

**SUPPORT FOR THIRD PARTIES  
UNDER PLURALITY RULE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS :  
A PUBLIC CHOICE ANALYSIS OF BRITAIN, CANADA,  
NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH KOREA**

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**Thesis presented for Ph.D. at London School of Economics and Political Science**

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## ABSTRACT

Why do parties other than major parties survive or even flourish under plurality rule electoral systems, when according to Duverger's law we should expect them to disappear? Why should rational voters support third parties, even though their chances of being successful are often low ?

Using an institutional public choice approach, this study analyses third party voting as one amongst a continuum of choices faced by electors who pay attention both to the ideological proximity of parties, and to their perceived efficacy measured against a community-wide level of minimum efficacy.

The approach is applied in detailed case study chapters examining four different third parties. Two of the cases cover long-established and relatively successful third parties - the British Liberal Democrