total	N
		Often	Seldom			
<b>Althydubladid (SDP)</b>						
<i>1983 vote</i>						
SDP	14	5	33	49	101	(107)
PP	2	2	30	67	101	(135)
IP	2	3	29	66	100	(353)
PA	5	2	27	67	101	(134)
SDA	1	3	40	55	99	(67)
WA	8	4	28	60	100	(53)
Did not vote	1	1	25	73	100	(93)
Total	4	3	30	64	101	(942)
Chi-sq=54.26 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.21 (exposure dependent)						
<i>1987 vote</i>						
SDP	9	4	41	46	100	(241)
PP	1	1	29	69	100	(262)
IP	2	2	35	61	100	(460)
PA	2	2	36	60	100	(202)
WA	5	3	37	55	100	(191)
CiP	3	-	32	65	100	(110)
Other	1	2	34	62	99	(70)
Did not vote	-	2	27	71	100	(94)
Total	3	2	35	60	100	(1630)
Chi-sq=67.46 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.19						
<b>Dagur (PP, rural)</b>						
<i>1987 vote</i>						
SDP	5	3	11	82	101	(239)
PP	15	5	19	61	100	(261)
IP	5	4	13	78	100	(460)
PA	7	9	15	70	101	(202)
WA	4	2	16	79	101	(190)
CiP	2	2	8	88	100	(110)
Other	20	7	15	58	100	(70)
Did not vote	8	3	14	76	101	(94)
Total	7	4	14	75	100	(1626)
Chi-sq=93.18 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.22						

continued...

**DV (independent)****1983 vote**

SDP	46	28	20	7	101 (107)
PP	38	29	27	7	101 (135)
IP	44	28	23	5	100 (354)
PA	38	30	31	2	101 (135)
SDA	52	30	16	2	100 (67)
WA	28	47	23	2	100 (53)
Did not vote	39	23	31	6	99 (94)

Total 42 29 25 5 101 (945)  
 Chi-sq=28.70 (sign=.0522)/ETA=.10

**1987 vote**

SDP	42	30	25	3	100 (240)
PP	37	22	33	8	100 (262)
IP	41	26	29	4	100 (461)
PA	33	33	31	4	101 (202)
WA	28	32	36	3	99 (192)
CiP	58	26	15	1	100 (110)
Other	46	20	26	8	100 (70)
Did not vote	45	23	28	5	101 (94)

Total 40 27 29 4 100 (1631)  
 Chi-sq=58.64 (sign=.0000)/ETA=.15

**Morgunbladid (IP)****1983 vote**

SDP	55	21	18	7	101 (106)
PP	34	20	42	4	100 (135)
IP	74	14	9	3	100 (355)
PA	36	24	36	4	100 (135)
SDA	58	21	19	2	100 (67)
WA	60	30	9	0	99 (53)
Did not vote	44	21	25	11	101 (94)

Total 56 19 21 4 100 (945)  
 Chi-sq=144.11 (sign=.0000)/ETA=.33

**1987 vote**

SDP	68	15	14	3	100 (240)
PP	44	17	31	8	100 (262)
IP	80	8	9	3	100 (460)
PA	36	26	30	8	100 (202)
WA	56	21	22	1	100 (192)
CiP	69	12	15	4	100 (110)
Other	38	12	40	10	100 (70)
Did not vote	43	24	26	7	100 (94)

Total 60 16 20 5 101 (1630)  
 Chi-sq=212.70 (sign=.0000)/ETA=.33

continued...

**Timinn (PP)**

## 1983 vote

SDP	7	7	46	41	101 (106)
PP	43	13	30	14	100 (136)
IP	11	9	46	34	99 (352)
PA	16	13	52	19	100 (134)
SDA	9	15	55	21	100 (67)
WA	15	13	53	19	100 (53)
Did not vote	8	14	36	43	101 (93)

Total 15 11 45 29 100 (941)

Chi-sq=133.45 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.33

## 1987 vote

SDP	5	5	46	44	100 (241)
PP	29	15	29	27	100 (261)
IP	7	5	47	41	100 (458)
PA	9	8	47	37	101 (201)
WA	9	9	44	38	100 (191)
CiP	6	4	51	39	100 (110)
Other	14	7	40	40	101 (70)
Did not vote	4	14	35	47	100 (92)

Total 11 8 43 39 101 (1624)

Chi-sq=163.28 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.26

**Thjodviljinn (PA)**

## 1983 vote

SDP	5	7	34	55	101 (107)
PP	7	5	38	50	100 (134)
IP	5	5	37	53	100 (353)
PA	40	16	34	10	100 (135)
SDA	6	9	48	37	100 (67)
WA	19	23	43	15	100 (53)
Did not vote	5	8	27	60	100 (93)

Total 11 8 37 44 100 (942)

Chi-sq=223.79 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.46

## 1987 vote

SDP	6	6	39	50	101 (241)
PP	7	2	40	51	100 (262)
IP	6	4	41	49	100 (459)
PA	43	18	25	14	100 (201)
WA	21	13	40	27	101 (192)
CiP	7	4	39	50	100 (110)
Other	6	3	48	43	100 (70)
Did not vote	7	11	31	52	101 (92)

Total 13 7 38 43 101 (1627)

Chi-sq=342.27 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.43

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The table reveals clear relationships between party voted for and newspaper readership.<sup>48)</sup> The strongest relationship is between party voted for and exposure to *Thjodviljinn* (ETA=.46 and .43), followed by *Morgunbladid* (ETA=.33) and *Timinn* (ETA=.33 and .26). This relationship is weaker for *Dagur* (ETA=.22) and *Althydubladid* (ETA=.21 and .19) - and weakest for the independent *DV* (ETA=.10<sup>49)</sup> and .15). By using squared ETAs we can say that 18-21% of the variance of *Thjodviljinn's* readership can be explained by party voted for. Corresponding figures are 11% for *Morgunbladid*, 7-11% for *Timinn*, 5% for *Dagur*, 4% for *Althydubladid* and 1-2% for *DV*.

*Morgunbladid* has a high readership among voters of all parties even though its readership has a distinct political profile. 74-80% of IP voters saw the paper daily, closely followed by CiP voters (69%). A majority of voters for the SDP (55-68%), WA (56-60%) and SDA (58%) also saw *Morgunbladid* daily while this was the case for just over a third of PP (34-44%) and PA (36%) voters.

The other daily with a large circulation, *DV*, has a very different profile. While the differences between the four old parties are not great, a somewhat higher proportion of IP and SDP voters (41-46%) saw *DV* daily than was the case among PP and PA voters (33-38%). When we look at the new parties, however, an interesting pattern emerges. Both in 1983 and 1987 only 28% of WA voters saw *DV* daily while 52%

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48) Here as in Table III.1.4 those who did not vote or turned in a blank ballot form a separate category when the ETAs are computed. The ETAs change, however, very little (.00 or .01) if this group is omitted from the calculations.

49) Not significant at the .05 level.

of SDA voters in 1983 and 58% of CiP voters in 1987 were daily readers of *DV*.<sup>50)</sup>

*Timinn*, which dropped in circulation from 1983-87, was seen daily by 43% of PP voters in 1983 but only 29% in 1987. *Timinn* was somewhat more popular among PA and WA voters than among voters of SDP, IP, SDA and IP.

*Thjodviljinn* was seen daily by 40-43% of PA voters. The most noteworthy aspect of the paper's profile is, however, that 19-21% of WA voters were daily readers of *Thjodviljinn*, while 5-7% of voters for all other parties saw the paper daily.

*Althydubladid* was seen daily by only 9-14% of SDP voters. Only 1-2% of voters for other parties saw the paper daily, with the exception of voters of the WA (5-8%) and PA in 1983 (5%).<sup>51)</sup> Almost half of the SDP voters never see the party's paper and 82-87% of SDP voters saw the paper seldom or never. Those SDP voters can hardly have been influenced by *Althydubladid* in their voting behaviour!

Other patterns emerge beside the clear tendency of voters to favour their party's newspaper. PP and PA voters have in common a relatively low proportion reading *Morgunbladid* and they read *DV* somewhat less frequently than IP and SDP voters, even though WA voters are lowest on that score. WA

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50) This may be connected to the populist, anti-establishment tone of *DV*. The paper was also clearly sympathetic towards Vilmundur Gylfason, the SDA leader who frequently wrote a column for the paper and Albert Gudmundsson, the CiP leader.

51) This may partly be due to the fact that many public institutions subscribe to the papers - a form of state subsidy. As we will see in Chapter VII PA and WA are much stronger in the public sector than in the private sector. The smaller the total circulation of a newspaper the greater is the proportional impact of the individuals who read the paper at work.

and PA voters read *Timinn* to a greater extent than voters of other parties (except the PP of course) and WA voters show a relatively high readership of *Thjodviljinn*. Thus the voters of the PP, PA and WA show some similarities in their newspaper reading habits.

Table III.4.2 shows to what extent the daily readership of each paper is confined to voters of the party the paper supports.

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**Table III.4.2. Voting behaviour of each paper's daily readers in 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

	Daily readers of						
	<i>Alth</i> (SDP)	<i>Dagur</i> (PP)	<i>DV</i> (ind.)	<i>Mbl</i> (IP)	<i>Timinn</i> (PP)	<i>Thjodv</i> (PA)	All voters
Voted for							
SDP 1983	42	n.a.	13	11	5	5	11
SDP 1987	41	9	16	17	7	7	15
PP 1983	6	n.a.	13	9	40	9	14
PP 1987	6	34	15	12	44	9	16
IP 1983	19	n.a.	39	50	26	16	38
IP 1987	19	20	29	39	17	14	28
PA 1983	17	n.a.	13	9	15	52	14
PA 1987	8	12	10	8	10	43	12
WA 1983	11	n.a.	4	6	6	10	6
WA 1987	19	6	8	11	10	19	12
SDA 1983	3	n.a.	9	7	4	4	7
CiP 1987	6	2	10	8	4	4	7
Other 1987	2	12	5	3	6	2	4
Didn't vote 1983	3	n.a.	9	8	5	5	10
Didn't vote 1987	-	6	7	4	2	3	6
N (1983)	(36)	-	(393)	(529)	(145)	(104)	(948)
N (1987)	(52)	(120)	(649)	(969)	(173)	(203)	(1633)

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 Figures for the rural PP daily *Dagur* are not available for 1983 as the paper was not a daily then.  
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By comparing the percentage of each party's voters of each newspaper's daily readers to the party's share of all

voters we can see to what extent the paper's political profile deviates from the profile of all voters. For *DV* the deviations are remarkably small both in 1983 and 1987. In 1983, for instance, when 38% of the sample voted for the IP, 39% of *DV*'s daily readers did so and when the IP vote went down to 28% in 1987 29% of *DV*'s daily readers claimed to have voted for the IP.

There are considerable deviations for all the other papers. In 1983 50% of *Morgunbladid*'s daily readers voted for the IP while the party obtained 38% of all voters. In 1987 the figure was down to 39%, corresponding to the IP losses at the polls.

40-53% of the daily readers of *Althydubladid*, *Timinn* and *Thjodviljinn* voted for the party the paper supports. 34% of *Dagur*'s daily readers voted for the PP, but due to *Dagur*'s local concentration in the north it is misleading to compare the paper's political profile to that of all voters.<sup>52)</sup>

If we consider those figures in terms of the papers' persuasion power we can see that, despite clear relationships between voting behaviour and readership of the papers supporting particular parties, in most cases over a half of each paper's daily readers do not vote in accordance with the paper's political line. The papers still have a function as a tie between parties and voters but their power

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<sup>52)</sup> It is more realistic to compare *Dagur*'s figures in Table III.4.2 to the actual 1987 results in the Northeast constituency, which were as follows: SDP 14.3%, PP 24.9%, IP 20.9%, PA 13.1%, WA 6.4%, CiP 3.6%, Others 16.8%. *Dagur*'s deviations from those figures are much smaller than from the national figures. While PP voters are still overrepresented in *Dagur*'s daily readers, the paper's political profile is remarkably similar to the Northeast general profile.

to mould the voter's behaviour in the polling booth should not be exaggerated.

If we finally consider whether newspaper readership has any impact on electoral volatility, the relationship between readership and party switching is not significant (chi-square, .05-level) both in 1983 and 1987 for all papers except DV. Those who read DV frequently are more likely to switch parties than others, but while the relationship is statistically significant it is very weak.<sup>53)</sup>

### ***III.5 Personal acquaintance with Members of Althingi***

Iceland is one of the smallest democracies of the world. The ratio between the members of Althingi and the number of eligible voters in the electorate was 1:2500 in 1983, and 1:2700 in 1987. In the most scantily populated constituency, the West Peninsula, which elected five members to the Althingi in the 1987 election, a total of 6527 votes were cast. Thus it is not unreasonable to expect that members of the Icelandic Althingi are able to nurture more personal relationships with their voters than is the case in most other countries. Personal contacts may constitute a more important tie between voters and their representatives in Iceland than is the case in most countries.

In 1983 we asked our respondents if they knew one or more members of Althingi personally. Table III.5.1 shows that of the total electorate one-half knew a member personally. 15% claimed to know one member, while one-third of the

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<sup>53)</sup> With party switching dependent (coded 0,1) the ETAs are .11 in 1983 and .10 in 1987. If readership is dependent the ETAs are .08 and .09.



electorate said they knew two or more members of Althingi personally. Those figures must be considered extremely high.

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**Table III.5.1. Do you know one or more Members of Althingi personally? By party voted for 1983, strength of party identification, party membership, party switching, sex, region, age. 1983 total sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Personally knows</i>			<i>Total</i>	<i>N</i>
	<i>None MP</i>	<i>One MP</i>	<i>Two or more</i>		
<i>All voters</i>	51	15	34	100	(1000)
<i>Vote 1983</i>					
SDP	54	13	33	100	(107)
PP	42	17	41	100	(136)
IP	45	16	40	101	(355)
PA	48	16	37	101	(134)
SDA	69	9	22	100	(67)
WA	64	23	13	100	(53)
Did not vote	63	15	22	100	(94)
Chi-sq=37.45(sign=.0002)/ETA=.19					
<i>Party identification</i>					
Very strong	31	13	56	100	(78)
Rather strong	42	20	38	100	(218)
Not very strong	50	12	38	100	(196)
Closer to a party	55	16	29	100	(311)
No party identification	64	12	24	100	(178)
Chi-sq=45.01(sign=.0000)/ETA=.20					
<i>Party membership</i>					
Party member	24	15	61	100	(189)
Identifier but not member	55	16	29	100	(597)
No party identification	64	12	24	100	(178)
Chi-sq=86.52(sign=.0000)/ETA=.30					
<i>Party switching</i>					
Voted same party 1979-83	41	16	43	100	(533)
Voted diff.parties '79-83	56	14	30	100	(161)
Chi-sq=11.51(sign=.0032)/ETA=.13					
<i>Sex</i>					
Male	41	14	45	100	(534)
Female	62	17	21	100	(466)
Chi.sq=64.53(sign=.0000)/ETA=.25					
<i>Region</i>					
Reykjavik	57	14	29	100	(369)
Southwest	52	17	31	100	(237)
Other constituencies	44	16	40	100	(394)
Chi-sq=14.87(sign=.0050)/ETA=.12					

*continued...*

Age					
20-23	77	15	8	100	(95)
24-29	68	16	16	100	(166)
30-39	51	19	31	101	(256)
40-49	35	11	54	100	(167)
50-59	40	14	46	100	(134)
60-69	37	15	49	101	(101)
70-83	54	14	32	100	(81)
Chi-sq=107.20 (sign=.0000) /ETA=.32					

-----  
 Acquaintance with MPs is dependent when ETA is calculated.  
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In this section we will examine if this kind of voter integration to the political system - personal acquaintance with a member of Althingi - is related to our political variables, in particular electoral volatility. First we shall, however, see if three background variables, sex, age, and region, are of any importance in this context.

Of these three variables, age is most strongly related to acquaintance with members of Althingi. 77% of the first time voters do not know any member, while this is only the case for 35-40% of those in middle age (30-59). The relationship to sex is somewhat weaker but a much higher percentage of men (59%) know one or more members than is the case for women (38%). Somewhat surprisingly, the relationship to region is weakest, while it is in the expected direction. In the urban Reykjavik (43%) and Southwest (48%) constituencies the number claiming to know an Althingi member personally is perhaps a higher figure than was to be expected, while the corresponding figure for other constituencies (56%) is relatively low, bearing in mind that most people in those regions live in villages or small towns inhabited by a few hundred to a few thousand people and the number of voters per representative is much lower in those constituencies than in Reykjavik and the Southwest. It is also commonly

assumed that the rural members of Althingi are much more closely tied to their constituents and more engaged in clientelistic politics. This is not strongly represented in the figures here.

If we turn to the political variables, acquaintance with Althingi members is, as expected, related to strength of party identification and especially party membership. Three out of every four party members know an Althingi member personally, while this is the case for less than a half of identifiers who are not members. Two out of every three voters without party identification do not know any member personally.

If we look at the voters of the different parties two major groups emerge: the voters of the old parties on the one hand (42-54% of whom do not know any member personally), and on the other hand the voters of the new parties, the SDA and the WA, and those who did not vote (63-69%).

The relationship to vote switching is weaker than to party membership, strength of party identification and party voted for in 1983. While 41% of the stable voters - those who did not switch parties from 1979-83 - did not know any Althingi representative, the corresponding figure for switchers was 56%.

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**Table III.5.2. Party switching 1979-83 by strength of party identification, party membership and acquaintance with a member of Althingi. 1983 sample. ANOVA and MCA.**

Party switching is coded 0 (did not switch) and 1 (did switch). Thus, the party-switching means in the table show directly the percentage of party switchers in each group.

Party identification	MPs known personally			
	None	One	Two or more	All voters
Very strong	.18 (17)	.00 (8)	.05 (42)	.07 (67)
Rather strong	.19 (73)	.14 (36)	.05 (74)	.13 (183)
Not very strong	.14 (73)	.06 (18)	.09 (68)	.11 (159)
Closer to	.40 (103)	.31 (36)	.33 (64)	.36 (203)
No party ident.	.55 (38)	.67 (9)	.58 (24)	.58 (71)
All	.29 (304)	.21 (107)	.17 (272)	.23 (683)

*Party membership*

Party member	.16 (38)	.12 (26)	.05 (106)	.08 (170)
Not party member	.31 (266)	.25 (81)	.25 (166)	.28 (513)
All	.29 (304)	.21 (107)	.17 (172)	.23 (683)

Significance (F) of main effects:  
 Strength of party identification=.000  
 Party membership=.112  
 MP acquaintance=.144

*MCA-table:*

	N	Unadjusted deviations	Adjusted deviations
Very strong party ident.	(67)	-.16	-.12
Rather strong	(183)	-.11	-.09
Not very strong	(159)	-.13	-.13
Closer to	(203)	.13	.11
No party ident.	(71)	.34	.32
		ETA=.38	BETA=.35
Party members	(170)	-.15	-.05
Not party members	(513)	.05	.02
		ETA=.20	BETA=.07
Knows no MP	(304)	.06	.03
Knows one MP	(107)	-.02	-.02
Knows two or more MPs	(272)	-.06	-.03
		ETA=.13	BETA=.07

Multiple R=.397  
 Multiple R squared=.158  
 -----

Earlier we saw that 16% of the variance in vote switching 1979-83 could be explained by strength of party identification and party membership (Table III.2.7). In

Table III.5.2 we can see if adding personal acquaintance to a member of Althingi as an independent variable increases the explained variance.<sup>54)</sup>

While in general the proportion of party switchers decreases as acquaintance with members of Althingi increases, also within the categories of partisan strength and party membership, the relationship is weak. If acquaintance is added as an independent variable the explained variance only increases from 15.5% to 15.8%. The independent impact of acquaintance with Althingi representatives on vote switching seems to be minimal.

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<sup>54)</sup> In Table III.5.2 party-switching means for groups based on all three variables are omitted. For party-switching means of party identification by party membership see Table III.2.7.

#### **Chapter IV: Voters' view of party system dimensions**

Left and right have been commonly used terms in political discourse since the French Revolution. While their exact meaning has been open to dispute - and has changed in the last two centuries - they are still frequently used to describe the ideologies and issue positions of political parties and voters in scholarly analysis, media discussion and political debate.

##### ***IV.1 The left-right model and Icelandic politics***

The basic idea of Anthony Downs in his rationalistic theory of voters and parties is that both voters and parties are rational actors, voters aiming to maximize their ideological utility through voting, parties aiming at maximizing their vote in order to benefit from governing. Voters are distributed along a single left-right axis and they vote for the party that is closest to them on that axis. The parties position themselves on the axis in such a way that they maximize their vote. In Downs's two-party model both parties tend to be close to the centre, as the distribution of voters along the left-right axis tends to approximate a normal distribution.<sup>1)</sup>

While Downs is mainly concerned with two-party systems, the basic idea that the ideological distance between voters and parties is important for voting behaviour, has been used widely in electoral studies of multi-party systems. If the voter's perception of the party system follows those lines the way in which ideological dimensions are structured among

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1) A. Downs (1957).

the electorate can contribute to explaining why people vote for certain parties. Such a structure should also restrain electoral volatility, as we would expect the ideological position of both voters and parties on the left-right axis to be relatively stable or change slowly. Party switching should to a large extent be limited to parties which are adjacent on the left-right axis. This ideological structuring of the party system in the voters' minds should serve as a stabilizing factor in electoral politics. Such structuring should also serve to stabilize party conflict. If the parties are positioned at different places on the left-right axis and they have to nurture voters in the ideological neighbourhood, their room for manoeuvre is limited. The lines of party battles become well known and stable and coalition formation, for example, is likely to be restricted by ideological left-right considerations.<sup>2)</sup>

In Sweden, Sören Holmberg argues, party political conflicts are seldom surprising; the parties usually fight each other according to known patterns. The positions of the parties on different issues can almost always be ranked in the same way. Government coalitions and party alliances are usually formed between neighbouring parties on the left-right axis. While it would be an exaggeration to say that the Swedish system is one-dimensional (the dispute on nuclear energy does not follow the left-right division), the left-right axis has clearly been dominant in Swedish

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2) Coalition theories which disregard ideological differences and only emphasize the size factor, such as the theories on "minimal winning coalitions" of W. Gamson (1961) and W.H. Riker (1962), have obtained meagre support from empirical studies while theories emphasizing ideological dimensions seem to have fared better. See e.g. A. De Swaan (1973) and E.C. Browne and J. Dreijmanis (eds.) (1982).

politics. An overwhelming majority of Swedish voters in 1979 (94-95%) were prepared to position themselves and all five parliamentary parties on a left-right scale. Their position on the left-right axis is strongly related to choice of party, to answers to questions on left-right issues, to their second preference of party, and to their ranking of parties on a like-dislike scale. Holmberg's conclusion is that a very large part of Swedish voters are able to ("correctly") relate the ideological concepts of left and right to the political parties and that voters' sympathies for and antipathies to the various parties are still very clearly structured by some version of a left-right model.<sup>3)</sup> To large extent this is also true of Norway; while the Norwegian party system is not one-dimensional, the left-right dimension has been dominant.<sup>4)</sup>

For various reasons we would expect the ideological structuring according to the left-right model to be weaker in Iceland than in Scandinavia. The system of government coalitions has been relatively open; all four old parties have teamed up with each other in coalitions, even though the polar players have only joined forces once, in the 1944-1947 IP-SDP-USP coalition.<sup>5)</sup>

Second, Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson has shown that the Icelandic PP has had a much weaker party organization and has shown much less stability in election programmes than the centre parties in Norway and Sweden. Sudden changes in

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3) S. Holmberg (1981), Chapter 11.

4) H. Valen (1981), Chapter 10. H. Valen and B.O. Aardal (1983), Chapter 7. B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), Chapter 4.

5) O.R. Grimsson (1982). The PA also took part in the Thoroddsen government 1980-1983 with the PP and a few IP MPs while the IP as a party remained in opposition (see Section II.1).



emphasis of policy have not been uncommon.<sup>6)</sup> It seems likely that the Icelandic parties in general have had less clear ideological positions than the Scandinavian parties and shown more flexible (or opportunistic) behaviour in terms of ideology.

Third, the existence of two blocks of "socialist" parties on the one hand and "bourgeois" parties on the other has not been as clear cut in Iceland as in Scandinavia. In fact, those terms are rarely used in the political debate. The SDP and the PA were commonly called "the working-class parties" (*verkalydsflokkarnir*), especially by their own supporters, while in recent years it has been more common to refer to them as the A-parties (*A-flokkarnir*), A being their common initial in Icelandic (SDP: *Althyduflokkurinn*, PA: *Althydubandalagid*). The commonly used terms "the left parties" (*vinstri flokkarnir*) and "the socially concerned parties" (*felagshyggjuflokkarnir*) usually refer to the PP (and recently also the WA), as well as the SDP and the PA.

Fourth, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson has argued that the Icelandic party system is basically two-dimensional. Besides the left-right spectrum (PA-SDP-PP-IP) there is a NATO-US base spectrum, along which the ranking of parties is different (PA-PP-SDP-IP).<sup>7)</sup> Grimsson's analysis is based on

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6) G.H. Kristinsson (1991).

7) The SDP and PP change places on the two dimensions. The SDP as a social democratic party is closest to the PA on the left-right spectrum. On the foreign policy dimension the PP is on the other hand closest to the PA. The PP has (at times) been more critical of the Keflavik base than the SDP. The PP has also been more critical of Icelandic involvement in European integration. Most of the party's MPs abstained when Iceland joined EFTA in 1970 under the IP-SDP coalition, while the PA opposed the move. The PP and the PA took a tough nationalistic stand on the extension of Iceland's fisheries limits in 1958-61 and in 1971, while the IP and the SDP were more prepared to negotiate with other European

party programmes and elite behaviour but not on voter surveys and he tries to explain coalition formation and dissolution on the basis of a two-dimensional system.<sup>8)</sup> Our analysis in Section IV.4 shows on the other hand that on the voter level attitudes towards NATO membership and the Keflavik base were strongly related to voters' left-right positions both in 1983 and 1987.

Fifth, on some aspects of economic policy related to the left-right axis the SDP, rather than the PP, has been closest to the IP, while the PP policies have more resembled the policies of the PA. The longest lasting coalition government in Icelandic history, the coalition of the IP and SDP 1959-71, greatly liberalized trade in the early 1960s by abolishing strict import controls and state regulation of trade, despite strong opposition from the PP and the PA. In recent years the SDP has argued for more liberal policies in the strongly regulated and state-subsidized economy, especially regarding agriculture and fisheries, increased privatization of banks and closer ties to the freer European markets.<sup>9)</sup> The party has claimed that the Icelandic economy is overly state regulated, much more so than is the case in neighbouring countries which have been governed by Social

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governments and accept the jurisdiction of the International Court.

8) O.R. Grimsson in O.R. Grimsson and Th. Broddason (1977, pp. 238-243) and O.R. Grimsson (1982).

9) G.H. Kristinsson (1990, p. 28) points out, that Icelandic agriculture gets much more state support than is customary in Western Europe. In 1985 state expenditure on agriculture was 7% of the total in Iceland, while a comparable figure in the EFTA countries was 0.4%. The cost of import protection of agricultural products in the EC countries has been estimated as 1% of GNP, while in Iceland it may be as high as 4%. Thorvaldur Gylfason (*Morgunbladid*, Oct. 9th, 1990) points out that state support to agriculture in Iceland is similar to total state expenditure on education and only slightly less than total state expenditure on health services.

Democrats or heavily influenced by their policies. Thus the SDP claims to be firmly in the mainstream of European Social Democracy: committed to goals like social justice and the welfare state, but also careful not to interfere too much in the market economy. The PP has been much more reluctant on such policies of liberalization claiming that due to the smallness of Iceland the economic policies practiced in Europe are not generally appropriate. They are particularly likely to harm Icelandic farmers, and lead to further regional disharmony, i.e. increased migration to the towns, especially the Reykjavik area, from rural areas and small fishing villages. Policies of this nature - where the PP is advocating more state intervention than the SDP - may contradict the more traditional notion that the SDP is a socialist party and the PP non-socialist when the parties' policies are described in terms of left and right.

In this chapter we will examine to what extent Icelandic voters are able to perceive themselves and the political parties in left-right terms. We will also examine the relationship of voters' left-right positions to their choice of party, their attraction to or dislike of the various parties and party leaders, vote switching and their attitudes on various issues.

#### ***IV.2 Voters' left-right positions and their like-dislike of parties and party leaders***

In our surveys a large majority of voters were prepared to position themselves and the parties in terms of left and right. In 1983 when respondents were simply asked to use a 3-fold classification of left, centre and right 90% gave

their own position and 85-89% ranked the four old parties. Respondents were not asked to rank the new parties, the SDA and the WA. In 1987 respondents were asked to use a left-right scale from 0-10 on which 78% were prepared to rank themselves, 80% ranked the four old parties, 78% the WA and 76% the CiP. It should be noted that WA voters were not more reluctant to position themselves or the parties on the left-right scale than voters of other parties despite the fact that the WA claims that it cannot be classified in terms of left and right, concepts the party considers misleading and outdated.

Among our panel respondents there is a considerable consistency ( $r=.62$ ) between own left-right position in 1983 (on the 3-fold scale) and 1987 (on the 11-point scale). This is a slightly weaker correlation than was the case in the Swedish panels 1976-1979 ( $r=0.67$ ), 1979-1982 ( $r=0.76$ ) and 1982-1985 ( $r=0.75$ ).<sup>10)</sup>

While the proportion of Icelandic voters prepared to use the left-right scale is not as high as in Sweden, it must still be considered quite high. It should also be borne in mind that in 1987 the Icelandic respondents were asked to use the scale in a telephone interview, and obviously lacked the show cards used in the Swedish face-to-face interviews. It is likely that the lower response rate in 1987 compared to 1983 is at least partly due to the more complex measurement.

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10) S. Holmberg (1981), p. 197. S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 259.

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Figure IV.2.1. Left-right positions of Icelandic voters 1987.

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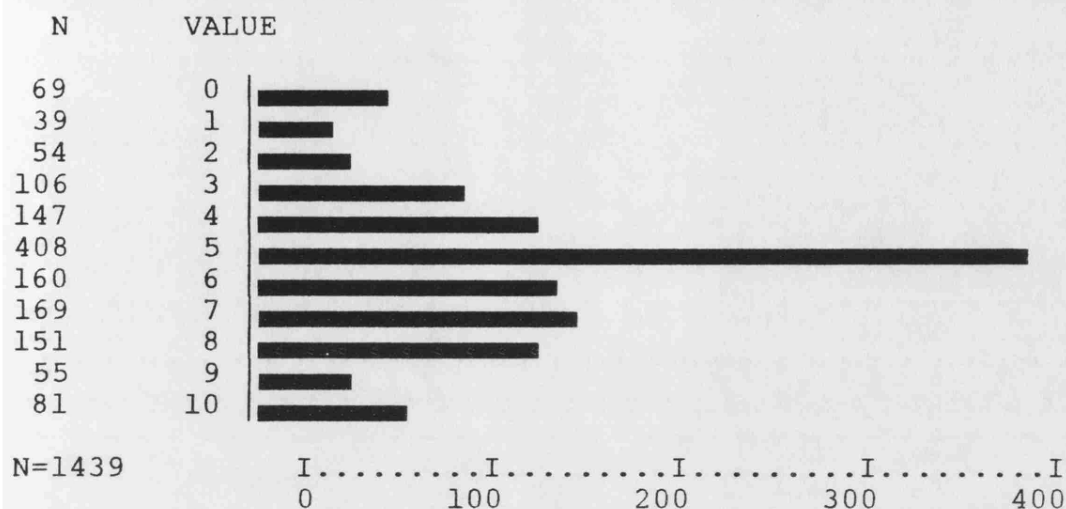


Figure IV.2.1 shows how the Icelandic respondents in 1987 positioned themselves on the left-right scale. Most voters tend to place themselves in or around the centre, a pattern well known from other European countries.<sup>11)</sup> Table IV.2.1 shows how voters of the different parties ranked themselves and the four old parties in terms of left and right in 1983. It should be borne in mind, that the means in the table are based on three-fold classification, left (1), centre (2), and right (3).

Table IV.2.1 reveals a clear pattern. If we look at how the total sample ranks the parties, it is quite clear that the PA is conceived as being furthest to the left, and the IP furthest to the right. The SDP and PP are close to each other in the centre, even though the SDP is placed on the left side of the PP.

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11) H. Valen and B. Aardal (1989, p. 27), quoting Listhaug, Macdonald and Rabinowitz, point out that comparative analyses of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, West-Germany, Netherlands, and France, show the same pattern.

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**Table IV.2.1. Perceived left-right positions of the parties and own left-right position 1983. Means (1=left, 2=centre, 3=right). Total sample.**

	<i>Perceived left-right position of</i>			
	PA	SDP	PP	IP
<i>Ranking by</i>				
PA voters	1.08	2.24	2.31	2.96
WA voters	1.10	1.96	2.22	2.94
SDP voters	1.05	1.85	2.22	2.91
PP voters	1.07	2.07	1.94	2.96
SDA voters	1.11	1.85	2.28	2.92
IP voters	1.08	1.92	2.07	2.89
Did not vote	1.20	2.06	2.22	2.87
Total sample	1.09	2.00	2.14	2.92

<i>Voters' self-rated positions on left-right scale</i>									
Total sample	Men	Women	PA	WA	SDP	PP	SDA	IP	
2.07	2.07	2.06	1.21	1.71	1.85	1.80	2.06	2.62	
N=(902)	(494)	(408)	(131)	(49)	(93)	(119)	(63)	(49)	

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 85-89% of the respondents ranked the four old parties as being left, right or centre, while 90% gave own position on the left-right scale.

87-94% of each party's voters were prepared to give own position and 77-87% of SDP and PP voters ranked the parties, while 86-92% of IP voters and 90-99% of PA, SDA and WA voters did so.

The respondents in the telephone interviews were asked: *Left and right are common terms in politics. Do you generally consider yourself to the right in politics, to the left, or are you in the centre in politics?* They were then asked to rank the four old parties on the same scale. The 329 respondents in the face-to-face interviews were on the other hand asked to use a scale from 1 (furthest to the left) to 9 (furthest to the right) to place themselves and the parties. Here 1-3 on the scale (21.5% of the face-to-face respondents) constitute left, 4-6 (43.4%) centre and 7-9 (35%) right. The figures for the total sample are: 25.5% left, 42.2% centre, 32.3% right.

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In general there is a large degree of consensus among voters of different parties on how to rank the parties on the left-right scale. The only exception from the PA-SDP-PP-IP ranking is among PP voters, who conceive the PP slightly to the left (1.94) of the SDP (2.07).

The self-ranking of the voters on the left-right scale shows that they do indeed prefer parties that are close to them on the scale. PA voters are clearly furthest to the

left and IP voters furthest to the right, while SDP and PP voters are close to the centre. As in many other countries, there is a tendency of voters on the left and right side of the spectrum to put themselves closer to the centre than their parties.<sup>12)</sup> Thus PA voters do not conceive themselves (1.21) quite as far to the left as their party (1.08), and the IP voters see their party as farther to the right (2.89) than themselves (2.62).

While both PP voters and SDP voters position themselves close to the centre, PP voters see themselves slightly further left (1.80) than do SDP voters (1.85). SDP voters on the other hand clearly perceive their party as being on the left (1.85) of the PP (2.22).

The voters of the two new parties position themselves on the open spaces in the continuum: as expected, the WA voters see themselves as being on the right of the PA but on the left of the SDP and the PP - and SDA voters, while close to the centre, see themselves to the right of the SDP and the PP.

In the 1983 survey, respondents were asked to rank the four old parties, beginning with the one they disliked most and ending with the one they liked most. In Table IV.2.2 we have calculated the mean ranking of each of the old parties among each party's voters so we can check whether the voters' likes and dislikes for the parties correspond to the left-right spectrum.

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12) For Norway see e.g. H. Valen (1981, pp. 236-237), B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989, pp. 30-31). For Sweden see e.g. S. Holmberg (1981), pp. 198-200.

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**Table IV.2.2. Likes and dislikes of the parties 1983 by party voted for. (Means on a 1-4 scale). Total sample.**

Mean ranking from likes best (4) to dislikes most (1)  
 PA      SDP      PP      IP

*Ranking by*

PA voters	3.9	2.1	2.5	1.5
WA voters	2.9	2.7	2.4	2.0
SDP voters	1.7	3.8	2.0	2.4
PP voters	2.0	1.8	3.9	2.1
SDA voters	2.1	2.8	2.2	3.0
IP voters	1.3	2.4	2.3	3.9

N of voters: PA (120-123), WA (39-40), SDP (84-89), PP (107-116), SDA (57-58), IP (306-319).

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 Q: Now I would like you to rank the four old parties, i.e. the SDP, PP, IP and PA according to how much you like or dislike them. What party do you generally dislike most? And second most? Which one is the second best? And which one is the best?

78-79% of all respondents ranked the parties.  
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While the left-right spectrum is clearly reflected in the pattern of voters' likes and dislikes for the parties, the ties between the SDP and IP on the one hand and between the PP and the PA on the other can also be observed. The strongest dislike is of IP voters for the PA (1.3) and of PA voters for the IP (1.5). WA voters like the PA best of the old parties<sup>13)</sup> and their ranking of other parties is in accordance with the left-right dimension. But although the difference is small, PA voters like the PP (2.5) better than the SDP (2.1) and SDP voters like the IP (2.4) better than the PP (2.0). PP voters' ranking of the PA (2.0) is very similar to their ranking of the SDP (1.8) and the same is

13) As the new parties (SDA and WA) are not ranked, the figures for the new parties' voters are not directly comparable. A second preference of an old party's voter who likes own party best gives the score of 3 in the calculations, while a similar second preference of a new party's voters gives a score of 4. The ranking orders should on the other hand be comparable.



the case for IP voters' ranking of the SDP (2.4) and the PP (2.3).

In 1987 respondents ranked the left-right positions of themselves and the parties on a 0-10 scale. The pattern that emerges is similar to that of 1983 but slightly clearer, as can be seen in Table IV.2.3. The parties are perceived as being positioned from left to right on the whole scale at rather regular intervals: PA (1.7), WA (3.6), SDP (4.9), PP (5.6), CiP (7.9) and IP (8.8).

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**Table IV.2.3. Perceived left-right positions of the parties and own left-right position 1987. (Means of scores on a 0-10 point scale). Total sample.**

	<i>Perceived left-right position of</i>					
	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
<i>Ranking by</i>						
PA voters	1.6	3.2	5.3	5.6	8.7	9.1
WA voters	1.7	3.8	5.0	5.6	8.4	9.1
SDP voters	1.6	3.7	5.0	5.7	7.9	8.8
PP voters	1.9	3.9	5.0	5.5	7.9	8.8
CiP voters	1.5	3.8	4.7	5.5	7.7	8.7
IP voters	1.6	3.5	4.8	5.6	7.4	8.7
Total sample	1.7	3.6	4.9	5.6	7.9	8.8

<i>Voters' self-rated positions on left-right scale</i>								
Total sample	Men	Women	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
5.4	5.5	5.2	2.3	3.9	5.1	5.3	6.5	7.4
N= (1439)	(830)	(603)	(181)	(153)	(203)	(192)	(94)	(403)

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 80% of all respondents were prepared to rank the four old parties on the left-right scale, 78% ranked the WA and 76% the CiP. 78% of all respondents gave own left-right position.

80-90% of each party's voters were prepared to rank the different parties and give own left-right position; only 70-73% of PP voters were, however, prepared to do so. The Ns in the table give the number of each party's voters that were prepared to give own position on the left-right scale. While the number of each party's voters willing to rank individual parties was not exactly the same, the variations are small.

Q: Sometimes people try to rank the political parties depending on how far to the left or the right they are. Now we would like you to rank the Icelandic political parties on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is furthest to the left, but 10 furthest to the right. If we start with the SDP, where would you put it on such a scale?...

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While the SDP and the PP are both close to the centre, the 1987 data puts the SDP more firmly on the left of the PP than was the case in 1983. This time the ranking order of the six parties is the same for all groups of voters. PP voters clearly put the SDP (5.0) on the left of the PP (5.5). The self-ranking of SDP voters is also further to the left (5.1) than the self-ranking of PP voters (5.3).

In 1987 as in 1983 there is a strong tendency among voters to choose a party which is close to their own position on the left-right scale.<sup>14)</sup> The tendency of voters on the left and right to put themselves closer to the centre than their party can also be observed in the 1987 data.

In 1987 the respondents were not asked to rank the old parties according to how much they liked or disliked them, as had been done in 1983. Instead they were asked to give each of the six parliamentary parties and their leaders marks on a scale from -5 to +5 according to their likes and dislikes (Table IV.2.4). This time respondents therefore could give two or more parties the same marks.

Most voters give their own parties high marks although some differences can be observed. WA voters show the strongest liking for their own party (4.2), while the PA voters show most discontent (3.2). The voters of the other four parties give their own party marks from 3.5 to 3.7.

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14) When we construct a variable containing the value of the left-right position each voter gave his own party the correlation between the left-right position of the party voted for and the voter's own left-right position is 0.78 (Pearson's  $r$ ,  $N=1175$ ).

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**Table IV.2.4. Likes and dislikes for party leaders and parties by party voted for in 1987. (Means on a scale from -5 to +5). Total sample.**

	Party voted for in 1987						
	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP	All
Svavar Gestsson	2.3	0.4	-0.6	-0.3	-0.7	-1.5	-0.3
PA	3.2	0.5	-1.0	-1.0	-1.2	-2.1	-0.6
Difference	-0.9	-0.1	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.3
Gudrun Agnarsdottir	2.8	4.0	2.1	2.3	1.5	1.2	2.1
WA	2.2	4.2	1.6	1.7	1.0	0.7	1.7
Difference	0.6	-0.2	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4
Jon B. Hannibalsson	0.0	0.0	2.7	-0.9	-0.3	0.0	0.2
SDP	0.5	0.6	3.5	-0.5	0.0	0.3	0.7
Difference	-0.5	-0.6	-0.8	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.5
Steingr. Hermannsson	1.9	2.7	2.9	4.5	3.4	3.4	3.2
PP	-0.1	0.6	0.4	3.7	0.6	1.4	1.2
Difference	2.0	2.1	2.5	0.8	2.8	2.0	2.0
Albert Gudmundsson	-2.1	-1.9	-0.5	-0.2	3.6	-0.5	-0.5
CiP	-2.7	-2.2	-0.9	-1.0	3.7	-1.2	-1.0
Difference	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.8	-0.1	0.7	0.5
Thorsteinn Palsson	-2.1	-1.0	-0.1	0.4	-0.6	2.6	0.3
IP	-2.5	-1.1	0.2	0.9	1.2	3.6	0.8
Difference	0.4	0.1	-0.3	-0.5	-0.6	-1.0	-0.5

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 90-91% of respondents were prepared to rate the individual parties while 92-95% of respondents were prepared to give the individual party leaders marks. N of voters: PA (188-192), WA (180-188), SDP (221-231), PP (228-257), CiP (101-106), IP (435-449), all voters (1651-1749).

Q: Now I would like to ask if you generally like or dislike individual political parties. You indicate this by giving each party a mark from -5 to +5. If you like a party you give it a positive mark of up to 5, but if you don't like a party you give it a negative mark of down to -5. Zero means that you neither like nor dislike the party in question. What mark would you give the PP on such a scale? The IP?... What if you use the same scale for people who have been in leadership positions in Icelandic politics? What mark would you give Steingrimur Hermannsson? Thorsteinn Palsson?...

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While we have to keep the shape of the ideological curve on the left-right dimension and the different sizes of the

parties in mind when we compare their overall popularity, it is clear that it is not only the distance on the left-right axis that determines the like/dislike marks of the voters. Voters from all parts of the spectrum systematically give some parties more positive ratings than others.

WA gets the highest overall marks on the like-dislike scale (1.7). Voters of all the other parties give the WA a positive mean rating. The PP comes second (1.2); the party only gets a small negative rating from the PA voters (-0.1). The IP comes third (0.8), despite its large size, mainly due to the negative rating of PA and WA voters. The SDP gets almost the same overall marks (0.7); only PP voters give the party a negative mean score. The PA is much more unpopular (-0.6); beside PA voters only WA voters give the party a positive rating. The most unpopular party among the voters is the new CiP (-1.0); voters of all other parties give it a negative mean score.

While its location on the left-right axis is clearly not the only factor explaining a party's popularity, strong relations between left-right distance and popularity nevertheless emerge. This can be seen if we look at the ranking order of the mean ratings of the parties among the voters of each party (the columns in Table IV.2.4).

The ratings of the old parties follow the left-right continuum while the popularity of the WA and the unpopularity of the CiP result in rifts in the ranking order. The WA is more popular than the SDP among voters of all parties on the right of the SDP. The CiP is more unpopular than the IP among voters of all parties left of the CiP.

If we look on the other hand only at the mean scores of the old parties, the ranking order of their popularity is in accordance with the left-right dimension. PA voters dislike IP most (-2.5), then PP (-0.1) and SDP (0.5). WA voters give the PA a positive ranking (0.5) on the left and their ranking of the old parties to the right follows their order from left to right: SDP (0.6), PP (0.6), IP (-1.1). SDP voters give the PP (0.4) slightly higher marks than they give the IP (0.2). PP voters give the SDP higher marks (-0.5) than they give the PA (-1.0). CiP voters also follow the left-right continuum when giving like-dislike marks: PP (0.6), SDP (0.0), PA (-1.2), and the same is the case for IP voters: PP (1.4), SDP (0.3) and PA (-2.1). The affinity between PA and PP on the one hand and the IP and the SDP on the other, which we observed in the 1983 data, is not strong enough here to disturb the ranking order. It may nevertheless be noted that the SDP voters' marks for the IP are only slightly lower than their marks for the PP and PP voters give the SDP a negative ranking despite the parties' closeness on the left-right scale.

If we compare each party's marks among different groups of voters (the party rows in Table IV.2.4) - thus eliminating the effects of each party's different overall popularity - we see that there is a strong tendency for each party to receive a lower rating as the distance increases, even though there are some small discrepancies.

On the whole, the pattern of liking and disliking the parties corresponds better in 1987 to the left-right spectrum than was the case in 1983. To some extent this might be the result of the differences in measurement, but

is should also be kept in mind that in 1983 the PP and the PA had been partners in the government coalition, while both IP and SDP were in opposition. The 1983-87 coalition consisted on the other hand of the IP and the PP, leaving both SDP and PA on the opposition benches.

Table IV.2.4 also shows how the voters of different parties ranked the six party leaders on the like-dislike scale. While there are clear differences in the overall popularity of the party leaders, their marks are related to the overall popularity of their parties and the left-right scale.

There is a strong relationship between the marks voters give a party and its leader. The correlation is strongest for the CiP and its leader Albert Gudmundsson ( $r=.77$ ) and lowest for the PP and Steingrímur Hermannsson ( $r=.58$ ), while the correlations for the other leaders and their parties range from .67 to .73.

The ranking of the overall popularity of the party leaders corresponds to the overall popularity of their parties, with the exception that PP-leader Hermannsson is by far the most popular leader (3.2) although his party came second (1.2). Gudrun Agnarsdóttir, the leader of the most liked party, the WA (1.7), is clearly the second best liked leader (2.1). While her score is 1.1 point lower than Hermannsson's, it is almost 2 points higher than the popularity score of the next two leaders, Pálsson and Hannibalsson.

Hermannsson's popularity is outstanding. He scores a whole 2 points higher on the like-dislike scale than his party, while the deviations for the other party leaders

range from 0.5 to -0.5. His lowest score (1.9 from PA voters) is higher than the highest score all leaders except Agnarsdottir get from voters outside their party. While Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir are clearly in a league of their own in terms of popularity, Hermannsson easily beats her on that score among voters of all parties except WA and PA.

The overall popularity ranking of the four other leaders corresponds to the ranking of their parties. While the differences between the scores of a party and its leader are rather small, Thorsteinn Palsson (0.3) and Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson (0.2) are liked less than their parties, while Svavar Gestsson (-0.3) and Albert Gudmundsson (-0.5) are not disliked as much as their parties.

If we look at how each party's voters like their own party and its leader a somewhat different pattern emerges. Voters of all parties give their party a higher score than their party leader except for PP voters, who like Hermannsson (4.5) more than their party (3.7). The voters of the WA and CiP give their party (4.2 for WA, 3.7 for CiP) a similar score as their leaders (4.0 for Agnarsdottir, 3.6 for Gudmundsson), while voters of IP, SDP and PA clearly like their parties better than their leaders. The respective voter groups like the IP (3.6) better than Palsson (2.6), the SDP (3.5) better than Hannibalsson (2.7) and the PA (3.2) better than Gestsson (2.3).

Four of the party leaders tend to be better liked than their parties among voters of other parties. The most popular leaders, Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir, are more popular than their parties among voters of all other

parties. At the other end of the spectrum the leaders of the most unpopular parties, the CiP and PA, tend to be less disliked than their parties. WA voters give Gestsson (0.4) similar marks as the PA (0.5) while the voters of SDP, PP, CiP and IP dislike Gestsson less than his party, even though all those voter groups give him negative marks. Voters of all parties except the CiP give Gudmundsson a negative rating but they dislike his party still more.

The two remaining party leaders tend to get lower marks than their party. While Hannibalsson only gets negative marks from PP and CiP voters, he is liked less than his party in all voter groups. Palsson gets a negative rating among voters of all parties except his own and the PP and he is less popular than his party in all voter groups, except among WA and PA voters, who in fact give both the IP and Palsson strong negative marks.

If we compare each party leader's popularity among the voters of the different parties (the party leaders' rows in Table IV.2.4) - thus eliminating the effect of their overall popularity - we can see that their popularity ranking tends to follow the left-right scale. The like-dislike ranking of the three leaders Gestsson, Hermannsson and Gudmundsson is in accordance with the left-right spectrum. Agnarsdottir's marks also follow the left-right scale, except that PP voters give her slightly higher marks (2.3) than do SDP voters (2.1). Palsson's ratings also correspond to the left-right spectrum, except that CiP voters break the ranking order by giving him lower marks (-0.6) than both PP and SDP voters - very likely a reflection of Palsson's leading role in the IP split before the election when he demanded



Gudmundsson's resignation from the government and declared that Gudmundson would never again become a minister for the IP, events which led to the formation of the CiP.

Hannibalsson is the only leader whose popularity does not follow the left-right dimension. Voters of three parties, the PA, WA and IP, give him the same marks (0.0) while CiP voters (-0.3) and PP voters (-0.9) give him a negative rating. Hannibalsson's unpopularity among PP voters can be explained by his severe attacks on the PP in the election campaign: one of his catch-phrases had been the necessity of "cleaning the PP stable", a reference to the near-continuous PP participation in government coalitions since 1971<sup>15)</sup>, while during the campaign he openly discussed the possibilities of an IP-SDP coalition after the election.

Three party leaders do not get the highest popularity score among their own voters. Agnarsdottir (2.8) has a higher score than Gestsson (2.3) among PA voters, Hermannsson (2.9) gains a higher score among SDP voters than Hannibalsson (2.7), and Hermannsson (3.4) easily beats Pálsson (2.6) as the most popular leader among IP voters. But as those figures are means, they do not necessarily tell us if the ranking order of the leaders among each party's voters is the same, e.g. if Agnarsdottir gets highest marks from more PA voters than Gestsson.<sup>16)</sup> Table IV.2.5 on the

15) The PP has taken part in all coalitions since 1971, but the party was out of government for a few months (Oct. 15th 1979-Feb. 8th 1980), while a SDP minority cabinet formed after the breakdown of a PP-SDP-PA coalition served as a caretaker government through the electoral campaign leading up to the December election of 1979 and during the coalition formation process after the election, which ended in the formation of the Thoroddsen coalition in which the PP took part.

16) Many factors can influence the means. A leader, for instance, controversial in his own party, who gets +5 from

other hand gives us the first preference for a leader among each party's voters - how large a percentage of PA voters gave Gestsson a higher score than any other leader, how many PA voters gave Agnarsdottir a higher score than the other leaders, and so on. The table gives both a single first preference, indicating that the voter gave one leader a higher mark than all other leaders, and a shared first preference, indicating that the voter gave two or more leaders his highest marks. The table also indicates how large a percentage of each party's voters had a single preference among the party leaders (the sum column in Table IV.2.5).

Table IV.2.5 reveals that 66% of all voters had a single first preference among the party leaders - a relatively low figure compared to Sweden in 1979, when 78% of the voters had a single preference for one of the five party leaders.<sup>17)</sup> More than half of the voters with a single preference like Hermannsson best of the leaders, or 37% of all voters, while 14% name Agnarsdottir as a single first preference. Only 2-5% of voters name the other four party leaders as a single first preference. If we look at first single or shared preference, 65% of the voters give Hermannsson their highest marks, while 35% do so for Agnarsdottir.

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75% of his own voters and -5 from 25%, would get 2.5 as an overall score, while a popular leader of another party, getting +3 from the entire group would of course get mean score of 3.0. In this case 75% of the party's voters nevertheless clearly prefer their own leader.

17) S. Holmberg (1981), p. 136.

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**Table IV.2.5. First preferences of party leaders by voters of the parliamentary parties 1987. Total sample. Percentages.**

	Party leaders ranked						
	<i>SG</i> <i>PA</i>	<i>GA</i> <i>WA</i>	<i>JBH</i> <i>SDP</i>	<i>SH</i> <i>PP</i>	<i>AG</i> <i>CiP</i>	<i>ThP</i> <i>IP</i>	<i>Sum</i> <i>%</i>
<i>PA voters (N=185):</i>							
Single first preference	15	25	3	14	2	-	58
Shared first preference	31	36	2	21	1	2	
Sum first preference	46	61	5	35	3	2	
<i>WA voters (N=182):</i>							
Single first preference	-	49	-	18	1	1	68
Shared first preference	3	32	2	28	2	3	
Sum first preference	3	81	2	46	3	4	
<i>SDP voters (N=217):</i>							
Single first preference	-	12	19	35	1	1	68
Shared first preference	4	20	24	24	5	7	
Sum first preference	4	32	43	59	6	8	
<i>PP voters (N=232):</i>							
Single first preference	1	4	1	75	1	0	83
Shared first preference	2	13	2	18	3	3	
Sum first preference	3	17	3	93	4	3	
<i>CiP voters (N=100):</i>							
Single first preference	-	2	1	28	29	1	61
Shared first preference	3	20	2	34	33	6	
Sum first preference	3	22	3	62	62	7	
<i>IP voters (N=432):</i>							
Single first preference	0	3	1	35	3	16	59
Shared first preference	2	12	4	36	7	30	
Sum first preference	2	15	5	71	10	46	
<i>Total sample (N=1648):</i>							
Single first preference	2	14	4	37	4	5	66
Shared first preference	7	21	7	28	7	13	
Sum first preference	9	35	11	65	9	18	

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 The table only includes respondents, who gave all six party leaders like/dislike marks.  
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There are great differences in the first preferences for leaders among the voters of the different parties, as was to be expected. All party leaders are much more preferred by the voters of their own party than by voters of other parties. Nevertheless, three party leaders do not come out on top among their own voters, both when we consider single

first preference and single or shared first preference, thus corresponding to the results we obtained by looking at the mean popularity scores among the voters of various parties.

Gestsson, Palsson and Hannibalsson only get 15-19% single first preferences among their own voters. Less than half of their own voters (43-46%) give them a single or shared first preference among the party leaders.

Gudrun Agnarsdottir is the single first preference of 25% of PA voters, while 15% of them give their highest marks exclusively to Gestsson and 14% to Hermannsson. 61% of PA voters have Agnarsdottir as single or shared first preference, 46% Gestsson and 35% Hermannsson. Very few PA voters give first preference to the other leaders.

35% of SDP voters give their highest marks exclusively to Hermannsson, 19% to Hannibalsson and 12% to Agnarsdottir. Hermannsson gets single or shared first preference from 59% of SDP voters, Hannibalsson 43% and Agnarsdottir 32%. Few SDP voters give first preferences to other leaders.

Hermannsson also leads among IP supporters, 35% of them have him as a single first preference and 16% Palsson, while only 3% name Agnarsdottir as a single first preference, the same number who prefer Gudmundsson. Hermannsson gets single or shared first preference of 71% of IP voters, Palsson 46%, Agnarsdottir 15% and Gudmundsson 10%.

29% of CiP voters give their highest marks exclusively to Gudmundsson while 62% have him as a single or shared first preference. This makes him just about even with Hermannsson (28% and 62%), while Agnarsdottir (2% and 22%) is far behind.

Both Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir are clear first preferences of their own parties' voters. 75% of PP voters have Hermannsson as a single first preference and 93% as single or shared first preference as compared to 4% and 17% for Agnarsdottir. Among WA voters Agnarsdottir on the other hand is the single first preference of 49% while 81% have her as a single or shared first preference. Hermannsson is the single first preference of 18% of WA voters and single or shared first preference among 46%. Very few PP or WA voters give their first preferences to other leaders.

The overall pattern in first preferences is clear. Only two leaders - Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir - are definitely attractive as a first preference to voters of other parties. What is surprising is that three party leaders are clearly less popular among their own ranks than either Hermannsson or Agnarsdottir. While there were considerable differences in the popularity of party leaders in Norway in 1981 and 1985 and Sweden in 1979, in all cases the party leader was clearly the most popular choice within his own party.<sup>18)</sup> The likes and dislikes of party leaders among Icelandic voters are clearly more independent of party choice than is the case in Norway and Sweden.

The appeal of Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir among voters of other parties is on the other hand clearly related to the left-right spectrum. Agnarsdottir is the most popular leader among PA voters while Gestsson beats Hermannsson for second place. Hermannsson is most popular among SDP voters while Hannibalsson beats Agnarsdottir for second place.

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18) H. Valen and B.O. Aardal (1983, p. 36). H. Valen and B. Aardal (1989, p. 33). S. Holmberg (1981), pp. 133 and 136.

Hermannsson is clearly the most popular leader among IP voters while he competes with Gudmundsson for the first place among CiP voters. While Hermannsson's stronger showing in the IP ranks than in the CiP ranks might at first seem to contradict the left-right continuum, this is due to the fact that Gudmundsson shows a much stronger standing among CiP voters than does Pálsson among IP voters. In accordance with the left-right spectrum, Agnarsdóttir is less often a first preference among CiP voters than SDP voters and even more seldom among IP voters.

We have seen that, even though the popularity of party leaders is both clearly related to the left-right dimension and voters' liking and disliking of the parties, Icelandic voters show more independence from party choice when estimating leaders than is the case in Norway and Sweden - possibly a result of a greater emphasis on personalities (and less emphasis on parties and policies) in Icelandic politics. The variations in party leader popularity seem to be greater in Iceland. But does this really matter? Does a popular party leader attract votes to his party to any significant extent?

It seems self-evident that a popular leader is an asset for a party. Popular leaders may, for instance, boost morale among the party's activists and candidates or voters' general liking of the party, and this might result in a higher vote for the party. This would be an example of an *indirect* impact of the party leader's popularity on the party's electoral fortunes. The *direct* impact of the leader's popularity would on the other hand be the extent to which his popularity increases the party's vote when voters'

liking of the party and other factors are taken into account.

Our data does not allow us to test indirect effects. We have only one measurement of the party leaders' popularities from 1987. Thus we can not say if - or to what extent - the high popularity of a leader will in turn increase the popularity of his party, or if the dislike of a leader will result in the increasing dislike of his party. In order to do this we would have to have panel data - and at least some of the same leaders at both time points.

We can on the other hand try to estimate the direct impact of the popularity of the leaders on voting. We know that both the popularity of a party and its leader are strongly intercorrelated and both variables are correlated to voting behaviour. We can measure the direct impact of a leader's popularity by observing if it increases the likelihood of voting for his party when the popularity of the party is taken into account.

This can be done in various ways. The most visual way is perhaps the presentation in Table IV.2.6. By crosstabulating the like/dislike scores of a party and its leader and calculating the percentage received by the party in each of the cells, we can observe if the party's percentage increases with increasing popularity of the party leader within each category of the party's popularity (the rows) and *vice versa* (the columns). As very few voters give the party they vote for or its leader negative marks, we have truncated both scales, putting all those who give negative marks into the 0 category.

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**Table IV.2.6. Proportion of vote for each parliamentary party 1987 by like/dislike of the party and the party leader. Total sample.**

**A. Percentage voting for PA**

Like/dislike of PA	Like/dislike of Svavar Gestsson						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	2	1	2	4	*13	17	2
+1	10	8	4	*0	*0	-	7
+2	25	15	25	30	*0	-	23
+3	39	50	42	41	*67	*78	46
+4	*80	*67	72	66	69	*46	66
+5	*47	*100	*100	*100	*100	92	90
All	4	12	22	38	54	68	13

**B. Percentage voting for WA**

Like/dislike of WA	Like/dislike of Gudrun Agnarsdottir						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	1	0	0	5	4	0	1
+1	0	0	0	0	*0	-	0
+2	0	5	4	2	0	0	2
+3	*0	17	12	14	11	30	14
+4	*0	*0	21	23	21	23	21
+5	*32	*0	67	38	48	54	51
All	1	2	8	12	18	40	13

**C. Percentage voting for SDP**

Like/dislike of SDP	Like/dislike of Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	1	4	0	5	*0	*40	2
+1	2	7	10	*0	-	-	5
+2	8	19	19	20	10	*100	15
+3	29	11	48	32	*29	*31	33
+4	*22	*82	49	61	37	*100	49
+5	*85	*100	*89	75	94	90	87
All	4	12	26	33	44	80	16

continued...



**D. Percentage voting for PP**

Like/dislike of PP	Like/dislike of Steingrímur Hermannsson						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	2	0	1	0	3	9	2
+1	*12	5	0	3	8	6	5
+2	*0	*0	3	8	4	12	7
+3	*50	*50	*26	22	24	16	21
+4	*0	*100	*100	*0	27	47	43
+5	-	*100	*0	*100	*67	74	74
All	4	4	3	7	13	35	17

**E. Percentage voting for CiP**

Like/dislike of CiP	Like/dislike of Albert Guðmundsson						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	0	0	0	0	11	17	1
+1	5	5	0	0	*33	-	4
+2	0	18	21	24	0	*0	13
+3	*0	*31	34	19	14	24	23
+4	-	*0	*50	*38	19	*45	31
+5	*67	*100	*100	*80	69	79	78
All	1	5	12	16	22	54	7

**F. Percentage voting for IP**

Like/dislike of IP	Like/dislike of Thorsteinn Pálsson						All
	-5/0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
-5/0	3	13	10	18	*17	*14	5
+1	15	16	*0	*0	*0	-	12
+2	17	5	18	16	*40	*100	17
+3	42	67	44	30	60	*100	45
+4	53	*71	75	77	66	84	72
+5	60	*74	63	89	97	86	82
All	10	31	35	47	69	82	31

\* denotes that the percentage is based on less than 10 individuals in that cell.

The problem with the presentation in Table IV.2.6 is that some of the cells are empty and many have very few respondents.<sup>19)</sup> The margins of error are therefore large for many of the percentages resulting in great fluctuations.

19) The figures marked with \* in Table IV.2.6 are based on less than 10 respondents and should therefore not really be taken seriously.

Nevertheless, clear patterns emerge in the table. On the whole, the percentage voting for a party increases as the popularity of the party leader increases (the All row). Thus only 4% of those who give Gestsson a negative mark or 0 vote for the PA, while 68% of those who give him +5 do so although 13% of all respondents in the table vote for the PA. Also, as was to be expected, most of those who give an unpopular leader high marks also vote for his party while this is not case for a popular leader: only 40% of those who give Agnarsdottir +5 vote for the WA while 86% of those who give Palsson +5 vote for the IP.

The table also reveals that the percentage voting for a party increases as the party's popularity increases (the All column). Thus only 2% of those who give the PA negative marks or 0 vote for the party while 90% of those who give the PA +5 also vote for the party. The figures also reflect the popularity of the party; only 51% of those who give the popular WA +5 vote for the party while 90% of those who give the unpopular PA +5 also vote for the PA.

What is of major interest, however, is the main body of the table. If the popularity of a party leader has a direct effect on the likelihood of voting for his party we would expect the pattern of the last row (All) to be repeated in the other rows, i.e. that within each category of party popularity the percentage voting for the party increases with increasing popularity of the leader. Despite the great fluctuations we can see that in general this does not happen. If we, for instance, look at the row for those respondents who gave the WA +4 we can see that 21% of those who gave Agnarsdottir +2 voted for the WA, 23% of those who

gave her +3, 21% of those who gave her +4 and 23% of those who gave her +5. Thus, among those who gave the WA +4, the proportion voting for the WA does not increase with the increasing popularity of Agnarsdottir. While the patterns are often not as clear as in this example, we cannot discern any strong trend for any of the party leaders.

This is not the case for party popularity. When we go down the columns of the main body of the table there is a clear trend within each category of the leader's popularity for an increasing proportion to vote for a party as the party's popularity increases. Despite the fluctuations the overall trend is clear: a party's growing popularity increases the likelihood of voting for that party, even when the impact of its leader's popularity is controlled.

Another way of trying to estimate the direct impact of a party leader's popularity on voting is to use multiple regression. In so doing we can to some extent solve the problem of few respondents in many of the cells, although the problem of intercorrelation remains. But as the relationships tend to be linear the multiple regression analysis allows us to estimate the impact of the popularity of the party leaders when the popularity of the parties has been taken into account.

Table IV.2.7 gives the regression equations and the amount of variance explained for each party, both for party popularity as the only independent variable and for both party and leader popularity as independent variables. It is clear that leader popularity has little independent impact on explained variance for all six parties. In two cases - for PP and CiP - leader popularity is not included in the

equation as its contribution is not significant. For the other parties party leader popularity increases explained variance by 0.2 - 1.0%.

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**Table IV.2.7. The impact of the popularity of a party and its leader on the party's vote 1987. Multiple regression. Total sample.**

Party	Regression equation	Multiple R squared
PA	%VOTE= .0078 + .158 PARTY	.438
	%VOTE=-.0013 + .149 PARTY + .014 LEADER	.440
WA	%VOTE=-.0425 + .082 PARTY	.204
	%VOTE=-.0557 + .073 PARTY + .014 LEADER	.207
SDP	%VOTE=-.0200 + .137 PARTY	.359
	%VOTE=-.0281 + .117 PARTY + .030 LEADER	.367
PP	%VOTE=-.0303 + .115 PARTY	.288
	LEADER not significant (PIN=.05)	
CiP	%VOTE=-.0053 + .116 PARTY	.386
	LEADER not significant (PIN=.05)	
IP	%VOTE= .0190 + .156 PARTY	.420
	%VOTE= .0077 + .136 PARTY + .036 LEADER	.430

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 %VOTE is coded 1 for those voting for the party in question and 0 for those voting for other parties. PARTY contains the like/dislike scores of the party in question and LEADER the scores for its leader. As very few voters give own party or leader a negative score, PARTY and LEADER are recoded so that negative scores are included in the 0 category. The regression was run stepwise.  
 -----

Party and leader popularity has weakest explanatory power for the two most popular parties, the WA and the PP, which also had the two most popular leaders. These variables explain 21% of the variation in the WA vote while party popularity explains 29% of the variation in the PP vote. For the other parties those variables can explain 37-43% of the variance in their vote.

As the dependent variable gives the proportion voting for a given party and as both the independent variables are measured on similar scales, we can interpret the regression

coefficients as the percentage increase<sup>20)</sup> in a party's vote for an increase of one unit on the independent variable. The PA vote, for instance, can be expected to increase by 15.8% when the party's popularity increases by +1 and party popularity is the only independent variable. When both independent variables are in the equation the PA vote can be expected to rise by 14.9% for an increase of +1 in party popularity when leader popularity is taken into account and the PA vote can be expected to rise by 1.4% for an increase of +1 in leader popularity when party popularity is controlled.

The regression coefficients of party popularity are lowest for the WA; its vote can be expected to rise by 7-8% for each rise of +1 in party popularity. The regression coefficients for the other parties range from .115 to .158, indicating a rise in the likelihood of voting for a party of 12-16% for each increase of +1 in party popularity.

The direct effect of leader popularity on voting, i.e. when party popularity has been taken into account, is small. For the PP and CiP it is so close to 0 that it is not significant. For the WA and the PA an increase of +1 in the popularity of the party leader increases the likelihood of voting for those parties by 1%. For the SDP and the IP the figures are 3-4%.

A comparable analysis of Swedish voters in 1979 gave regression coefficients for the parties ranging from .10 to .18 while the coefficients for party leaders were in all five cases close to 0 and not statistically significant.<sup>21)</sup>

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20) By multiplying the coefficients by 100, of course.

21) S. Holmberg (1981), p. 143.

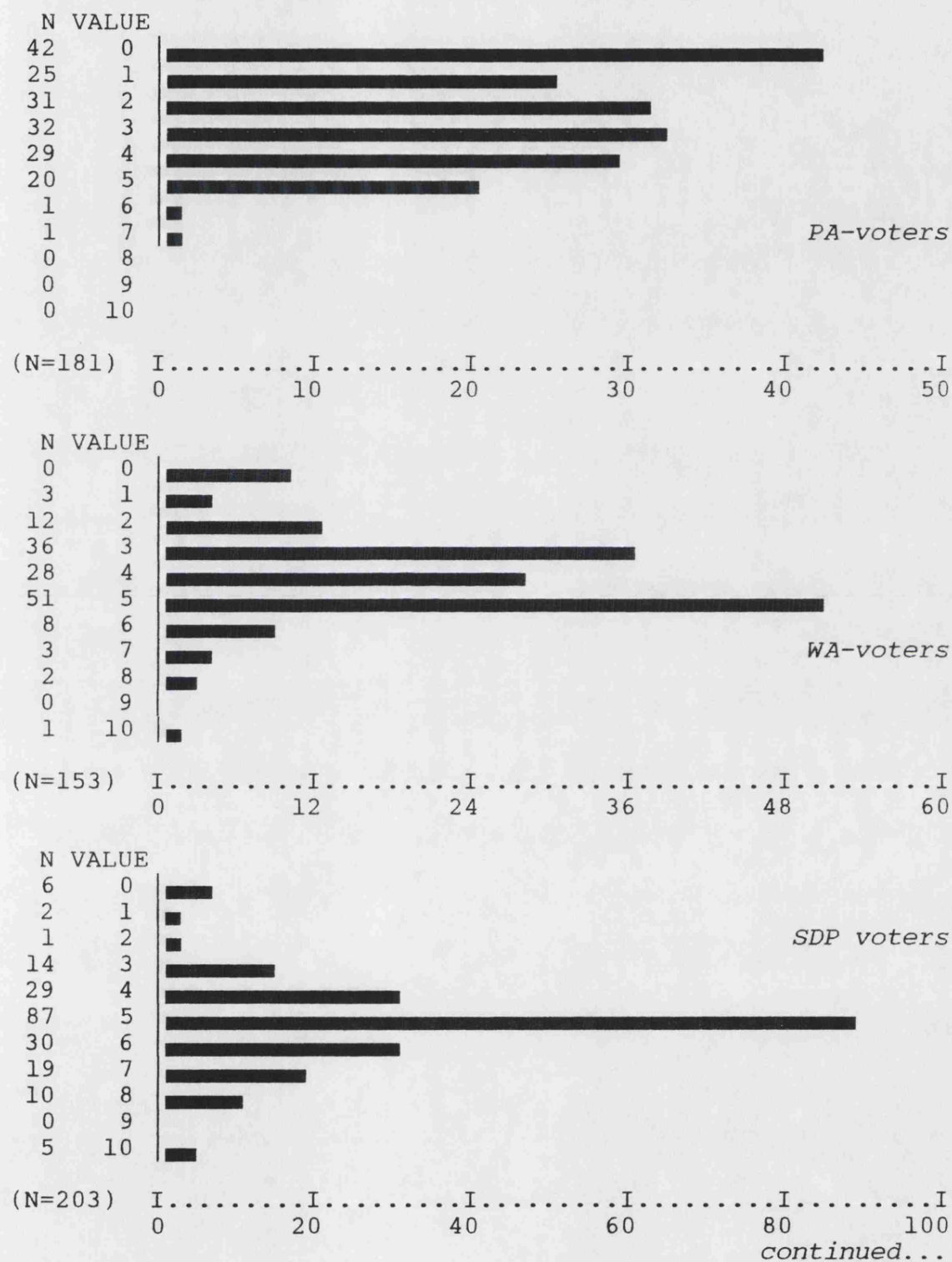
The Swedish and Icelandic results are thus rather similar, even though Icelandic voters show somewhat more independence from party choice when evaluating leaders and leader popularity does in some cases have a small direct effect on voting behaviour.

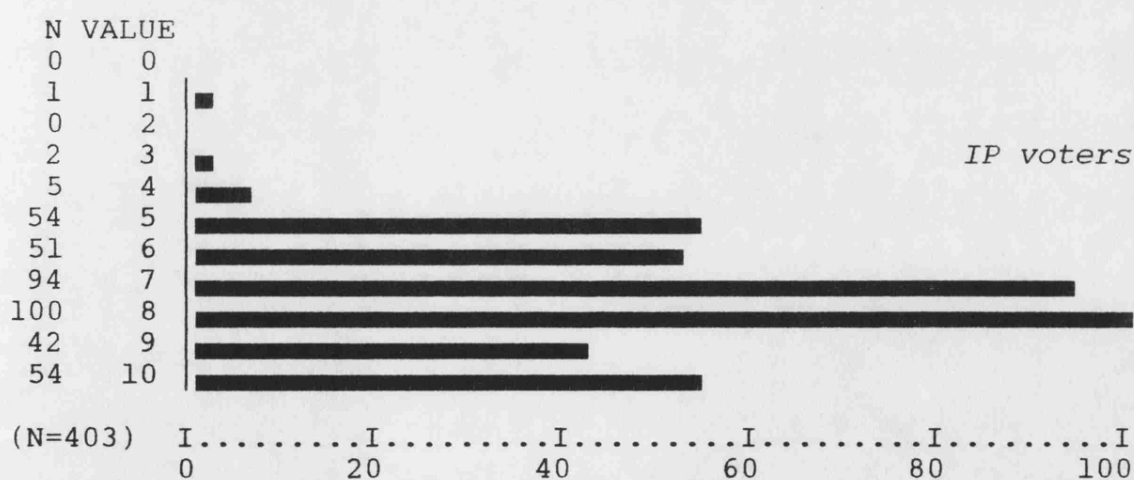
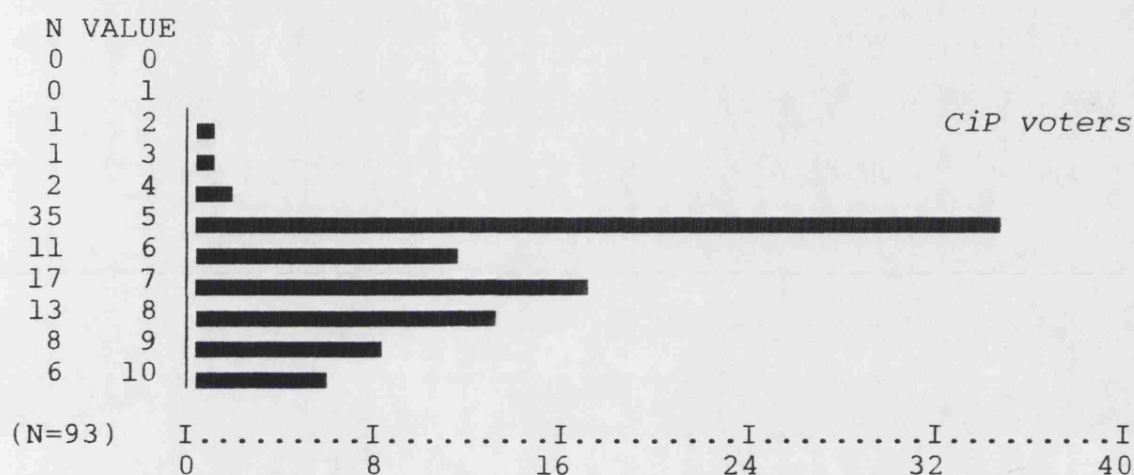
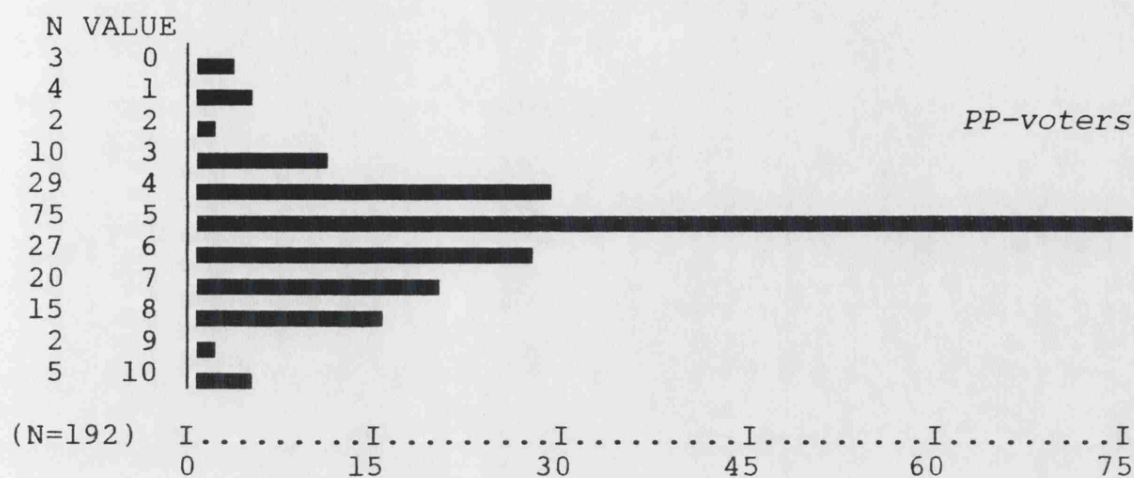
The main conclusion must, however, be that the great popularity of Hermannsson and Agnarsdottir did not increase their parties' votes in a direct way in 1987. It should be underlined that their popularity may have had an indirect effect, e.g. served to increase voters' liking of their parties. That is a question we cannot answer here. The results - both from Iceland and Sweden - should on the other hand serve as a reminder that leader popularity does not automatically increase the party vote at the polls.

#### ***IV.3 Left-right positions of voters within each party and the parties' popularities***

In the last section we saw that when we calculate the means of voters' own left-right positions for each party, those party means are positioned at regular intervals along the left-right scale. We should nevertheless not ignore the fact that within the ranks of each party there are considerable differences in the self-position of individual voters. The distribution of each party's voters' own positions on the left-right scale can be seen in Figure IV.3.1. While the shape of distributions clearly changes from left to right, voters of each party are concentrated on 3-6 points of the 11-point scale. The centre of the scale, 5, is the modal point for four of the parties, for all except the PA and the IP.

Figure IV.3.1. Left-right position of the voters of the parliamentary parties 1987. Total sample.





The modal point for the PA is 0; almost a fourth of all PA voters position themselves at the extreme left end of the scale. Almost all other PA voters are rather regularly distributed from 1-5.



While the WA is clearly second furthest to the left, its profile is quite different from that of the PA. A third of WA voters position themselves at point 5 but almost all other voters of the party are left of centre.

The distributions of SDP and PP voters are rather similar with the main difference being that fewer PP voters (39%) position themselves in the centre (point 5) than is the case among SDP voters (43%), while 36% of PP voters are right of centre as compared to 32% of SDP voters.

38% of CiP voters position themselves in the centre but almost all other voters of the party are to the right of centre.

The modal point for the IP is 8 and almost half of the party's voters choose point 7 or 8 to describe their left-right position. The rest are rather evenly divided between points 5 and 6 on the left of the party's centre of gravity and point 9 and 10 on the right.

In the last section we saw that the parties' left-right positions were clearly related to their voters' like or dislike of parties and party leaders. Here we will examine whether similar differences in the popularity of the parties can be discerned *within* each party's following. In Table IV.3.1 we have on the basis of own position on the left-right scale divided voters of each party into three groups, left, centre and right, as equal in size as possible, and then calculated the mean like-dislike score for the parties among each voter group.

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**Table IV.3.1. Likes and dislikes for parties in 1987 among each party's voters divided by their left-right position. Means.**

	<i>Mean score on dislike-like scale for</i>						
	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP	N
<b>PA voters</b>							
Left (0-1)	3.6	2.1	0.0	-0.2	-3.3	-3.2	(61-63)
Centre (2-3)	3.3	2.9	0.6	0.0	-3.5	-2.8	(59-61)
Right (4-7)	2.7	2.0	0.9	0.0	-1.5	-1.2	(47-49)
F-prob.	.0156	.0280	.0482	.8088	.0000	.0001	
<b>WA voters</b>							
Left (0-3)	1.9	4.5	0.4	0.2	-3.3	-2.7	(59-60)
Centre (4)	0.7	4.1	0.8	0.6	-1.4	-0.9	(27)
Right (5-10)	-0.7	4.0	0.7	1.0	-1.6	-0.1	(62-63)
F-prob.	.0000	.0681	.6858	.1385	.0001	.0000	
<b>SDP voters</b>							
Left (0-4)	-0.7	1.6	3.6	-0.3	-1.8	-1.0	(51-52)
Centre (5)	-0.9	2.0	3.4	0.6	-1.1	0.1	(83-85)
Right (6-10)	-1.5	1.1	3.5	0.7	-0.3	1.5	(60-61)
F-prob.	.2071	.0832	.6642	.0671	.0106	.0000	
<b>PP voters</b>							
Left (0-4)	0.1	1.7	-1.1	3.5	-1.3	-0.2	(41-44)
Centre (5)	-0.9	1.9	-0.6	3.8	-1.3	1.2	(68-69)
Right (6-10)	-2.0	1.4	-0.4	3.8	-0.9	1.8	(62-66)
F-prob.	.0000	.3608	.2487	.7106	.6484	.0001	
<b>CiP voters</b>							
Left (2-5)	0.1	1.2	-0.1	0.6	3.9	0.4	(37)
Centre (6-7)	-2.6	0.9	0.4	1.5	3.7	1.5	(26-27)
Right (8-10)	-2.2	1.0	0.3	0.2	4.1	2.7	(24-25)
F-prob.	.0000	.9082	.7049	.1051	.6813	.0046	
<b>IP voters</b>							
Left (1-6)	-1.3	1.2	0.6	1.3	-1.0	3.0	(108-110)
Centre (7-8)	-2.4	0.7	0.4	1.4	-1.1	3.8	(185-187)
Right (9-10)	-3.0	-0.4	-0.2	1.3	-1.3	4.2	(93-94)
F-prob.	.0000	.0000	.0141	.8825	.7760	.0000	

-----

Table IV.3.1 reveals some interesting patterns. Two major questions concern us here. First, do the three different left-right groups within each party like their own party to a different extent? Second, is the like or dislike of other

parties among the groups related to the left-right scale so that, for instance, left-wing PA voters dislike the IP more than right-wing PA voters?

For three of the parties, SDP, PP and CiP, there are clearly no significant differences among the left-right groups in the liking of their own party. This is not the case for the polar parties, the PA and the IP, where the differences are significant at the .05 level. The PA voters furthest to the left like the PA more (3.6) than PA voters in the centre (3.3) and on the right (2.7). The IP voters furthest to the right like the IP better (4.2) than IP voters in the centre (3.8) and on the left (3.0). A similar tendency can be observed among WA voters: those on the left in the party like it better than those in the centre or on the right. While the relationship is weaker than for the PA and the IP it is still significant at the .10 level.<sup>22)</sup>

Like and dislike of other parties is clearly not independent of left-right position within own party. Out of 30 such entries in Table IV.3.1, 18 cases show significant (at the .10 level) differences in the groups' liking of other parties. In 14 of these cases the ranking order follows the left-right model completely while in three more the marks of the left and right groups are clearly in the expected direction, even though there is a (slight) break in the ranking order.<sup>23)</sup>

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22) It should be noted that as the number of respondents in many groups is low the differences in the means have to be quite large to be significant.

23) These three cases are PA voters' estimates of the CiP, WA voters' estimates of the CiP and SDP voters' estimates of the WA. In the fourth case PA voters in the centre give WA 2.9 while those on the left give the WA 2.1 and those on the right give the party 2.0.

In 12 of the 30 cases the differences between the left, centre and right groups are not great enough to be significant at the .10 level, but most of them go in the expected direction.<sup>24)</sup>

Thus it is clear that not only is the left-right position of a party relevant to its voters' liking and disliking of other parties but also that a voter's left-right position within his own party tends on the whole to have an effect on his evaluation of other parties. The analysis in this section further supports our earlier conclusion that left-right positions are important guides for voters when they cognitively map the political world in their minds.

#### ***IV.4 The left-right model and voters' stances on issues***

While the left-right model is commonly used, it is by no means self-evident how individual issues should be placed on it. In Europe, however, one of the main criteria has been the socialist/non-socialist division, especially on questions concerning economic and social issues. While communist ideas of a centralized economy have had little success in Western Europe, the social democratic version of strong government involvement in the economy has been influential. Traditionally, socialist and social democratic parties favoured nationalization, at least of large companies, regulation of banking, high taxation on

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24) Four of those cases have a ranking order in accordance with the left-right model, and six more have the left and right groups in the expected positions. The remaining cases are CiP voters' estimate of the SDP, where those on the left give lower marks (-0.1) than those in the centre (0.4) and those on the right (0.3), and PP voters' estimate of SDP, where the ranking order is reversed, so the lowest marks come from the left (-1.1), then from centre (-0.6), and highest from the right (-0.4).

companies, reduction in wage differentials and a strong welfare state with high expenditure on public services. Their overall aim was a more egalitarian society and their basic conception of the capitalist society was constructed in class terms; they saw themselves as pro-labour and anti-business. The economic policies of the right-wing parties on the other hand tended to favour the free-market system.

Those distinctions, never completely clear cut, have become more blurred in the second half of the twentieth century. Social democratic parties have increasingly accepted the market system and the parties on the right have accepted the welfare state. In the 1950s and the 1960s social scientists used the term "the end of ideology" to describe these tendencies towards consensus politics in Western democracies. In many European democracies there were strong trends towards corporatism - the cooperation of government, labour unions and employers' federations in forming economic and social policy.

In the 1970s and 1980s we have seen to a certain extent the resurrection of "conviction politics" in many countries, especially on the right wing, as exemplified by increased emphasis on the virtues of the market system by politicians like Reagan and Thatcher. The change seems though to be more clearly observed at the level of rhetoric rather than on the level of results; government expenditure has continued to grow in most Western democracies in recent years. While there has probably been increasing acceptance of some of the "iron laws of the market", no strong tendency towards abolishing or strongly reducing the welfare state can be observed among politicians or voters.

Besides different emphases on economic issues found among parties of the left and the right, other issues have also tended to follow the left-right division. In Western Europe right-wing parties have for example tended to be more strongly committed to strong defence and support of NATO than left-wing parties. On other issues the left-right dimension does clearly not reflect the battle lines between parties. Good examples are the debate on nuclear energy in Sweden, on membership of the EC in Norway, and on government support and regulation of agriculture in many European countries.

We have seen that most Icelandic voters use the terms left and right to conceptualize the party system. The terms are ideological and thus we would expect the voters' attitudes on some issues to be related to their overall left-right position. In order to elaborate this relationship we can adopt several strategies.

First, we can define what we mean by left and right in abstract terms and then deduce propositions that are testable. The advantage with such an approach is that it is clear and logically coherent. The disadvantage is that by doing this we are testing how our model of left and right relates to voters' stands on individual issues; their perceptions of "left" and "right" may be different.

Second, we can analyse how voters' stands on individual issues are related to their left-right positions. While a high correlation does not necessarily mean that the issue in question is considered to be a left-right issue in the mind of the voter, the lack of such a correlation means that the issue is not a left-right issue.

Third, we can use factor analysis to see if the individual issues are structured in such a way that we can explain the variance in attitudes by assuming that there are underlying dimensions that influence the individual attitudes. Such an analysis should give us a dimension that we would recognize as a left-right dimension, even though it may not correspond completely to our own "logical" model of left and right, and it should be related to the voters' own positions on the left-right scale.

In Table IV.4.1 we have the correlations between voters' stands on individual issues and their own left-right position both in 1983 and 1987. We have divided the attitudes into six general issue areas: security and foreign policy, economic issues, environment, women's rights, morals, and the political system. Besides giving the correlations for individual issues and the left-right scale, we have calculated an attitude index for each issue area simply by reversing the values on variables correlating negatively with the left-right scale and adding together each individual's scores on all the variables in each issue area. Thus the sign of the correlation coefficient between an attitude index and the left-right spectrum is always positive by definition. The table gives the correlation between each attitude index and the left-right scale.

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**Table IV.4.1. Correlations between stand on issues and own left-right position 1983 (1=left, 2=centre, 3=right) and 1987 (scale 0-10). Pearson's r. Total samples.**

	1983	1987
<i>Security and foreign policy:</i>		
Keflavik base should stay	-.59	-.59
Iceland should stay in NATO (2-fold scale)	-.54	-.56
Iceland should stay in NATO (3-fold scale)	-.45	-.48
Supports the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Nordic countries even though this would weaken NATO		.33
Icelanders should take payment for the presence of U.S. military forces in the country	-.17	-.23
Attitude index (incl. 3-fold NATO scale)	.52	.60
<i>Economic issues:</i>		
Gradual reduction of inflation is impossible. The best policy is a quick solution by strict reduction in spending and toughness towards pressure groups	-.33	
Taxes should be reduced even though it meant reduced public services, e.g. in health care, education and social security	-.29	-.25
Steps to make it possible to operate private radio and TV stations have gone too far		.27
It is necessary to do more to decrease the differences in conditions between the regions and the capital area	.22	
Progress in the capital area may be decreased in order to increase prosperity in the regions		.21
Real and long-term increases in living standards can only be obtained if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions and really considers their point of view	.21	
Government should prioritize full employment even though companies are inefficient	.18	
Cooperation with foreigners on power intensive plants is only acceptable if at least 50% of the ownership in such companies is Icelandic	.13	
Clientelistic politics are necessary for the underprivileged when dealing with "the system"		-.13
Agricultural production must be greatly reduced as now there is overproduction at taxpayers expense	-.12	
All pension funds should be joined in one fund		.12
Government should give organizations of employees and employers effective part in decision-making on major issues		.10
Attitude index	.44	.37

*continued...*



*Environment:*

In the next years environmental issues  
should be prioritized over economic growth .17

*Women's rights:*

Attempts to assure women equal position to men  
have gone too far -.28 -.24  
Liberalization in women's rights to abortion  
has gone too far -.09  
Attitude index .26

*Morals:*

Beer should be sold in the state's liquor  
stores -.09

*The political system:*

All parties should hold open primaries where  
supporters as well as members can decide which  
candidates are put in the lists' top seats -.06 -.07  
Preferably all votes should have equal weight  
when parliamentary seats are allotted -.13  
The new electoral law's rules providing for  
more equal weight of votes between regions  
have gone too far .11  
The party system is outdated .03  
Attitude index .13 .12  
-----

The relationship between individual issues and the left-right dimension is statistically significant at the .05-level in all cases but one.<sup>25)</sup> Some of the relationships are nevertheless weak. It should also be noted that for questions asked both in 1983 and 1987 the strength of relationships are similar in both elections.

Issues concerning security and foreign policy are most strongly related to the left-right spectrum. The attitude index for this issue area gives correlations of .52 (1983, 3 questions) and .60 (1987, 4 questions). Attitudes towards

25) The relationship between answers to the 1987 question of whether the party system is outdated ( $r=.03$ ) is not significant.

the U.S. military base in Keflavik are more strongly related to left-right position than any other single issue (-.59 both in 1983 and 1987; the negative sign on the coefficient of course signifying that those on the left (low scores on left-right variable) are more likely to oppose the base (high scores on base variable)). The relationship is almost as strong for attitudes on NATO membership (-.54 and -.56 on a 2-fold scale including only those for or against; -.45 and -.48 on a 3-fold scale also including those with no opinion). The other two security policy issues, support for the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Nordic countries (.33) and the idea of charging for the Keflavik base (-.17 and -.23), are less strongly related to the left-right dimension, even though those relationships are stronger than is the case for many other issues.

The second most important are economic issues, the attitude index giving .44 (1983) and .37 (1987). The most strongly related single issues are attitudes for a tough and quick anti-inflationary policy in 1983 (-.33), for tax reduction at the expense of public services (-.29 and -.25), and against private TV and radio stations in 1987 (.27).

Somewhat more weakly related are attitudes for prioritizing full employment in 1983 (.18) and for supporting regional policy, which is similar both in 1983 (.22) and 1987 (.21) even though the wording of the questions are different. Pro-corporatist attitudes are on the other hand more strongly related to left-right in 1983 (.21) than in 1987 (.10). This is most likely a result of different wording, as the 1983 question focuses only on cooperation between government and labour unions, while the

1987 question focuses on cooperation between government, unions and employers' organizations. The relationships between other economic issues and left-right position are weak (+/- .12 and .13) even though they are statistically significant.

Concerning other issues, both in 1983 and 1987, leftists are clearly more prone to disagree with the statement that attempts to assure women equal position to men have gone too far (-.28 and -.24) and in 1987 they are more ready to prioritize the environment over economic growth (.17). In 1983 the relationship between left-right position and an anti-abortion stand is on the other hand weak (-.09) and the same is the case for legalization of beer, which is only slightly more opposed by those on the left (-.09).<sup>26)</sup> All attitudes towards the political system are very weakly (.03 to .13) related to the left-right dimension.

While this analysis shows that there is clearly a relationship between left-right position and stands on issues, especially those concerning foreign and economic policy, we have not shown how those attitudes are intercorrelated nor how the overall relationship between attitudes and left-right position compares to other countries. A factor analysis should help us to answer both of these questions.

In Chapter V we present the results of a factor analysis of our issue questions (see Tables V.7 and V.8). For each election we extract four factors; three of the factors are common to both elections. The strongest factor in both

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26) Until 1989 it was illegal to sell beer in Iceland although wine and liquor were sold through a State monopoly.

elections is clearly a left-right factor, which in 1983 is strongest related to the questions on the Keflavik base, NATO membership, inflation strategy, equality for women, and reduction of taxes at the expense of the welfare system. In 1987 the left-right factor is most strongly related to the questions of the Keflavik base, a nuclear-weapons-free zone, NATO membership, equality for women, uniting the pension funds, and reduction of taxes. In both elections we also have a factor related to the urban-rural cleavage, which we call the old-new economy factor. In 1983 this is most strongly related to the questions on equality of votes, regional support, and reduction of agricultural production and in 1987 to equality of votes, private radio and TV, and regional support. The third factor, common to both elections, is a populism factor. In 1983 this is most strongly connected to the questions on open primaries, base payment, and power industry ownership and in 1987 to base payment, clientelistic politics, and open primaries. The fourth factor in 1983 is a moral factor, most strongly correlated to full employment, beer legalization, abortion, and corporatism, while the fourth factor in 1987 is a green factor, most strongly related to the questions on the environment and whether the party system is outdated. In Chapter V we also calculate additive indices based on the factors (see Table V.9) simply by using the three questions most strongly correlated with each factor (except we use only two questions for the green factor). The correlations of these additive indices to own left-right positions are shown in Table IV.4.2.

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**Table IV.4.2. Correlations between issue indices 1983 and 1987 and own left-right position.**

	Correlation (r) with own left-right position	
1983		
Left-right index	-.58	(N=902)
Old-new economy index	-.22	
Populism index	-.05	
Morality index	.13	
1987		
Left-right index	-.60	(N=1439)
Populism index	-.21	
Old-new economy index	.28	
Green index	.12	

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 For construction of indices see Table V.9. The different signs on the correlations with the new-old economy index in 1983 and 1987 are of no substantial importance; they are simply a result of differences in coding.  
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The left-right attitude indices are, as expected, much more strongly related to own left-right position than are the other attitude indices. In 1983 the correlation between left-right attitudes and own left-right position is  $r = -.58$  and in 1987  $r = -.60$ , indicating that in 1983 those on the left tend to oppose the Keflavik base, NATO membership, and a tough inflation strategy. In 1987 those on the left tend to oppose the Keflavik base and NATO membership and be in favour of a nuclear-weapons-free zone. Comparable additive attitude indices from Swedish electoral research, based on the questions most strongly related to the left-right factor, have somewhat stronger relationships to own left-right position,  $r = 0.68$  in 1979 and  $r = 0.67$  both in 1982 and 1985.<sup>27)</sup> The strongest relationships between individual questions and own left-right positions in the 1985 Swedish data were on abolition of workers' funds and aiming at a socialist society ( $r = 0.64$  for both), while other

27) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 301.

associations were weaker, e.g. with questions on nursery schools ( $r=0.33$ ), six-hour working day ( $r=0.36$ ), and advertising on TV ( $r=0.33$ ).<sup>28)</sup>

While the results from the Norwegian election surveys are not directly comparable, they also show a strong relationship between stands on left-right attitude questions and own left-right position. The Norwegian association between factor scores on the left-right factor and own position on the left-right scale was  $\tau b=0.44$  in 1977,  $\tau b=0.45$  in 1981, and  $\tau b=0.50$  in 1985.<sup>29)</sup> The Icelandic voters thus resemble the Swedish and Norwegian ones in that their left-right attitudes are strongly anchored to their abstract perception of their position on the left-right scale. The issues most strongly related to the left-right factor are, however, to some extent different between the countries and the Swedish associations are somewhat stronger than the Icelandic ones.

The relationships between the other attitude indices and own left-right position are much weaker than the relationship to the left-right attitude index. Nevertheless, in both elections the old-new economy index is related to own left-right position. In 1983 those on the right tended to support the view that all votes should have equal weight and that agricultural production should be reduced, while they were sceptical of regional support ( $r=-.22$ ). In 1987 those on the left favour regional support and think that increased equality of votes and steps to make it possible for private companies to operate radio and TV stations had

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28) *Ibid.*, pp. 263, 265, and 274.

29) B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), p. 72.

gone too far ( $r=.28$ ). The populism factor is also moderately related to own left-right position in 1987 ( $r=-.21$ ): those on the left tended to oppose base payment, clientelistic politics and open primaries.

#### ***IV.5 The left-right model and vote switching***

We have seen that left-right position is clearly related to voting, liking and disliking of parties, and stand on issues. Thus we would also think it likely that it is related to party switching. If the left-right position of a voter is relatively stable and it influences his choice of party we would expect that when a voter leaves his old party he is most likely to choose a new party that is close to his old one on the left-right scale. In this section we will examine if our data supports that hypothesis.

Such an examination is more problematic than it may seem at first and involves at least three concerns. First, the same parties were not fighting the elections of 1979, 1983 and 1987. Thus we do not have a fixed number of parties and a fixed ranking order on a left-right scale. We try to tackle this problem by looking separately at movements between the four old parties both in 1983 and 1987, movements between the five parliamentary parties which took part both in 1983 and 1987, and movements to the new parties, the SDA and WA in 1983 and the CiP in 1987.

The second problem is that the number of respondents moving between individual parties is in many cases small, especially in 1983. We have therefore to be cautious in our interpretation. Nevertheless, having data from both 1983 and 1987 for the four old parties is an advantage; the

similarity in the patterns of voter movements between the old parties in both elections suggests that those patterns are not chance results due to small sample size.

Third, the different sizes of the parties constitute a problem. Ideally, we should construct a model showing the expected movements between parties if voters leaving each party simply showed the same tendency to vote for another party as the electorate as a whole, without any ideological considerations. Instead we shall only examine if there are clear tendencies in the data, but the size factor should be borne in mind.

Table IV.5.1 shows voters who switched between the four old parties in 1983 and 1987. This group constituted half of all party switchers in 1983, and 38% in 1987. The table shows what percentages of those switchers moved between each pair of parties and the grouping is based on the conventional left-right dimension.

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**Table IV.5.1. Vote switching between the four old parties 1979-83 and 1983-1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

*Left-right model: PA - SDP - PP - IP.*

	1983	1987
<i>Switches to an adjacent party:</i>	38	45
Between PA and SDP	9	8
Between SDP and PP	10	11
Between PP and IP	19	26
<i>Jumps one party:</i>	50	49
Between PA and PP	16	15
Between SDP and IP	34	34
<i>Jumps two parties:</i>	13	6
Between PA and IP	13	6
Total	101%	100%
N=	(80)	(163)

---



The movements in the table do not correspond well to the left-right model. If all parties were of equal size and the party switches were random we would expect half of the switches to be between adjacent parties (3 pairs),  $1/3$  would jump one party (2 pairs), and  $1/6$  jump two parties (1 pair). If the left-right dimension had an impact we would expect more than half of the movements to be between adjacent parties.

Instead, in both elections a majority of voters do not switch to a party adjacent to their old party. Half of the voters jump one party: move between PA and PP on the one hand and SDP and IP on the other. This is clearly not only an effect of different party size. The small size of the SDP in 1983 may partially explain why there is clearly much more movement between the PA and the PP than between the SDP and either of those parties. But this clearly does not even partially account for the fact that there are considerably more movements between the IP and the SDP than between the IP and the PP.

The observed movements between the old parties in both elections have a much better fit to another left-right model: PA - PP - SDP - IP. If we classify the movements on that basis 60% of switching between the old parties in both elections is between adjacent parties, while 28% in 1983 and 34% in 1987 jump one party. The ties between the IP and the SDP on the one hand and the PP and the PA on the other, which we have observed before, are simply manifested more strongly in vote switching than in the various patterns we discussed earlier.

Table IV.5.2 shows the movements between the four old parties and the WA from 1983 to 1987 both based on the total sample (recalled 1983 vote) and on the panel (1983 vote as reported then). The differences between the two samples are generally small.<sup>30)</sup>

**Table IV.5.2. Vote switching between the four old parties and the WA 1983-87. Panel and total sample. Percentages.**

*Left-right model: PA - WA - SDP - PP - IP*

	<i>Panel</i>	<i>Total sample</i>
<i>Switches to an adjacent party:</i>	46	46
Between PA and WA	14	16
Between WA and SDP	7	6
Between SDP and PP	4	7
Between PP and IP	21	16
<i>Jumps one party:</i>	32	32
Between PA and SDP	7	5
Between WA and PP	9	6
Between SDP and IP	16	21
<i>Jumps two parties:</i>	16	18
Between PA and PP	9	9
Between WA and IP	8	9
<i>Jumps three parties:</i>	6	3
PA-IP	6	3
Total	100%	99%
N=	(104)	(265)

The overall pattern fits the five-party left-right model better than was the case for the four old parties. 88% of the movements are between adjacent parties or include jumping over one party, as compared to 70% which we would expect if all parties were of equal size and the movements random. While the relationship is obviously weak, it is in

<sup>30)</sup> It is nevertheless interesting that in the panel a higher percentage switches between the IP and the PP than between the IP and the SDP and the difference between PA-PP switchers and PA-SDP switchers is smaller than in the total sample. But we do not know if the panel is more accurate, despite its superior measurement, as the number of respondents is so low.

the expected direction. If we group the data on the basis of a left-right model where the positions of SDP and PP are reversed (PA-WA-PP-SDP-IP) the fit is similar; it is slightly better if we use the total sample and slightly worse if we use the panel.

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**Table IV.5.3. Party switchers in the new parties' votes 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

	SDA vote 1983	WA vote 1983	All switch- ers 1983*
Vote in 1979			
PA	20	50	27
SDP	33	12	28
PP	13	9	19
IP	33	29	25
Total	99%	100%	99%
N=	(45)	(34)	(159)
		CiP vote 1987	All switch- ers 1987
Vote in 1983			
PA		2	18
WA		2	6
SDP		8	13
PP		11	14
SDA		4	10
IP		72	39
Total		99%	100%
N=		(83)	(423)

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 \* Three voters for Trotskyites in 1979, all of whom voted for the PA in 1983, are omitted here.  
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Table IV.5.3 shows the party of origin of the party switchers who voted for parties fighting their first election in 1983 and 1987. For comparison we also show which party all party switchers voted for in the previous election. If party switching was random we would expect the profiles of the new parties to mirror that distribution. If the left-right dimension has an effect, we would expect the

new parties to get relatively more votes from parties close to them on the left-right scale.

There are clear differences between the three new parties in terms of the origins of their converts. The profile of the SDA in 1983 is rather similar to that of all switchers, thus indicating that the party got its voters from all parts of the left-right spectrum even though the SDA appealed more to previous voters of SDP and IP than PP and PA. The other two new parties, however, have a stronger left-right profile. In 1983 the WA gets half of its switchers from its neighbour on the left, the PA, but relatively few from the SDP and the PP. The CiP in 1987 shows the strongest correspondence to the left-right spectrum. Almost three of every four switchers to the party come from the IP and the appeal of the party decreases as we go further to the left on the spectrum.

On the whole the pattern of party switching does not correspond well to the left-right spectrum. It should be noted, however, that our analysis is only based on movements between the parties and their ranking order on the left-right scale. As we saw earlier, voters of each party are distributed over a considerable space on the left-right dimension. Left-right position within a party may influence party switching but our data does not allow us to test this.

More important is the fact that the parties' ranking orders along the old-new economy dimension, which is clearly related to party choice, is different from their ranking on the left-right dimension. On the old-new economy dimension the PP and the PA are adjacent parties both in 1983 and 1987, as we shall see in the next chapter.

### **Chapter V: Issues and voting behaviour**

Political parties are the structured alternatives voters face in elections. If politics is about the peaceful - and meaningful in a democratic sense - resolution of conflict through the ballot box, it seems necessary that there should be some consistency between cleavage at voter level and in the party system. The parties should reflect differences among voters on ideological concerns and on disputed issues or interests. A complete correspondence is logically impossible if parties are relatively few and voters' stances on issues are not completely structured along a few ideological dimensions. In the real world it is to be expected that a voter cannot vote for a party with which he agrees on all issues but party systems can realistically be expected to differ in this respect. In one party system the correspondence between voters' opinions and party choice may be relatively small while in another there can be considerable correspondence.

An obvious precondition for the latter is that voters have different opinions concerning issues and ideology and that the parties offer different policy options in elections. A complete lack of ideological or issue-related connection has serious consequences for the democratic nature of a party system or - as Sören Holmberg has observed - makes it a facade:

It can be to a party's advantage in an election campaign to stress the qualities of trust and the voters' old bonds of loyalty to the party. This is a defensive strategy aimed at preventing potential party switchers from betraying the party. Election campaign strategy of this kind is not uncommon among Western European parties, and is not - of course - illegitimate. But - as often happens in

the U.S.A. - if it is combined with a tactic of trying to keep a low profile on many political issues and avoiding taking an open position on different social problems, this can have negative consequences in the long run. There is a risk that the political content becomes unimportant. The ability of politicians to gain from the voters' bonds of loyalty to the parties then becomes the factor that decides elections. And then democracy becomes only Potemkin curtains. The will of the people does not determine development. That role goes to the forces that play on people's emotions and keeps the problems of reality away from the election campaigns.<sup>1)</sup>

Classical democratic theory - and armchair speculation before the advent of electoral surveys - had assumed the rationality of the voters and "championed the nonpartisan, independent voter, rationally choosing between competing issues and candidates".<sup>2)</sup> Early research on voting behaviour - mainly American and in particular *The American Voter* - radically changed that perception. In that influential book the Michigan scholars maintained that issue orientations were of relative insignificance in the voting decision and that ideologies, or coherent patterns of belief across issue areas, were largely absent in the mass electorate.<sup>3)</sup> In a classic article Converse argued not only that stand on issues had little impact on voting decision but also that voters' attitudes were not structured to a great extent, i.e. he did not find strong correlations between voters' stands on issues which theoretically seemed related, thus indicating that voters did not have consistent belief systems. Moreover, voters' stands on issues did not seem to be consistent from one instance to the next. Most voters

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1) S. Holmberg (1981), p. 223. My translation.

2) G.M. Pomper (1988), p. 114.

3) *Idid.*, p. 117.

thus seemed to have non-attitudes and simply give random responses to interviewers' questions about issues.<sup>4)</sup>

This view of the electorate became the conventional wisdom among political scientists and remained predominant until the 1970s. It seemed confirmed by other research, e.g. studies of British voters in the 1960s by Butler and Stokes.<sup>5)</sup>

An early challenge to this model of the unsophisticated voter was made in the 1960s by V.O. Key in his book *The Responsible Electorate*:

The perverse and unorthodox argument of this little book is that voters are not fools. To be sure, many individual voters act in odd ways indeed; yet in the large the electorate behaves about as rationally and responsibly as we should expect, given the clarity of the alternatives presented to it and the character of the information available to it.<sup>6)</sup>

Since the 1970s the predominant view has been that Key's basic argument was correct: issues do matter in the voting decision. In 1976 Nie, Verba and Petrocik argued in *The Changing American Voter* that the 1964 election in the U.S. marked a watershed in the importance of issues in American elections:

We think it important that three major changes occur during the same period, between the 1960 and 1964 elections. These are the increase in consistency among attitudes themselves, the increased relationship between attitudes and the vote, and the decreased relationship between party identification and the vote.<sup>7)</sup>

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4) P.E. Converse (1964). Converse's analysis of issue consistency was based on a panel survey conducted between 1956 and 1960.

5) M. Harrop and W.L. Miller (1987), pp. 122-123. Stokes was one of the Michigan scholars and a co-author of *The American Voter*.

6) V.O. Key (1966), p. 7.

7) N.H. Nie, S. Verba, and J.R. Petrocik (1979), p. 166.

Nie, Verba and Petrocik found that issue voting was much higher in 1964, 1968 and 1972 (especially in 1964 and 1968) than had been the case in 1956 and 1960.<sup>8)</sup> On the other hand, in 1976 "Ford and Carter, by underplaying the issue distance between them, conducted an election campaign that returned issue voting to the pre-1964 level".<sup>9)</sup> While the apparent increase in issue constraint in 1964 seems at least partly to be due to different methodologies (e.g. changes in question format on issue questions),<sup>10)</sup> the conclusion seems to be that issues "are more significant when, as in 1964 and 1972, there is at least one ideological candidate".<sup>11)</sup> In summing up the most recent American debate on issue voting, Niemi and Weisberg conclude that "the contemporary issue voting literature is concerned not with whether issues matter but with which issues matter and how they matter".<sup>12)</sup> On the other hand, model building "has not resulted in firm conclusions regarding the relative importance of candidates, issues, and party in the vote decision".<sup>13)</sup>

Research on voting behaviour in Britain has in general also emphasized the importance of issue voting since the 1970s. Some authors claim that issue voting has increased considerably since the 1960s as an explanatory factor in voting, at the expense of other factors such as class or family loyalties. On the basis of a multiple regression analysis Rose and McAllister found e.g. that in the 1987 election political values were by far the strongest

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8) *Idid.*, p. 165.

9) *Idid.*, p. 381.

10) M. Harrop and W.L. Miller (1987), pp. 123-124.

11) *Idid.*, p. 156.

12) Niemi, R.G. and H. Weisberg (1993b), p. 138.

13) *Idid.*



determinant of voting, explaining 27.9% of the vote.<sup>14)</sup> According to their calculations the explained variance due to political values had increased from 9.3% in 1964.<sup>15)</sup>

Crewe argues that recent studies "have established a close fit between respondents' positions on the main issues of an election and the way they voted - a much closer fit than found between social class (or any other social attribute) and the vote".<sup>16)</sup> Franklin argues along similar lines:

what evidence we have been able to bring to bear points to the causal primacy of the decline of class voting in opening the way to an increase in the importance of issues in determining the electoral choice of British voters.<sup>17)</sup>

Heath *et al.*, while arguing that the decline of class voting in Britain has been greatly exaggerated, nevertheless accept that issue voting in Britain has increased.

In 1983 and 1987 voters' attitudes towards the issues were more closely associated with the way they voted than had been the case in previous election studies. Attitudes have become better predictors of how people will vote.<sup>18)</sup>

They argue on the other hand that this change is not due to changing social psychology of voters but rather to the fact that the major parties, Labour and Conservative, have moved ideologically apart. Thus

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14) Other factors were family loyalties, explaining 19.7% of the vote, current performance of political leaders (10.5%), socio-economic interests (9.3%), party identification (3.4%), and social and political context (1.7%). Total explained variance was 72.5%. See R. Rose and I. McAllister (1990, p. 152). The dependent variable is coded from Conservative (1) through Alliance (0.5) to Labour (0). (See p. 58).

15) *Idid.*, p. 166. Explained variance due to political values was 16.6% in 1974, 17.2% in 1979, and 22.6% in 1983.

16) I. Crewe (1984), p. 199. See also Himmelweit *et al.* (1985).

17) N.M. Franklin (1985), p. 152.

18) A. Heath, R. Jowell, J. Curtice, G. Evans, J. Field and S. Witherspoon (1991), p. 33.

voters were rational and sophisticated in the 1960s just as they are today, and the changes since then are largely to be explained by the changes in the ideological positions of the parties.<sup>19)</sup>

Dunleavy and Husbands, while arguing for a "radical" approach to voting, also accept the importance of issues. Even though they believe that "peoples' social situations continue to structure their voting behaviour in important ways" they admit that "social-structural change in Britain cannot alone explain the undoubted political volatility and voter detachability of the past fifteen years".<sup>20)</sup> On the other hand they doubt the causal primacy of issues on voting indicated by many authors.

Our analytic approach towards issues is very different from that of mainstream issue-oriented analysis, which invariably sees voters' attitudes as primary causal influences on their voting decision. This approach simply infers from empirical correlations between issue attitudes and voting, without inquiring in any depth how particular issue positions came to be held by voters ... we argued that the mass media, especially the national press, have a major influence in determining political attitudes and alignments ... In addition, on certain issues voters may adopt attitudes merely to fit a voting intention produced by social influences ... <sup>21)</sup>

Thus, while there remains a considerable controversy over why issue voting has increased in Britain and if the conclusions support a rational model of voting behaviour, the simple fact that issues and voting increasingly correlate among the British electorate seems not to be disputed.

In Scandinavia there seems to be a widespread consensus among researchers that issue voting increased in Denmark,

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19) *Idid.*, p. 43.

20) P. Dunleavy and C.T. Husbands (1985), p. 147.

21) *Ibid.*

Norway and Sweden during the 1960s and especially since the 1970s.<sup>22)</sup> Some authors even maintain that "issues and ideology have gradually replaced social class (and other socially determined groups, such as local communities) as the chief bases for the voter's orientation toward the parties".<sup>23)</sup> Holmberg notes that recent findings on increasing issue voting in Sweden have not been as controversial as similar findings in the U.S., partly because Swedish electoral researchers have never doubted that ideological concerns and different stands on issues are important explanatory factors behind the voter's choice of a party.<sup>24)</sup>

In a very interesting comparison of Sweden and the United States Granberg and Holmberg find that while in both countries "there is a tendency for people to be in subjective agreement with their preferred political actor and subjective disagreement with a nonpreferred political actor",<sup>25)</sup> this tendency is considerably stronger in Sweden. They also maintain that "ideology was also shown to be more closely linked to specific issues and more stable across time in Sweden than in the United States".<sup>26)</sup> They argue that the main reason for this difference is the stronger party system in Sweden, which has greater range and clarity of alternatives presented in the electorate.

It is in no way intended to cast aspersions on the American voter. It is, after all, not realistic to expect that voter groups be more divided along lines of ideology and issues than the alternatives confronting them in an election. V. O. Key's

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22) O. Borre (1984), pp. 355-362.

23) *Idid.*, p. 355.

24) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 286.

25) D. Granberg and S. Holmberg (1988), p. 10.

26) *Idid.*, p. 213.

(1966) concept of an echo chamber has a direct application here. The echo chamber metaphor implies that there ought to be a relation between how *distinct* the alternatives are and the degree to which voter groups are *polarized*. The assumption is that voter groups echo, in a slightly muted form, the alternatives with which they are presented in elections. If the voter groups are not divided on an issue or on ideology, this is often traceable back to a lack of distinctiveness among the alternatives.<sup>27)</sup>

In this chapter we will analyse the relationship between issues and voting in the Icelandic elections of 1983 and 1987. First, we will examine the distributions of the individual issue questions put to the respondents in 1983 and 1987. Second, we will analyse how voters' stands on individual issues relate to party choice and if the ranking of the parties on the issues corresponds to their ranking along the left-right dimension. Third, we will compare the attitudes of different voter groups, thus showing to what extent voters of different parties have different attitudes and if those differences reflect the distance of the parties on a left-right continuum. Fourth, we will use factor analysis to examine if voters' attitudes are structured along a few ideological or attitudinal dimensions. Finally, we will explore how those dimensions are related to party choice.

This analysis will not allow us to draw any clear cut conclusions about the direct causal impact of attitudes on party choice or vote switching.<sup>28)</sup> In order to do that we would need a more complex analysis and a considerably larger sample of panel data. Our more modest aim is simply to

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27) *Idid.*, p. 217.

28) A strong correlation between stands on issues and party choice or high issue voting could of course also be a result of the parties' success in convincing their supporters to adopt the "correct" issue positions.

establish to what extent a link between issues and party choice exists in the Icelandic electorate. Such a link is of course a prerequisite if an issue-oriented explanation of Icelandic voting is to be at all valid. So while our conclusions cannot establish the causal priority of issues in the Icelandic setting, we can at least see the analysis as an attempt to test an issue model. No link between issues and party choice would refute such a model.

We will also examine if the patterns of issue voting in the Icelandic electorate correspond to the voters' cognitive left-right map of the party system as outlined in Chapter IV. While a good fit would not demonstrate the causal primacy of issues on voting, a link between a stand on issues and the abstract left-right dimension in the expected direction at least supports the notion of the voter as a relatively sophisticated being.

In our analysis we will attempt to draw comparisons to other Nordic countries, especially to Sweden, and our method of analysis has partly been chosen to make such comparisons possible.

We argued before that Icelandic parties were less programmatic and more pragmatic or opportunistic than was the case for the Swedish parties.<sup>29)</sup> Thus, the alternatives facing Icelandic voters are less clear and stable than in Sweden. Bearing in mind Granberg and Holmberg's thesis that unclear alternatives are reflected in weaker attitude polarization among voters, we would expect the Icelandic voters to show a lesser degree of issue voting than is the case among Swedish voters.

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29) See Chapter I and Chapter IV.

In the following analysis we will be using issue questions that were put to our total samples in 1983 and 1987. Each survey contained 15 such questions. Some of those questions were identical in both election surveys, some dealt with the same issue but used different wording or format, and questions on some issues were only in one of the surveys.

On most of the issue questions respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a statement, and then they were probed as to whether they strongly agreed/disagreed or tended to agree/disagree.<sup>30)</sup> In 1983 two middle categories were used; "ambivalent" and "makes no difference". In 1987 two middle categories were also used; "makes no difference" and "do not want to pass a judgement". Those questions thus form a 5-fold scale.

Another format used was to ask respondents if they thought that a certain development (e.g. attempts to assure women equal position to men) had gone much too far, a bit too far, about right, a bit too short, or much too short. This format, which also forms a 5-fold scale, was used on two questions in 1983 and three questions in 1987.

Both in 1983 and 1987 a "filtered" question was used to ask about NATO membership. Thus respondents were first asked if Iceland's continued membership of NATO was an issue on which they had an opinion. Those who said yes were then asked if they wanted Iceland to stay in NATO or discontinue its membership. The question can thus be used as a dichotomous variable or a 3-fold scale using the "no

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30) In the 1983 face-to-face interviews a different format was used in four issue questions. See Appendix A.

opinion" as a middle category. This question gave by far the highest "no opinion" response, most likely due to the "filtering".

One question in 1987 was a combined question. Those who said they favoured the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Nordic countries were then asked if they would favour the idea if this would weaken NATO. Those who opposed the idea were asked if they tended to oppose the idea or if they strongly opposed it. This question thus forms a 5-fold scale as can be seen in Table V.2.

Tables V.1 and V.2 give an overview of the responses to the issue questions. In those tables we have combined the "tend to" and "strongly" agree/disagree. We also give the percentage who did not answer each question, i.e. refusing to answer or saying "don't know". Opinion balance is calculated simply by subtracting the percentage disagreeing from the percentage agreeing.<sup>31)</sup> The exact wording of questions and the 5-fold distribution can be found in Appendix A.

In general the respondents are quite ready to give an opinion on the issues. Relatively few end up in the "no answer" category. Leaving the "filtered" NATO question aside, by far the highest "no answer" percentage is 25% on the question if steps taken to increase the equality of votes had gone far enough in 1987, followed by the question on prioritizing environment over economic growth in 1987 (17%) and the combined question on a nuclear-weapons-free

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31) It is noteworthy that on most issues the opinion balance is positive. This may reflect a tendency among respondents to agree rather than disagree with a question, especially questions on which they have no strong opinion.

zone in 1987 (17%). On the majority of questions 5% or less give "no answer".

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**Table V.1. Answers to issue questions 1983. Total sample - all respondents. Percentages.**

	Agree	Ambi- valent	Dis- agree	No answer	Total	Opinion balance
Corporatism#	72	7	16	5	100	+56
Power industry ownership	64	12	19	5	100	+45
Regional support#	67	5	23	5	100	+44
Equal weight of votes	59	9	23	9	100	+36
Base payment	60	9	27	5	101	+34
Open primaries	59	10	25	5	99	+34
Keflavik base*	53	14	30	3	100	+23
Beer legalization#	53	10	35	2	100	+18
Reduce agricultural production	43	19	32	6	100	+11
Inflation#	40	3	48	9	100	-8
Full employment	30	17	49	4	100	-19
Reduce taxes	23	17	56	3	99	-33

# Agree, makes no difference, disagree.

\* Support, makes no difference, oppose.

	Current developments have				Total
	Gone too far	About right	Gone to short	No answer	
Equality for women	19	34	45	3	101
Abortion	42	45	6	7	100

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*Should Iceland stay in NATO - a "filtered" question:*

	Stay	No opinion	Leave	No answer	Total	Opinion balance
	52	33	13	2	100	+39

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**Table V.2. Answers to issue questions 1987. Total sample - all respondents. Percentages.**

	Agree	Makes no diff.	Dis- agree	No answer	Total	Opinion balance
Unite pension funds	68	9	14	10	101	+54
Regional support	65	12	15	7	99	+50
Corporatism	54	18	17	11	100	+37
Base payment	56	9	30	5	100	+30
Party system outdated#	44	35	17	3	99	+27
Open primaries	48	15	31	7	101	+17
Environment	41	17	26	17	101	+15
Keflavik base*	40	24	32	5	101	+8
Clientelistic politics#	24	35	36	4	99	-12
Reduce taxes	17	4	73	6	100	-56

# Agree, do not want to pass judgement, disagree.

\* Support, makes no difference, oppose.

	Current developments have				Total
	Gone too far	About right	Gone to short	No answer	
Equality for women	6	34	57	3	100
Private radio and TV	33	58	7	3	101
Equality of votes	11	41	23	25	100

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*Should Iceland stay in NATO - a "filtered" question:*

	Stay	No opinion	Leave	No answer	Total	Opinion balance
	48	37	14	2	99	+34

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*Nuclear-weapons-free zone in Nordic countries - a combined question:*

For the idea even if this weakens NATO	56
For the idea but don't know if this weakens NATO	12
For the idea but not if it weakens NATO	8
Tend to be against the idea	2
Strongly against the idea	4
No answer (refuse, don't know)	17

Total 99  
 Opinion balance= +42  
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Those choosing a middle category are usually more numerous than those with "no opinion". In most cases those percentages are nevertheless not high. Notable exceptions are the two questions in 1987 where respondents can choose the category "do not want to pass a judgement" - 35% of the respondents pick that answer in each case. On the whole, an overwhelming majority of the respondents is ready to agree or disagree on most of the issues.

Question format and the exact wording of questions can influence the pattern of response. If we want to discover the "true" attitude of a population on a given issue it is therefore advisable to ask more than one question on the same issue. We have not been able to do that here. Answers to individual questions should therefore be interpreted with some caution. It should also be pointed out that we do not know the saliency of individual questions to the respondents. Bearing this in mind we will nevertheless give here an overview of the outlines of Icelandic public opinion in 1983 and 1987 as reflected by the answers to our issue questions.

Support for corporatism seemed strong both in 1983 and 1987. A clear majority agreed in 1983 that "real and long term increases in living standards can only be obtained if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions and really considers their point of view" (+56). This was also the case in 1987; the majority agreed that "government should give organizations of employees and employers an effective part in decision making on major issues" (+37).

The most popular suggestion in 1987 was "that all pension funds in the country should be united in one fund" (+54), a

position frequently advocated by the SDP, some other forces of the left and various trade union leaders without any success in legislation.

A clear majority also agreed in 1983 that "cooperation with foreigners on power intensive plants is only acceptable if at least 50% of the ownership in such companies is Icelandic" (+45). The support for this left wing plank is perhaps higher than expected and probably reflects a nationalistic feeling.

Regional support is also strongly backed both in 1983 and 1987. The majority in 1983 agreed that "it is necessary to decrease the differences in conditions between the regions and the capital area" (+44) and in 1987 that "progress in the capital area may be decreased in order to increase prosperity in the regions" (+50).

In 1987 the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Nordic countries - a policy that NATO strongly opposed - proved very popular among the Icelandic electorate. Originally 76% said they were for such an idea, but when asked if they would support the idea even though this would weaken NATO the support dropped to 56%, with 14% opposed, thus giving an opinion balance of +42.

A clear majority agreed in 1983 that "preferably all votes should have equal weight when parliamentary seats are allotted" (+36). Nevertheless, in 1987, after changes in electoral law which reduced the overweight of the rural constituencies only slightly, only 23% thought the changes had not gone far enough, while 11% thought they had gone too far and 41% said "about right". The 25% who gave "no answer"

to this question in 1987 might, however, indicate some uneasiness in the electorate on this issue.

Somewhat surprisingly, a large majority supported the statement that "Icelanders should take payment for the presence of U.S. military forces in the country" both in 1983 (+34) and in 1987 (+30). While it was known that this idea had some support, it had been vehemently rejected by all the political parties regardless of whether they were pro- or anti-base.<sup>32)</sup>

The idea that all parties should hold open primaries was also popular both in 1983 (+34) and in 1987 (+17). The idea that the party system is outdated also got strong support in 1987 (+27).

More people supported than opposed the continued presence of the Keflavik base both in 1983 (+23) and 1987 (+8). The change in public attitude on this long-standing and hotly disputed issue is nevertheless interesting. The number of opponents to the base did not significantly increase between 1983 and 1987, but as many voters have moved from the "support" to the "makes no difference" category we see a considerable reduction in the opinion balance. Changes in the attitudes towards NATO membership are on the other hand small; about 80% of those stating an opinion both in 1983 and 1987 favour continued membership.

More controversial among voters in 1983 was the question of whether beer should be legalized in Iceland (+18), an issue that had been disputed for a long time, but on which the parties as such did not take positions. Another moral

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32) The only exception was that some CiP candidates in 1987 seemed keen on the idea.

issue - abortion - where the parties' stands were generally unclear also divided the 1983 electorate. 42% thought that the liberalization in women's rights to abortion had gone too far, while 45% claimed it was about right and 6% thought it had not gone far enough.<sup>33)</sup>

Attitudes towards the heavily state subsidized agricultural system also divided the electorate fairly evenly in 1983, even though slightly more agreed than disagreed that "agricultural production must be greatly reduced as now there is overproduction at taxpayers expense" (+11).

Environmental issues entered the Icelandic political arena in the 1980s. In 1987 more people agreed than disagreed that "in the next years action on environmental issues should be prioritized over attempts to increase economic growth" (+15) while 34% either gave "no answer" or said this "made no difference".

A clear change took place between 1983 and 1987 concerning a question on women's rights. The proportion claiming that "attempts to assure women equal position to men" had gone too far decreased from 19% to 6%, while the proportion saying it had not gone far enough increased from 45% to 57%.

The abolition of the state monopoly of broadcasting seemed to be supported by a majority in 1987. Only 33% said that "steps to make it possible for private companies to

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33) Iceland has a liberal abortion law. Women are allowed abortion for "social reasons" after consultation with health care officials. This means *de facto* "abortion on demand" in most cases.

operate radio and TV stations" had gone too far, 58% said about right and 7% not far enough.

Slightly more people disagreed than agreed in 1983 that "gradual reduction of inflation is impossible. The best policy is a quick solution by strict reduction in spending and toughness towards pressure groups" (-8). Such a proposition, usually connected with the right of centre, had been the core of the IP platform in its unsuccessful 1979 campaign.

Similarly, in 1987 more people disagreed than agreed that "clientelistic politics are necessary for the underprivileged when dealing with 'the system'" (-12), a view openly championed by the CiP-leader, Albert Gudmundsson, who tended to be more outspoken about his role as a patron in the Icelandic political system than most other politicians.

More unpopular, however, was the idea in 1983 that "government should prioritize full employment, even when companies are inefficient" (-19). By far the most unpopular statement, both in 1983 (-33) and in 1987 (-56) was that "taxes should be reduced, even though it meant that public services had to be reduced, e.g. in health care, education or social security". While differences in the question format could account for part of the increasing unpopularity of welfare cuts between 1983 and 1987, the change is nevertheless noteworthy and may be related to the policies of the PP-IP government 1983-1987.

The next step in our analysis - and a much more interesting one - is to examine to what extent voters of different parties also had different opinions on the issue

questions. We do this by coding the answers from the questions on a scale from 1-5 in such a way that each issue scale correlates positively with voters' own positions on the left-right scale.<sup>34)</sup> The category "no answer" has been excluded.<sup>35)</sup> Then we calculated the mean position for each party's voters on each issue. The exact position of each party on an issue scale is not of interest here - that depends e.g. on question wording. What is interesting is to what extent the means for individual parties differ from each other and the ranking order of the parties, especially if the ranking order corresponds to the parties' positions on the left-right continuum. The greater the difference between the parties' means, the more distinct are the voters of the different parties concerning that issue. The more distinct the voter groups are on an issue, the better do the parties reflect divisions on that issue in the electorate.

In order to estimate the strength between stance on issues and party choice, we have calculated ETA squared for each issue. ETA is a coefficient comparable to Pearson's  $r$  but allows a nominal independent variable. ETA can be interpreted in a similar way to  $r$ ; thus ETA squared gives the explained variance in the dependent variable (issue)

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34) Thus we convert some questions from the order shown in Appendix A; the answers on the Keflavik base e.g. in Tables V.3 and V.4 are coded: 1=strongly disagree, 2=tend to disagree, 3=makes no difference, 4=tend to agree, 5=strongly agree. Questions converted like this in 1983 are: Keflavik base, NATO membership, inflation, equality for women, all votes equal weight, reduce agricultural production, reduce taxes, base payment, abortion, open primaries, and beer legalization. Converted scales in 1987 are: Keflavik base, NATO membership, equality for women, base payment, clientelistic politics, reduce taxes, and open primaries.

35) "No opinion" is included on the NATO-scale, which is coded thus: 1=leave NATO, 3=no opinion, 5=continue membership. "No answer" is excluded.

accounted for by the independent variable (party choice). If ETA squared is .50 (ETA=.71), 50% of the variance in attitudes can be explained by party choice. Such a figure should be considered very high in social science, especially in the study of attitudes. ETA squared of .10 (ETA=.32) indicates a rather weak relationship, but even an explained variance of 10% is often considered quite high in social science.<sup>36)</sup>

First we will examine the ranking order of the parties on the individual issue dimensions in Tables V.3 and V.4. It should be borne in mind that each issue dimension correlates positively to voters' own positions on the left-right scale. This means that the lower values on each scale tend to be "leftist" and the higher values "rightist". As we saw in Chapter IV the correlation of some of the issues to the left-right own position is weak, as was to be expected: some of the issues are not traditional left-right issues. It should also be borne in mind that sometimes the difference between individual parties on the issue scales is too small to be of any significance. Nevertheless it is of great interest to see to what extent the ranking of the parties' voter groups on the issue scales reflects their perceived left-right position.

By glancing at the tables we see immediately that on the whole the positions of the parties' voter groups on the issue dimensions tend to reflect the parties' left-right positions as perceived by the voters (see Chapter IV), even though there are also clear deviations from that ranking order on some issues.

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<sup>36)</sup> See e.g. S. Holmberg (1981), p. 236.



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**Table VI.3. Relationship between stand on issues and party choice in 1983 (means on a 1-5 scale and  $ETA^2$ ).**

Keflavik base $ETA^2=.44$	PA	WA	PP	SDA	SDP	IP
	1.60	2.25	3.20	3.38	3.45	4.16
NATO membership $ETA^2=.28$	PA	WA	SDA	PP	SDP	IP
	2.21	3.12	3.91	3.95	3.97	4.39
Inflation $ETA^2=.13$	PA	WA	SDP	SDA	PP	IP
	2.05	2.16	2.83	2.91	2.92	3.36
Equality for women $ETA^2=.12$	WA	PA	SDA	PP	SDP	IP
	1.75	2.20	2.42	2.73	2.76	2.90
All votes equal weight $ETA^2=.10$	PP	PA	WA	IP	SDP	SDA
	2.82	3.49	3.94	4.05	4.07	4.25
Reduce agricult. prod. $ETA^2=.10$	PP	PA	WA	IP	SDA	SDP
	2.44	2.83	3.24	3.50	3.63	3.78
Reduce taxes $ETA^2=.09$	PA	WA	PP	SDA	SDP	IP
	1.76	1.88	2.33	2.41	2.48	2.86
Regional support $ETA^2=.08$	PP	PA	SDP	WA	IP	SDA
	1.61	1.88	2.07	2.20	2.53	2.81
Base payment $ETA^2=.06$	WA	PA	SDA	IP	PP	SDP
	2.83	2.86	3.59	3.78	3.79	3.86
Corporatism $ETA^2=.05$	PA	WA	SDP	SDA	PP	IP
	1.66	1.70	2.03	2.12	2.12	2.31
Full employment $ETA^2=.05$	PA	WA	PP	SDP	SDA	IP
	2.72	3.04	3.30	3.38	3.47	3.57
Abortion $ETA^2=.04$	WA	PA	SDA	IP	SDP	PP
	3.17	3.32	3.37	3.63	3.68	3.79
Open primaries $ETA^2=.04$	PA	WA	SDP	IP	PP	SDA
	3.19	3.54	3.63	3.64	3.66	4.48
Beer legalization $ETA^2=.03$	PP	PA	SDP	IP	SDA	WA
	2.80	2.99	3.29	3.36	3.69	3.69
Power industry ownership $ETA^2=.03$	WA	PA	SDA	PP	SDP	IP
	1.72	1.72	1.92	1.98	2.05	2.35

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**Table VI.4. Relationship between stand on issues and party choice in 1987 (means on a 1-5 scale and  $ETA^2$ )**

Keflavik base $ETA^2=.40$	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
	1.55	2.08	3.12	3.16	3.67	3.96
NATO membership $ETA^2=.30$	PA	WA	PP	SDP	CiP	IP
	2.13	2.88	3.88	3.94	4.15	4.45
Nuclear-weapons-free zone $ETA^2=.09$	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
	1.16	1.34	1.50	1.61	1.86	2.10
Equality for women $ETA^2=.07$	WA	PA	SDP	CiP	PP	IP
	1.76	1.94	2.22	2.34	2.37	2.44
Regional support $ETA^2=.07$	PA	PP	WA	SDP	CiP	IP
	1.73	1.81	1.93	2.21	2.31	2.55
Private radio and TV $ETA^2=.06$	PA	PP	WA	SDP	CiP	IP
	2.19	2.52	2.58	2.60	2.76	2.83
Base payment $ETA^2=.06$	PA	WA	PP	IP	SDP	CiP
	2.62	3.18	3.50	3.55	3.69	4.22
Clientelistic politics $ETA^2=.06$	PA	WA	IP	SDP	PP	CiP
	2.23	2.51	2.65	2.70	2.85	3.55
Reduce taxes $ETA^2=.05$	WA	PA	PP	SDP	IP	CiP
	1.63	1.69	1.91	2.01	2.34	2.45
Unite pension funds $ETA^2=.04$	CiP	SDP	WA	PP	PA	IP
	1.64	1.69	1.75	1.88	1.90	2.28
Environment $ETA^2=.04$	WA	PA	PP	CiP	SDP	IP
	2.32	2.43	2.72	2.89	2.90	2.92
Equality of votes $ETA^2=.03$	PP	PA	WA	CiP	IP	SDP
	2.99	3.09	3.13	3.32	3.36	3.39
Corporatism $ETA^2=.02$	WA	PA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
	2.23	2.31	2.51	2.53	2.54	2.64
Open primaries $ETA^2=.01$	PA	IP	PP	WA	SDP	CiP
	3.02	3.14	3.23	3.24	3.35	3.76
Party system outdated $ETA^2=.01$	CiP	WA	SDP	PA	IP	PP
	2.30	2.38	2.58	2.59	2.69	2.75

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As we have 15 issues in each election we have a total of 30 issue dimensions in the two tables. Out of those 30 the PA is positioned furthest to the left on 15 issues. In both years the PA is furthest to the left on the 3 issues most strongly related to party choice: NATO and the Keflavik base

in both elections, inflation strategy in 1983, and a nuclear-weapons-free zone in 1987. PA voters come second from the left on 13 issues. Only on two issues did PA voters deviate further to the "right": in 1987 they were rather critical of the ideas of uniting the pension funds and that the party system was outdated. Both of those issues are weakly related to party choice.

The WA occupies the second from the left position on 13 of the 30 issues, including those most strongly related to party choice. On 8 issues the party's voters are furthest to the left, most clearly on the issue of women's rights in 1983 and 1987, abortion in 1983, and the environment in 1987. On 6 issues the WA was third from the left. On only three issues was the WA "right" of centre: most liberal on the legalization of beer in 1983, slightly more critical of regional support than the SDP in 1983, and the party's voters are shown to be a little more in favour of open primaries than PP voters in 1987, although the difference is clearly not significant.

On 16 out of 30 issues the SDP occupies one of the two middle positions, third or fourth place from the left. The party's voters are never in the position furthest to the left but come second from the left on the question of uniting the pension funds in 1987. On 10 issues the party is second to the right: on the Keflavik base and NATO in 1983 (for), women's rights in 1983 (gone too far), equal value of votes in 1983 (for), tax reduction at the expense of welfare in 1983 (for), abortion in 1983 (gone too far), power industry ownership in 1983 (against), base payment in 1987 (for), prioritizing the environment in 1987 (against), and

open primaries in 1987 (for). On most of these issues the SDP is only slightly to the right of the party in the fourth place from the left. Sometimes the difference is clearly insignificant. On three issues the SDP voters are furthest to the "right": they are most in favour of reducing the agricultural production in 1983, most in favour of base payment in 1983 (slightly more than the PP), and most likely to think that increase in equality of votes had not gone far enough in 1987 (just ahead of IP and CiP).

The PP occupies one of two centre positions on 15 issues out of 30. On five occasions the party is furthest to the "left": its voters are clearly most opposed to equal weight of votes and reduction of agricultural production in 1983, most in favour of regional support in 1983, most opposed to beer legalization in 1983, and most likely in 1987 to think that increase in equality of votes had gone too far. These positions clearly reflect the party's role as "the champion of the regions".

On two issues the PP is second from the "left". In 1987 PA voters are slightly more in favour of regional support than PP voters and, while PA voters in 1987 are clearly more opposed to the establishment of private radio and TV stations than PP voters, the latter are slightly more critical of that development than voters of the WA and SDP. The PP is second from the right on six issues, but on five of those six the difference between the PP and the party occupying the third place from the left is clearly not significant. On two issues the PP is furthest to the "right": most critical of abortion in 1983 (slightly more

than SDP), and least likely to agree that the party system is outdated (just ahead of IP).

The IP voters are furthest to the right on 17 out of 30 issues, including the issues strongest related to party choice, the four strongest in 1983, and the six strongest in 1987. On four issues the party is second from the right; SDA voters are even less in favour of regional support than IP voters in 1983; CiP voters are more in favour of tax cuts at the expense of the welfare system in 1987; SDP voters are more likely to think that increased equality of votes had not gone far enough in 1987; and PP voters were less likely to think the party system was outdated in 1987. The difference in the two last cases is, however, very small. In seven cases the IP voters are third from the right, but sometimes the difference between them and the party coming second is insignificant. It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that in 1983 IP voters were less keen on reducing the agricultural production than SDA and SDP voters and less in favour of beer legalization than the SDA and WA voters. On two occasions IP voters are "left" of centre. In 1987 only PA and WA voters are more opposed to clientelistic politics, and only PA voters are more critical of open primaries.

If we look at the five parties that contested both the 1983 and 1987 elections it is clear that the positions their voters took on different issues tended on the whole to reflect the ranking of the parties on the left-right continuum. PA voters are clearly furthest to the left and it is equally clear that WA voters are second from the left. The SDP and PP tend to occupy the two centre positions, and while PP voters clearly have a stronger tendency than SDP

voters to occupy the two positions furthest to the "left" on various issues, this is mainly on issues that follow an urban-rural cleavage rather than a conventional left-right division. IP voters are without doubt generally furthest to the right.

In 1983 we did not ask our respondents to rank the SDA on the left-right scale, but we would expect the party to occupy a centre position and exhibit a profile similar to the SDP concerning its voters' stands on issues. This is borne out in Table V.3. On 7 issues out of 15 SDP and SDA are side by side on the issue ranking and on 5 more issues voters of only one party come between the voters of the SDP and the SDA. SDA voters never occupy the two positions furthest to the left. On 9 out of 15 issues the SDA occupies one of the two centre positions, three times it is second to the right, and three times furthest to the right. The SDA voters tend to be "socially liberal", thinking like PA and WA voters that attempts to assure women equal position have not gone far enough, and express liberal views concerning abortion; like WA voters they also support beer legalization. Concerning the urban-rural cleavage they are "economically liberal", most opposed to regional support, in favour of reducing agricultural production and most strongly supporting equal weight of votes. Not surprisingly, SDA voters are also by far the strongest supporters of open primaries.

In 1987 our respondents clearly ranked the CiP second to right on the left-right continuum. This position is largely reflected in Table V.4. On 13 out of 15 issues CiP voters occupy the three places right of centre, three times they

are third from the right, six times second from the right (including the three issues most strongly connected to voting choice), and four times furthest to the right. Only in the last four instances is the CiP on the "right" of the IP: CiP voters are much more in favour of base payment, clientelistic politics, and open primaries than voters of other parties. On the fourth issue where the party is furthest to the right CiP voters are slightly more in favour of tax cuts at the expense of the welfare system than IP voters. This is somewhat surprising as the CiP platform emphasized the party's commitment to traditional "mild" conservatism. On two issues the CiP voters come furthest to the "left": they are most in favour of a united pension fund and most readily agree that the party system is outdated.

In general then, the positions the voters of different parties take on different issues tend to reflect the parties' rankings on the left-right continuum. This is important, as it indicates that the voters' left-right cognitive map of the party system is related to political values.

Another important question concerns the strength of the relationship between stances on issues and party choice. To what extent do the party alignments reflect differences of opinion in the electorate? The squared ETAs in Tables V.3 and V.4 help us to answer that question.

In 1983 two issues were strongly related to party choice: the Keflavik base and NATO membership. Party choice accounts for 44% and 28% of the variance in the distribution of attitudes towards those two issues respectively. In 1987 those same two issues also stood out, with 40% and 30%

explained variance. Those two issues reflect the foreign policy cleavage in Icelandic politics which has been very important in the post-war period. The positions of the parties regarding those issues have been relatively stable and clear for decades, which is more than can be said of the parties' stands on, for example, economic policy. While the importance of the foreign policy cleavage in election campaigns and coalition formations clearly declined in the late 1970s and 1980s, different opinions on those issues still are strongly reflected in the party alignments of the electorate. This does of course not mean that those issues were the most important ones when the electorate was making up its mind in 1983 and 1987, but only that the party system successfully reflects divisions in the electorate on the foreign policy dimension.

Other relationships between party choice and attitudes are much weaker. Only in two cases, both in 1983, does explained variance exceed 10% - on the issues of inflation strategy and women's rights. On five issues in 1983 and six issues in 1987, explained variance was 6-10%: on equal weight of votes, reduction of agricultural production, reduction of taxes, regional support and base payment in 1983 and a nuclear-weapons-free zone, women's rights, regional support, private radio and TV, base payment and clientelistic politics in 1987. The explained variance for the remaining issues was 5% or less; this was the case for 6 out of 15 issues in 1983 and for 7 out of 15 issues in 1987.

While most of the relationships appear rather weak, it should nevertheless be borne in mind that they are all statistically significant at the .001 level (F-test). And



even though 6% explained variance (which means that  $ETA=0.24$ ) seems rather low relationships of that magnitude are common in attitude research.

It is useful to compare our results with Swedish evidence while bearing in mind that issue voting in Sweden is extremely high. In the 1979 Swedish election survey party choice explained over 40% of the variance in attitudes on two out of 18 attitude questions. On two questions the explained variance was 21-40%, on six questions 11-20% and below 11% on 8 questions.<sup>37)</sup> In 1982 explained variance was over 40% on two questions out of 26, 21-40% on five questions, 11-20% on six questions and 10% or less on 13 questions.<sup>38)</sup> In 1985 explained variance was over 40% on two out of 25 questions, 21-30% on 7 questions, 11-20% on 9 questions and below 11% on 7 questions.<sup>39)</sup> The strongest relationships in the Swedish data were in all cases on workers' funds and also quite strong on some other issues closely related to the left-right scale such as nationalization, the market economy, socialist society, influence of big business, privatization of health care and the size of the public sector.

While the strongest relationships between party choice and stand on issues are not much weaker in the Icelandic than in the Swedish data, there is a great difference if we look at issues where 11-40% of the variance is explained. Many Swedish questions fall in that range but very few of the Icelandic ones. On the whole, issue voting seems stronger in Sweden than in Iceland.

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37) S. Holmberg (1981), pp. 238-240.

38) S. Holmberg (1984), p. 182.

39) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 129.

Of course, this could simply be a result of the question selection: that the Swedish researchers included issues which divide the electorate along party lines while we failed to do so. To some extent it is plausible that our selection of issues for the questionnaires was not the best possible. With hindsight one might say that we should have put in more questions directly related to the left-right cleavage, for instance on nationalization, socialist society and free market economy. Nevertheless, it is very unlikely that question selection can explain all the observed difference between the Icelandic and the Swedish data. The overall results are in accord with our hypothesis that, due to less ideological clarity and consistency among the Icelandic parties as compared to their Swedish counterparts, we should expect issue voting in general to be weaker in the Icelandic electorate.

We have seen that the issue positions taken by the voters of different parties tend to reflect the parties' left-right position. Our next step is to examine the distance between voters of the different parties on the issue dimensions. How far apart are the parties' voters on average on the issue dimensions? On what particular issues are they close and on what issues are they further apart? In order to answer those questions we compare two parties at a time, calculating the difference between their voters' means on the issue questions. In Tables V.5 and V.6 we thus have 15 pairs of parties for each election. For each pair we show the difference between the means presented in Tables V.3 and V.4 and also calculate the mean difference of all 15 issues for

each pair of parties. As the scales are coded from 1-5, the lowest conceivable difference is 0 and the highest 4.

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**Table V.5. Attitude differences 1983 between voters from different parties. Ranked from greatest to lowest difference (difference between means).**

<b>PA and WA voters</b>		<b>PA and SDP voters</b>	
NATO membership	0.91	Keflavik base	1.85
Beer legalization	0.70	NATO membership	1.76
Keflavik base	0.65	Base payment	1.00
Equality for women	0.45	Reduce agricult. prod.	0.95
All votes equal weight	0.45	Inflation	0.78
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.41	Reduce taxes	0.72
Open primaries	0.35	Full employment	0.66
Regional support	0.32	All votes equal weight	0.58
Full employment	0.32	Equality for women	0.56
Abortion	0.15	Open primaries	0.44
Reduce taxes	0.12	Corporatism	0.37
Inflation	0.11	Abortion	0.36
Corporatism	0.04	Power industry ownersh.	0.33
Base payment	0.03	Beer legalization	0.30
Power industry ownersh.	0.00	Regional support	0.19
Mean of 15 issues	0.33	Mean of 15 issues	0.72
<b>PA and PP voters</b>		<b>PA and SDA voters</b>	
NATO membership	1.74	Keflavik base	1.78
Keflavik base	1.60	NATO membership	1.70
Base payment	0.93	Open primaries	1.29
Inflation	0.87	Regional support	0.93
All votes equal weight	0.67	Inflation	0.86
Full employment	0.58	Reduce agricult. prod.	0.80
Reduce taxes	0.57	All votes equal weight	0.76
Equality for women	0.53	Full employment	0.75
Abortion	0.47	Base payment	0.73
Open primaries	0.47	Beer legalization	0.70
Corporatism	0.46	Reduce taxes	0.65
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.39	Corporatism	0.46
Regional support	0.27	Equality for women	0.22
Power industry ownersh.	0.26	Power industry ownersh.	0.20
Beer legalization	0.19	Abortion	0.05
Mean of 15 issues	0.67	Mean of 15 issues	0.79

continued...

**PA and IP voters**

Keflavik base	2.56
NATO membership	2.18
Inflation	1.31
Reduce taxes	1.10
Base payment	0.92
Full employment	0.85
Equality for women	0.70
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.67
Regional support	0.65
Corporatism	0.65
Power industry ownersh.	0.63
All votes equal weight	0.56
Open primaries	0.45
Beer legalization	0.37
Abortion	0.31
Mean of 15 issues	0.93

**WA and SDP voters**

Keflavik base	1.20
Base payment	1.03
Equality for women	1.01
NATO membership	0.85
Inflation	0.67
Reduce taxes	0.60
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.54
Abortion	0.51
Beer legalization	0.40
Full employment	0.34
Corporatism	0.33
Power industry ownersh.	0.33
Regional support	0.13
All votes equal weight	0.13
Open primaries	0.09
Mean of 15 issues	0.54

**WA and PP voters**

All votes equal weight	1.12
Equality for women	0.98
Base payment	0.96
Keflavik base	0.95
Beer legalization	0.89
NATO membership	0.83
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.80
Inflation	0.76
Abortion	0.62
Regional support	0.59
Reduce taxes	0.45
Corporatism	0.42
Full employment	0.26
Power industry ownersh.	0.26
Open primaries	0.12
Mean of 15 issues	0.67

**WA and SDA voters**

Keflavik base	1.13
Open primaries	0.94
NATO membership	0.79
Base payment	0.76
Inflation	0.75
Equality for women	0.67
Regional support	0.61
Reduce taxes	0.53
Full employment	0.43
Corporatism	0.42
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.39
All votes equal weight	0.31
Abortion	0.20
Power industry ownersh.	0.20
Beer legalization	0.00
Mean of 15 issues	0.54

*continued...*

**WA and IP voters**

Keflavik base	1.91
NATO membership	1.27
Inflation	1.20
Equality for women	1.15
Reduce taxes	0.98
Base payment	0.95
Power industry ownersh.	0.63
Corporatism	0.61
Full employment	0.53
Abortion	0.46
Regional support	0.33
Beer legalization	0.33
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.26
All votes equal weight	0.11
Open primaries	0.10
Mean of 15 issues	0.72

**SDP and PP voters**

Reduce agricult. prod.	1.34
All votes equal weight	1.25
Beer legalization	0.49
Regional support	0.46
Keflavik base	0.25
Reduce taxes	0.15
Abortion	0.11
Inflation	0.09
Corporatism	0.09
Full employment	0.08
Base payment	0.07
Power industry ownersh.	0.07
Equality for women	0.03
Open primaries	0.03
NATO membership	0.02
Mean of 15 issues	0.30

**SDP and SDA voters**

Open primaries	0.85
Regional support	0.74
Beer legalization	0.40
Equality for women	0.34
Abortion	0.31
Base payment	0.27
All votes equal weight	0.18
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.15
Power industry ownersh.	0.13
Full employment	0.09
Corporatism	0.09
Inflation	0.08
Keflavik base	0.07
Reduce taxes	0.07
NATO membership	0.06
Mean of 15 issues	0.26

**SDP and IP voters**

Keflavik base	0.71
Inflation	0.53
Regional support	0.46
NATO membership	0.42
Reduce taxes	0.38
Power industry ownersh.	0.30
Corporatism	0.28
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.28
Full employment	0.19
Equality for women	0.14
Base payment	0.08
Beer legalization	0.07
Abortion	0.05
All votes equal weight	0.02
Open primaries	0.01
Mean of 15 issues	0.26

*continued...*

**PP and SDA voters**

All votes equal weight	1.43
Regional support	1.20
Reduce agricult. prod.	1.19
Beer legalization	0.89
Open primaries	0.82
Abortion	0.42
Equality for women	0.31
Base payment	0.20
Keflavik base	0.18
Full employment	0.17
Reduce taxes	0.08
Power industry ownersh.	0.06
NATO membership	0.04
Inflation	0.01
Corporatism	0.00

Mean of 15 issues                      0.47

**PP and IP voters**

All votes equal weight	1.23
Reduce agricult. prod.	1.06
Keflavik base	0.96
Regional support	0.92
Beer legalization	0.56
Reduce taxes	0.53
Inflation	0.44
NATO membership	0.44
Power industry ownersh.	0.37
Full employment	0.27
Corporatism	0.19
Equality for women	0.17
Abortion	0.16
Open primaries	0.02
Base payment	0.01

Mean of 15 issues                      0.49

**SDA and IP voters**

Open primaries	0.84
Keflavik base	0.78
Equality for women	0.48
NATO membership	0.48
Inflation	0.45
Reduce taxes	0.45
Power industry ownersh.	0.43
Beer legalization	0.33
Regional support	0.28
Abortion	0.26
All votes equal weight	0.20
Base payment	0.19
Corporatism	0.19
Reduce agricult. prod.	0.13
Full employment	0.10

Mean of 15 issues                      0.37

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Table V.5 shows that in 1983 the PA was clearly closest to the WA when we look at the mean difference in attitudes (0.33). The parties were furthest apart on NATO membership (0.91), beer legislation (0.70) and the Keflavik base (0.65), while the difference between the parties was 0.45 or less on all other issues. Further apart from the PA were the PP (mean of 0.67), the SDP (0.72) and the SDA (0.79). In all cases the PA was furthest from those three parties on NATO membership and the Keflavik base (1.60-1.85). On the

question of reducing the agricultural production the SDP (0.95) and the SDA (0.80) were much further apart from the PA than was the case for the PP (0.39). The SDA was much further from the PA on regional support (0.93) than was the case for the SDP (0.19) and the PP (0.39). On average the IP is clearly furthest away from the PA (mean 0.93). PA and IP voters are furthest apart on the questions of the Keflavik base (2.56), NATO membership (2.18), inflation strategy (1.31) and tax cuts at the expense of the welfare system (1.10). On 12 out of 15 issues the difference between IP and PA is 0.56 or greater.

While the mean difference of the WA to the PA on its left was 0.33, the party's distance to the centre parties on its right was greater: 0.54 to the SDP and the SDA, 0.67 to the PP. IP voters were furthest apart from WA voters (0.72). The distance between those two parties is, however, clearly smaller than was the case for the IP and the PA (0.93).

The SDP is closer to the centre and right parties than to the parties on its left, the PA (0.72) and the WA (0.54). The party's average distance from the SDA and IP is 0.26 and 0.30 in the case of the PP. While the greatest differences between the SDP and the IP are on left-right issues, the Keflavik base (0.71) and inflation strategy (0.53), the issues that most divide PP voters from SDP voters are clearly reduction of agricultural production (1.34), equality of votes (1.25), beer legalization (0.49), and regional support (0.46), reflecting the urban-rural cleavage.

Nevertheless, the PP is closer to the SDP (0.30) on average than to any other party. As was the case for the

SDP, the PP is further away from the left parties, the PA and WA (0.67), than the SDA (0.47) and the IP (0.49). The distance of the PP and the SDP from the PA and the WA is rather similar but the SDP is closer to the SDA and the IP than is the case for the PP.

The SDA is closest to the SDP (0.26) and the IP (0.37). The party's distance from the PP is somewhat greater (0.47), especially as there are clear differences between the voters of the two parties on the urban-rural cleavage issues: equality of votes (1.43), regional support (1.20) and reduction of the agricultural production (1.19). The SDA's average distance from the WA is 0.54; the two new parties differ most on the Keflavik base (1.13), open primaries (0.94), NATO membership (0.79), base payment (0.76) and inflation strategy (0.75). The PA is furthest from the SDA (0.79). The two parties strongly disagree on the same issues that divide the WA and the SDA and also on the urban-rural cleavage issues: regional support (0.93), reduction of agricultural production (0.80) and equality of votes (0.76).

The IP is closest to the SDP (0.26), the SDA (0.37) and the PP (0.49). The reason for the party's greater distance from the PP than the SDP is largely the disagreement between IP and PP voters on equality of votes (1.23), reduction of agricultural production (1.06) and regional support (0.92). The differences between IP and SDP voters on those three urban-rural issues are considerably smaller. The distance of the IP from the left parties, the WA (0.72) and the PA (0.93), is much greater than the party's distance from the three centre parties.



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**Table V.6. Attitude differences 1987 between voters from different parties. Ranked from greatest to lowest difference (difference between means).**

<b>PA and WA voters</b>		<b>PA and SDP voters</b>	
NATO membership	0.75	NATO membership	1.81
Base payment	0.56	Keflavik base	1.57
Keflavik base	0.53	Base payment	1.07
Private radio and TV	0.39	Regional support	0.48
Clientelistic politics	0.28	Clientelistic politics	0.47
Open primaries	0.22	Environment	0.47
Party system outdated	0.21	Private radio and TV	0.41
Regional support	0.20	Nuclear free zone	0.34
Nuclear free zone	0.18	Open primaries	0.33
Equality for women	0.18	Reduce taxes	0.32
Unite pension funds	0.15	Equality of votes	0.30
Environment	0.11	Equality for women	0.28
Corporatism	0.08	Unite pension funds	0.21
Reduce taxes	0.06	Corporatism	0.20
Equality of votes	0.04	Party system outdated	0.01
Mean of 15 issues	0.26	Mean of 15 issues	0.55
<b>PA and PP voters</b>		<b>PA and CiP voters</b>	
Keflavik base	1.61	Keflavik base	2.12
NATO membership	1.75	NATO membership	2.02
Base payment	0.88	Base payment	1.60
Clientelistic politics	0.62	Clientelistic politics	1.32
Nuclear free zone	0.45	Reduce taxes	0.76
Equality for women	0.43	Open primaries	0.74
Private radio and TV	0.33	Nuclear free zone	0.70
Environment	0.29	Regional support	0.58
Reduce taxes	0.22	Private radio and TV	0.57
Corporatism	0.22	Environment	0.46
Open primaries	0.21	Equality for women	0.40
Party system outdated	0.16	Party system outdated	0.29
Equality of votes	0.10	Unite pension funds	0.26
Regional support	0.08	Equality of votes	0.23
Unite pension funds	0.02	Corporatism	0.23
Mean of 15 issues	0.49	Mean of 15 issues	0.82

continued...

**PA and IP voters**

Keflavik base	2.41
NATO membership	2.32
Nuclear free zone	0.94
Base payment	0.93
Regional support	0.82
Reduce taxes	0.65
Private radio and TV	0.64
Equality of women	0.50
Environment	0.49
Clientelistic politics	0.42
Unite pension funds	0.38
Corporatism	0.33
Equality of votes	0.27
Open primaries	0.12
Party system outdated	0.10
Mean of 15 issues	0.75

**WA and SDP voters**

Keflavik base	1.04
NATO membership	1.06
Environment	0.58
Base payment	0.51
Equality of women	0.46
Reduce taxes	0.38
Regional support	0.28
Corporatism	0.28
Equality of votes	0.26
Party system outdated	0.20
Clientelistic politics	0.19
Nuclear free zone	0.16
Open primaries	0.11
Unite pension funds	0.06
Private radio and TV	0.02
Mean of 15 issues	0.37

**WA and PP voters**

Keflavik base	1.08
NATO membership	1.00
Equality for women	0.61
Environment	0.40
Party system outdated	0.37
Clientelistic politics	0.34
Base payment	0.32
Corporatism	0.30
Reduce taxes	0.28
Nuclear free zone	0.27
Equality of votes	0.14
Unite pension funds	0.13
Regional support	0.12
Private radio and TV	0.06
Open primaries	0.01
Mean of 15 issues	0.36

**WA and CiP voters**

Keflavik base	1.59
NATO membership	1.27
Base payment	1.04
Clientelistic politics	1.04
Reduce taxes	0.82
Equality for women	0.58
Environment	0.57
Nuclear free zone	0.52
Open primaries	0.52
Regional support	0.38
Corporatism	0.31
Equality of votes	0.19
Private radio and TV	0.18
Unite pension funds	0.11
Party system outdated	0.08
Mean of 15 issues	0.60

*continued...*

**WA and IP voters**

Keflavik base	1.88
NATO membership	1.57
Nuclear free zone	0.76
Reduce taxes	0.71
Equality of women	0.68
Regional support	0.62
Environment	0.60
Unite pension funds	0.53
Corporatism	0.41
Base payment	0.37
Party system outdated	0.31
Private radio and TV	0.25
Equality of votes	0.23
Clientelistic politics	0.14
Open primaries	0.10

Mean of 15 issues 0.61

**SDP and PP voters**

Regional support	0.40
Equality of votes	0.40
Base payment	0.19
Unite pension funds	0.19
Environment	0.18
Party system outdated	0.17
Equality for women	0.15
Clientelistic politics	0.15
Open primaries	0.12
Nuclear free zone	0.11
Reduce taxes	0.10
Private radio and TV	0.08
NATO membership	0.06
Keflavik base	0.04
Corporatism	0.02

Mean of 15 issues 0.16

**SDP and CiP voters**

Clientelistic politics	0.85
Keflavik base	0.55
Base payment	0.53
Reduce taxes	0.44
Open primaries	0.41
Nuclear free zone	0.36
Party system outdated	0.28
NATO membership	0.21
Private radio and TV	0.16
Equality for women	0.12
Regional support	0.10
Equality of votes	0.07
Unite pension funds	0.05
Corporatism	0.03
Environment	0.01

Means of 15 issues 0.28

**SDP and IP voters**

Keflavik base	0.84
Nuclear free zone	0.60
Unite pension funds	0.59
NATO membership	0.51
Regional support	0.34
Reduce taxes	0.33
Private radio and TV	0.23
Equality for women	0.22
Open primaries	0.21
Base payment	0.14
Corporatism	0.13
Party system outdated	0.11
Clientelistic politics	0.05
Equality of votes	0.03
Environment	0.02

Means of 15 issues 0.29

*continued...*

**PP and CiP voters**

Base payment	0.72
Clientelistic politics	0.70
Reduce taxes	0.54
Open primaries	0.53
Keflavik base	0.51
Regional support	0.50
Party system outdated	0.45
Equality of votes	0.33
NATO membership	0.27
Nuclear free zone	0.25
Private radio and TV	0.24
Unite pension funds	0.24
Environment	0.17
Equality for women	0.03
Corporatism	0.01

Mean of 15 issues            0.37

**PP and IP voters**

Keflavik base	0.80
Regional support	0.74
NATO membership	0.57
Nuclear free zone	0.49
Reduce taxes	0.43
Unite pension funds	0.40
Equality of votes	0.37
Private radio and TV	0.31
Clientelistic politics	0.20
Environment	0.20
Corporatism	0.11
Open primaries	0.09
Equality for women	0.07
Party system outdated	0.06
Base payment	0.05

Mean of 15 issues            0.33

**CiP and IP voters**

Clientelistic politics	0.90
Base payment	0.67
Unite pension funds	0.64
Open primaries	0.62
Party system outdated	0.39
NATO membership	0.30
Keflavik base	0.29
Nuclear free zone	0.24
Regional support	0.24
Reduce taxes	0.11
Equality for women	0.10
Corporatism	0.10
Private radio and TV	0.07
Equality of votes	0.04
Environment	0.03

Mean of 15 issues            0.32

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In 1987 the average differences between the parties tend to be somewhat smaller, but the overall pattern remains largely the same. PA clearly remains much closer to the WA (0.26) than to the centre parties, the PP (0.49) and the SDP (0.55). The PA is much closer to the PP on regional support (0.08) than to the SDP (0.48); it is also closer to the PP on equality of votes (0.10) than to the SDP (0.30). The PA is on average furthest away from the IP (0.75) and the CiP (0.82). While the IP and the PA are furthest apart on the

issues most strongly related to party choice (the Keflavik base (2.41), NATO membership (2.32) and a nuclear-weapons-free zone (0.94)), the average distance between the PA and CiP is somewhat greater, largely because CiP voters and PA voters disagree to a greater extent on base payment (1.60) and clientelistic politics (1.32) than do IP and PA voters (0.93 and 0.42 respectively). The difference between IP and PA voters is much smaller on the questions of open primaries (0.12) and whether the party system is outdated (0.10) than is the case for the CiP and the PA (0.74 and 0.29 respectively). These issues, which move the CiP further than the IP from the PA on average, are not traditional left-right issues.

As in 1983 the WA is closest to the PA (0.26), closer than to its neighbours in the centre, the PP (0.36) and the SDP (0.37). The WA's distance from the CiP (0.60) and the IP (0.61) is greater still, reflecting the left-right spectrum.

Contrary to 1983 in 1987 the SDP is closer to the PP (0.16) than to the IP (0.29). As in 1983 the greatest differences between the SDP and the PP are along the urban-rural cleavage, on regional support and equality of votes (0.40). As in 1983 IP and SDP voters disagree most on foreign policy: the Keflavik base (0.84), a nuclear-weapons-free zone (0.60) and NATO membership (0.51). While in 1983 there was also considerable disagreement on inflation strategy (0.53), a question not asked in 1987, IP and SDP clearly disagreed on a new question in 1987 as SDP voters were much more in favour of uniting the pension funds than IP voters (0.59). The distance between the SDP and the CiP (0.28) was similar to the IP-SDP distance while, as in 1983,

the left parties, the WA (0.37) and PA (0.55), were clearly further away from the SDP than was the case for the parties of the centre and the right.

The PP is closest to the SDP (0.16) in 1987 as in 1983. PA voters were still furthest away from PP voters (0.49), but while the PA-PP and WA-PP distances were the same in 1983 in 1987 the distance of the PP towards the WA on the left (0.36) was similar to the distance of PP voters to the parties on their right, the CiP (0.37) and the IP (0.33).

The CiP was closest to the IP on its right (0.32) and the centre parties on its left, the SDP (0.28) and the PP (0.37). The party's voters were much further away from the left parties, the WA (0.60) and the PA (0.82).

In 1987 the IP was closest to the SDP (0.29), the CiP (0.32) and the PP (0.33), but IP voters' disagreements with the voters of those parties tended to be on different fronts. While IP voters clearly disagreed with SDP and PP voters on foreign policy, the Keflavik base, a nuclear-weapons-free zone, and NATO membership (0.49-0.84), this was not the case for IP and CiP voters (0.24-0.30). SDP and IP voters differed on the question of pension funds (0.59), while PP and IP voters differed on regional support (0.74). IP and CiP voters differed most on clientelistic politics (0.90), base payment (0.67), uniting pension funds (0.64) and open primaries (0.62). Thus, the disagreement between those two parties' voters was mainly on issues not associated with the traditional left-right cleavage. As in 1983 the WA voters (0.61) and PA voters (0.75) were much further away from the IP, reflecting their positions on the left-right continuum.

In general, the issue differences between the parties tend to reflect their left-right positions. This is especially clear for the left parties, the PA and the WA on the one hand and the IP on the other. The centre parties are in general rather close on the issue dimensions; their distances from the polar parties are on the other hand different on unlike issue dimensions.

Until now we have been examining individual issue questions and how the parties' voters relate to them. Our next step is to examine if voters' stands on individual issues are structured along a few cleavage lines. We would expect some issues to be highly intercorrelated. Voters who support the Keflavik base are e.g. likely to support continued NATO membership. Factor analysis can help us to analyse the overall structure of the attitudes in our data. On the basis of the correlations between individual attitudes factor analysis extracts factors which are said to represent underlying, theoretical dimensions not directly measurable themselves. The factors are therefore general attitude dimensions or ideological dimensions. The factor loadings shown in Tables V.7 and V.8 indicate how strongly each issue variable is correlated to each factor. As a rule of thumb we consider factor loadings over 0.40 as high.

The number of factors extracted is not simply a result of the intercorrelations between the issue variables; the researcher can influence the number, e.g. in order to obtain factors that can be interpreted in a meaningful way. In Table V.7 we represent a four-factor solution from the 15

1983 issues.<sup>40)</sup> The four factors can account for 46.3% of the variance of the attitudes and the first factor, left-right, is clearly by far the strongest, explaining 18% of the total variance. In Table V.8 we represent a four-factor solution for the 1987 issues.<sup>41)</sup> The four factors can explain 42.8% of the total variance in the 15 issue questions; as in 1983 the left-right factor is by far the strongest, explaining 16.4% of the total variance. Those results echo the findings of the Norwegian and Swedish election studies.<sup>42)</sup>

By far the strongest factor both in 1983 and 1987 is Factor 1 which clearly represents the left-right dimension in Icelandic politics. In 1983 voters on the right tended to support the Keflavik base (factor loading .72) and continued membership of NATO (.71), support tough inflation strategy (.60), think that attempts to assure women equal position with men had gone too far (.50), and support tax reductions at the expense of the welfare system (.49).

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40) This solution was obtained by using the default criteria in the SPSSPC.

41) We have chosen the four-factor solution here. By using the default criteria SPSSPC extracted five factors explaining 49.9% of the variance.

42) In Norway in 1977 a five-factor solution explained about a third of the total variance; the left-right dimension accounted for almost half of the explained variance (H. Valen (1981), pp. 246-249). The left-right dimension also accounted for about half of the explained variance in a five-factor solution in 1981 (H. Valen and B.O. Aardal (1983), pp. 164-165) and in a four-factor solution in 1985, where the left-right factor explained almost 16% of the total variance (B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), pp. 60-61). In Sweden in 1979 the left-right dimension explained 18% of the total variance, while all four factors accounted for 46% (S. Holmberg (1981), p. 262).



**Table V.7. Dimensions of political attitudes among voters 1983. Factor analysis of answers to 15 issue questions (varimax rotation).**

	<b>Factor</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<i>Left-Right</i>	<i>Old-New</i>	<i>Populism</i>	<i>Moral</i>
Keflavik base	.72	.21	.11	-.05
NATO membership	.71	.14	.02	-.06
Inflation	.60	-.03	-.05	-.10
Equality for women	.50	-.08	.01	.05
Reduce taxes	.49	.27	-.03	.04
Abortion	.40	-.17	.03	.54
Corporatism	-.35	.08	.34	.43
Base payment	.34	-.10	.64	.27
Power industry ownership	-.30	-.01	.47	.33
Full employment	-.28	.07	.04	.59
Beer legalization	-.16	.25	.17	-.58
Regional support	-.13	-.67	.27	.17
Reduce agricult.prod.	.06	.66	.05	-.06
All votes equal weight	.05	.70	.21	.04
Open primaries	.03	.10	.72	.00
Eigenvalue	2.70	1.61	1.50	1.13
Explained percentage of total variance	18.0	10.8	10.0	7.5
				=46.3%

**Table V.8. Dimensions of political attitudes among voters 1987. Factor analysis of answers to 15 issue questions (varimax rotation, four factors selected).**

	<b>Factor</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<i>Left-Right</i>	<i>Populism</i>	<i>Old-new</i>	<i>Green</i>
Keflavik base	.63	.26	-.26	-.29
Nuclear-weapons-free zone	-.61	.08	.14	.03
NATO membership	.56	.18	-.23	-.31
Equality for women	.52	.16	.21	-.09
Unite pension funds	-.47	.20	-.09	-.32
Reduce taxes	.45	.15	-.21	.33
Corporatism	-.34	.34	-.02	.19
Regional support	-.19	.20	.60	.14
Environment	-.16	-.09	.12	.61
Clientelistic politics	.16	.62	.18	.01
Base payment	.11	.72	.00	-.14
Open primaries	-.04	.55	-.08	.13
Party system outdated	-.03	.31	-.07	.57
Equality of votes	-.02	.08	.66	-.22
Private radio and TV	-.01	-.22	.62	.18
Eigenvalue	2.45	1.63	1.22	1.11
Explained percentage of total variance	16.4	10.9	8.2	7.4
				=42.8%

In 1987 voters on the right tended to support the Keflavik base (.63), oppose a nuclear-weapons-free zone (-.61), support NATO membership (.56), think that attempts to further women's rights had gone too far (.52), oppose uniting the pension funds and support the reduction of taxes at the expense of the welfare system (.45). Four of the variables strongly correlated with the left-right factor in 1983 were also included among our issue questions in 1987; all of them also have high factor loadings in 1987. Several more variables had considerable factor loadings on the left-right factor even though they do not meet our rule of thumb criteria. Right wingers in 1983 tended to think that abortion liberalization had gone too far (.40), oppose corporatism (-.35), support base payment (.34), oppose the policy that foreign investment in power intensive plants should not exceed 50 per cent (-.30), and oppose government prioritization of full employment even though companies are inefficient (-.28). In 1987 those on the right also tended to oppose corporatism (-.34), while the factor loading for base payment (.11) was much lower than in 1983.

Our second strongest factor in 1983, explaining 10.8% of the total variance, is clearly related to the urban-rural cleavage. We have chosen to call it the old-new economy dimension. Those in favour of the new economy tend to agree that all votes should have equal weight (.70), oppose regional support (-.67) and support the reduction of agricultural production (.66).

This factor is the third strongest in 1987, explaining 8.2% of the total variance. Those in favour of the old economy tend to think that the new rules of more equal

weight of votes had gone too far (.66), think that the steps to make it possible for private companies to operate radio and TV stations had gone too far (.62), and favour regional support (.60).

We have chosen to call the third strongest factor in 1983 populism. This factor explains 10% of the total variance. The "populists" tend to favour open primaries (.72), favour base payment (.64) and support the view that foreign investment in power intensive industry must not exceed 50 per cent (.47). In 1987 populism is the second strongest factor, explaining 10.9% of the total variance. The "populists" in 1987 tend to support base payment (.72), clientelistic politics (.62) and open primaries (.55). It should be noted that the question on foreign investment was only asked in 1983 and the question on clientelistic politics was only asked in 1987.

Due to different questions in 1983 and 1987 the fourth factor is not the same in both elections. The fourth factor in 1983, explaining 7.5% of the total variance, seems to be a moral one. The "moralists" tend to agree that the government should prioritize full employment even though companies are inefficient (.59), oppose beer legalization (-.58), think that abortion liberalization has gone too far (.54) and support corporatism (.43).

The fourth factor in 1987, explaining 7.4% of the total variance, we have somewhat tentatively chosen to call the green factor. It has only two strong factor loadings: the "greens" tend to think that in the next years action on environmental issues should be prioritized over attempts to

increase economic growth (.61) and agree that the party system is outdated (.57).

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**Table V.9. Issue voting: Issue indices and party choice in 1983 and 1987. Parties' deviations from the mean.**

**1983:**

**Left-right index (Mean=7.99) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.42**

(Keflavik base+ NATO membership+ Inflation)	PA	WA	PP	SDA	SDP	IP
	4.10	2.43	-0.06	-0.13	-0.22	-1.81
N=	(135)	(53)	(136)	(67)	(107)	(356)

**Old-new economy index (Mean=8.79) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.16**

(All votes equal weight+ Regional support+ Reduce agricult.prod.)	PP	PA	WA	SDP	IP	SDA
	2.26	1.01	-0.11	-0.60	-0.79	-1.40

**Populism index (Mean=6.93) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.02**

(Open primaries+ Base payment+ Power industry ownership)	PA	WA	IP	PP	SDP	SDA
	0.69	0.46	0.05	-0.27	-0.35	-0.90

**Morality index (Mean=9.04) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.04**

(Full employment+ Beer legalization+ Abortion)	PP	PA	SDP	IP	WA	SDA
	-0.65	-0.62	-0.01	0.27	0.51	0.75

**1987:**

**Left-right index (Mean=9.36) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.41**

(Keflavik base+ Nuclear-weapons-free zone+ NATO membership)	PA	WA	SDP	PP	CiP	IP
	3.67	2.22	-0.15	-0.19	-1.22	-2.04
(202)	(192)	(241)	(262)	(110)	(462)	

**Populism index (Mean=8.67) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.07**

(Base payment+ Clientelistic politics+ Open primaries)	PA	WA	IP	PP	SDP	CiP
	1.42	0.42	0.01	-0.22	-0.37	-2.02

**Old-new economy index (Mean=8.01) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.10**

(Equality of votes+ Private radio and TV+ Regional support)	PA	PP	WA	SDP	CiP	IP
	-0.93	-0.56	-0.34	0.19	0.33	0.69

**Green index (Mean=5.39) ETA<sup>2</sup>=.03**

(Environment+ Party system outdated)	WA	PA	CiP	SDP	PP	IP
	-0.59	-0.26	-0.17	0.12	0.15	0.25

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 The attitude indices are additive. Answers have been coded 1-5 (also for NATO), values on variables negatively correlated to the factors have been inverted. "No answer" is included, coded 3. The table includes only those who give party voted for. Ns for the parties are the same for all indices in each election.  
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We have seen that the voters' attitudes on the issues we put to them in 1983 and 1987 are clearly structured along a few general dimensions which can explain almost half of the total variance. Our final step in this chapter is to examine whether those general attitude dimensions are related to party choice. We do this by calculating additive indices for each of the factors. To construct each index we simply add the values of the three variables most strongly correlated to the relevant factor, after having inverted the values on variables showing a negative factor loading. For the green index we only use two variables. Thus, each index can take values from 3-15 (the Green Index from 2-10).

Both in 1983 and 1987 the left-right index is by far the most strongly related to party choice. In 1983 party choice can explain 42% of the variance in left-right attitudes and in 1987 41%. The ranking of the parties on the left-right index corresponds well to the voters' perceptions of the parties' positions on the left-right scale as discussed in Chapter IV. PA voters are clearly furthest to the left on this attitude index; they deviate 4.1 points from the mean. WA voters are equally clearly second from the left (2.43). Close to the centre are the PP (-0.06), the SDA (-0.13) and the SDP (-0.22). The attitudes of IP voters are much further to the right (-1.81). The pattern is largely repeated in 1987. The PA (3.67) and the WA (2.22) are much further to the left than the centre parties, the SDP (-0.15) and the PP (-0.19). The CiP voters (-1.22) are clearly further to the right than the voters of the centre parties, while IP voters come by far furthest to the right (-2.04). General left-right attitudes thus not only structure issues to a greater

extent than other dimensions, they are also strongly related to party choice and the left-right attitudes of the voters of different parties correspond to the positions voters give the parties when asked to rank them on an abstract left-right scale. While this does not by itself show that issues do influence voting, it at least shows a great deal of political sophistication in the Icelandic electorate.

The old-new economy index is also clearly related to party choice even though the relationship is much weaker than for the left-right dimension. Party choice can explain 16% of the distribution on this index in 1983 and 10% in 1987. The ranking of the parties differs from the left-right index. In 1983 the PP is most in favour of the "old economy" (2.26), followed by the PA (1.01). In 1987 those parties change places: the PA is most opposed to the "new economy" (-0.93), followed by the PP (-0.56). The reason for this is partly that PA voters are more opposed to private radio and TV stations in 1987 than are PP voters but also that PA voters have moved much closer to PP voters on the question of equality of votes than was the case in 1983. PA voters are also slightly more in favour of regional support than PP voters in 1987, while the reverse was true in 1983.

WA voters come third in support for the old economy both in 1983 (-0.11) and 1987 (-0.34), clearly less supportive than PP and PA voters but more supportive than voters of other parties. In 1983 both the SDP (-0.60) and the IP voters (-0.79) are much more opposed to the "old economy", while the strongest opposition clearly comes from the SDA (-1.40). In 1987 SDP (0.19) and CiP (0.33) support for the "new economy" is considerably less than is the case for IP

voters (0.69). The reason for a greater difference between the IP and the SDP on this dimension in 1987 is that while in 1983 SDP voters were more keen on reducing the agricultural production than IP voters (a variable not included in 1987), in 1987 IP voters were more supportive of private radio and TV stations than SDP voters (a variable not included in 1983). The most important contrast between the old-new economy index and the left-right index is that on the former the PP and the PA are closest together while the centre parties, the PP and the SDP, are far apart.

The populism index is more weakly related to party choice, which can explain only 2% of its distribution in 1983 as compared to 7% in 1987. While in both years PA voters (0.69 and 1.42) and WA voters (0.46 and 0.42) show the strongest anti-populist attitudes, they are followed by IP voters (0.05 and 0.01), PP voters (-0.27 and -0.22) and SDP voters (-0.35 and -0.37). Populism is by far the strongest among SDA voters in 1983 (-0.90) and especially CiP voters in 1987 (-2.02), a result that is hardly surprising.

The two remaining indices are weakly related to party choice, which can explain 4% of the variance on the morality index in 1983 and 3% of the green index variance in 1987. It should nevertheless be noted that the PP and the PA voters are clearly most conservative on the morality dimension in 1983, while WA and SDA voters are most liberal. WA voters are, as expected, most in favour of the green issues in 1987, followed by PA voters.

Let us finally consider what the relationships between left-right attitudes and party choice tell us about the strength of issue voting when compared to Norway and Sweden.

In Norway the left-right dimension was not only by far the strongest factor in a factor analysis for the elections of 1969, 1977, 1981 and 1981,<sup>43)</sup> it is also strongly related to party choice. Using the factor scores from the left-right factor as a dependent variable and party choice as an independent variable,  $ETA^2$  was 0.52 in 1981 and 0.47 in 1985.<sup>44)</sup> While not directly comparable to our left-right index, this clearly indicates a very high level of issue voting along the left-right dimension. The correlation between factor scores from the left-right factor and party choice in the Icelandic data was weaker:  $ETA^2$  was 0.42 in 1983 and 0.33 in 1987.<sup>45)</sup>

Holmberg and Gilljam have constructed left-right indices for Swedish elections from 1956-1985. Those indices are additive and, like our indices, based on the three issue questions in each election survey that were most strongly related to the left-right factor in a factor analysis. Those indicators of the strength of issue voting in Sweden (shown in Table V.10) should therefore be directly comparable to our results.

The figures in Table V.10 show - like many other indicators - that issue voting has sharply increased in Sweden in the last three decades. The Icelandic figures for issue voting, measured as the correlation between the left-

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43) Aardal, B. and H. Valen (1989), p. 63.

44) *Idid.*, p. 65.

45) In those calculations we have included "no answer", coded as 3.



right index and party choice ( $ETA^2=0.42$  for 1983 and 0.41 for 1987), are of similar strength as the Swedish figures from 1973-1976. The Icelandic relationship 1983-1987 is considerably stronger than the Swedish one in the 1950s and the 1960s but weaker than in Sweden 1979-1985.

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**Table V.10. Issue voting in Sweden 1956-1985. Explained variance on a left-right index ( $ETA^2$ )**

<i>Election</i>	<i>ETA<sup>2</sup></i>
1956	.23
1960	.29
1964	.23
1968	.35
1970	.33
1973	.40
1976	.39
1979	.55
1982	.58
1985	.52

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 The figures in the table are from S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 292.  
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Our overall conclusion is that, while issue voting can be considered relatively high in Iceland, it seems to be weaker than is the case in Norway and Sweden. The most probable reason for this seems to be that the alternatives facing Icelandic voters in elections are not as clear nor as consistent as is the case in Norway and Sweden.

## **Chapter VI: Social background**

Emphasis on social background as an explanatory factor for voting behaviour can be traced to general sociological theory. Two of the great nineteenth century social thinkers, Marx and Weber, both gave weight to the impact of social structures on human behaviour and consciousness. Marx's famous dictum - that it is not social consciousness that conditions social being but social being that determines consciousness - has perhaps sometimes been interpreted, both by Marxists and non-Marxists, rather too narrowly as being a simple form of economic determinism. Nevertheless, Weber was clearly closer to the mark in his emphasis that economic structures were not the only ones that mattered - and that social structure was but one of many factors that had a part to play.

Much of sociological theory in this century has also stressed the impact of social structures. It may be overstating the case to say that Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism is a form of cultural determinism, but the heavy emphasis in many sociological studies on the impact of socialization easily gives rise to a model of man as largely the captive of his environment or social system, be that societal or based on a smaller community or subculture of class, religious denomination, etc. In one of the first American voter studies, *The People's Choice* (1944), Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet argue, for instance, that

There is a familiar adage in American folklore to the effect that a person is only what he thinks he is, an adage which reflects the typically American notion of unlimited opportunity, the tendency toward self-betterment, etc. Now we find that the reverse of the adage is true: *a person thinks,*

*politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference.<sup>1)</sup>*

Different sociological theories of voting need not concern us greatly here. Empirical evidence has clearly shown that the relationship between social structures and voting differs greatly both in time and space. Even in the 19th century, when Disraeli greatly extended the franchise to the working classes, it became clear that this was not the end for the Conservative Party - as some of his colleagues had feared. Yet in few countries has class been as important an explanatory factor for voting as in Britain.

In this chapter we will examine several social-structural characteristics of Icelandic voters and their relationship to voting and electoral volatility. First we look at gender, age and education, then class, occupation, public or private sector and income, and finally we analyse the impact of parental influences.

### **VI.1 Sex and age**

Sex and age have long been known to be relevant to some aspects of political behaviour. Even though empirical evidence has contradicted some long believed simple "truths" - that people become more conservative with age or that women are inherently more conservative than men - those variables still deserve to be taken into account. Their impact seems to vary with time and space, just as other background variables do. Their impact on some types of political behaviour can also be greater than on others. We have, therefore, to be careful to make clear whether we are

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1) P.F. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson and H. Gaudet (1968), p. 27. Emphasis added.

talking about voting patterns, strength of partisanship, attitudes and ideology, turnout, etc.

In discussing voting Robertson points out that there is

no reason why age and sex should not be relevant to a person's voting decision, in the same way, based on self-interest and cultural perspective, that class is relevant. As our political parties are not, however, organized expressly in terms of age group interest or sexual ideology, any gender/age pattern ought to be flexible, and relatively easily alterable between elections.<sup>2)</sup>

In view of the influence of the women's movement and the increasing number of old-age pensioners in many Western democracies, these variables may indeed become more important. Even though political parties are not based on cleavages along these lines their policies may favour such groups differently - or be perceived to do so. In the Icelandic context we also have a party based on gender, the Women's Alliance.

The impact of age on voting patterns can both be a life-cycle effect, where we treat "the correlation between age and conservatism as tantamount to that between age and arthritis",<sup>3)</sup> and a generational effect, described thus by Butler and Stokes:

We shall argue that there are, in fact, common aspects to the way in which each of these political generations absorbed its political ideas. Indeed, the very concept of a 'political generation' - of there being a common pattern in the behaviour of those entering the electorate in the same period - implies that the young show a common susceptibility to political ideas during their years of growing awareness.<sup>4)</sup>

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2) D. Robertson (1984), pp. 37-39.

3) D. Robertson (1984), p. 37.

4) D. Butler and D. Stokes (1974), p. 48.

Butler and Stokes clearly favour the generational explanation of increasing vote for the Conservatives with age in Britain: "We must ask not how old the elector is but when it was that he was young".<sup>5)</sup> Robertson, showing that older voters gave more support to the Conservatives both in 1974 and 1979,<sup>6)</sup> concludes that "whilst there cannot be a final decision between the generational and the ageing model, the former seems more plausible".<sup>7)</sup>

Evidence from other countries shows that the impact of age on voting patterns differs. In Denmark there was a clear tendency for the young to support the socialist left (the parties on the left of the Social Democrats) in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1971-79 17-31% of the young voted for the socialist left while 8-12% of older voters did so. In 1981-84 36-37% of the young voted for the socialist left as compared to 16-17% of the older.<sup>8)</sup>

In Norway in the 1957-85 period the impact of age on voting patterns was in general not strong, although some interesting patterns nevertheless emerge.<sup>9)</sup> In 1957 Labour was the party of young voters; support for the party clearly decreased with age. In 1965 and 1969 the party had no clear age profile but in all elections since 1973 the party has had more support among older voters. In 1985 32-33% of those under 40 voted for the party, while 44-46% of those over 50 did so. The support for Labour in the youngest age group

5) D. Butler and D. Stokes (1974), p. 62.

6) D. Robertson (1984), see Table p. 38.

7) D. Robertson (1984), p. 37.

8) P. Svensson (1984), p. 238. The young are those 24 years and younger. In 1971-79 there were four parliamentary elections in Denmark and two in 1981-84.

9) See H. Valen (1981), Table 2.3, vote by age 1957-79 (p. 28).

went down from 64% in 1957 to 32% in 1985.<sup>10)</sup> The fortunes of the Conservatives (*Hoyre*) were quite the reverse. The party had no clear age profile until the late 1970s. In 1985 33-34% of those under 50 voted Conservative as compared to 21-26% of older voters. The centre parties tended to have somewhat more support among older voters in the whole period, especially the Christian People's Party. The left socialists always obtained around twice as much support (often ca. 8%) among the youngest voters than among older voters (3-5%). The other flank party, the extreme right Progressives, has had a similar profile in recent elections.

In Sweden the relationship between age and voting has been weak in the 1948-1985 period, or as Holmberg puts it:

Swedish voters have for the whole post-war period largely voted the same way, regardless of age. The small differences that can be observed in the party choice of different age groups are nevertheless interesting.<sup>11)</sup>

Thus the Communists, who had been somewhat stronger among older voters in the cold war years, have had more support among younger voters in all elections since 1970, as had been the case for the party in 1948. The Social Democrats have changed from being stronger among the young in the 1950s to being stronger among the older in 1979 and 1982. The Centre Party has always been stronger among the old except in the party's great upswing in the early 1970s when it was stronger among the young. The Conservatives (*Moderaterna*) were stronger among the old until 1976; in

10) See B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), Table 8.6, vote by age 1985 (p. 165).

11) S. Holmberg (1984), p. 75. (My translation). Table 4.4 (p. 76) gives vote by age 1982 and Table 4.6 (p. 77) gives a summary of direction and strength of relationship between vote and age 1948-82. S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987) give vote by age 1985 (Table 9.4, p. 176).

1979 and 1982 the party has been strongest among the middle-aged and in 1985 it had no age profile.

Those examples show that there is no simple relationship between age and voting patterns for parties. There has been a great deal of controversy concerning the impact of life-cycle effects vs. generational effects. Methodologically it is difficult to get any clear cut answers, as both processes can be going on at the same time in opposite directions. In addition, we can have so-called period effects, i.e. some factors influencing all age groups. The generational theory presupposes that each generation is moulded in a certain way when its members are relatively young and more or less stays that way for the rest of its life. Such a theory cannot explain change in the older cohorts such as increased support for the Conservatives in Norway in the late 1970s. A period effect alone cannot explain why factors changing a party's fortune do not affect all age groups in the same way: the drastic decline in support for the Norwegian Labour Party in the younger age groups seems to be generational. A political generation and party identification can explain why the party has not suffered in the same way in older cohorts.<sup>12)</sup> This example also goes contrary to the life-cycle theory, which on the other hand gets limited support from the fact that the Swedish Communists have been a youth party for twenty years without growing: a great deal of their young voters are obviously leaving them as they get older.

Table VI.1.1 shows that the age profiles for all the old Icelandic parties are weak. The clearest profile is that of

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<sup>12)</sup> See B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), p. 169.

the PP, which receives more votes from older people both in 1983 and 1987. This may be partly a generational effect. The mean support for the PP in Althingi elections was 26.7% in 1931-37 and 25.9% 1942-1967,<sup>13)</sup> while its mean for 1971-1987 is down to 21.7%. Since 1974 the party has polled under 20% in three elections out of four.

**Table VI.1.1. Party voted for in 1983 and 1987 by age. Total samples. Percentages.**

	18-23*	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-80**
SDP 1983	8	17	13	13	16	7
1987	13	18	12	23	17	12
PP 1983	14	9	15	19	17	22
1987	15	13	17	16	22	19
IP 1983	41	35	40	45	44	46
1987	33	31	27	25	30	37
PA 1983	14	20	14	13	15	20
1987	15	12	15	11	11	14
WA 1983	8	11	8	4	4	2
1987	13	16	17	11	8	8
SDA 1983	16	9	10	7	4	3
CiP 1987	5	5	8	9	10	7
Others 1987	7	5	4	5	3	2
Total 1983	101	101	100	101	100	100
N=	(80)	(138)	(224)	(148)	(115)	(149)
Total 1987	101	100	100	100	101	99
N=	(221)	(239)	(374)	(281)	(162)	(253)

\* 20-23 in 1983.

\*\* 60-83 in 1983.

The SDP, PA and IP do not have clear age profiles. It may be noted, however, that the SDP was weak among the youngest and the oldest in both elections, especially in 1983. The weak showing of the SDP in 1983 among first time voters may

13) Excluding the 1956 election.



partly be a result of the SDA's success in that age group. In 1983 the IP was clearly weaker among those under forty than older voters, while in 1987 the youngest and oldest age groups showed strongest support for the party. The IP lost only 4% between 1983 and 1987 among the 24-29 year olds, while its losses in other age groups were 8-14%.

The three new parliamentary parties had clearer age profiles. The WA was clearly stronger among younger voters than older ones both in 1983 and 1987, though it should be noted that in neither election was its strongest support among first time voters. The party gained in all age groups between 1983 and 1987 (4-9%), relatively more among the older cohorts, resulting in a somewhat weaker age profile for the party in 1987.

The SDA in 1983 was clearly a party of the young. The party obtained 16% among first time voters, 7-10% among 24-49 year olds and only 3-4% among voters over fifty. The reverse was true of the CiP in 1987: the party only got 5% of the poll among voters under thirty, while its support in other age groups was 7-10%.

The difference between the SDA and the CiP is easily understandable. While both were breakaway parties with popular leaders - the SDA from the SDP under Vilmundur Gylfason, the CiP from the IP under Albert Gudmundsson - the leadership, candidates and policies of the two parties were quite different. While both party leaders may be characterized somewhat loosely as populists, Gylfason was a young, radical anti-establishment figure, the father of controversial investigative journalism in Iceland and the main architect of the enormous SDP victory in 1978, and most

of the candidates were young and new to politics. Gudmundsson, on the other hand, was an old-fashioned clientelistic veteran of the IP, never strong on ideology, and some of his candidates were IP veterans who had been unsuccessful in IP primaries. The success of the CiP on the other hand shows that a new party need not necessarily appeal to young voters; older voters are obviously also prepared to leave their old ship.

In general, however, young voters tend to be more volatile than older ones. As we saw in Chapter III, strength of partisanship in Iceland follows the general pattern, as it clearly increases with age. Table VI.1.2 shows that in Iceland age is also clearly related to actual vote switching and the young also tend to make their decision on what party to vote for closer to polling day than older voters. Turnout is also lower among the youngest voters.

A number of studies have shown that the young are more prone to switch parties between elections than older voters. In Denmark 17-25% of the total electorate switched parties between elections in the 1975-1984 period. The number of switchers in the youngest age group was on the other hand 29-34% in four elections and as high as 51% in one.<sup>14)</sup> In Sweden 33% of 22-30 year olds changed parties 1979-82, while 23% of 31-40 year olds, 16% of 41-50 year olds and only 11-13% of those over 50 did so.<sup>15)</sup> Similar trends have been observed in Norway and Britain.<sup>16)</sup>

14) P. Svensson (1984), p. 242.

15) S. Holmberg (1984), Table 2.10, p. 35.

16) See e.g. H. Valen (1981), p. 27, and B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe (1983), pp. 91-93.

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**Table VI.1.2. Time of voting decision, party switching and non-voting 1983 and 1987 by age. Total samples. Percentages.**

		18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-80	All
<b>VOTING DECISION:</b>								
Did not consider	1983	35	37	36	55	68	78	51
other party	1987	24	27	33	38	53	65	39
More than a month before	1983	13	10	12	12	8	11	11
	1987	7	9	7	9	13	10	9
8-30 days before	1983	9	8	7	7	5	4	7
	1987	16	18	16	13	11	10	14
One week before	1983	10	13	9	9	9	4	9
	1987	12	11	7	8	4	3	8
During the last week	1983	10	18	15	7	4	1	10
	1987	16	12	14	15	9	6	12
On polling day	1983	22	13	21	10	6	3	13
	1987	26	23	24	17	10	6	18
Total	1983	99	99	100	100	100	101	101
N=		(77)	(137)	(216)	(145)	(110)	(142)	(827)
Total	1987	101	100	101	100	100	100	100
N=		(246)	(250)	(391)	(298)	(175)	(268)	(1526)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>								
Switched 1979-83		-	32	29	25	19	10	23
Switched 1983-87		-	52	39	40	31	20	37
N (1983)		-	(119)	(193)	(136)	(105)	(143)	(696)
N (1987)		-	(186)	(335)	(252)	(154)	(233)	(1160)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>								
Did not vote 1983		9	8	6	6	6	9	7
Did not vote 1987		9	3	3	4	5	5	4
N (1983)		(93)	(159)	(246)	(158)	(125)	(167)	(948)
N (1987)		246)	(250)	(391)	(298)	(175)	(268)	(1628)

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 In 1983 the youngest age group is 20-23, the oldest 60-83. Time of voting decision is only for respondents who reported party voted for. The base (N) for party switching are the respondents who reported vote both in current and previous election. The base for non-voting are the respondents who reported party voted for, turned in a blank or void ballot or claimed not to have voted.  
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This general pattern clearly emerges in the Icelandic data. Both in 1983 and 1987 young voters were much more prone to switch parties than older ones. The relationship

tends to be linear. It is however important to note that the increased overall volatility from 1983 (23%) to 1987 (37%) is a result of increasing party switching within all age groups; a clear example of a period effect.

Another indication of greater volatility among the young is that they tend to make their voting decision later than older voters. In Danish elections 1971-1984 17-29% of the youngest voters reported that they made their decision in the last few days before the election, while the corresponding figure for the whole electorate was 9-15%.<sup>17)</sup> In Sweden the same question on decision time has been asked since 1964. The results are a clear indication of increasing volatility. The number of respondents claiming to have made the voting decision during the election campaign has risen in every election, from 18% in 1964 to 39% in 1985.<sup>18)</sup>

The results from the interview question on when the voters decided what party to vote for should of course not be interpreted literally. The question is crude and measures not only the voters' perceptions of when they made the voting decision but also uncertainty in the party choice. Less convinced voters tend to say they made the decision late irrespective of when the actual voting decision was made. The increasing proportion of voters reporting late voting choice is a sign of the Swedish parties' decreasing grip on the voters, which has led to increasing uncertainty and volatility.<sup>19)</sup>

This indicator of volatility is clearly related to age in Sweden. In 1985 of 40% voters aged 18-21 years said they had made their voting decision in the last week, while the

17) P. Svensson (1984), p. 240.

18) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 100.

19) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 101. My translation.

corresponding figure was 21-26% for 22-50 year olds and 9-13% for 50-80 year olds.<sup>20)</sup>

The percentage of Icelandic voters who reported they made their voting decision in the last week before polling day rose from 32% in 1983 to 38% in 1987.<sup>21)</sup> The percentage reporting voting decision on polling day rose from 13% to 18% - and the number of those who did not consider voting for another party fell from 51% to 39%. This data indicates that volatility increased from 1983-1987 in all age groups. Nevertheless, in each year there emerges a clear age pattern: the young are more volatile than the old.

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**Table VI.1.3. Proportion of voters claiming to have made their voting decision during the last week before the election in 1983 and 1987 by age. Total samples. Percentages.**

	18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-80	All
1983	42	42	45	26	19	8	32
1987	54	46	45	40	23	15	38

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 20-23 and 60-83 in 1983. The percentages shown are an addition of "one week before", "during the last week" and "on polling day" in Table VI.1.2.  
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Among first time voters, only one of every three did not consider voting for another party in 1983; in 1987 the figure was down to one in every four. Among those over sixty, 78% did on the other hand not consider voting for another party in 1983 and 65% in 1987. 22-26% of the youngest voters claimed to have made their decision on polling day; only 3-6% of the oldest voters did so. Table

20) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam, p. 101. In 1979 27% of the 18-21 year olds reported voting decision in the last week, as did 14-21% of 21-50 year olds, and 4-11% of 51-80 year olds. S. Holmberg (1981), p. 47.

21) The figure for decision in the last week is computed by adding the categories "one week before", "during the last week", and "on polling day" in Table VI.1.2.

VI.1.3 shows how large a proportion claimed to have made their voting decision during the last week before the elections in 1983 and 1987.

Non-voting is usually related to age.

Most research on political participation has found that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and turnout. Among the young turnout is relatively low in the first years after they come of voting age. Turnout then increases with age until it culminates around sixty; then it decreases again among the old.<sup>22)</sup>

Survey research usually underestimates non-voting. Non-voters are more likely to refuse to participate in a survey on politics and there seems also to be a tendency for respondents not to admit that they did not vote. The Swedish data on non-voting is unusually good: respondents' answers to the question of whether they voted are checked by the voting records and corrected; adjustments are also made to take account of the underrepresentation of non-voters in the sample. The Swedish data shows a curvilinear trend: In 1985 13-15% of those aged 18-30 years did not vote, 8-9% of those aged 31-70 years and 12% of those aged 71-80 years.

The uncorrected Icelandic data in Table VI.1.2 underestimates non-voting by around 5% in 1983 and around 6% in 1987. The age trends in the data are on the other hand curvilinear in the expected direction. Turnout among young and old voters is lower than among middle-aged voters but the differences are by no means drastic; their impact on election outcomes is minimal. It seems likely that the Icelandic age pattern is in fact very similar to the Swedish one, as are the overall turnout figures in recent elections.

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<sup>22)</sup> P. Svensson (1984), p. 232. My translation.

Like age, gender has some role to play in politics. An overwhelming majority of the political elite continues to be male even though participation of women in some legislatures has increased considerably in recent years, especially in the Nordic countries. On the electoral level the sex differences have been much less pronounced but nevertheless not without significance. Relatively small differences in the voting patterns of men and women can have more impact on electoral outcomes than similar differences among, say, age groups or educational categories, as men and women each constitute roughly half of the electorate.

In most western countries the turnout of women was much lower than of men in the first years after women were enfranchised but the difference has now become insignificant or disappeared.<sup>23)</sup> In Iceland the turnout of women was 38.9% lower than among men in 1916, the first election after the introduction of women's suffrage, and in 1919 the difference was 35%. In 1923-1943 the difference between the turnout of men and women usually varied between 10 and 19%,<sup>24)</sup> in 1946-1959 5-7%,<sup>25)</sup> and in 1963-1971 3-4%. From 1974 it remained between 2-3% until the 1987 election, when the difference between the turnout of the sexes was only 0.8%. Only once has turnout among Icelandic women been higher (90.9%) than among men (90.1%) - in the 1980 presidential election, when a women president, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, was elected for the first time.

In Sweden there was 10-15% difference in turnout between men and women in the 1920s but after 1960 the difference was

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23) D. Dahlerup (1984), p. 252.

24) In 1937 the difference was, however, only 7.7%.

25) Except in 1946 (8%) and the 1959 June election (4.9%).

never greater than around 2%. Women's turnout has, in fact, been somewhat higher than men's in all Swedish parliamentary elections since 1976.<sup>26)</sup>

Concerning voting behaviour "there has been a belief, held particularly profoundly amongst those on the Left, that women are innately more Conservative than men".<sup>27)</sup> It seems indeed to have been the case in Europe that from the 1920s to the 1940s women tended to vote for religious and conservative parties to a greater extent than men, while the social democrats and especially the communists got fewer votes from women than men.<sup>28)</sup> As we shall see, this trend was on the other hand temporal in many European countries, and it is not known to have existed in America:

The earliest European study of female voting found that women were more likely to support bourgeois over socialist parties, and to reject both left and right-wing extremities in favor of clerical and moderate parties ... Among Americans, there is no evidence of a more conservative character among women ... In the vote, American women have not evidenced any special fondness for conservative or Republican candidates.<sup>29)</sup>

In the 1950-1980 period the differences in the voting behaviour in Northern Europe between men and women tended to grow smaller, while women in Italy and France continued to vote more heavily for religious parties than men. In 1976 the old truth that women supported the West German Christian Democrats to a greater extent than men was no longer true.<sup>30)</sup> In Britain in 1979

The votes of men and women were virtually identical. Women were fractionally the more

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26) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 73.

27) D. Robertson (1984), p. 36.

28) D. Dahlerup (1984), p. 255.

29) G.M. Pomper (1975), p. 77.

30) D. Dahlerup (1984), pp. 257-259.



likely to vote Conservative, as customary, but the difference was probably smaller than at any time since the war.<sup>31)</sup>

In Norway men voted consistently more socialist than women in 1957-1981, but the difference was small, e.g. only 1% in 1977 and 4% in 1981.<sup>32)</sup> In Sweden the differences between men's and women's voting behaviour was very small in the post-war period but followed a systematic pattern. The Communists usually received 1-2% more votes from men 1948-1982. The Social Democrats were also slightly stronger among men 1948-1968 (except in 1960), but from that time to 1979 there was virtually no difference. The Centre party was stronger among men until the early 1970s; in the "nuclear-power elections" of 1976 and 1979 the party's support was stronger among women (2 and 4% respectively). The liberal People's Party usually got slightly more votes from women for the whole period. The Conservatives usually obtained 3-4% more votes among women 1948-1968; in the early 1970s there was no difference; in the late 1970s this trend was reversed.<sup>33)</sup>

In the 1970s and especially the 1980s a gender gap developed in American presidential elections: women started to vote more to the left than men.

In 1972, for the first time in available survey research, a significant sex difference was found in the two-party vote, as 7 percent more of men voted for Richard Nixon. The difference between the sexes was particularly important among the youngest voters.<sup>34)</sup>

While 7% more of men voted for Carter in 1976, the 1972-pattern re-emerged in 1980 when Carter got 6% more votes

31) B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe (1983), p. 91.

32) B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), pp. 250-251.

33) S. Holmberg (1984), pp. 73-75.

34) G.M. Pomper (1975), p. 78.

from women than from men. The swing to Reagan was mainly among male voters.<sup>35)</sup>

The radicalization of voting behaviour among women also took place in Scandinavia in the late 1970s and 1980s. Even though the sex differences in Sweden had been small and decreasing in the post-war period, women had never voted more socialist than men. That happened first in 1982 and the trend was reinforced in 1985. The new gender gap was visible mainly among the Conservatives and the Social Democrats. In 1979 and 1982 4% more men voted Conservative, while in 1985 the figure was up to 7%. In 1979 1% more women voted Social Democrat, 2% in 1982 and 5% in 1985.<sup>36)</sup> In Norway the trend of women voting less socialist was reversed in 1985, when 5% more women voted for the socialist parties than did men. That trend remained in the local elections of 1987.<sup>37)</sup> In Denmark there is also some evidence of women moving to the left since the mid-1970s, even though the trend is largely confined to women in the middle strata.<sup>38)</sup>

We do not have survey data on the voting behaviour of the sexes in Iceland prior to 1983. On the basis of various indirect evidence Kristjansson argues that in the 1930s and 1940s women tended to vote more heavily for the IP than men.<sup>39)</sup> In our 1983 survey we asked our respondents what party their parents had generally supported when they were growing up. Of those giving one of the four major parties 46% said their father used to support the IP, while 49% said their mother supported the party. This was not at the

35) See D. Dahlerup (1984), Table 11.4, p. 262.

36) S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), pp. 173-175.

37) B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), pp. 250-251.

38) D. Dahlerup (1984), p. 263.

39) S. Kristjansson (1977).

expense of the socialist parties, as both the SDP (16%) and the CP/USP/PA (11%) got equal reported support among fathers and mothers; fathers were more inclined to support the PP than mothers.<sup>40)</sup> Thus, the available evidence suggests that women in Iceland may in the past have followed the trend of supporting Conservatives somewhat more than men.

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**Table VI.1.4. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by sex. Total samples. Percentages.**

	1983		1987	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
SDP	13	12	17	14
PP	17	14	18	16
IP	41	42	34	25
PA	17	14	13	13
WA	3	11	5	22
SDA	9	6	-	-
CiP	-	-	8	6
Others	-	-	5	4
Total	100	99	100	100
N=	(472)	(382)	(830)	(705)

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In the 1983 election by far the largest gender gap emerges - not unexpectedly - in the following of the WA: the party got 8% more support from women than men. This is at the expense of all other parties except the IP. The SDP, PP and SDA got 1-3% more votes from men than women, while the IP received 1% more from women.

A major change took place in 1987. A new major gender gap emerged on the right, as 9% fewer women than men voted for the IP. The WA continued to have a mainly female following - around four-fifths of its voters were women as in 1983 - but since the party almost doubled its vote the difference in its male/female vote rose to 17%. Men and women gave the

40) A further discussion of parental vote is found in Section VI.5.

same amount of support to the PA while the PP, CiP and SDP got 2-3% fewer votes from women than from men.

The emerging gender gap in the IP vote is not to any great extent a result of a direct transfer of votes from the IP to the WA. As we saw in Chapter II only 1.4% of voters moved from IP to WA in 1983, while 1% moved from the SDP or the PP to the WA and 2.4% from the PA to the WA. In 1987 only 1.7% moved from the IP to the WA, while the party got 2.2% from the SDP and the PP and 2.8% from the PA.<sup>41)</sup> What happened in 1987 - besides direct transfers between the IP and the WA - was that the IP lost woman voters to the parties on its left, which in turn lost woman voters to the WA.

Table VI.1.5 shows the gender profiles of the IP and the WA in different age groups both in 1983 and 1987. In 1983, when the IP had no overall gender profile, the party was nevertheless much stronger among men than women in two age groups, among first time voters and 50-59 year olds. In other age groups the party was stronger among women, especially among the oldest voters. In 1987 the oldest voters were the only age group in which women voted more heavily for the IP than men. The gender gap among first time voters and 50-59 year olds from 1983 remained and a clear gap emerged among 24-39 year olds. In 1987 the IP was strongest among men under thirty and over fifty and weakest among women under sixty.

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41) See Tables II.2.8 and II.5.12 in Chapter II.

**Table VI.1.5. Vote for the IP and the WA by age and sex 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		18-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-89
<b>IP</b>							
1983	Men	49	33	37	44	50	39
	Women	28	38	43	45	37	54
	Difference	+21	-5	-6	-1	+27	-15
1987	Men	42	37	31	26	37	34
	Women	22	23	20	25	23	41
	Difference	+20	+14	+11	+1	+14	-7
<b>WA</b>							
1983	Men	0	7	4	0	0	3
	Women	21	15	13	10	10	1
	Difference	-21	-8	-11	-10	-10	+2
1987	Men	0	5	7	4	2	6
	Women	28	29	30	17	15	9
	Difference	-28	-24	-23	-13	-13	-3
<b>N</b>							
N (1983 men)=		(51)	(70)	(121)	(86)	(64)	(80)
N (1983 women)=		(29)	(68)	(103)	(62)	(51)	(69)
N (1987 men)=		(121)	(132)	(207)	(137)	(90)	(142)
N (1987 women)=		(98)	(107)	(169)	(144)	(75)	(111)

20-23 year olds and 60-83 year olds in 1983.

The base (N) is the number of male and female respondents who reported the party voted for.

The WA had a clear age profile among women in 1983: the party's vote decreased with increasing age. In 1987 the party increased its share among women in all age groups, most strongly among 24-39 year olds, resulting in an age-profile where 28-30% of 18-39 year old women voted for the WA, 15-17% of 40-59 year olds and 9% of women over sixty. The gender gap in both elections is largest among first time voters, as no male respondents in that age group voted for the WA in either election. Among males the WA was clearly strongest among 24-39 year olds in 1983 but the party did not increase its share among men in that age group in 1987, while its support grew among men over forty.

While both men and women became more volatile from 1983-1987, the change among women was greater. In 1987 women were clearly more volatile than men, as can be seen in Table VI.1.6.

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**Table VI.1.6. Strength of party identification, time of voting decision, party switching, and non-voting by sex 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

	1983		1987	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>STRENGTH OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>				
Party supporter	53	45	50	41
Closer to a party	28	35	30	35
No party identification	18	20	20	24
Total	101	100	100	100
N=	(532)	(462)	(915)	(783)
<b>VOTING DECISION</b>				
Did not consider another party	50	53	41	37
More than a month before	13	8	9	8
8-30 days before	7	6	16	12
One week before	9	8	8	7
During the last week	9	11	12	13
On polling day	12	14	15	23
Total	100	100	101	100
N=	(456)	(371)	(829)	(698)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>				
Switched parties	23	24	34	40
N=	(389)	(307)	(637)	(526)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>				
Did not vote	6	9	4	5
N=	(513)	(435)	(876)	(753)

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 The base for "strength of party identification" is all respondents who answered the question. For the base of other dependent variables see Table VI.1.2.  
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In 1983 the amount of party switching was similar among men and women, while in 1987 there had emerged a 6% gap: 34% of men switched parties and 40% of women. In 1983 the strength of party identification was weaker among women: 8% more men considered themselves party supporters and 2% more

women had no party identification. In 1987 both sexes showed weaker party identification, but the difference between the sexes had increased slightly: 9% more men considered themselves party supporters and 4% more women had no party identification.

In 1983 the question on time of voting decision showed small differences between the sexes. 50% of men and 53% of women did not consider voting for another party. 30% of men and 33% of women made their decision in the last week. In 1987 both sexes showed more volatility, women to a greater extent than men. 41% of men and 37% women did not consider voting for another party. 35% of men and 43% of women made their decision in the last week; 15% of men and 23% of women as late as on polling day.

While the main change in volatility between 1983 and 1987 was the overall increase, we can also say that in 1987 a small gender gap emerged with women showing weaker attachments to the party system than men.

Finally, our data shows abstaining to be more common among women. As we saw earlier, the data underestimates non-voting. The data nevertheless reflects the difference between the sexes rather accurately - Table VI.1.6 shows a difference of 3% in 1983, when the actual difference was 2.3% and of 1% in 1987, when the actual difference was 0.8%.

## **VI.2 Education**

The impact of education on politics is similar to that of age and gender: it is bound by time and space, and can influence some aspects of the political system to a greater extent than others. Thus, the authors of *The American Voter*

found that while the impact of education on partisan behaviour in America in the 1950s tended to be trivial or non-existent when the occupation factor was held constant, education nevertheless "has many striking consequences for political behavior that are independent of status implications ...".<sup>42)</sup> The more educated tended to be better informed, have different cognitive structures, show higher turnout and discuss politics more often, and they were more likely to think they could and should influence political events.<sup>43)</sup> The most important finding of early American voting research - and the most serious for democratic theory - was that independents, most likely to switch parties in elections, were the "least admirable voters",<sup>44)</sup> or in the words of *The American Voter*:

The ideal of the Independent citizen, attentive to politics, concerned with the course of government, who weighs the rival appeals of a campaign and reaches a judgement that is unswayed by partisan prejudice, has had such a vigorous history in the tradition of political reform - and has such a hold on civic education today - that one could easily suppose that the habitual partisan has the more limited interest and concern with politics ... Far from being more attentive, interested, and informed, Independents tend as a group to be somewhat less involved in politics. They have somewhat poorer knowledge of the issues, their image of candidates is fainter, their interest in the campaign is less, their concern over the outcome is relatively slight, and their choice between competing candidates, although it is indeed made later in the campaign, seems much less to spring from discoverable evaluations of the elements of national politics.<sup>45)</sup>

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42) Campbell et al. (1960), p. 475.

43) *Ibid.*, pp. 476-481.

44) B. Berelson, P. Lazarsfeld, and W. McPhee (1954), p. 316.

45) Campbell et al. (1960), p. 143.



While this low estimate of independent voters was to become accepted truth in American political science, it was already outdated in the early 1970s.

The recent growth in the proportion of Independents has come from persons of advanced education, the young, and those of higher social status - individuals who presumably are able to analyze political issues and make sense of campaigns ... Those who switch votes from one election to another ... are about as educated, concerned, and aware of policy questions, as those who stay with the same party.<sup>46)</sup>

In Europe we have examples of education influencing voting choice, values and volatility. In Britain in 1979 there was a clear relationship between education and voting: Labour support was 21% among those with the most education, 47% among those with the least education. The Conservative and the Liberal vote on the other hand increased with increasing education.<sup>47)</sup> In their book on the 1983 British election Heath et al. claim that

Education, when it has been considered at all by British political scientists, has usually been thought of as an aspect of class structure rather like housing ... However, it is quite misleading to treat education as if it were related to class in the same way that housing is.<sup>48)</sup>

Housing is associated with "free market" values, while education is on the other hand related to "liberal values", like opposing the death penalty and supporting free speech. But whereas "education is as strongly associated with liberal values as class is with free enterprise values, its association with vote is much weaker than that of class".<sup>49)</sup> Nevertheless, education clearly had an impact on the vote in

46) G. Pomper (1975), p. 31-32.

47) See B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe (1983), Table 3.12, p. 101.

48) A. Heath et al. (1985), p. 64.

49) Ibid., p. 67.

the 1983 British election independent of class: Inside what Heath *et al.* call the salariat the Conservatives got 42% among those with a degree and 60% among those below O-level, while the Alliance got 41% of those with a degree and only 22% among those below O-level. The Conservatives were stronger among those with O-levels or more than among those below O-level both in the intermediate classes (8% stronger) and the working class (12% stronger), while the reverse was true for Labour (8% weaker among the more educated in the intermediate classes; 16% weaker in the working class).<sup>50)</sup>

In Norway education has been strongly related to voting choice. In 1977 Labour had a clear educational profile, as it received 65% of the votes of those with 7 years of education or less but only 16% among those with 14 years of education or more. While the Christian People's Party and the Centre Party were also overrepresented among those with little education, the reverse was true for the Conservative and the Socialist Left Party. Among those with 7 years education or less, 8% voted Conservative and 3% Socialist Left. Among those with 14 years education or more, 39% voted Conservative, 14% Socialist Left.<sup>51)</sup> While the impact of structural variables on voting choice declined in Norway from 1969 to 1985, in both of these years education was among the strongest factors when other structural variables were controlled for.<sup>52)</sup>

In Sweden electoral volatility has been related to education. In the elections of 1979, 1982 and 1985 around 15% of those with least education switched parties, while

50) See *ibid.*, Table 5.6, p. 67.

51) See H. Valen (1981), Table 6.9, p. 119.

52) See B. Aardal and H. Valen (1989), pp. 200-205.

those with more education were more volatile. Among those with the most education 24-27% switched parties.<sup>53)</sup>

**Table VI.2.1. Party voted for in 1983 and 1987 by level of education. Total samples. Percentages.**

	A	B	C	D	E	F
SDP 1983	14	13	12	9	9	15
1987	14	15	21	15	13	17
PP 1983	20	19	13	15	8	3
1987	24	21	13	14	8	13
IP 1983	41	43	45	38	50	30
1987	25	28	37	30	41	28
PA 1983	16	15	18	12	16	23
1987	14	11	10	14	18	16
WA 1983	3	5	2	15	11	18
1987	7	14	3	23	17	21
SDA 1983	6	6	10	11	6	13
CiP 1987	8	8	12	4	3	1
Others 1987	8	4	5	1	2	5
Total 1983	100	101	100	100	100	102
N=	(258)	(195)	(182)	(114)	(64)	(40)
Total 1987	100	101	101	101	102	101
N=	(382)	(344)	(300)	(226)	(120)	(160)

Levels of education:

A: Compulsory education only.

B: 1-2 years of further education.

C: 3-5 years of further education; vocational training for manual jobs (e.g. tradesmen, ship captains, etc.).

D: 3-5 years of education; general, commercial, vocational training for non-manual jobs.

E: University education.

F: Students.

Table VI.2.1 reveals that education is related to party choice in Iceland even though there are great differences in the sharpness of the parties' educational profiles. One of the old parties, the PP, is clearly stronger among the less educated. The relationship is almost linear, both in 1983

<sup>53)</sup> S. Holmberg (1981), p. 364, S. Holmberg (1984), p. 118, S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 211.

and 1987, and the party is especially weak among those with university education. In 1987 the party's support among those with compulsory education only was three times stronger than among those who had finished university.

The traditional working-class parties, the SDP and the PA, have weak educational profiles. The SDP was somewhat weaker among those with higher education in 1983, but not in 1987. The PA was strongest in 1987 among the university educated.

The IP is stronger among those with more education. Both in 1983 and 1987 the party's share increases with each educational category, except that in both years the party's support drops among those with 3-5 years of non-manual further education. It is noteworthy that both in 1983 and 1987 the party is relatively weak among students.

The new parties have different educational profiles. The WA is clearly a party of the better educated, both in 1983 and 1987, and its strongest support is among those with 3-5 years non-manual further education and students. The SDA in 1983 is strongest among those with 3-5 years further education, while the CiP in 1987 resembles the PP: the party's support is much stronger among those with little education.

Table VI.2.2 shows an MCA analysis of the mean number of years respondents reported having attended school by age and party voted for. As expected, length of school attendance is strongly related to age. Its relationship to party voted for is much weaker but a clear pattern nevertheless emerges. In both years the PP and the WA voters show the greatest deviations and in opposite directions: PP voters have on

average the shortest school attendance, WA voters the longest. Voters of the SDP, PA and IP deviate less from the overall mean. IP voters have the longest school attendance of the three in both years when controlled for age. In 1983 SDA voters had relatively long school attendance, also when controlled for age, but they deviated by no means as much as WA voters. In 1987 CiP voters had attended school for fewer years than other voters, except those voting for the PP and those voting for the minor parties, which in fact had the shortest mean school attendance when controlled for age.

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**Table VI.2.2. Mean length of education (years) by party voted for and age 1983 and 1987. Total samples. MCA table.**

	1983			1987		
	GRAND MEAN=10.36			GRAND MEAN=11.12		
	Deviations			Deviations		
	Unadj.	Adjusted	N	Unadj.	Adjusted	N
PARTY						
PP	-1.80	-1.41	(135)	-1.45	-1.30	(253)
PA	-0.17	0.01	(134)	0.12	0.17	(200)
SDP	0.12	-0.13	(106)	0.39	0.29	(236)
IP	0.13	0.24	(350)	0.20	0.37	(455)
WA	2.56	1.76	(53)	1.64	1.14	(190)
SDA	1.07	0.37	(67)			
CiP				-0.74	-0.59	(107)
Others				-1.01	-1.38	(69)
	ETA	BETA		ETA	BETA	
	.24	.18		.22	.19	
AGE						
18-23	1.78	1.69	(79)	0.74	0.73	(220)
24-29	1.99	1.82	(138)	1.94	1.83	(237)
30-39	1.26	1.22	(223)	1.44	1.42	(371)
40-49	0.13	0.20	(148)	-0.03	0.00	(280)
50-59	-1.39	-1.33	(113)	-1.40	-1.28	(163)
60-80	-3.88	-3.73	(144)	-3.84	-3.82	(239)
	ETA	BETA		ETA	BETA	
	.49	.47		.47	.46	
Multiple R Squared			.27			.26
Multiple R			.52			.51

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 Age was 20-23 and 60-83 in 1983.  
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**Table VI.2.3. Strength of party identification, party switching, and non-voting by education 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>STRENGTH OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>							
Party supporter							
1983		51	49	48	52	52	34
1987		43	48	46	45	61	44
Closer to a party							
1983		25	35	33	32	38	43
1987		32	29	30	37	34	33
No party ident.							
1983		24	16	19	16	10	23
1987		25	23	23	18	6	23
Total	1983	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=		(316)	(222)	(206)	(130)	(71)	(47)
Total	1987	100	100	99	100	101	100
N=		(426)	(379)	(340)	(248)	(125)	(175)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>							
Switched parties							
1979-1983		19	20	27	28	28	(42)
N=		(219)	(164)	(154)	(89)	(57)	(12)
1983-1987		35	41	37	37	23	43
N=		(292)	(277)	(244)	(188)	(107)	(49)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>							
Did not vote							
1983		10	6	8	4	3	7
N=		(297)	(213)	(201)	(123)	(67)	(46)
1987		5	5	3	3	0	8
N=		(411)	(371)	(313)	(234)	(121)	(175)

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**Levels of education:**

A: Compulsory education only.

B: 1-2 years of further education.

C: 3-5 years of further education; vocational training for manual jobs (e.g. tradesmen, ship captains, etc.).

D: 3-5 years of education; general, commercial, vocational training for non-manual jobs.

E: University education.

F: Students.

For base of dep. variables see Tables VI.1.2 and VI.1.6.  
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Education is not as strongly - nor consistently - related to volatility as to party choice if we exclude students, who are more volatile on all counts than others. Table VI.2.3 reveals that in 1983 those with little education were clearly less prone to switch parties, as has been the case

in Sweden. 19-20% of those with 1-2 years of further education or less switched parties, while 27-28% of those with more education did so. In 1987 on the other hand only 23% of the university educated changed parties, while 35-41% in other educational groups did so.

Strength of party identification is not strongly related to education. The number of party supporters was rather similar in the educational categories in both elections, except that in 1987 party supporters were substantially more numerous among the university educated than others. The number of those with no party identification was also lower among the more educated in both elections, especially among those with university education.

Table VI.2.4 shows that both in 1983 and 1987 those with little education were less likely to have considered voting for another party. The number of people claiming to have made a late voting decision did not vary greatly by educational categories. In 1983 26% of those with compulsory education only said they had made their decision in the last week, while the corresponding figures were 31-35% for other categories. In 1987, 30% of those with university education made the decision in the last week, while 36-40% of respondents with less education did so. On the whole, our data does not reveal any great differences in the strength of ties to the parties among the various educational categories.

Table VI.2.3 shows on the other hand that non-voting is clearly related to education. In both elections non-voting goes steeply down with increased education. It may be noted,

however, that among students - most of whom are young - non-voting is relatively high.

**Table VI.2.4. Time of voting decision by education 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Did not consider another party						
1983	62	52	44	46	45	34
1987	45	41	38	37	38	25
More than a month before						
1983	7	13	13	12	11	16
1987	7	8	11	8	16	7
8-30 days before						
1983	5	5	9	7	10	5
1987	11	15	14	16	16	17
One week before						
1983	8	8	9	6	16	11
1987	9	6	11	4	3	10
During the last week						
1983	6	10	12	13	8	18
1987	10	13	11	15	14	16
On polling day						
1983	12	13	13	16	10	16
1987	19	17	15	21	13	25
Total 1983	99	101	100	100	100	100
N=	(249)	(191)	(174)	(112)	(62)	(38)
Total 1987	101	100	100	101	100	100
N=	(380)	(343)	(299)	(223)	(119)	(159)

Levels of education:

A: Compulsory education only.

B: 1-2 years of further education.

C: 3-5 years of further education; vocational training for manual jobs (e.g. tradesmen, ship captains, etc.).

D: 3-5 years of education; general, commercial, vocational training for non-manual jobs.

E: University education.

F: Students.

For base of dependent variable see Table VI.1.2.

### **VI.3 Class, occupation, public or private sector**

Most modern party systems in Europe have been heavily influenced by class. The development of the working class movement and Social Democratic or Labour parties, which largely got their support from the working class, was among the most important political changes in the early twentieth



century. In America, where the working class movement differed greatly from what was common in Europe, class nevertheless had its impact on voting behaviour. In 1960 Lipset described the general tendency in class voting thus:

The most important single fact about political party support is that in virtually every economically developed country the lower income groups vote mainly for the parties of the Left, while the higher income groups vote mainly for the parties of the Right.<sup>54)</sup>

The fact that class is usually not defined by income need not concern us here. Lipset is simply arguing that some basic economic situation was important for voting choice. Definitions of class vary and they are related to different class theories.<sup>55)</sup> Different definitions of class can have an important impact on the extent of class voting shown in empirical studies. One of the problems of cross-national comparisons is that scholars rarely use exactly the same definitions and the more sophisticated the analysis becomes for one country the less likely we are to find similar analyses for other countries.

The most commonly used measure to compare class voting is a very simple index presented in 1963 by Robert Alford in his book *Party and Society*, usually referred to as "the Alford index" or simply "the index for class voting". The index is based on two dichotomies: working class (manual) and middle class (non-manual) on the one hand and left-wing parties (often socialist parties) and non-left parties on the other. The value of the index is simply calculated by subtracting the percentage of middle class voting left from the percentage working class voting left (including only

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54) S.M. Lipset (1960), pp. 223-224.

55) See e.g. D. Robertson (1984), pp. 3-13.

those who give the party supported or voted for).<sup>56)</sup> While this index has been criticized<sup>57)</sup> and is obviously not well suited to describe the complexities of the relationship between economic situation and voting in individual countries, it is nevertheless useful as a rough measure of comparison.

Class voting has always varied greatly among countries. An average index for the post-war period in the four English-speaking democracies that Alford studied shows strong class voting in Britain (41%) and Australia (34%), while it has been much lower in the USA (16%) and in Canada (8%).<sup>58)</sup>

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<sup>56)</sup> See D. Robertson (1984), pp. 18-20.

<sup>57)</sup> A. Heath et al. (1985, p. 41) claim for instance: "Unfortunately, the Alford index is inappropriate as a measure of relative class alignment since it confuses relative with overall support. Suppose, for example, that Labour support among manual voters fell to 33 per cent while support among nonmanual fell to zero. On the Alford index this would give a score of 33 points, less than in 1945, but surely we would want to say that such a situation where Labour drew all its votes from the working class represented a much higher degree of class alignment than in 1945." Are we so sure? What if a socialist party obtains 5% of manual votes, but none from non-manuals? Is that a strong class alignment? Their relative class support refers really to the class composition of each party's vote; not the party destination of class vote. In most of the post-war period the Labour party has clearly had a clearer class profile than the Conservatives in the sense that they got ca. 75-80% of their vote from the working class, while working-class votes constituted almost half of the Conservative vote. (See Sarlvik and Crewe (1983), p. 90). The middle class was on the other hand more class conscious in the sense that it usually gave Labour only ca. 20-25% of its vote, while the Conservatives obtained ca. 30-35% of the working class vote. Both facts are important when we consider class alignment. More to the point is the criticism that overall loss for Labour is likely to deflate the Alford index even though the loss is of the same proportion in both classes (p. 31). If Labour gets 60% of manuals and 20% of non-manuals in Election A, the index value is 40. If Labour loses 20% of its support in both classes in Election B its support among manuals is 48% and 16% among non-manuals, giving a score of 32 on the Alford index.

<sup>58)</sup> See D. Robertson (1984), Table 1.2, p. 21.

Class voting also varies with time. In recent decades there has been a general decline in class voting as measured by the Alford index. In USA class voting was stronger in the 1930s and 1940s, culminating in 1948 (ca.43%) but has been low and somewhat fluctuating since the 1950s (from almost zero (in 1972) to 15-20%). In West Germany the Alford index showed 30-35% in the 1950s but had declined to ca. 10-15% in the early 1980s.<sup>59)</sup> In Britain the index score was usually around 40% 1955-1966 but was down to 25-33% in 1970-1983.<sup>60)</sup> A dramatic decline has taken place in Scandinavia, where class voting has been among the highest in the world for the whole post-war period - and still is. Ole Borre, describing class voting in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, concludes that

There is a rather steady drop in class voting, from an index value of around 55 percent in the 1950s to around 45 percent in the 1960s and further to the level of 40 to 45 percent in the 1970s, finally decreasing to the 35 percent level by 1980.<sup>61)</sup>

Despite the decline in class voting - which in the case of Britain has been disputed by Heath et al.<sup>62)</sup> - class, and

59) R. Inglehart (1984), pp. 29-30.

60) D. Robertson (1984), gives the figures for 1955-1979 (Table 1.3, p. 26). For 1983, see Heath et al. (1985), Table 3.1, p. 30 (Labour got 17% of non-manuals, 42% of manuals). Robertson also calculates the Alford index for 1964-79, including those who did not vote in the base figures (Table 1.4, p. 28). This measure gives a value of 35% in 1964 and 1966, 24-29% 1970-1974 and 22% in 1979. The table also reveals that while the Labour vote has been 20-22% the whole period, its share in the working class has dropped from 55-57% 1964-1966 to 42% in 1979. Less than half of the manuals have voted Labour in all elections in the 1970s when non-voters are taken into account.

61) O. Borre (1984), p. 352.

62) While they agree that the absolute level of class voting has declined, i.e. the overall proportion of the electorate voting for its "natural" party has decreased from 60-67% in the 1945-1970 period to 54-55% 1974-1979 and 47% in 1983, they claim this is not as important a measure of class based politics as is relative class voting, measured by odds ratios ((% non-manual voting Conservative/% non-manual voting Labour)/(% manual voting Conservative/% manual voting

various class related groupings, are still important for voting behaviour in Britain and Scandinavia. Class voting as measured by the Alford index is still relatively high compared to other countries: pooled results from surveys in the nine EC-countries 1973-1979 gave an Alford index of 18%. And a more detailed analysis - based on a greater number of classes or occupational groups - shows that such a group membership still correlates highly with voting. We can briefly look at two examples from countries where class voting has been strong, Britain and Sweden, before we examine the impact of class and class-related factors on Icelandic voting.

Heath et al. claim that while the six social grades scheme conventionally used in British electoral research, focusing on income and life-style, may be appropriate for market research it is of limited political relevance. Instead they develop a classification of five classes based on economic interests: salariat, routine non-manual, petty bourgeoisie, foremen and technicians, and the working class. The most important innovation in their scheme is probably the class of the petty bourgeoisie, consisting of farmers, small proprietors and own-account manual workers. In the social grades scheme those occupations were dispersed across the A to D grades but, while the group is small, it is very distinct and homogeneous in political values and behaviour. The petty bourgeoisie is for instance more supportive of free-enterprise values than any other class.<sup>63)</sup>

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Labour). Those odds ratios show no consistent trend in the 1945-1983 period. (See A. Heath et al. (1985), pp. 31-34). Those results and the use of odd ratios have been criticized for instance by P. Dunleavy (1987).

63) A. Heath et al. (1985), pp. 13-19.

The voting behaviour of those five classes was quite different in 1983. The Conservatives got 71% of the petty bourgeoisie vote, 30% of the working class vote and 46-54% in the three remaining groups. Labour obtained 49% of the working class vote, 25-26% among routine non-manual and foremen and technicians, 14% in the salariat and 12% in the petty bourgeoisie. The Alliance was strongest among the salariat (31%) and routine non-manual (27%), but weakest among the working class (20%) and the petty bourgeoisie (17%).<sup>64)</sup> Class is obviously still not unimportant in British voting.

Class is also still important in Sweden. In 1976-1985 the Social Democrats got 68-75% of the votes of industrial workers, 58-62% of other workers, 42-44% of lower non-manuals, 34-37% of intermediary non-manuals, 20-24% of higher managerial and administrative, 19-24% of small businessmen and 6-13% of farmers. The Conservatives got 3-7% of industrial workers, 6-13% of other workers, 36-46% of higher managerial and administrative and 11-23% among farmers. The Conservatives' following among small businessmen jumped from 25% in 1976 to 40-43% in 1979-1985. In 1985 the Conservatives' support was strongest in this group (43%) - 7 percentage points stronger than among the higher managerial and administrative group. The class profiles of the other parties tended to be weaker, except

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<sup>64)</sup> A. Heath et al. (1985), p. 20. D. Robertson (1984, pp. 45-49) also notes that the strongest support for the Conservative Party in 1979 was among owners of small enterprises and self-employed professionals (63%) and the manual own-account workers (60%).

that the Centre Party obtained 65-70% of the farmers' vote.<sup>65)</sup>

Using ecological analysis Svanur Kristjansson has tried to estimate class voting in Iceland in elections from 1931-1942.<sup>66)</sup> According to his figures the socialist parties obtained 73-83% of the manual vote in this period, while the socialist vote among non-manuals was only 10-16% in 1931-1937 and 5-6% in the two 1942 elections - resulting in extremely high figures on the Alford index (57-77%). While the estimates of socialist voting among manual workers are clearly too high,<sup>67)</sup> thus strongly inflating the values of the Alford index, this does not affect Kristjansson's main conclusion that in stark contrast to Scandinavia the proportion of manual workers voting for non-socialist parties was considerably higher than the proportion of non-manuals voting for socialist parties. While Kristjansson's calculations for 1946-1953 continue to show very high figures on the Alford index (75-80%), a sharp decline (to 49%) can be observed in 1959.<sup>68)</sup>

In our 1983 survey we asked our respondents what party their fathers and mothers had mainly supported when the respondents were growing up. We also asked about the occupation of their parents at that time. Almost 70% of our respondents gave party and occupation of their fathers.<sup>69)</sup>

65) See S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), Table 9.10, p. 181.

66) S. Kristjansson (1977), pp. 63-70.

67) See O.Th. Hardarson (1979), p. 47.

68) O.Th. Hardarson (1981), p. 7. The 1959 June election is the last one for which ecological calculations can be made, as after that the number of constituencies was reduced to eight. Calculations for the 1956 election are not possible because of the SDP-PP electoral alliance.

69) When asked about mother's occupation 62% said their mother was a housewife and 11% that she was a farmer's wife.

While such data is obviously prone to error, it is of great interest to examine if class voting among the respondents' fathers is similar to what Kristjansson's ecological analysis gives. Table VI.3.2 gives the support for each of the four main parties among the respondents' fathers as reported in 1983, broken down by respondents' age cohorts.

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**Table VI.3.2. Party usually supported by fathers of respondents in different age cohorts. 1983 total sample.**

	<i>Respondent's year of birth</i>					Total
	1901-20	1921-30	1931-40	1941-50	1951-63	
Father's party						
CP/USP/PA	1	9	12	11	15	11
SDP	17	12	26	17	13	16
PP	38	32	26	26	23	28
IP	44	48	37	47	49	46
Total	100	101	101	101	100	101
N=	(97)	(103)	(104)	(161)	(214)	(679)

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If we assume that the bulk of fathers are 20-45 at birth of their children and that the respondents are in fact accurately reporting their father's party affiliation during the respondents' adolescence, the figures in Table VI.3.2 should roughly tell us the voting behaviours of fathers aged 30/35-55/60 years old, 10-15 years after the respondents birth. They indicate, for instance, that only 1% of the fathers of the first cohort voted for the CP in the 1915-1935 period. While there is no way to check the accuracy of the figures, we can roughly compare them to election results in the period.<sup>70)</sup> On the whole the figures look rather credible. The low figures for the Communist Party in the first two cohorts accurately reflect the fact that the party

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Therefore we only use fathers in our analysis of class voting here.

70) Even if the figures were completely correct they should only match election results for a corresponding period if the fathers voted exactly like the rest of the electorate.

first put up candidates in 1931 and obtained only 3-9% in elections 1931-37. The CP/USP/PA following in later cohorts seems on the other hand underestimated as the party usually obtained 16-18% of the vote after 1942. The IP vote seems on the other hand somewhat overestimated in most cohorts; for the whole period its support was around 38-42%. Thus the total socialist vote is probably somewhat too low in the later cohorts.

In Table VI.3.3 we have divided the fathers into two groups according to when their responding children were born. Even though the groups overlap in time to some extent, the former group should be more representative of class voting in the party system from the 1920s to the early 1950s and the latter from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Table VI.3.3 reveals a clear decline in class voting. The Alford index for the older fathers shows +38, for the younger fathers +21 and for the respondents themselves in 1983 and 1987 only +11 and +10. While the limitations of the data on earlier voting should be borne in mind, it clearly suggests that class voting in Iceland in the 1930s and 1940s was quite strong - similar to Britain but not as strong as in Scandinavia - grew weaker in the late 1950s to 1970s, and had become very weak in the 1980s. The declining class voting is both a result of declining socialist vote among manual workers and increasing socialist vote among non-manuals.



**Table VI.3.3. Class voting of respondents' fathers in respondents' youth (as reported in 1983) and respondents 1983 and 1987. Percentages. Total samples.**

	<i>Fathers' vote (reported 1983)</i>				<i>Respondents' vote</i>			
	Respondent born				1983		1987	
	1901-40	1941-63	1901-40	1941-63	1983	1987	1983	1987
	Man- uals	Non- man.	Man- uals	Non- man.	Man- uals	Non- man.	Man- uals	Non- man.
CP/USP/PA	12	4	18	8	19	14	15	11
SDP	34	5	20	9	14	9	19	13
PP	6	54	16	33	16	18	17	18
IP	48	38	47	49	37	45	26	34
WA					4	8	8	15
SDA					10	7		
CiP							10	6
Others							6	4
Total	100	101	101	99	100	101	101	101
N=	(137)	(166)	(200)	(174)	(355)	(364)	(604)	(682)

Percentage socialist  
(CP/USP/PA,SDP) 46 8 38 17 34 23 33 23

Alford index +38 +21 +11 +10

Manual=Seamen, unskilled and skilled manual workers.  
Non-manual=Farmers, lower non-manual, professionals, skilled non-manuals, employers, higher managerial and administrative.

The Alford index of 38% in Table VI.3.3 is only half of the figure indicated by Kristjansson's ecological analysis, mainly because of much lower socialist vote among manuals. The ecological analysis on the other hand shows a similar trend in the reduction of the Alford index values from 57-80% in the 1931-1953 period to 49% in 1959. Both sets of data also clearly indicate that the non-socialist vote among manuals far exceeded the socialist vote among non-manuals.

In general the class voting profiles of the two socialist parties in Table VI.3.3 are similar. Only among the fathers of the older cohort does a clear distinction emerge: while the CP/USP support is three times greater among manual than

non-manual workers, the SDP's manual support is seven times stronger than its non-manual support. This stronger working class profile of the SDP compared to the CP/USP/PA has on the other hand all but disappeared among the fathers of the younger cohort and among voters in the 1980s.

The PP support among the manual older fathers is very weak, only 6%, but in the younger groups it is 16-17%. Somewhat astonishing is on the other hand the fact that in the older fathers' cohort the IP is 10% stronger among manuals than among non-manuals and while this trend is reversed among the younger groups, the party's support among the working class is only 2-8% weaker than in the middle class. To some extent this is a reflection of the fact that farmers are included among the non-manuals. As Table VI.3.4 shows, farmers' voting behaviour was very distinct from that of other non-manuals as well as manuals for the whole period.

The data suggests that an overwhelming majority of farmers has voted for the PP since the formation of the modern party system. Among fathers 59-64% of the farmers are reported to have supported the PP.<sup>71)</sup> In 1983 58% of farmers voted for the party and its lower share of 48% in 1987 is mainly due to the success of the new regional parties (mainly the NP and the URE) in the farming community that year. While the party gets 40% of other non-manuals among the older fathers, its support in this group is much lower among the younger fathers (16%) and the respondents

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71) An ecological analysis of the PP's vote indicates that from the 1920s to 1959, the party polled 60-80% among farmers, except in the mid-1930s when its support dropped to 50% due to the PP split that resulted in the short-lived Farmers' Party. See G.H. Kristinsson (1991), pp. 211-213.

themselves (11-12%). In the 1980s elections the party is 5 percentage points stronger among manual workers than among non-manuals outside farming.

**Table VI.3.4. Party supported by respondents' fathers in respondents' youth (as reported in 1983) and respondents vote in 1983 and 1987 among farmers, other non-manual workers and manual workers. Total samples. Percentages.**

Father's party (reported 1983)						
Respondent's father born						
	1901-1940			1941-1963		
	Farmers	Other non-man.	Man- uals	Farmers	Other non-man.	Man- uals
CP/USP/PA	2	8	12	6	9	18
SDP	4	6	34	3	13	20
PP	59	40	6	64	16	16
IP	35	46	48	27	62	47
Total	100	100	100	100	100	101
N=	(118)	(48)	(137)	(63)	(111)	(200)
-----						
Percentage socialist (CP/USP/PA, SDP)	6	15	46	8	22	38
Alford's index (EXCLUDING farmers)			+31			+16

	<i>Respondents' vote</i>					
	1983			1987		
	Farmers	Other non-man.	Man-u als	Farmers	Other non-man.	Man-u als
PA	8	15	19	7	12	15
SDP	4	10	14	2	15	19
PP	58	11	16	48	12	17
IP	30	48	37	23	36	26
WA	0	9	4	4	16	8
SDA	0	8	10			
CiP				5	7	10
Others				11	3	6
Total	100	101	100	100	101	101
N=	(50)	(314)	(355)	(101)	(581)	(604)
-----						
Percentage socialist (PA, SDP)	12	25	34	9	26	33
Alford's index (EXCLUDING farmers)			+9			+7

The IP's following among farmers is rather similar in our four groups: 27-35% among fathers and 1983 voters, but dropping to 23% in the party's disastrous 1987 election. Among our older fathers the IP is still 2% stronger among manuals than non-manuals outside farming, mainly because of the strong showing of the PP in the latter group. In other groups we get on the other hand the expected relationship: manual support for the IP is weaker than among non-farming non-manuals among younger fathers (-15) and voters both in 1983 (-11) and 1987 (-10). For most of the period the IP thus seems to have been weakest among farmers, stronger among manual workers and strongest among non-manuals outside the farming community. It should nevertheless be underlined, that the party's working class support is very impressive even if compared to Britain's Conservatives, not to mention their Scandinavian counterparts.

The socialist parties enjoy the least support among farmers in all groups, less than among other non-manuals. The USP/PA has nevertheless clearly had a greater appeal to farmers than the SDP. If we calculate an Alford index excluding farmers class voting tends to be somewhat lower than when farmers are included, especially among fathers. The general trend is nevertheless the same, a sharp decline in class voting.

In our calculations of class voting the new parties in 1983 and 1987 have been counted with the non-socialist parties. Their class profiles are nevertheless of interest. The WA, obviously furthest to the left of those parties, is like many green or protest parties of the 1980s clearly a middle class party both in 1983 and 1987. The SDA, the anti-

establishment party of liberal social democrats, had a slight class profile in 1983, except that it had no support among farmers. The CiP in 1987 was stronger among the working class than the middle class, while the small regional parties appealed most strongly to farmers.

We have already mentioned that the manual/non-manual division is a crude one; it can in fact hide as much as it reveals if the groups within each class are heterogeneous. In the remainder of this section we will examine the relationship of other class-related variables to voting behaviour.

Table VI.3.5 gives vote by occupation. We use a 7-fold occupational scale. All *farmers* and *seamen* are included in their occupational categories,<sup>72)</sup> while employers are included in the category *employers and higher managerial and administrative* along with higher management jobs, both in public and private employment. *Unskilled manual workers* include e.g. workers in the fishing industry, construction and industry, and some service occupations like cleaning and catering. *Skilled manuals* are tradesmen and drivers, many of them self-employed, police officers and foremen. *Lower non-manuals* includes routine clerical and commercial jobs. *Professionals and skilled non-manuals* include university educated professionals like physicians and lawyers, but also occupations where only some have a university education, like teachers, nurses and artists.

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72) Including a few who hire labour.

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**Table VI.3.5. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by occupation.**  
**Total samples. Percentages.**

		<i>Farm- ers</i>	<i>Sea- men</i>	<i>Unsk. man.</i>	<i>Sk. man.</i>	<i>Lo. non.</i>	<i>Pro. sk.n.</i>	<i>Emp. hi.m.</i>	<i>House wives</i>
Fathers	4	27	33	21	13	19	7	-	
SDP 1983	4	11	17	13	11	10	9	17	
1987	2	15	16	23	16	15	12	16	
Fathers	61	11	17	10	23	32	20	-	
PP 1983	58	21	13	16	15	7	9	15	
1987	48	20	16	18	15	10	11	15	
Fathers	32	50	30	54	54	39	65	-	
IP 1983	30	32	35	41	44	37	64	52	
1987	23	27	24	28	30	24	57	29	
Fathers	3	11	20	16	10	10	8	-	
PA 1983	8	30	18	18	13	21	10	9	
1987	7	21	16	10	10	18	7	12	
WA 1983	0	2	6	2	7	17	3	5	
1987	4	5	13	4	17	26	5	16	
SDA 1983	0	5	12	10	10	7	4	2	
CiP 1987	5	6	10	12	8	4	7	7	
Oth 1987	11	6	5	6	3	4	1	4	
TOTAL:									
Fathers	100	99	100	101	100	100	101	-	
N=	(181)	(114)	(76)	(147)	(39)	(31)	(89)	-	
1983	100	101	101	100	100	99	99	100	
N=	(50)	(44)	(159)	(152)	(131)	(93)	(90)	(93)	
1987	100	100	100	101	99	101	100	99	
N=	(101)	(88)	(284)	(231)	(247)	(172)	(162)	(103)	

The decline of class voting is clearly reflected in the voting behaviour of the seven occupational categories. Among the fathers all four of the old parties have clear profiles, and their support differs greatly in the various occupations. In 1983 and 1987 the differences, in general, are much smaller. Only three outstanding deviations remain in the 1980s: the extremely weak position of the SDP among farmers and the overwhelming support that the PP enjoys among farmers and the IP among employers and higher

managerial and administrative. But while the occupational differences in voting have generally become weak, some of the old patterns nevertheless remain, as can clearly be seen in Table VI.3.6.<sup>73)</sup> Some changes of the old patterns that have taken place are also of great interest.

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**Table VI.3.6. Ranking of occupations within each party by strength of support for that party. Fathers, voters 1983 and voters 1987. Total samples. Percentage supporting party within each category in brackets.**

<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Voters 1983</i>	<i>Voters 1987</i>
<b>CP/USP/PA</b>		
1. Unsk man (20)	1. Seamen (30)	1. Seamen (21)
2. Sk man (16)	2. Prof (21)	2. Prof (18)
3. Seamen (11)	3. Sk man (18)	3. Unsk man (16)
4. Lo non-man (10)	4. Unsk man (18)	4. Lo non-man (10)
5. Prof (10)	5. Lo non-man (13)	5. Sk man (10)
6. Empl/manag (8)	6. Empl/manag (10)	6. Farmers (7)
7. Farmers (3)	7. Farmers (8)	7. Empl/manag (7)
<b>SDP</b>		
1. Unsk man (33)	1. Unsk man (17)	1. Sk man (23)
2. Seamen (27)	2. Sk man (13)	2. Unsk man (16)
3. Sk man (21)	3. Seamen (11)	3. Lo man-man (16)
4. Prof (19)	4. Lo non-man (11)	4. Prof (15)
5. Lo non-man (13)	5. Prof (10)	5. Seamen (15)
6. Empl/manag (7)	6. Empl/manag (9)	6. Empl/manag (12)
7. Farmers (4)	7. Farmers (4)	7. Farmers (2)
<b>PP</b>		
1. Farmers (61)	1. Farmers (58)	1. Farmers (48)
2. Prof (32)	2. Seamen (21)	2. Seamen (20)
3. Lo non-man (23)	3. Sk man (16)	3. Sk man (18)
4. Empl/manag (20)	4. Lo non-man (15)	4. Unsk man (16)
5. Unsk man (17)	5. Unsk man (13)	5. Lo non-man (15)
6. Seamen (11)	6. Empl/manag (9)	6. Empl/manag (11)
7. Sk man (10)	7. Prof (7)	7. Prof (10)
<b>IP</b>		
1. Empl/manag (65)	1. Empl/mang (64)	1. Empl/manag (57)
2. Lo non-man (54)	2. Lo non-man (44)	2. Lo non-man (30)
3. Sk man (54)	3. Sk man (41)	3. Sk man (28)
4. Seamen (50)	4. Prof (37)	4. Seamen (27)
5. Prof (39)	5. Unsk man (35)	5. Unsk man (24)
6. Farmers (32)	6. Seamen (32)	6. Prof (24)
7. Unsk man (30)	7. Farmers (30)	7. Farmers (23)

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 When the same percentages are shown for two occupations the ranking order has been determined by the decimal fractions.  
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<sup>73)</sup> Table VI.3.6 gives the same information as Table VI.3.5 in a simpler form, but only for the four old parties.

The occupational profile of the CP/USP/PA among fathers is weaker than the profiles of the other old parties but the party was clearly strongest among skilled and unskilled manual workers, considerably weaker among seamen and those in non-manual occupations, and very weak among farmers. In both of the elections in the 1980s the party was, on the other hand, strongest among seamen and professionals and skilled non-manuals. The party remained relatively strong among unskilled manual workers in both elections and continued to be weakest among farmers and the group of employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations. The party's farming support was nevertheless considerably stronger among voters in the 1980s than it had been among the fathers. The party's strength among seamen in the 1980s may to some extent be a result of PA's emphasis on the periphery and regional policy or to the tough stand the party took on extending the fishery limits. Its strong showing among professionals and skilled non-manuals, many of whom work in the public sector, is an example of the new left middle class radicalism in Iceland which also is manifested in the following of the WA.

The SDP has maintained its working class character to a greater degree than the PA. While the party's occupational profile had become much weaker in the 1980s, the SDP still enjoyed its greatest support among skilled and unskilled manual workers but the party had lost its strong support among seamen. The party is consistently weak among employers and the higher managerial and administrative occupations and very weak among farmers.



The profile of the PP has changed considerably. While the party is consistently very strong among farmers, it has become more working class. Among the fathers the PP was clearly stronger among non-manuals than among skilled and unskilled manual workers and seamen. In the 1980s the party's strongest support - outside the farming sector - came from seamen and skilled manual workers and was somewhat weaker among unskilled manuals and lower non-manuals. Both in 1983 and 1987 the PP was clearly weakest among employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations on the one hand and among professionals and skilled non-manuals on the other. This occupational profile fits the strong educational profile of the PP; we observed earlier (Table VI.2.1) that the PP is much stronger among those with little education. Those characteristics of the party fit the fact that the party is weak in "the new economy" in Reykjavik and the Southwest but strong in "the old economy" in the regions.

The IP has been successful in maintaining its very strong support among employers and the higher managerial and administrative occupations. The differences in the party's support among other occupations were on the other hand much smaller in the 1980s - especially in 1987 - than among the fathers. The lower non-manuals continued to be the IP's second strongest occupation. Among the fathers the IP was surprisingly strong among seamen and skilled manual workers, while the party was weakest among farmers and unskilled workers. The gap between skilled and unskilled manual workers remained in the 1980s but narrowed considerably. The skilled manual workers continued to be the IP's third

strongest occupation, while the IP continued to be rather weak among unskilled manual workers and farmers. Somewhat surprising is the relatively weak position of the party among professionals and skilled non-manuals. On the whole, the profile of the IP does not follow the manual/non-manual divide neatly.

Table VI.3.5 shows that the strong showing of the WA among non-manuals is most pronounced among professionals and skilled non-manuals. The party is also relatively strong among lower non-manuals and unskilled workers but weak in other occupations. We will later examine, if this is to some extent simply due to different male/female ratios inside the occupations. There are some similarities in the occupational profiles of the SDA in 1983 and CiP in 1987; both parties are strongest among manual and lower non-manual workers.

Table VI.3.7 shows a further breakdown of voting behaviour within the working class. It has to be borne in mind that the number of respondents in some of the groups is really too small for any serious analysis. Two things of interest can nevertheless be pointed out. First, in both elections in the 1980s the SDP is stronger among workers in the fish industry, construction and other industries than among service workers, while the reverse is true for the WA. Second, among the fathers the IP enjoys extremely high support of foremen, police officers and drivers while its support among tradesmen is lower, even though it is considerably higher than among unskilled workers. In the 1980s foremen and police officers remained the IP's stronghold in the working class and tradesmen supported the party to a greater extent than unskilled workers.

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**Table VI.3.7. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by occupation:  
 Manual workers. Total sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Unskilled manual</i>		<i>Skilled manual</i>			
	Fish industry	Industry constr.	Services	Foremen, police	Drivers	Tradesmen
Fathers	30	40	31	17	8	28
SDP 1983	22	19	14	0	16	15
1987	26	19	12	9	19	27
Fathers	40	7	16	17	8	8
PP 1983	17	16	11	16	28	13
1987	12	22	15	23	34	12
Fathers	20	33	31	63	69	45
IP 1983	31	30	38	56	34	40
1987	26	23	23	37	23	28
Fathers	10	20	22	4	14	20
PA 1983	19	14	19	16	9	21
1987	16	16	17	20	2	10
WA 1983	3	5	7	0	3	2
1987	5	8	18	0	5	4
SDA 1983	8	16	12	12	9	10
CiP 1987	10	10	10	6	11	14
Others 1987	6	2	5	6	7	6
Tot.fathers	100	100	100	101	99	101
N=	(10)	(15)	(51)	(24)	(36)	(87)
Total 1983	100	100	101	100	99	101
N=	(36)	(37)	(86)	(25)	(32)	(95)
Total 1987	101	100	100	101	101	101
N=	(63)	(60)	(161)	(35)	(43)	(154)

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Table VI.3.8 gives a further breakdown of the non-manuals. We have divided professionals and skilled non-manuals into three groups. Despite the far too low number of respondents in some groups, a clear difference emerges between the professionals on the one hand and "the caring professions" - i.e. teachers, nurses and similar occupations - on the other. The reason for the low share of the IP among professionals and skilled non-manuals that we observed

earlier is the party's weak standing in the caring professions. The party is on the other hand as strong among professionals as among lower non-manuals but considerably weaker than among employers and higher managerial.

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**Table VI.3.8. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by occupation:  
 Non-manual workers. Total samples. Percentages.**

	<i>Lower non-man.</i>	<i>Nurses, etc.</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Profess- ionals</i>	<i>Employers hi.manag.</i>
Fathers	13	-	14	24	7
SDP 1983	11	14	13	5	9
1987	16	18	15	13	12
Fathers	23	-	50	18	20
PP 1983	15	5	13	5	9
1987	15	9	13	7	11
Fathers	54	-	29	47	65
IP 1983	44	36	19	50	64
1987	30	18	15	35	57
Fathers	10	-	7	12	8
PA 1983	13	27	23	18	10
1987	10	21	15	20	7
WA 1983	7	14	19	18	3
1987	17	32	30	19	5
SDA 1983	10	5	13	5	4
CiP 1987	8	0	7	3	7
Others 1987	3	2	5	3	1
Tot.fathers	100	-	100	101	100
N=	(39)	(0)	(14)	(17)	(89)
Total 1983	100	101	100	101	99
N=	(131)	(22)	(31)	(40)	(90)
Total 1987	99	100	100	100	100
N=	(247)	(44)	(60)	(68)	(162)

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The PA and the WA are exceptionally strong among the caring professions, the PA being the stronger of the two in 1983 but having clearly lost first place to the WA in 1987. In 1983 the parties obtained jointly 41% of the votes of nurses, etc. while this figure rose to 53% in 1987. The

parties obtained 42-45% of teachers' votes in those elections. While the parties were not quite as strong among professionals in the 1980s elections, they nevertheless got 36-39% of the votes in that group.

A further note is needed on the occupational profile of the WA. Is the occupational profile of the party - which gets around 80% of its votes from women - simply a reflection of the fact that women are more numerous in some occupations than others? Table VI.3.8 gives the WA share of votes among males and females in different occupations and while some of the groups are too small to be of any significance, the table on the whole nevertheless gives a reasonably clear answer to the question.

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**Table VI.3.8. The WA's share of votes in 1983 and 1987 by sex and occupation. Total samples. Percentages.**

	<i>Men</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Women</i>		<i>N</i>
	1983	1987		1983	1987	
	%	%		%	%	
Farmers	0	0	(38/62)	0	11	(12/37)
Seamen	2	5	(43/88)	0	0	(1/0)
Unskilled manuals	2	8	(61/110)	8	16	(98/174)
-Fish industry	0	6	(9/16)	4	4	(27/47)
-Oth ind,construct	4	8	(25/48)	8	8	(12/12)
-Services	0	9	(27/47)	10	22	(59/114)
Skilled manuals	1	2	(145/215)	14	25	(7/16)
Lower non-manuals	3	4	(39/72)	9	23	(92/174)
Prof,skilled non-man	13	15	(48/69)	22	34	(45/103)
-Nurses etc.	0	0	(2/0)	15	32	(20/44)
-Teachers	6	16	(18/25)	39	40	(13/35)
-Professionals	18	14	(28/44)	17	29	(12/24)
Empl,hi manag	1	2	(77/128)	15	15	(13/34)

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On the whole, the occupational profile of the WA is not simply a reflection of the male/female ratio in the different occupations. Women in non-manual jobs are in general more supportive of the WA than are women in manual

jobs. The male/female ratio is nevertheless not without consequences.

As in the electorate in general, the WA is weakest among women in the primary industries, farming and the fishing industry, where the party obtained only 4% of women's votes both in 1983 and 1987. The party is stronger among women in unskilled manual service jobs and lower non-manual jobs, obtaining 9-10% of the votes in 1983 and 22-23% in 1987. The very few women in skilled manual occupations show similar support for the party; if those figures can be trusted the very low overall figure for the WA among skilled manuals is a function of the domination of men in this category.

The strong position of the WA among professionals and the caring professions is on the other hand clearly not a reflection of the gender ratio. Those groups show the strongest support for the WA in 1983 and 1987, both among men and women. The WA gets less support from the few women in higher managerial and administrative jobs, especially in 1987, but the difference is not as great as the overall figures indicate, as the party gets virtually no support from men in the heavily dominated male category.

Table VI.3.9 gives voting behaviour by another class-related measure: a division between employers, self-employed and employees. Employers are the most homogeneous - or class conscious - economic group yet encountered. Among fathers 82% of employers voted for the IP. In 1983 the IP got 71% of the employers' vote, but the lower figure of 57% in 1987 should be interpreted in the light of the heavy losses of the IP in that election.

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**Table VI.3.9. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by occupational status. Total samples. Percentages.**

	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Self-employed</i>			<i>Employees</i>		
		All	NOT in agricult.	All	Priv. sect.	Publ. sect.	Co-ops
Fathers	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	19	<b>24</b>	na	na	na
SDP 1983	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	14	<b>13</b>	17	9	9
1987	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	15	<b>17</b>	21	13	18
Fathers	<b>8</b>	<b>50</b>	17	<b>18</b>	na	na	na
PP 1983	<b>7</b>	<b>41</b>	17	<b>14</b>	12	11	30
1987	<b>14</b>	<b>36</b>	24	<b>15</b>	14	14	23
Fathers	<b>82</b>	<b>37</b>	50	<b>44</b>	na	na	na
IP 1983	<b>71</b>	<b>31</b>	36	<b>40</b>	42	37	30
1987	<b>57</b>	<b>23</b>	24	<b>28</b>	30	24	28
Fathers	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	15	<b>14</b>	na	na	na
PA 1983	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	19	<b>18</b>	15	22	20
1987	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	10	<b>14</b>	12	19	13
WA 1983	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	6	<b>6</b>	4	11	4
1987	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	7	<b>13</b>	10	20	5
SDA 1983	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	8	<b>10</b>	10	10	7
CiP 1987	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	10	<b>8</b>	10	7	8
Others 1987	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	9	<b>4</b>	4	4	6
Tot. fath.	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	101	<b>100</b>			
	(62)	(231)	(54)	(381)			
Total 1983	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	100	<b>101</b>	100	100	100
N=	(59)	(83)	(36)	(578)	(250)	(227)	(70)
Total 1987	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>	99	<b>99</b>	101	101	101
N=	(120)	(147)	(71)	(1007)	(502)	(384)	(86)

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As farmers constitute a large part of the self-employed the PP is strong in this group. If we exclude farmers from this category a different picture emerges. The voting behaviour of the self-employed outside farming, largely consisting of own-account manual workers, is on the whole rather similar to that of employees. Among fathers the IP is somewhat stronger in this group than among employees, although somewhat weaker in the elections of the 1980s. The

tendency of the "petty bourgeoisie" to vote heavily conservative in Britain and Sweden discussed earlier in this section is clearly absent in Iceland.

Another class-related division which has received increasing attention in recent years is that between the public and private sectors. The public sector has grown considerably in the last few decades in most Western democracies. Recently this growth and the expansion of the welfare state have increasingly been criticized, especially on the right wing of the political spectrum. Thus it is not unreasonable to expect those who earn their living in the public sector to be more likely to support the left.

The emphasis here is on the growth of welfare state occupations like teaching, nursing and social work which are funded through taxation. Correspondingly, their members are seen to have a greater interest, like the working class, in government intervention in the economy and government spending on the welfare services.<sup>74)</sup>

Hans Zetterberg puts the point more bluntly - arguing that increasing sectorial voting, which was not previously strong in Sweden, was the reason for the Social Democrat victories in 1982 and 1985. Zetterberg claims that "the great conflict in society now is not only - or mainly - a class struggle but a sectorial struggle, a struggle over resources between the private and the public sector". Voters dependent on the public sector can hardly be expected to "bite the hand that feeds them".<sup>75)</sup>

Zetterberg's claims are greatly overstated in light of the empirical evidence. In 1985 the Social Democrats and the

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74) A. Heath *et al.* (1985), p. 58.

75) H. Zetterberg, *Sifo Indicator* (1985), quoted in S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), p. 191. My translation.



Communists obtained 52% of the votes in the public sector and 46% in the private sector. The Conservatives got 24% in the private sector and 15% in the public sector. An inclusion of welfare clients, such as pensioners and long-term hospitalized or unemployed, in the public sector only marginally increases the differences. The difference in voting for the Social Democrats and the Communists in the public and the private sector was +2 in 1976, +5 in 1979, +8 in 1982 and +6 in 1985. The corresponding figures for the Conservatives were +1 in 1976, -3 in 1979 and -9 in 1982 and 1985.<sup>76)</sup> The sectorial voting, while going in the expected direction, is much weaker in Sweden than class voting.

In Denmark on the other hand there was a much greater increase in sectorial voting in the 1970s and 1980s. The percentage difference in socialist voting in the public and private sector was 0 in 1971, +7 in 1975, +17 in 1979, +27 in 1981 and +13 in 1984.<sup>77)</sup>

In Britain the voting differences between the public and private sector have been more modest. In 1979 the Conservatives got 37% in the public and 45% in the private sector (-8%) while the figures for Labour were 44% and 39% (+5%).<sup>78)</sup> The differences in Conservative voting were greatest among managerial and professional (-9), lower non-manual (-6) and unskilled manual (-13).<sup>79)</sup> Sarlvik and Crewe conclude that

the division between private and public sector did not prove to be a major basis of the vote in 1979, or of the change in vote since October 1974 ... It is true, too, that the

76) See S. Holmberg and M. Gilljam (1987), pp. 191-198.

77) J. Goul Andersen (1984), p. 121.

78) B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe (1983), Table 3.9, p. 96.

79) See D. Robertson (1984), Table 2.4, p. 50.

Conservative vote was lower and the Labour (and Liberal) vote higher among public-sector as opposed to private-sector workers, and that this was irrespective of whether they did manual or non-manual jobs. But the difference between the sectors was relatively small, falling well short of that made by the division between manual and non-manual workers.<sup>80)</sup>

In their analysis of the 1983 election, Heath *et al.* divide the public sector into two sections: the nationalized industries and the government sector. The difference in Conservative voting between their two public sectors on the one hand and the private sector on the other was -15% and -16% among their salariat, -15% and -12% among their intermediate classes, and -17% and -5% in the working class.<sup>81)</sup>

In Iceland we would not necessarily expect a division between the private and the public sector following the socialist/non-socialist division. While the IP has clearly been the party most critical of increased taxation, it can be argued that the SDP has been most critical of the heavy state regulation of the economy. While the SDP claims a firm commitment to the welfare state - as in fact the IP also does - the Social Democrats have probably been more critical of public sector expansion and increased taxation than the PP. The PA and the WA have been the strongest advocates of the welfare state, demanding increased public spending for welfare, and those parties, along with the PP, have most strongly supported the current state regulation of the economy.

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<sup>80)</sup> B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe (1983), pp. 95-97.

<sup>81)</sup> A. Heath *et al.* (1985), p. 69.

In Table VI.3.10 we have divided the voters in three groups: the private sector, the public sector and those who work for the co-operative movement, traditionally strongly linked to the PP. Not unexpectedly, the PP is much stronger among co-op employees than in the other sectors. Most interesting, however, is the clear distinction that emerges between the public and the private sector.

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**Table VI.3.10. Party voted for 1983 and 1987 by sector.**  
**Total samples. Percentages.**

	1983				1987			
	Private sector	Public sector	Co-ops	Public-private	Private sector	Public sector	Co-ops	Public-private
SDP	14	9	8	-5	17	13	16	-4
PP	17	11	30	-6	18	14	26	-4
IP	44	37	31	-7	32	24	29	-8
PA	13	22	19	+9	10	19	12	+9
WA	3	11	4	+8	9	20	4	+11
SDA	8	10	8	+2	-	-	-	-
CiP	-	-	-	-	9	7	7	-2
Others	-	-	-	-	5	4	6	-1
Total	99	100	100		100	101	100	
N=	(387)	(227)	(74)		(757)	(387)	(91)	

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The parties of the public sector are clearly the PA and the WA, both of which are 8-11 percentage points stronger in the public sector. Those parties jointly obtained 16% of the votes in the private sector in 1983, while their share in the public sector was more than twice as high at 33%. In 1987 the corresponding figures were 19% and 39% respectively, a difference of +20 percentage points.

SDP, PP and IP are all stronger in the private sector. As expected, the difference is greatest for the IP, -7 in 1983 and -8 in 1987.

In Table VI.3.10 employers and the self-employed, including farmers, are by definition included in the private

sector. Table VI.3.9 shows on the other hand if the division we have observed also holds for employees in the public and the private sector.

As the PA and WA are relatively weak among employers and self-employed the difference between the public and private sectors decreases when those groups are excluded. Nevertheless, a strong pattern remains. Among employees those two parties obtained 19% in the private sector in 1983 as compared to 33% in the public sector. In 1987 the figures are 22% and 39% respectively.

The strong position of the IP among employers leads to slight decrease in the difference between the public and private sector when we only look at employees. The weak position of the SDP among employers and self-employed on the other hand increases the difference. Among employees the SDP shows the greatest overrepresentation in the private sector; both in 1983 and 1987 the party received 8% more votes among employees in the private sector than in the public sector.

The strong position of the PP among farmers means that the differences between public and private sectors decrease when they are excluded. Among employees there is virtually no difference in the support for PP in the two sectors either in 1983 or 1987.

While the differences between the public and private sector in Iceland are not much stronger than in Britain and Sweden, the existence of such a pattern is nevertheless very interesting considering the meagre impact of other class-related variables on Icelandic voting.

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**Table VI.3.11. Strength of party identification, party switching, and non-voting by occupation 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		<i>Farm- ers</i>	<i>Sea- men</i>	<i>Unsk. man.</i>	<i>Sk. man.</i>	<i>Lo. non.</i>	<i>Pro. sk.n.</i>	<i>Emp. hi.m.</i>
<b>STRENGTH OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>								
Party supporter								
1983		66	52	47	51	50	46	57
1987		63	41	38	45	48	47	60
Closer to a party								
1983		20	26	34	26	38	38	27
1987		28	33	33	33	29	39	25
No party ident.								
1983		15	22	19	23	12	16	16
1987		8	26	29	22	23	15	15
Total	1983	101	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=		(55)	(54)	(194)	(174)	(149)	(108)	(97)
Total	1987	99	100	100	100	100	101	100
N=		(107)	(99)	(324)	(257)	(269)	(189)	(171)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>								
Switched parties								
1979-1983		11	19	24	30	25	32	16
N=		(47)	(32)	(131)	(130)	(106)	(79)	(81)
1983-1987		26	35	39	39	40	35	25
N=		(91)	(66)	(210)	(179)	(187)	(151)	(147)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>								
Did not vote								
1983		7	12	8	8	5	4	4
N=		(54)	(51)	(184)	(168)	(142)	(102)	(95)
1987		4	7	5	4	2	2	1
N=		(106)	(97)	(305)	(244)	(258)	(177)	(165)

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 For base of dep. variables see Tables VI.1.2 and VI.1.6.  
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Two occupations show less volatility than others, as can be seen in Table VI.3.11, farmers and employers and higher managerials. These same occupational categories showed by far the most homogeneous voting behaviour (see Table VI.3.5). In 1983 only 11% of farmers and 16% of employers switched parties, while 19-32% of voters in other occupational categories did so. In 1987 26% of farmers and 25% of employers and higher managerials switched parties, while the corresponding figure was 35-40% for other

occupations. The overall increase in volatility in 1987 is on the other hand a result of increased party switching in all occupations from 1983 to 1987.

The strength of party identification follows a similar pattern. 63-66% of farmers and 57-60% of employers and higher managerials consider themselves party supporters, while the corresponding figures are 46-52% for other occupations in 1983 and 38-48% in 1987.

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**Table VI.3.12. Time of voting decision by occupation 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		<i>Farm- ers</i>	<i>Sea- men</i>	<i>Unsk. man.</i>	<i>Sk. man.</i>	<i>Lo. non.</i>	<i>Pro. sk.n.</i>	<i>Emp. hi.m.</i>
Did not con- sider another party	1983	81	63	51	46	45	43	51
	1987	63	40	40	37	38	33	39
More than a month before	1983	8	5	13	14	7	16	7
	1987	8	10	8	8	9	14	7
8-30 days before	1983	2	9	7	8	8	6	10
	1987	11	12	14	18	11	16	16
One week before	1983	4	7	11	10	11	9	7
	1987	6	10	9	10	6	4	6
During the last week	1983	2	5	9	8	11	16	10
	1987	4	14	10	11	13	13	17
On polling day	1983	2	12	11	15	19	11	15
	1987	9	14	20	16	23	21	15
Total	1983	99	101	102	101	101	101	100
N=		(48)	(43)	(152)	(147)	(129)	(90)	(88)
Total	1987	101	100	101	100	100	101	100
N=		(101)	(88)	(283)	(229)	(243)	(171)	(162)

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 For the base of dependent variable see Table VI.1.2.  
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Table VI.3.12 shows on the other hand that only farmers stand out concerning the time of voting decision. In 1983 81% of farmers did not consider voting for another party, as compared to 63% of seamen and 43-51% in other occupations. In 1987 the number not considering another party had fallen

in all occupational categories, but farmers still stand out: 63% of them did not consider another party, while the corresponding figure was 33-40% in other occupations. On the whole, farmers and employers and higher managerials, the only remaining occupational groups that still show a considerable "class consciousness", are also the two occupations that show the strongest ties to the party system.

**Table VI.3.13. Strength of party identification, party switching, and non-voting by class, sector and occupational status 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		CLASS		SECTOR		OCCUP. STATUS		
		Man- uals	Non- man.	Priv. sect.	Publ. sect.	Empl- oyers	Self- empl.	Empl- oyees
<b>STRENGTH OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>								
Party supporter								
	1983	50	53	53	46	57	64	49
	1987	41	53	48	46	55	50	46
Closer to a party								
	1983	30	33	29	35	26	21	33
	1987	33	31	30	36	29	31	32
No party ident.								
	1983	21	14	18	19	17	15	18
	1987	26	17	22	19	16	19	22
Total	1983	101	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=		(422)	(409)	(531)	(263)	(65)	(95)	(671)
Total	1987	100	101	100	101	100	100	100
N=		(679)	(735)	(927)	(428)	(129)	(162)	(1111)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>								
Switched parties								
	1979-1983	26	22	22	29	11	14	27
N=		(293)	(313)	(390)	(188)	(53)	(72)	(481)
	1983-1987	39	33	35	37	31	37	36
N=		(455)	(576)	(673)	(319)	(105)	(122)	(794)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>								
Did not vote								
	1983	8	5	7	5	5	8	7
N=		(403)	(393)	(511)	(251)	(63)	(92)	(642)
	1987	5	2	3	3	2	6	3
N=		(647)	(706)	(889)	(405)	(124)	(157)	(1058)

For base of dep. variables see Tables VI.1.2 and VI.1.6.

Tables VI.3.13 and VI.3.14 show the same variables by class, sector and occupational status. While the differences in most instances are not great, manual workers, public sector voters and employees tend to show weaker party identification and more party switching than non-manual workers, private sector voters and employers and self-employed. To a large extent, this is simply a result of the fact that farmers and employers and higher managerials are mostly included in the latter categories.

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**Table VI.3.14. Time of voting decision by class, sector and occupational status 1983 and 1987. Total samples. Percentages.**

		CLASS		SECTOR		OCCUP. STATUS		
		Man- uals	Non- man.	Priv. sect.	Publ. sect.	Empl- oyers	Self- empl.	Empl- oyees
Did not con- sider another party	1983	50	51	52	47	52	72	47
	1987	39	41	39	40	36	47	39
More than a month before	1983	12	9	10	13	9	10	11
	1987	9	10	8	12	8	10	10
8-30 days before	1983	8	7	8	5	9	1	8
	1987	15	13	14	15	18	14	14
One week before	1983	10	9	8	11	5	5	10
	1987	9	6	9	5	9	6	8
During the last week	1983	8	11	9	11	12	7	10
	1987	11	12	11	13	15	9	12
On polling day	1983	13	14	13	13	14	5	14
	1987	17	19	19	15	15	15	19
Total	1983	101	102	100	100	101	100	100
N=		(342)	(355)	(448)	(219)	(58)	(81)	(559)
Total	1987	100	101	100	100	101	101	102
N=		(601)	(677)	(846)	(381)	(120)	(147)	(999)

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 For base of the dependent variable see Table VI.1.2.  
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Concerning the time of voting decision only the self-employed (a large part of which consists of farmers) stand



out: a larger proportion did not consider another party than was the case in other occupational categories.

Non-voting is clearly more common among manuals and farmers than among the middle classes, the lowest turnout being among seamen, who are often at sea on polling day.

#### **VI.4 Income**

Income is a background variable that is usually related to other background variables such as age, sex, education, occupation, sector, etc. It is common in the literature on voting behaviour that income is not treated as an independent variable. There are several reasons behind this. Some classification schemes, like the British one of six social grades, do in fact follow the income structure rather neatly, so it can be argued that a separate analysis of incomes is not necessary. Some authors, e.g. Heath et al. who reject the usefulness of the social grades scheme "question whether income and life-style are particularly relevant to politics".<sup>82)</sup> Others who use income as a variable claim that more interesting than a simple analysis of the relationship between income and party vote is the question of whether income variations within occupations are related to political preferences.<sup>83)</sup> Here we will nevertheless treat income as an independent variable and examine if it is more strongly related to our political variables than other class- or status-related background variables.

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<sup>82)</sup> Heath et al. (1985), p. 14.

<sup>83)</sup> See H. Valen (1981), pp. 114-115.

Income has been related to party choice in the Nordic countries. In Norway the main pattern was similar both in 1977 and 1981. The Labour Party was much stronger among the middle income groups (43-45% in 1981) than among those with the highest (24%) and lowest income (25%). The Conservatives obtained much higher percentages in the top income group (51% in 1981) than in lower groups (20-33%). The centre parties had a more even profile, but tended to get more votes in the lower income groups; those parties are relatively strong in the primary sector.<sup>84)</sup> In Denmark the Social Democrats obtained only 17% in the highest income group in 1971 but 37-47% in others. The Conservatives got 9-11% in the two lowest income groups, 17% in the second highest and 28% in the highest income group. Other parties had weaker profiles.<sup>85)</sup> In Sweden in 1976 the Social Democrats obtained 30% in the highest income group, while getting 43-52% in the lower ones. While the Conservatives got 28% in the highest income group, their share was 10-13% in the lower ones. The other parties had weaker profiles.<sup>86)</sup> Thus, similar tendencies can be observed in all three countries: there are no simple linear relationships between income and voting, but among those with highest income the Social Democrats tend to be much weaker than among the rest of the electorate and the Conservatives much stronger.

In Iceland we only have data on income for the 1987 election, when we asked both for the respondent's own income

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84) See H. Valen (1981), pp. 114-115 and H. Valen and B. Aardal (1983), pp. 71-72.

85) O. Borre et al. (1976), p. 55.

86) O. Petersson (1977), p. 46.

and for family income. Compared to Scandinavia the income profiles of the Icelandic parties are clearly weaker.

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**Table VI.4.1. Party voted for by own income 1987. Total sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Own income (in thousands of kronur)</i>				
	3-24	25-39	40-58	60-83	85-600
PA	17	12	17	14	15
WA	17	18	14	10	4
SDP	11	19	17	17	19
PP	21	14	14	17	9
CiP	5	8	9	7	8
IP	25	23	25	34	40
Other parties	5	6	5	2	5
Total	101	100	101	101	100
N=	(174)	(189)	(175)	(200)	(202)

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**Table VI.4.2. Party voted for by family income 1987. Total sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Family income (in thousands of kronur)</i>				
	4-42	43-69	70-89	90-118	120-600
PA	18	16	12	13	14
WA	15	11	12	14	10
SDP	14	16	17	22	16
PP	18	17	20	8	17
CiP	6	8	9	7	9
IP	21	28	27	34	32
Other parties	8	4	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	101	101
N=	(222)	(222)	(217)	(250)	(301)

Table VI.4.1 shows party vote by own income. The IP shows a profile similar to the Nordic one, but weaker: the party obtains 23-25% of the votes in the three lowest income groups, 34% in the second highest, and 40% in the highest. The party with a reverse profile turns out to be the WA, obtaining 14-18% in the three lowest income groups, 10% in the second highest and only 4% in the highest income group. The WA's profile is largely due to the lower income of women as compared to men, as we shall see.

Other parties have weaker profiles. The PA and the CiP do not have any profiles to speak of but SDP is clearly weakest in the lowest income group and the PP in the highest.

Table VI.4.2 shows the party voted for by family income. Now all the parties have weak profiles; the strongest one is that of the IP, which obtained 21% in the lowest income group but 32-34% in the two highest ones.

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**Table VI.4.3. Mean own income (kronur) by vote and sex 1987. Mean family income (kronur) by vote 1987. Total sample. Percentages.**

	All voters	Own income		Family income	
		Male voters	Female voters	Male voters	All voters
PA	60.200 (138)	77.400 (83)	34.000 (55)	87.500 (175)	
WA	43.200 (115)	76.700 (27)	32.900 (88)	79.400 (148)	
SDP	63.300 (155)	78.600 (100)	35.900 (55)	92.100 (207)	
PP	55.000 (137)	75.200 (76)	29.800 (61)	88.600 (188)	
CiP	64.500 (70)	81.600 (46)	30.300 (23)	98.000 (94)	
IP	70.300 (280)	89.500 (176)	37.600 (103)	97.500 (346)	
All	61.200 (894)	81.800 (508)	34.100 (386)	91.300 (1157)	

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 Only respondents with some income are included in the table. Means are rounded to the nearest hundred. Numbers in brackets give the number of respondents in each category.

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 MCA analysis shows that the rather weak relationship between own income and party ( $\text{ETA}=.17$ ) goes down when controlled for by sex ( $\text{BETA}=.09$ ). The strong relationship between own income and sex ( $\text{ETA}=.47$ ) on the other hand remains when controlled for by vote ( $\text{BETA}=.46$ ). The relationship between family income and vote is very weak ( $\text{ETA}=.11$ ,  $\text{BETA}=.08$  when controlled for by sex). The relationship between family income and sex is also low ( $\text{ETA}=.16$ ,  $\text{BETA}=.14$  when controlled for by vote).

The mean difference in own income between voter group is significantly different according to LSD procedure (.05) between WA and IP, CiP, SDP, PA and between PP and IP, but according to Scheffe (.05) only between WA and IP. Among men the mean own income was not significantly different between any two voter groups, neither according to LSD nor Scheffe. Among women PP and IP were sign. diff. by the LSD-test but no two groups according to Scheffe. Mean family income was significantly different between WA and IP, CiP, SDP by LSD; no two groups by Scheffe.

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Table VI.4.3 shows the mean income of males and females by party. The table clearly reveals that the main reason for the much lower own income among WA voters (43,200 kronur) than among voters of other parties (55,000-70,300) is the huge difference in mean income of men (81,800) as compared to women (34,100). Among males PP voters show the lowest income (75,200) but the differences between parties are small, except that the mean income of IP voters is clearly the highest (89,500). The same pattern is repeated for female voters, with the PP being lowest (29,800) and IP highest (37,600). As regards family income, the WA voters are on the other hand lowest (around 80,000), the PP, PA and SDP in the middle (around 90,000) and the IP and the CiP highest (around 98,000). The reason behind the low mean family income of WA voters is partly that for single women own income constitutes family income, and that women also seem to have some tendency to report a slightly lower family income than men.<sup>87)</sup> On the whole, the differences in income between parties cannot be considered great when gender is taken into account. Nevertheless, the IP is consistently strongest among those with highest income, just as its Scandinavian counterparts. The socialist parties do on the other hand not show the weakness among the highest income group that can be observed in Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

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87) Among all couples female respondents report a mean family income of 93,300, while the figure is 106,200 for male respondents. Among couples where both are economically active female respondents report a mean family income of 106,500, while the corresponding figure is 114,000 among male respondents. Family income should be the same in comparable groups irrespective of the sex of the respondent. The observed difference is more likely to be a result of systematic bias than sampling error.

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**Table VI.4.4. Time of voting decision, strength of party identification, party switching and non-voting by family income 1987. Percentages. Total sample.**

	<i>Family income (in thousands of kronur)</i>				
	4-42	43-69	70-89	90-118	120-600
Did not consider another party	45	37	40	39	31
More than month before	7	10	6	8	12
8-30 days before	9	17	14	14	17
One week before	8	9	7	8	7
During the last week	10	10	15	13	15
On polling day	21	17	19	19	19
Total	100	100	101	101	101
N=	(221)	(220)	(214)	(250)	(299)
<b>STRENGTH OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>					
Party supporter	45	46	44	48	49
Closer to a party	26	33	33	33	33
No party ident.	29	21	23	19	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N=	(261)	(249)	(232)	(267)	(320)
<b>PARTY SWITCHING</b>					
Switched parties 1983-1987	35	39	38	34	40
N=	(135)	(174)	(174)	(205)	(260)
<b>NON-VOTING</b>					
Did not vote 1987	10	4	3	1	1
N=	(248)	(238)	(230)	(256)	(307)

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 For base of dep. variables see Tables VI.1.2 and VI.1.6.  
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Table VI.4.4 does not reveal any great differences by income regarding our measures of volatility, time of voting decision, strength of party identification and party switching. Non-voting is on the other hand clearly related to income, being much higher among the lower income groups.

### **VI.5 Parental influences**

Socialization theories usually give a large role to the family, which is supposed to be the main agent transferring culture from one generation to the next. According to the Michigan model, party identification is largely "inherited" from the family.<sup>88)</sup>

Many studies have found a strong relationship between the party preference of respondents and their parents. Such findings are nevertheless problematic for several reasons, two of which we will mention here. First, the evidence of parental party preference is usually according to the respondent's recall. This may result in an inflated correlation, because of a tendency to "remember one's parents as having one's own beliefs".<sup>89)</sup> On the other hand, the recall can also deflate the relationship, as "more random errors of memory will tend to understate the real strength of these ties".<sup>90)</sup> We have already seen (Chapter II) that some respondents make errors when recalling own voting behaviour; errors in recalling their parents' preferences should be expected and the results therefore interpreted with caution. It should also be kept in mind that many voters do not recall their parents' preferences. When the overall impact of parental preference is considered, it is important to keep this group in mind but not only concentrate on the relationship that can be observed among those who recall the preference of their parents. Children who never knew their parents' political

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88) Campbell et al. (1964), pp. 86-87.

89) D. Butler and D. Stokes (1974), p. 50.

90) *Ibid.*

preferences can hardly have been directly influenced by them!

The second problem concerns spurious relationships. If voting behaviour is strongly influenced by other variables, such as class, and social mobility is limited, we should expect a strong relationship between the voting behaviour of parent and offspring, even though there is no causal link. The apparent relationship is then simply is a result of class influencing both parents' and offspring's party preference.

Despite those problems it is of interest to analyse the parent-offspring relationship in the Icelandic setting. We have seen that in Iceland voting behaviour is weakly related to structural variables; its relationship to class seems to have greatly declined in the last few decades. Family is commonly expected to be important in Icelandic politics. On the elite level, considerable family patterns can be observed in recruitment to leadership positions, e.g. in the political parties. In the 1980s two party leaders, Hannibalsson of the SDP and Hermannsson of the PP, were sons of fathers who had also been leaders of their respective parties. In the electorate many cases are known of extended families heavily supporting one party - or, on the contrary, being split between two parties. Such observations do, of course, not tell us how common such patterns are but they suggest that "inherited" party preference should be considered as a potential explanatory factor, especially in a country where the explanatory power of social factors seem to be weak and the parties tend to be pragmatic on policy and strongly marked by clientelism.



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**Table VI.5.1. Parental vote of respondents 1983. Total sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Party usually voted for by parents</i>				<i>Mean results</i>
	Father		Mother		1931-67
SDP	12	16	11	16	16.4
PP	20	28	16	23	26.1
IP	33	46	33	49	40.9
CP/USP/PA	7	11	7	11	14.2
Other, more than one	5		4		
Did not know	24		29		
Total	101	101	100	99	
N=	(945)	(679)	(970)	(655)	

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Q: *Do you know which party your father generally supported while you were growing up? (If yes): What party was that? - What about your mother?*

-Those who refused to answer (2% for fathers, 1.6% for mothers) and those to which the question was not applicable (3.8% for fathers, 1.7% for mothers) are omitted from the table.

Mean results 1931-67 gives the parties' mean percentages in the 14 Althingi elections in that period (13 elections for the SDP and the PP, as the 1956 election is omitted for those parties due their electoral alliance).

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Table VI.5.1 shows the reported party preferences of fathers and mothers in 1983.<sup>91)</sup> A quarter of the respondents reported that they did not know their father's party preference and 29% did not know their mother's preference. 17% on the other hand neither knew their father's nor their mother's party preference (Table VI.5.3). Thus, about eight in every ten voters claimed to know the party preference of at least either their father or their mother.

The proportion not knowing their parents' party is strongly related to the respondents' interest in politics, as can be seen in Table VI.5.2. This proportion was on the other hand not higher among those respondents who in 1983 claimed not to have voted or turned in a blank ballot than

<sup>91)</sup> The question of parents' party was not asked in 1987.

among those who reported a party vote. A clear difference emerges on the other hand concerning age; a much higher proportion of respondents under 30 did not know their fathers' party preferences than is the case among those over 30.

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**Table VI.5.2. Proportion not recalling their fathers' party in 1983 by own interest in politics and by age. Total 1983 sample.**

	<i>Interest in politics</i>					All
	Very great	Great	Some	Little	None	
Percentage who did not know father's party	7	18	22	29	37	24
N=	(41)	(130)	(448)	(265)	(60)	(944)

	<i>Age</i>						All
	20-23	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-83	
Percentage who did not know father's party	38	33	24	23	9	17	24
N=	(89)	(156)	(249)	(157)	(127)	(167)	(945)

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The difference in fathers' and mothers' preferences is small with the PP being slightly stronger among fathers and the IP among mothers. The strength of the parties is not far off the mark if we consider the strength of the parties in the period in which the parents were voting (see Table VI.5.1). The major deviations are an overrepresentation of the IP and an underrepresentation of the CP/USP/PA, while the proportion of PP and SDP voters among fathers and mothers is very close to the mean results for those parties in Althingi elections 1931-1967. The strength of the parties among parents seems on the whole rather credible, despite the limitations of the data.

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**Table VI.5.3. Mother's vote by father's vote. 1983 total sample. Total percentages.**

<i>Mother's vote</i>	<i>Father's vote</i>				<i>Other /more</i>	<i>Didn't know</i>
	SDP	PP	IP	PA		
SDP	7	0	1	1	0	1
PP	1	13	1	0	0	1
IP	1	2	26	1	0	4
CP/USP/PA	0	1	1	5	0	1
Other, more than one	0	1	0	-	2	0
Did not know	2	4	4	1	1	17
Total	100% (N=930)					

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Table VI.5.3 gives the reported vote of mother by that of father (total percentages). As we have already noted, 17% of respondents did not know the party affiliation of either their mother or their father. 11% give their father's party but did not know their mother's party and 7% knew their mother's but not their father's party.<sup>92)</sup> On the whole, 19% give parental preference of one parent while the preference of the other is unknown, 51% report that their mother and father voted for the same party, 10% report that their parents voted for different parties, and 17% knew neither parental preference. According to this, 70% of the respondents were prone to one-sided parental cues concerning party preference, while 10% were prone to conflicting preferences by their parents and 17% without any parental cue.

Table VI.5.4 gives the same information as Table VI.5.2, except that here we get column percentages showing how large a proportion of mothers shared party preference with fathers from each party. Here IP stands out - 78% of the respondents whose father supported the IP also had a mother supporting

<sup>92)</sup> Here we omit the category "Other, more than one".

that party, while the corresponding figure for the other three parties is 59-65%. Of the respondents with IP fathers, only 8% had mothers supporting one of the three other old parties, while the corresponding figures are 14% for the PP, 21% for the SDP and 24% for the CP/USP/PA. Conflicting parental cues are thus least common among respondents whose fathers supported the IP and most common among those whose fathers supported SDP or CP/USP/PA.

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**Table VI.5.4. Mother's vote by father's vote. 1983 total sample. Percentages.**

<i>Mother's vote</i>	<i>Father's vote</i>					
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	Other /more	Didn't know
SDP	59	2	4	11	3	6
PP	5	63	3	3	10	5
IP	12	9	78	10	5	15
CP/USP/PA	4	3	2	65	5	3
Other, more than one	3	4	1	-	49	1
Did not know	18	20	12	11	28	70
Total	101	101	100	100	100	100
N=	(110)	(185)	(304)	(71)	(39)	(221)

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Table VI.5.5 shows the respondents' 1983 vote by their father's and mother's party. The first thing to note is that the figures for fathers and mothers are almost identical, so it makes little difference if we look at the "success-rate" of mothers or fathers in recruiting their offspring to their party.

The IP fathers are at first sight by far the most "successful recruiters" if we look at the data in those terms. Of those respondents who give party voted for in 1983, 64% of those with a father supporting the IP vote for the same party. The corresponding figures for the other parties are only 39-45%.

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**Table VI.5.5. Respondents vote in 1983 by father's and mother's vote. 1983 total sample. Percentages.**

<i>Respondent's vote</i>	<i>Father's vote</i>						<i>All</i>
	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>Other /more</i>	<i>Didn't know</i>	
SDP	39	5	9	10	8	14	13
PP	8	43	7	11	13	14	16
IP	28	23	64	18	37	40	41
PA	13	16	9	45	21	17	16
SDA	10	7	7	7	11	9	8
WA	2	6	6	10	11	7	6
Total	101	100	102	101	101	101	100
N=	(95)	(159)	(270)	(62)	(38)	(188)	(812)

<i>Respondent's vote</i>	<i>Mother's vote</i>						<i>All</i>
	<i>SDP</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>Other /more</i>	<i>Didn't know</i>	
SDP	40	4	8	8	12	15	13
PP	7	45	6	9	9	18	16
IP	26	22	65	17	35	38	41
PA	18	20	6	48	27	14	16
SDA	8	4	9	8	6	9	8
WA	2	5	6	9	12	7	6
Total	101	100	100	99	101	101	100
N=	(90)	(137)	(287)	(64)	(34)	(219)	(831)

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We can on the other hand interpret those figures in terms of the relative size of the parties. If no parental influence existed we would expect the offspring of fathers from each party to behave like the total electorate, i.e. all the columns should look like the last one, "all". This is indeed the case for those who did not know their parents' party preferences; their column is almost identical to the one for the whole electorate. The columns for the parties are on the other hand very different. Among those with SDP fathers 39% vote for the SDP, while only 13% of the total electorate do so. Thus we could say that having a father from the SDP increases the likelihood of voting SDP from 13% to 39% or by 26 percentage points. Similar calculations

result in 27 points for the PP, 23 points for the IP and 29 points for the PA. While the data clearly supports the hypothesis of parental influence, the different "success-rates" of the parties disappear.

If we note the destination of the "deserters", a familiar pattern emerges:<sup>93)</sup> SDP fathers "loose" by far the largest proportion of offspring to the IP (28%), PP fathers also "loose" most to the IP (23%), but a also a considerable proportion to the PA (16%), and the PA fathers "recruit" a much higher proportion to the WA (10%) than do fathers supporting other parties.

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**Table VI.5.6. Respondent's vote 1983 by parental vote. Total sample. Percentages.**

Parental vote	Respondent's vote 1983						Total	N=
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA		
SDP/SDP	45	9	26	13	4	2	99	(53)
SDP/no party	37	3	17	23	17	3	100	(30)
SDP/other party	24	5	48	10	14	-	101	(21)
PP/PP	3	51	20	16	5	6	101	(103)
PP/no party	6	40	17	26	6	6	101	(35)
PP/other party	14	24	33	14	10	5	100	(21)
IP/IP	8	5	66	8	7	7	101	(210)
IP/no party	7	7	67	3	10	7	101	(61)
IP/other party	13	13	39	26	9	-	100	(23)
CP-USP-PA/CP-USP-PA	5	12	14	52	5	12	100	(42)
CP-USP-PA/no party	20	10	20	40	10	-	100	(10)
CP-USP-PA/other party	21	7	29	29	7	7	100	(14)
No party/no party	14	17	40	14	8	7	100	(126)
All voters	13	16	42	16	8	6	101	(854)

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 Parental vote: The first line for each party gives the 1983 vote of respondents whose parents both supported that party. The second line gives voters whose one parent supported the party in question, but the respondent did not know the other parent's party preference. The third line gives voters whose father supported the party in question, but the mother supported another party.  
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93) See Sections II.2, II.3, II.5, II.6, and IV.5.

In Table VI.5.6 we have combined the party preferences of both parents and compare those to the respondents' 1983 votes. If parental influence exists we would expect the relationship between father's (or mother's) vote and the offspring's vote to be strongest when both parents support the same party and weakest if the parents support different parties. This pattern is borne out in the table.

As before, the IP stands out: 66% of the respondents whose parents both supported the IP voted for the party in 1983, as did 67% of those who had one parent supporting the IP but did not know the other's preference. However, only 39% of those having a father supporting the IP and a mother supporting another party voted for the IP. For the other parties the figures are lower: 45-52% of those whose parents supported the same party voted for that party in 1983, as did 37-40% of those who only knew the preference of one parent, while only 24-29% voted for their fathers's party when their mother had a conflicting party preference. While it should be noted that the number of respondents in some of the categories is very low, the overall pattern is too clear to be disregarded. For all parties, conflicting parental preference means lower support for the party among offspring. For all parties except the IP the support is higher when both parents support the party than it is when only one parent supports the party and the respondent does not know the preference of the other parent.

Another way of looking at the relationship between parents and offspring is to examine the composition of each party's vote in 1983 with regard to father's party, as is done in Table VI.5.7. First we may note that a similar

proportion of all parties' voters comes from respondents who did not know the party preference of their father. If we on the other hand consider only those who claimed to know their father's party preference the two parties that were most popular among the fathers, the IP and the PP, also have the highest proportion of offspring agreeing with their father's preference in their 1983 vote, 66% and 64% respectively.<sup>94)</sup> In 1983 48% of the SDP vote and only 29% of the PA vote, comes on the other hand from respondents who shared party preference with their father.

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**Table VI.5.7 Father's party by respondent's 1983 vote. 1983 total sample. Percentages.**

Father's vote	Respondent's 1983 vote							All
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	Didn't vote	
SDP	48	8	10	12	20	5	13	15
PP	10	64	14	27	24	27	29	26
IP	30	17	66	24	39	41	39	43
CP/USP/PA	8	7	4	29	9	16	12	10
Other/more th.one	4	5	5	8	9	11	7	6
Total	100	101	99	100	101	100	100	100
N=	(77)	(106)	(261)	(97)	(46)	(37)	(69)	(693)
Did not know fathers preference	25	20	22	25	26	26	23	23

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Comparable figures for Sweden in 1976 show a similar pattern. The proportion of each party's following coming from respondents sharing preference with their father were 78% for the largest party, the Social Democrats, 50% for the Conservatives, 43% for the Centre Party, 36% for the Liberals and only 18% for the small Communist Party.<sup>95)</sup>

<sup>94)</sup> Even though PP fathers "recruited" only 43% of their offspring to the PP compared to the IP's 64% (see Table VI.5.5) the parties are similar in Table VI.5.7, as the PP's following among fathers is much stronger (26%) than in our 1983 electorate (17%).

<sup>95)</sup> O. Petersson (1977), Table 2.11 p. 26. -The proportion not knowing or not willing to reveal their father's party



On the whole, 49% of the Icelandic sample voted for the party their father supported, if we only look at those who gave a party vote in 1983 and also gave their father's party. The relationship does not vary by age: the figures are 48% for 20-29 year olds, 50% for 30-49 year olds and 48% for 50-83 year olds. In Sweden in 1976 58% voted for their fathers party and the difference between age groups was small. The young were not more prone to leave their father's party than older voters.<sup>96)</sup> The overall relationship between voting behaviour of parents and offspring seems thus rather similar in Iceland and Sweden, even though it is somewhat weaker in Iceland.

Class voting has on the other hand been much stronger in Sweden than in Iceland, as we noted before. In 1976 the Alford index was 36% in Sweden,<sup>97)</sup> while in Iceland in 1983 it was only 11%. We should therefore expect that the Swedish relationship between father's and offspring's voting behaviour is more likely to be spurious, i.e. simply a result of class voting both among fathers and offspring, than is the case in Iceland.

The relationship between own voting and father's class was almost as strong in Sweden in 1976 as the relationship between own voting and own class. The correlation between own voting and father's class was 0.32, while it was 0.36 between own voting and own class. The correlation between

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preference was on the other hand slightly higher in Sweden (33%) and the variation between parties was greater than in Iceland: Communists 21%, Social Democrats 28%, Centre Party 35%, Liberals 35%, Conservatives 27%, non-voters 55%.

96) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

97) *Ibid.*, Table 2.8, p. 22.

father's class and own class was 0.22.<sup>98)</sup> Using path analysis, Petersson concludes that most of the impact of father's class on own voting is a direct one, not indirect through own class position. "Independent of the individual's altered social class, the political importance of the parents' class still exists. In such a way yesterday's socio-economic antagonisms are transplanted to today's political life".<sup>99)</sup>

Social mobility and the importance of father's class on own voting serves to deflate the Alford index. If we take father's class into account, 81% of manuals with manual fathers voted socialist in Sweden in 1976, while only 24% of non-manuals with non-manual fathers did so, giving an "Alford index" of 57% between the core groups based on both own and father's class instead of 36% when only own class is taken into account.<sup>100)</sup>

While social mobility in Sweden has been high in this century,<sup>101)</sup> social mobility in Iceland could be expected to have been even greater in the last decades, as the industrialization process started later in Iceland. Stefan Olafsson's results nevertheless indicate that social mobility in Iceland in the early post-war period was similar to that in Sweden.<sup>102)</sup> In Table VI.5.8 we have separated farmers into a special class group distinct from other non-manuals. If we compare own and father's class in our sample

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98) *Ibid.*, p. 27. The three variables were made dichotomous; manual/non-manual, socialist/non-socialist.

99) *Ibid.*, p. 29. My translation.

100) *Ibid.*, p. 30. Socialist voting among manuals with non-manual fathers was 51% and 46% among non-manuals with manual fathers.

101) See *ibid.*, pp. 23-25.

102) S. Olafsson (1982).

the major change in the size of the class groups has taken place among non-manuals, as the proportion of farmers has fallen from 25% to 7%, while other non-manuals have increased from 22% to 43% (Table VI.5.8).

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**VI.5.8. Changes in the class structure: Class of fathers and respondents. Total 1983 sample. Percentages.**

	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
Manuals	53	51
Farmers	25	7
Other non-manuals	22	43
Total	100	101
N=	(963)	(839)

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Behind those changes in sizes of class groups lies a great deal of social mobility between generations, as can be seen in Table VI.5.9. The mobility creating the changes we can observe in Table VI.5.8 is clearly not only that farmers' offspring move into the middle class; a much more complex pattern of social mobility has been taking place.

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**Table VI.5.9. Social mobility: Father's and respondent's class. 1983 total sample. Percentages.**

<i>Father's class</i>	<i>Respondent's class</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farmer	Farmer	5
Farmer	Manual	14
Farmer	Non-manual	6
Manual	Farmer	2
Manual	Manual	31
Manual	Non-manual	21
Non-manual	Farmer	0
Non-manual	Manual	7
Non-manual	Non-manual	16
Total		102
N=		(805)

---

Only around half the respondents belong to the same class group as their father; almost half of the sample has been socially mobile. More farmers' offspring have moved to the

working class (14% of the whole sample) than to the middle class (6%), but 28% of the sample have moved between the working class and the middle class. A large majority of them have been upwardly mobile, moving from manuals to non-manuals (21%), as compared to 7% moving from non-manual to manual.

The correlation between own class and father's class is much lower in Iceland than in Sweden or only 0.15. The correlations with own voting are also much lower, 0.15 to father's class and 0.12 to own class.<sup>103)</sup> The relationship of voting to father's class is thus slightly stronger in Iceland than the relationship to own class! If we calculate an Alford index for own vote and father's class it comes to 13% as compared to 11% if we use the respondents' own class.

As was the case in Sweden, father's class has an independent impact on own vote, i.e. voting behaviour differs within own class according to father's class. Thus the socialist vote among workers with a working class father is 37%, while it is 21% among workers with middle class fathers. Among middle class voters with middle class fathers the socialist vote is only 17%, compared to 31% among middle class voters with working class fathers. Thus, an "Alford index" comparing the core groups (workers with working class fathers versus non-manuals with non-manual fathers) is 20%, considerably higher than the proper one (11%), which we obtained when we used only own class as the base.

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103) The three variables are dichotomized: father's class and own class into manuals (seamen, unskilled and skilled manual workers) and non-manuals (farmers, lower non-manuals, professionals, skilled non-manuals, employers, higher managerial and administrative). Own vote is socialist (SDP, PA) and non-socialist (PP, IP, SDA, WA). The correlation coefficient is Pearson's  $r$ .

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**Table VI.5.10. Respondent's 1983 vote by father's class and own class. Total 1983 sample. Percentages.**

Class of father/respondent	Respondent's 1983 vote						N	Soc. vote
	SDP	PP	IP	PA	SDA	WA	Total	
Farmer/farmer	-	71	24	6	-	-	101	(34) 6
Manual/farmer	18	46	36	-	-	-	100	(11) 18
Farmer/manual	6	29	27	25	8	4	99	(99) 31
Manual/manual	20	10	41	17	7	4	99	(198) 37
Non-manual/manual	5	11	41	16	25	2	100	(44) 21
Farmer/non-manual	3	36	31	23	5	3	101	(39) 26
Manual/non-manual	14	4	48	17	10	8	101	(153) 31
Non-manual/non-man.	8	11	53	9	7	12	100	(108) 17
All	12	17	41	16	8	6	100	(687) 28
----- Socialist vote=SDP+PA. -----								

The impact of father's class is also evident in the case of the PP. The party was supported by 71% of the farmers whose fathers also were farmers. The PP's share among workers whose fathers were farmers is 29%, while the party obtains only 10-11% of the votes among other workers. In the middle class, 36% of the offspring of farmers vote for the PP, while only 4% of those with working class fathers and 11% of those with middle class fathers do so.

While the IP is stronger among middle class voters than working class voters, the strength of the party inside the classes does not differ by father's class, except that the party is much weaker among those whose fathers were farmers. Whether the father was working class or middle class does not on the other hand make a significant difference.

On the whole the Icelandic pattern resembles the Swedish one, except that all relationships between voting and class are much weaker in Iceland. While it seems to be true for

Iceland like Sweden that today's politics are affected by yesterday's class structure, the overall impact of class - past and present - on the 1983 vote is very weak. Thus we can to a greater extent look at the parent-offspring relationship in voting behaviour as a more independent one in Iceland than in Sweden. While the importance of "inherited" partisanship should not be overemphasized and the methodological shortcomings of our analysis of parental party preferences should be borne in mind, the family nevertheless seems to play an independent role in maintaining voter alignments in Iceland, while social factors have largely ceased to do so.

## ***Chapter VII: Conclusions***

Iceland, a micro-state with an electorate of ca. 170,000 people, exhibits a structure of voter alignments as complex as are found among larger nations. In many respects the Icelandic electorate resembles its neighbours in the other Nordic countries, while considerable differences also exist.

Electoral volatility has greatly increased in Iceland in the last three decades. Since the early 1970s, the Icelandic political system has become one of the most volatile democratic systems in the world. Net gains or net volatility (in percentages of votes) for the victorious parties in the 1983 and 1987 elections were 16.6% and 23.1% respectively. In this thesis we demonstrate that those major changes in parties' fortunes at the polls were mainly the result of gross volatility or the direct switching of voters between parties. Of respondents voting both in 1979 and 1983, 23% claimed to have changed parties, while the corresponding figure for 1983-1987 was 36%. If we look at three consecutive elections, one-half of those who reported party vote in 1979, 1983 and 1987 voted for the same party in all three elections, while the other half claimed to have changed parties. These figures show extremely volatile voting behaviour in the Icelandic electorate.

Another potential source of net volatility is movement of voters from voting in one election to non-voting in the next (demobilization), or vice versa (mobilization). Such movements can have great impact on election results, especially if turnout is rather low or fluctuating. Non-voting in Iceland has been around 10% in recent decades.

Most of the non-voting is due to occasional non-voting of some voters rather than to consistent non-voting, thus allowing for some impact of movements in and out of the voting electorate on election outcomes. In 1983 and 1987, however, the impact of such movements on the fortunes of the parties was very small.

The impact of first time voters on the election results was small both in 1983 and 1987. While the SDA in 1983 clearly had much greater appeal to first time voters than to other voters, first time voters in general voted in a similar fashion to the older ones. The hypothesis that first time voters had a somewhat greater tendency to follow the electoral winds, or jump on the bandwagon, gained some support from the 1983 data, but not from the 1987 data. Non-voting, on the other hand, was somewhat higher among the youngest and oldest voters.

In this thesis three theoretical approaches are used to analyse voting behaviour in the highly volatile Icelandic electorate: a psychological or party identification approach, a rational or issue-oriented approach and a social-structural approach.

*Party identification* among the Icelandic electorate decreased slightly from 1983-1987. The number of party supporters dropped from 49% to 46%; 32% of those who were not party supporters nevertheless felt closer to a party in both elections, while the figure for those with no party identification rose from 19% to 22%. Party identification in Iceland is weaker than in Denmark and Sweden.

In accordance with the party identification model, party identification is clearly related to age: partisanship is



stronger among those in older age groups. While our data does not allow us to test if this pattern is mainly a result of life-cycle or generational effects, we nevertheless compared the strength of party identification among the same respondents in 1983 and 1987. While the party identification did in fact strengthen among the youngest respondents, the number of party supporters decreased in most other age groups during those four years, indicating a period effect rather than either a life-cycle or generational effect. The basic assumption of the party identification model, that party identification generally strengthens with age, is thus not supported by our data.

If party identification is a lasting characteristic, we would expect identification for new parties to develop slowly, unless we expect most of the converts to become "true believers" immediately. Both in 1983 and 1987 the proportion of own identifiers among each party's voters was much lower for new parties than older ones. In 1983, while 72-86% of voters for the old parties identified with the party voted for, this was only the case for 28% of SDA and 42% of WA voters. In 1987, while 62-83% of voters for the old parties also identified with their party, only 46% of CiP voters did so. In 1987 69% of WA voters also identified with the party. In four years the WA had become similar to the old parties in that respect.

We would also expect identifiers with new parties to identify less strongly with their party than identifiers with old parties. This is borne out for the SDA and the WA in 1983. Not only are their identifiers relatively few, but their attachments to their parties are also weaker than is

the case for those who identify with the old parties. In 1987, on the other hand, the identifiers of the CiP show stronger attachments to their party than is the case for any other party, both in 1983 and 1987. While it can be open to interpretation whether the considerable number of identifiers for new parties (even though it is lower than for the old parties), and the rapid increase in WA-identifiers 1983-1987, are in accord with the party identification model, the measured strength of party identification of CiP identifiers in 1987 clearly contradicts the model.

More serious for the party identification approach is the fact that many Icelandic voters tend to change their party identification when they change their vote, as is common among voters in Europe. While our data shows that party identification and party vote are not identical, and that party identification is a more lasting characteristic for some voters than party vote, the fact that in 1983-1987 more party switchers changed their party identification than retained it severely limits the usefulness of the concept of direction of party identification in the Icelandic setting.

Strength of party identification is on the other hand clearly related to electoral volatility. In 1983 7-12% of party supporters switched parties, while 58% of those with no party identification did so. In 1987 17-20% of party supporters changed parties, while the corresponding figure for those with no party identification was 65%. This would suggest that party identification still serves as a stabilizing factor in the electorate. On the other hand, the strength of party identification is not a good predictor of

actual volatility. Party switching increased greatly between 1983 and 1987, while the strength of party identification decreased only slightly. The overall increase in party switching in 1987 as compared to 1983 was the result of an increase in party switching within all groups: party supporters, those who only feel closer to a party, and those with no party identification.

The basic assumption of the Michigan model, that voters develop a strong identification with the parties and retain it even though they vote for other parties, has limited validity among the Icelandic electorate. Weak party identification in Iceland also allows gives room for large changes in party fortunes at elections. Nevertheless many voters identify strongly with the parties and this identification is related to their behaviour. It seems likely that the greatly increased net volatility in Iceland in the 1970s is partly due to weakening party attachments.

Besides party identification, other ties between parties and voters were also examined. Both in 1983 and 1987 20% of the respondents claimed to be party members. The IP is far more successful than other parties in mobilizing their support into formal membership of the party. 27-32% of the IP votes comes from IP members, while the corresponding figures for the other old parties are 17-23%. The new parties get a lower share of votes from own members: only 3% of SDA voters in 1983 claimed to be members of the party while the corresponding figures for the WA were 6% in 1983 and 9% in 1987, and 13% for the CiP in 1987. The increase in party membership for the WA is clearly much slower than was the case for party identification.

Party members are indeed the core of party support in the sense that party members both identify more strongly with the parties than non-members and they are less likely to switch parties. And while party membership and party identification are strongly related, they are by no means identical. Many of the voters who strongly support their party and show a weak tendency to switch parties are not party members.

While the increasing use of primary elections since the early 1970s has probably served to weaken the parties organizationally, they nevertheless serve as a link between parties and voters. In 1983 46% of the respondents claimed that they had at some time participated in a primary, while 29% claimed to have done so before the 1983 election, and 19% reported primary participation before the 1987 election.

Primary participation is by no means confined to party members. In 1983 78% of party members claimed to have participated in a primary at some time, while the corresponding figure for party identifiers who were not members was 39% and 37% for those with no party identification. Even 24% of those who did not vote or cast a blank ballot in the 1983 election claimed to have voted in a primary at some time. Around 40% of those who took part in primaries before the 1983 elections were party members, while 60% of the 1987 participants were members of a party.

Newspapers can serve as a link between parties and the electorate. Five out of six Icelandic daily newspapers support a political party, and the papers still serve as a connection between the parties and voters. Readers of different newspapers tend to support different parties. The

relationship between party vote and newspaper readership is strongest for the PA daily, *Thjodviljinn*, followed by *Morgunbladid*, supporting the IP, and the PP daily, *Timinn*, while it is very weak for the independent paper *DV*. Despite clear links between voting behaviour and newspaper readership the papers' power to mould the voters' behaviour in the polling booth should not be exaggerated. In most cases over a half of each paper's daily readers do not vote in accordance with the paper's political line.

Personal ties between MPs and voters should be expected to be stronger in a micro-state like Iceland than among larger nations. Half of Icelandic voters claim to know an MP personally. While acquaintance with MPs is related to age, party membership, gender and party identification, its relationship with region is surprisingly weak; we would have expected greater differences in acquaintance with MPs between the urban Reykjavik and Southwest constituencies on the one hand and the less populous constituencies in the countryside on the other, not only because of the size of the electorate, but also because clientelism is much more common in the latter. The impact of acquaintance with MPs on vote switching is also weak, and seems to be minimal when party membership and strength of party identification are taken into account.

The applicability of a *rational model* in the Icelandic setting is tested by exploring to what extent the voters have a cognitive map of the party system along left-right lines, whether this cognitive map has electoral consequences, and to what extent issue voting takes place among voters.

The concepts of left and right clearly have meaning for Icelandic voters. Most voters are prepared to position themselves on a left-right scale. They are also prepared to rank the parties on such a scale, and tend to agree on the ranking: the PA is clearly furthest to the left in the minds of the voters and the WA is second from the left. The SDP and the PP are close together at the centre, while the CiP is second from the right in 1987 and the IP is clearly furthest to the right. If we compare the perceived position of the parties on the left-right scale to voters' own positions on the scale, it is clear that in the polling booth voters do indeed prefer parties that are close to them on the left-right dimension.

Voters' like and dislike of parties and party leaders is also clearly related to the left-right dimension. Voters tend to dislike a party more the further away it is from their own party on the left-right scale. An affinity between the PP and the PA on the one hand, and the SDP and the IP on the other, can nevertheless be discerned. Voters' left-right positions within a party are also related to their like and dislike of other parties.

While the relationship between voters' stands on individual issues and their own positions on the left-right scale varies a great deal between issues, as was to be expected, some of these relationships are quite strong. When attitude indices based on factor analysis are correlated to own left-right position, the left-right attitude index is by far the most strongly related, as is the case in Norway and Sweden.

Thus it is clear that the voters' cognitive map of the party system in abstract left-right terms is meaningful, as indicated by the relationship of own left-right position to voting, to like and dislike of parties and party leaders, and to voters' stands on issues.

Voters' stands on issues are also clearly related to party choice, even though there are great differences in the strength of the relationship. In general, the positions the voters of different parties take on different issues tend to reflect the parties' ranking on the left-right continuum, even though there are notable exceptions, such as issues related to the urban-rural cleavage.

When attitude indices based on factor analysis are constructed, the left-right index is most strongly related to party choice ( $\text{ETA}^2$  is .42 in 1983 and .41 in 1987). PA voters are clearly furthest to the left on this attitude index and WA voters second from the left. In 1983 the PP, the SDA and the SDP are close to centre on the index, the PP being slightly on the left of the SDP. In 1987 the SDP and the PP also occupy the centre but the SDP is slightly to the left of the PP. The IP voters are clearly furthest to the right, while CiP voters are second from the right in 1987. The voters' ideological positions on the left-right attitude index thus clearly correspond to the parties' perceived positions on the left-right scale.

An attitude index which we call the old-new economy index, largely reflecting the urban-rural cleavage, is second most strongly related to party choice ( $\text{ETA}^2$  is .16 in 1983 and .10 in 1987). Voters' positions on this index do not follow the left-right dimension. Both in 1983 and 1987

the PP and the PA voters are most supportive of the old economy, while the WA voters are closer to the centre. Voters of the SDP, IP and SDA in 1983 are on the other hand more supportive of the new economy, as are SDP, CiP and IP voters in 1987. This may partly explain why party switching among the four old parties does not correspond well to the PA-SDP-PP-IP left-right model.

On the whole, issue voting can be considered relatively high in Iceland, even though it is weaker than in Norway and Sweden. The most probable reason for this seems to be that the alternatives facing Icelandic voters in elections are not as clear or as consistent as is the case in the other two countries.

*Social-structural variables* are in general very weakly related to voting behaviour in Iceland. Class voting, as measured by the Alford index is extremely low, both in 1983 (11%) and in 1987 (10%). An analysis of the class voting of the respondents' fathers gave much higher values for the Alford index: 38% for older fathers (fathers of respondents born 1901-40) and 21% for younger fathers (fathers of respondents born 1941-63). While the figures for the fathers can, of course, only be seen as very crude approximations, we nevertheless feel confident, on basis of other evidence as well, that class voting in Iceland in the 1930s and 1940s was quite strong (probably similar to Britain but weaker than in Scandinavia), grew weaker in the 1950s and the 1960s, and became very weak in the 1980s. While class voting has decreased in Scandinavia from around 55% in the 1950s to around 35% by 1980, the decrease is much more dramatic in Iceland.



A more detailed analysis of the relationship between various occupational categories and voting further shows that the parties tend to have weak profiles. The main exceptions are that the SDP is extremely weak among farmers, the PP is very strong among farmers, and the IP is very strong among employers and higher managerial and administrative. A tendency for the "petty bourgeoisie" to vote heavily conservative, observed in Britain and Sweden, is not the case in Iceland. The PA and the WA are on the other hand much stronger in the public sector than in the private sector. While the sectoral effect is not much stronger than in Britain and Sweden, it is nevertheless interesting considering the meagre impact of other class related variables on Icelandic voting.

The relationship between income and voting is also weaker in Iceland than in Scandinavia. The IP obtains more votes among higher income groups than among lower income groups but the difference is smaller than in Scandinavia. The PA and the SDP do not show the weakness among those with highest income that can be observed among socialist parties in Scandinavia. The WA is strongest in the lower income groups mainly because women, even with considerable higher education, tend to have lower incomes than men.

Some of the parties tend to have educational profiles. The PP is clearly stronger among those with little education and very weak among University graduates. While the WA is very clearly a party of the better educated, the IP also shows a weaker tendency in that direction. The CiP in 1987 did badly among those with higher education.

The relationship between age and voting is in general weak. The PP nevertheless has an age profile: the party is stronger among older voters. The WA also has a slight age profile: the party is weaker among older voters. The SDA was clearly stronger among younger voters, while the CiP was stronger among older voters.

There is a clear gender gap in voting for the WA, as around 80% of the parties' voters are women. The differences for other parties are small, except that in 1987 9% fewer women than men voted for the IP. The new gender gap, where women tend to be more to the left than men, a tendency which has been observed in many countries in recent years, also seems to be emerging in Iceland.

In 1983 80% of the respondents claimed to know the party preference of their father or their mother or both. There is a strong correspondence between the political preferences of parents and offspring, the relationship being strongest when both parents support the same party, and weakest when the father and the mother support different parties. In an electorate where class voting has become extremely weak, the family seems to play some part, in accordance with the Michigan model, in maintaining voter alignments.

All three of our theoretical approaches seem to have a part to play in explaining Icelandic voting behaviour. While our data in general perhaps best fits a rational or issue-oriented approach, party identification serves to maintain stability in a highly volatile system and social structures still have some impact, even though that impact is very weak, both in comparison to earlier voter alignments in Iceland and in comparison to Scandinavia.

In Scandinavia, class voting has been declining in recent decades. Class voting in Iceland, while probably never as strong as in Scandinavia, has been decreasing at a much faster rate.

Party attachments have weakened in Scandinavia. This seems also to have taken place in Iceland but at a faster rate: party identification is weaker in Iceland.

Issue voting has been rising in Scandinavia. While we have only two measurements of issue voting in Iceland, from 1983 and 1987, it seems likely that issue voting is now higher than it was in earlier decades when class voting was higher and partisanship stronger. Nevertheless issue voting in Iceland is still weaker than in Norway and Sweden. We would argue that this is mainly due to the state of the Icelandic party system: the Icelandic parties offer less coherent and consistent alternatives to voters than is the case in Scandinavia. This shows the importance of not observing voters in isolation: they react to actions of parties and politicians.

The increasing electoral volatility in Iceland since the 1970s seems to be a result of a withering away of the parties' class base and of decreasing loyalties to the parties. Under such circumstances, voters have to find other clues on which to base their voting behaviour. Issues or ideological considerations can be among such clues. In a period when voters are giving up their old allegiances of class and class parties and looking for issue positions on which to base their vote, we should expect a great deal of volatility, especially if the issue positions of the parties are unclear and fluctuating.

The Icelandic parties have gone through difficult times in recent decades. While they are clearly not narrowly defined class parties, they remain divided and weak on policy. If the parties manage to restructure themselves and present more comprehensive and consistent policies on the major questions and problems facing the Icelandic electorate, we might expect more stability in the electoral market.

Perhaps two major general conclusions can be drawn from the Icelandic case. First, the Icelandic electorate clearly exhibits trends that have been observed in Scandinavia as well as in many other European countries: declining class voting, decreasing loyalty to parties and increasing issue voting. This general development seems to be taking place at a faster rate in Iceland, perhaps because the population is small and the country has developed at a faster rate than most countries in recent decades, resulting in a weaker institutionalization of politics and society. Second, the Icelandic case seems to indicate that political institutions such as the parties are crucial when we try to explain the behaviour of the voter. Voters can only behave rationally - choose parties on the basis of policies - if they are faced with clear and meaningful choices. There is no reason to expect that weaker issue voting in Iceland as compared to Sweden and Norway is due to less sophistication or rationality among Icelandic voters. Inherently voters are not fools, but political parties can certainly influence their behaviour.

**APPENDIX A: Distributions of answers to issue questions in 1983 and 1987.**

Table headings are the labels used for the issue questions in Table V.1. Opinion balance is calculated by subtracting the percentage opposed from the percentage in favour ("no answer" included).

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**Table A.1. Abortion (1983).**

Gone much too far	19	20
Gone a bit too far	23	25
About right	45	48
Gone a bit too short	5	5
Gone much too short	1	1
No answer	7	
Total	100	99
N=	(1003)	(934)

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*Q: What about the liberalization in women's rights to abortion? Do you think this has gone much too far, a bit too far, about right, a bit too short, or much too short?*

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**Table A.2. All votes equal weight (1983).**

Strongly agree	46	51
Tend to agree	13	15
Ambivalent	9	10
Tend to disagree	11	12
Strongly disagree	12	13
No answer	9	
Total	100	101
N=	(1003)	(910)

Opinion balance +36

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*Q (statement): Preferably all votes in the country should have equal weight when parliamentary seats are allotted. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*

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**Table A.3. Base payment (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Strongly agree	47	49	39	41
Tend to agree	13	14	17	17
Ambivalent/Makes no diff.	9	9	9	10
Tend to disagree	6	7	9	10
Strongly disagree	21	22	21	22
No answer	5		5	
Total	101	101	100	100
N=	(1003)	(958)	(1845)	(1754)
Opinion balance	+34		+30	

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 Q. 1983 (statement): *Icelanders should receive payment for the presence of US military forces in the country. Do you strongly agree, tend to agree, are you ambivalent, do you tend to disagree, or do you strongly disagree?*

Q. 1987: *Do you agree or disagree that Icelanders should receive payment for the presence of U.S. military forces in the country? (Probe: strongly/tend to).*

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**Table A.4. Beer legalization (1983).**

Strongly agree	26	26
Tend to agree	27	28
Makes no difference	10	11
Tend to disagree	15	15
Strongly disagree	20	21
No answer	2	
Total	100	101
N=	(1003)	(987)
Opinion balance	+18	

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 Q: *What do you think about the proposition which has sometimes been suggested that beer should be sold in Icelandic liquor stores - do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*

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**Table A.5. Clientelistic politics (1987).**

Strongly agree	9	9
Tend to agree	15	16
Do not want to pass a judgment	35	37
Tend to disagree	12	12
Strongly disagree	24	25
No answer	4	
Total	99	99
N=	(1845)	(1764)
Opinion balance	-12	

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 Q: *Do you agree or disagree, that clientelistic politics are necessary for the underprivileged when dealing with "the system" - or do you not want to pass a judgment on that?*  
 (Probe: *Strongly/tend to*).  
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**Table A.6. Corporatism (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Strongly agree	32	34	14	16
Tend to agree	40	42	40	45
Makes no difference	7	8	18	21
Tend to disagree	11	12	10	11
Strongly disagree	5	5	7	8
No answer	5		11	
Total	100	101	100	101
N=	(1003)	(950)	(1845)	(1764)
Opinion balance	+56		+37	

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Q 1983 (statement): *Real and long-term increases in living standards can only be obtained if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions and really considers their point of view. Do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*

1983 face-to-face interviews: *People disagree on the best way to increase general living standards in the country in the long run. Some think this can only happen if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions. Others think on the contrary, that the government must be tough on pressure groups like the trade unions. What do you think? Which statement, A, B, or C, is closest to your opinion?*

Show card: *A. Real and long-term increases in living standards can only be obtained if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions and really considers their point of view. B. This makes no difference. C. Real and long-term increases in living standards in the country can only be obtained, if the government is tough on pressure groups like the trade unions. Those who favoured A or C were asked if they were very strongly in favour, rather strongly in favour, or tended to be in favour. Here, "very strongly in favour" is coded as "strongly agree/disagree".*

Q 1987: *Do you agree or disagree that government should give organizations of employees and employers an effective part in decision making on major issues - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*

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**Table A.7. Environment (1987).**

Strongly agree	16	19
Tend to agree	25	30
Makes no difference	17	20
Tend to disagree	19	23
Strongly disagree	7	8
No answer	17	
Total	101	100
N=	(1845)	(1529)
Opinion balance	+15	

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*Q: Do you agree or disagree that in the next years action on environmental issues should be prioritized over attempts to increase economic growth - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.8. Equality for women (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Gone much too far	4	4	1	1
Gone a bit too far	15	15	5	5
About right	34	35	34	35
Gone a bit too short	32	33	33	34
Gone much too short	13	13	24	25
No answer	3		3	
Total	101	100	100	100
N=	(1003)	(972)	(1845)	(1791)

-----  
*Q 1983: If we turn to individual issues - first to attempts to assure women equal position to men. Do you think this development has gone much too far, a bit too far, about right, a bit too short, or much too short?*

*Q 1987: If we turn to several issues which have been widely discussed in society in recent years - first attempts to assure women equal position to men. Do you think this development has gone too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).*  
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**Table V.9. Equality of votes (1987).**

Gone much too far	4	5
Gone a bit too far	7	9
About right	41	56
Gone a bit too short	14	18
Gone much too short	9	13
No answer	25	
Total	100	101
N=	(1845)	(1375)

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 Q: *What about the rules on the more equal weight of votes in the new electoral law - do you think they go too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).*  
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**Table V.10. Full employment (1983).**

Strongly agree	14	15
Tend to agree	16	17
Ambivalent	17	18
Tend to disagree	23	24
Strongly disagree	26	27
No answer	4	
Total	100	101
N=	(1003)	(967)

Opinion balance -19  
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Q (statement): *Government should prioritize full employment even though companies are inefficient. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.11. Inflation (1983).**

Strongly agree	14	16
Tend to agree	26	29
Makes no difference	3	3
Tend to disagree	32	35
Strongly disagree	16	18
No answer	9	
Total	100	101
N=	(1003)	(912)
Opinion balance	-8	

-----  
 Q (statement): *Gradual reduction of inflation is impossible. The best policy is a quick solution by strict reduction on spending, and toughness towards pressure groups. Do you agree, disagree - or do you think this makes no difference?*  
 (Probe: Strongly/tend to).

In the face-to-face interviews: People disagree on how inflation should be reduced. Some think it necessary to reduce inflation quickly, even though it may cost considerable sacrifices in the short term, while others think that such action is not justifiable, as it could lead to class warfare and unemployment. What do you think? Which of the statements, A, B, or C, is closest to your opinion? Show card: A. Gradual reduction of inflation is impossible. The best policy is a quick solution by strict reduction on spending and toughness towards pressure groups. B. This makes no difference. C. The cost of a quick reduction in inflation is too high. Therefore it should be reduced gradually by a coordinated long-term policy. Those who favoured A or C were asked if they were very strongly in favour, rather strongly in favour, or tended to be in favour. Here "very strongly in favour" is coded as "strongly agree/disagree".  
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**Table A.12. Keflavik base (1983 and 1987).**

		1983		1987
Strongly approve	23	23	16	16
Tend to approve	30	31	24	25
Makes no difference	14	15	24	26
Tend to disapprove	15	15	14	15
Strongly disapprove	15	15	18	18
No answer (refuse, DK)	3		5	
Total	100	99	101	100
N=	(1003)	(970)	(1845)	(1753)
Opinion balance	+23		+8	

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Q 1983: *The Defence Agreement between Iceland and the United States has been much debated. Some people support the presence of the American armed forces here, while others oppose it. Do you support its presence here, oppose it, or do you think it makes no difference? (If support or oppose): Do you strongly approve/disapprove, or do you tend to approve/disapprove?*

In the 1983 face-to-face interviews: *The Defence Agreement between Iceland and the United States has been much debated. Some people support the presence of American forces here, while others oppose it. What is your opinion? Which statement, A, B, or C, is closest to your opinion? Show card: A. While the present situation in international affairs prevails, the defence force in Keflavik is necessary for Icelanders. B. This makes no difference. C. The presence of the US military force does not serve the interests of Icelanders and it should leave. Those who favoured A or C were asked if they were very strongly in favour, rather strongly in favour, or tended to be in favour. Here "very strongly" from the face-to-face interviews is coded with "strongly approve/disapprove" from the telephone interviews.*

Q 1987: *Do you support the presence of the American defence force here, do you think the armed forces should leave, or do you think this makes no difference? (If support or oppose): Are you strongly of that opinion, or do you tend to be of that opinion?*

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**Table A.13. NATO membership (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Approve	52	53	48	49
No opinion	33	34	37	38
Disapprove	13	13	14	14
No answer	2		2	
Total	100	100	99	101
N=	(1003)	(979)	(1845)	(1814)
Opinion balance	+39		+34	

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 Q 1983 and 1987: *If we now turn to the question of whether Iceland should continue its membership of NATO, is that an issue on which you have an opinion? (If yes): Some people believe Iceland should stay in NATO, while others believe it should discontinue its membership. What is your opinion?*  
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**Table A.14. Nuclear-weapons-free zone (1987).**

For the idea even if this weakens NATO	56	80
For the idea but DK if this weakens NATO	12	
For the idea but not if it weakens NATO	8	11
Tend to be against the idea	2	3
Strongly against the idea	4	6
No answer (refuse, DK)	17	
Total	99	100
N=	(1845)	(1310)
Opinion balance	+42	

-----  
 Q: *Are you for or against the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapons-free-zone in the Nordic countries - or are you uncertain on this issue? (If for): But would you support the idea even though this would weaken NATO? (If against): Do you tend to oppose the idea or do you strongly oppose it?*  
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**Table A.15. Open primaries (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Strongly agree	45	48	23	24
Tend to agree	14	15	25	27
Ambivalent/Makes no diff.	10	11	15	16
Tend to disagree	9	9	11	12
Strongly disagree	16	17	20	21
No answer	5		7	
Total	99	100	101	100
N=	(1003)	(951)	(1845)	(1711)
Opinion balance	+34		+17	

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 Q 1983 (statement): All parties should hold open primaries, where supporters as well as party members can decide the ranking of candidates in the lists' top seats. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).

Q 1987: Do you agree or disagree that all parties should hold open primaries, where supporters as well as party members can decide the ranking of candidates in the lists' top seats - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).

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**Table A.16. Party system outdated (1987).**

Strongly agree	23	23
Tend to agree	21	22
Does not want to pass judgement	35	36
Tend to disagree	11	11
Strongly disagree	6	7
No answer	3	
Total	99	99
N=	(1845)	(1785)

-----  
 Q: Do you agree or disagree, that the party system in this country has become outdated - or do you not want to pass a judgement on that?

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**Table A.17. Power industry ownership (1983).**

Strongly agree	51	54
Tend to agree	13	14
Ambivalent	12	13
Tend to disagree	8	8
Strongly disagree	11	11
No answer	5	
Total	100	100
N=	(1003)	(952)
Opinion balance	+45	

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*Q (statement): Cooperation with foreigners on power intensive plants is only acceptable if at least 50% of the ownership in such companies is Icelandic. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.18. Private radio and TV (1987).**

Gone much too far	14	14
Gone a bit too far	19	20
About right	58	60
Gone a bit too short	5	5
Gone much too short	2	2
No answer	3	
Total	101	101
N=	(1845)	(1786)

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*Q: What (do you think) about steps to make it possible for private companies to operate radio and TV stations - do you think this has gone too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).*  
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**Table A.19. Reduce agricultural production (1983).**

Strongly agree	25	27
Tend to agree	18	19
Ambivalent	19	20
Tend to disagree	17	18
Strongly disagree	15	16
No answer	6	
Total	100	100
N=	(1003)	(941)
Opinion balance	+11	

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 Q (statement): *Agricultural production must be greatly reduced as now there is overproduction at the tax-payers' expense. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.20. Reduce taxes (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Strongly agree	12	12	7	8
Tend to agree	11	12	10	10
Ambivalent/Makes no diff.	17	18	4	4
Tend to disagree	25	26	32	34
Strongly disagree	31	32	41	44
No answer	3		6	
Total	99	100	100	100
N=	(1003)	(973)	(1845)	(1742)
Opinion balance	-33		-56	

-----  
 Q 1983 (statement): *Taxes should be reduced even though it meant that public services had to be reduced, e.g. in health care, education, or social security. Do you strongly agree, tend to agree, ambivalent, do you tend to disagree, or do you strongly disagree?*

Q 1987: *Do you agree or disagree that taxes should be reduced, even though it meant that public services had to be reduced, e.g. in health care, education, or social security - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.21. Regional support (1983 and 1987).**

	1983		1987	
Strongly agree	37	39	36	39
Tend to agree	30	32	29	32
Makes no difference	5	5	12	13
Tend to disagree	14	15	9	10
Strongly disagree	9	9	6	6
No answer	5		7	
Total	100	100	99	100
N=	(1003)	(953)	(1845)	(1712)
Opinion balance	+44		+50	

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 Q 1983 (statement): *It is necessary to do more to decrease the differences in conditions between the rural regions and the capital area. Do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*

In 1983 face-to-face interviews: *So-called regional policy is sometimes disputed. Some think that government support for the rural regions should be greatly reduced, - others think that more should be done to decrease the difference in conditions between the regions and the capital area. What do you think? Which statement, A, B, or C, is closest to your opinion? Show card: A. Government regional policy has gone much too far at the expense of those who live in the capital area. B. This makes no difference. C. It is necessary to do more to decrease the differences in conditions between the rural regions and the capital area. Those who favoured A or C were asked if they were very strongly in favour, rather strongly in favor, or tended to be in favour. Here "very strongly in favour" is coded as "strongly agree/disagree".*

Q 1987: *Do you agree or disagree that progress in the capital area may be decreased in order to increase prosperity in the rural regions - or does this not make any difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**Table A.22. Unite pension funds (1987).**

Strongly agree	49	54
Tend to agree	19	21
Makes no difference	9	10
Tend to disagree	6	7
Strongly disagree	8	9
No answer	10	
Total	101	101
N=	(1845)	(1658)
Opinion balance	+54	

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*Q: Do you agree or disagree that all pension funds in the country should be united in one fund - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).*  
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**APPENDIX B: The questionnaire for telephone interviews in the Icelandic Election Study 1983.**

*(The Icelandic version can be obtained at the Social Science Research Institute, University of Iceland, Reykjavik).*

1. Do you consider your interest in politics very great, great, some, little, or are you not interested in politics at all?
2. Now I will read you the names of the newspapers in an alphabetical order, and for each paper I would like you to say how often you see it. If we start with Althydubladid, would you say that you see it daily, often, seldom, or never? What about DV? Morgunbladid? Timinn? Thjodviljinn?
3. Do you think that politicians are in general trustworthy, that many of them are trustworthy, some are trustworthy, few, or perhaps none?
4. If we turn to individual issues - first, to attempts to assure women equal position to men. Do you think this development has gone much too far, a bit too far, about right, a bit too short, or much too short?
5. What about the liberalization in women's rights to abortion? Do you think this has gone much too far, a bit too far, about right, a bit too short, or much too short?
6. What do you think about the proposition which has sometimes been suggested that beer should be sold in Icelandic liquor stores - do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (If agree or disagree, probe: Strongly/tend to).
7. The Defence Agreement between Iceland and the United States has been much debated. Some people support the presence of the American armed forces here, while others oppose it. Do you support its presence here, oppose it, or do you think it makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
8. Now we will read you some statements that are sometimes heard when politics are discussed. We would like to know what you think about these statements. The first statement is: Real and long-term increases in living standards can only be obtained if the government closely cooperates with the trade unions and really considers their point of view. Do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
9. The next statement is: It is necessary to do more to decrease the differences in conditions between the rural regions and the capital area. Do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).

10. Next statement: Gradual reduction of inflation is impossible. The best policy is a quick solution by strict reduction on spending and toughness towards pressure groups. Do you agree, disagree, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
11. All parties should hold open primaries, where supporters as well as party members can decide the ranking of candidates in the lists' top seats. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
12. Cooperation with foreigners on power intensive plants is only acceptable if at least 50% of the ownership in such companies is Icelandic. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
13. Agricultural production must be greatly reduced as now there is overproduction at the tax-payers' expense. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
14. Icelanders should receive payment for the presence of US military forces in the country. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
15. Taxes should be reduced even though it meant that public services had to be reduced, e.g. in health care, education, or social security. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
16. Preferably all votes in the country should have equal weight when parliamentary seats are allotted. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
17. Government should prioritize full employment even though companies are inefficient. Do you agree, disagree, or are you ambivalent? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
- 18a. If we turn to the question of whether Iceland should continue its membership of NATO, is that an issue on which you have an opinion?
- 18b. (If yes to 18a): Some people believe Iceland should stay in NATO, while others believe it should discontinue its membership. What is your opinion?
19. Some people always vote in Althingi elections and some people never vote. If you consider the period since you came of voting age, do you think you have always voted in Althingi elections, usually voted, seldom, or never?
20. Some people always vote for the same party in Althingi elections, while some people usually vote for different parties. Have you always voted for the same party in Althingi elections, have you usually voted for the same party, or have you usually voted for different parties?

- 21a. Now I would like to ask you about your attitudes towards the political parties. I would like to remind you that any information you may give is strictly confidential. Many people consider themselves supporters of political parties. Do you in general consider yourself as a supporter of any political party or organization? (If yes: What party?).
- 21b. (If yes to 21a): Would you say you are a very strong, rather strong or not a very strong supporter (of a given party)?
22. (If no or don't know to 21a): Do you nevertheless feel somewhat closer to any party or organization than to others? (If yes: What party?)
- 23a. (If yes to 21a or 22): Are you a member of (given party)?
- 23b. (If no to 23a): Would you consider becoming a member of (given party)?
24. Left and right are common terms in politics. Do you generally consider yourself to the right in politics, to the left, or are you in the centre in politics?
25. If you consider where the four old parties stand in this respect, and we start with the SDP. Do you think the SDP is to the right, to the left, or in the centre in politics? What about the PP? The IP? The PA?
26. Now I would like you to rank the four old parties, i.e. the SDP, the PP, the IP and the PA, according to how much you like or dislike them. What party do you generally dislike most? And the second most? Which one is the second best? And which one is the best?
- 27a. Have you ever taken part in a primary of any party before an Althingi election?
- 27b. (If yes to 27a): Did you take part in a primary before this election?
- 27c. (If yes to 27b): Could you to tell me in what primary/primaries you took part?
- 28a. If you try to remember individual elections in this country in recent years - did you vote in the 1978 Althingi election?
- 28b. (If yes to 28a): May I ask what party or list you voted for then?
- 29a. What about the Althingi election in December 1979? (Did you vote?)
- 29b. (If yes to 29a): What list did you vote for then?

- 30a. What about the Althingi election on last April 23rd?  
(Did you vote?)
- 30b. (If yes to 30a): What list did you vote for then?
- 31a. Did you ever consider voting for another party before  
the last election? (If yes: What party/parties?).
- 31b. (If yes to 31a): How long before the election did you  
make a final decision?
- 31c. (If yes to 31a): If we had a fresh election in the next  
few days, do you think you would vote for the same  
party you voted for last time, or some other party?
32. Where in the country did you grow up. (Region, county,  
town-rural, age 8-16).
- 33a. What was your father's occupation in your youth (age  
12-17)?
- 33b. What was your mother's occupation?
34. Do you know what political party your father supported  
when you were growing up? (If yes: What party?).
35. What about your mother? (If yes: What party?).
36. Do you know one or more members of Althingi personally?
- 37a. Have you completed any studies after the age of 15?
- 37b. (If yes to 37a): In what field? What school? When?
38. How many years, approximately, have you attended school,  
including compulsory education?
39. Have you generally been economically active in the last  
3-4 months, or have you mainly been doing something  
else?
40. (If active, or has been active): What is your main  
occupation? (Name of occupation, and a short  
description. Public, private, cooperative. Employee,  
self-employed, employer. Manual, non-manual.  
Agriculture, fisheries, fish industry, other industry,  
electricity or water supplies, construction,  
communications, commerce, other services).
41. Are you a member of a trade union or other economic or  
professional interest organization? (If yes: what  
union?).
42. Are you married or cohabiting?
43. (If yes to 42): Has your spouse generally been  
economically active in the last 3-4 months, or has  
he/she mainly been doing something else?

44. (If spouse active, or has been active): What is the main occupation of your spouse?
45. (If spouse active, or has been active): Is your spouse a member of a trade union or other economic or professional interest organization? (If yes: what union?).
46. Are you living in your own accommodation or do you rent?

**APPENDIX C: The questionnaire for telephone interviews in the Icelandic Election Study 1987.**

*(The Icelandic version can be obtained at the Social Science Research Institute, University of Iceland, Reykjavik).*

1. Do you consider your interest in politics very great, great, some, little, or are you not interested in politics at all?
2. Now I will read you the names of the newspapers in an alphabetical order, and for each paper I would like you to say how often you see it. If we start with Althydubladid, would you say that you see it daily, often, seldom, or never? What about Dagur? DV? Morgunbladid? Timinn? Thjodviljinn?
3. Do you think that politicians are in general trustworthy, that many of them are trustworthy, some are trustworthy, few, or perhaps none?
4. Next we have two questions on what you think is important in politics. If we begin with the Althingi election on April 25th. Were there any particular issues that greatly influenced what party you voted for? (Probe: Any more issues?)
5. What do you think are the most important tasks the new Althingi and government have to tackle? (Probe: Any more?)
- 6a. Now I would like to ask if you generally like or dislike individual political parties. You indicate this by giving each party a mark from -5 to +5. If you like a party you give it a positive mark of up to 5, but if you don't like a party you give it a negative mark of down to -5. Zero means that you neither like nor dislike the party in question. What mark would you give the PP on such a scale? The IP? The CiP? The PA? The SDP? The WA?
- 6b. What if you use the same scale for people who have been in leadership positions in Icelandic politics? What mark would you give Steingrimur Hermannsson? Thorsteinn Palsson? Albert Gudmundsson? Svavar Gestsson? Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson? Gudrun Agnarsdottir?
- 6c. If you try to give the government marks on the same scale for its general performance in the last term - what mark would you like to give the government of Steingrimur Hermannsson for its performance in the last four years?
- 6d. What marks would you give the opposition on the same scale?
- 6e. Finally I would like you to give the government a mark for its performance on individual policies or policy areas. If we start with housing, what marks would you give the government for its performance? Regional



policy? Inflation? Foreign policy? Agricultural policy?  
Wages? Taxes?

7. If we turn to several issues which have been widely discussed in society in recent years - first, to attempts to assure women equal position to men. Do you think this development has gone too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).
8. What about steps to make it possible for private companies to operate radio and TV stations - do you think this has gone too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).
9. What about the rules on the more equal weight of votes in the new electoral law - do you think they go too far, about right, or too short? (Probe: Much/a bit).
10. Do you support the presence of the American defence force here, do you think the armed forces should leave, or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
11. Do you agree or disagree that all parties should hold open primaries, where supporters as well as party members can decide the ranking of candidates in the lists' top seats - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
12. Which of the following do you think is most responsible for the inflation problem in Iceland: governments, companies, or the trade unions?
13. Do you agree or disagree that government should give organizations of employees and employers an effective part in decision making on major issues - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
14. Do you agree or disagree that progress in the capital area may be decreased in order to increase prosperity in the rural regions - or does this not make any difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
- 15a. If we now turn to the question whether Iceland should continue its membership of NATO, is that an issue on which you have an opinion?
- 15b. (If yes to 15a): Some people believe Iceland should stay in NATO, while others believe it should discontinue its membership. What is your opinion?
16. Do you agree or disagree that clientelistic politics are necessary for the underprivileged when dealing with "the system" - or do you not want to pass a judgment on that? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
17. Do you agree or disagree that in the next years action on environmental issues should be prioritized over

attempts to increase economic growth - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).

18. Do you agree or disagree that taxes should be reduced, even though it meant that public services had to be reduced, e.g. in health care, education, or social security - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
19. Do you agree or disagree that all pension funds in the country should be united in one fund - or do you think this makes no difference? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
- 20a. Are you for or against the idea to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Nordic countries - or are you uncertain on this issue?
- 20b. (If for in 20a): But would you support the idea even though this would weaken NATO?
- 20c. (If against in 20a): Do you tend to oppose the idea or do you strongly oppose it?
21. Do you agree or disagree that the party system in this country has become outdated - or do you not want to pass a judgment on that? (Probe: Strongly/tend to).
22. Do you agree or disagree that Icelanders should receive payment for the presence of U.S. military forces in the country? (Probe: strongly/tend to).
23. What parties would you like to see form a majority coalition government?
- 24a. Some people consider themselves supporters of political parties or organizations while others do not feel a solidarity with any party. Do you in general consider yourself as a supporter of any political party or organization? (If yes: What party?).
- 24b. (If yes to 24a): Would you say you are a very strong, rather strong or not a very strong supporter (of given party)?
25. (If no or don't know to 24a): Do you nevertheless feel somewhat closer to any party or organization than to others? (If yes: What party?)
26. (If yes to 24a or 25): Are you a member of (given party)?
- 27a. Sometimes people try to rank the political parties according to how far to the left or the right they are. Now we would like you to rank the Icelandic political parties on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is furthest to the left, but 10 is furthest to the right. If we start with the SDP, where would you put it on such a scale? What about the WA? The IP? The CiP? The PA? The PP?

- 27b. But where would you put yourself on such a scale?
28. Did you take part in a primary of any party before the last election? (If yes: What primary?)
- 29a. Did you vote in the Althingi election on April 25th? (If yes: What party or list did you vote for?)
- 29b. (If yes to 29a): Did you ever consider voting for another party before the last election? (If yes: What party/parties?).
- 29c. (If yes to 31a): How long before the election did you make a final decision?
30. What about the 1983 Althingi election - did you vote then? (If yes: What party or list did you vote for?)
31. Where in the country did you grow up? (Region, county, town-rural, age 8-16).
- 32a. What was your father's occupation in your youth (age 12-17)?
- 32b. What was your mother's occupation?
33. Have you completed any studies after the age of 15? (If yes: What?)
34. How many years, approximately, have you attended school, including compulsory education?
35. Have you generally been economically active in the last 3 months, or have you mainly been doing something else?
- 36a. (If active, or has been active): What is your main occupation? (Name of occupation and a short description).
- 36b. Do you work for a private firm, in the public sector, or for a cooperative?
- 36c. Are you an employee or do you operate your own business? (If own business: Do you have employees?)
- 36d. In what field is your work mainly: agriculture, fisheries, fish industry, other industry, construction or transport, commerce, welfare services and education, other services?
37. Are you a member of a trade union or other economic or professional interest organization? (If yes: what union?).
38. Are you married or cohabiting?
39. (If yes to 38): Has your spouse generally been economically active in the last 3-4 months, or has he/she mainly been doing something else?

40. (If spouse active, or has been active): What is the main occupation of your spouse?
41. If you compare your standard of living to that of two years ago, do you think it has generally improved, remained about the same, or grown worse?
42. Are you living in your own accommodation or do you rent?
43. What was your own total income last April, approximately? (If applicable): What was the total income of you and your spouse last April, approximately?

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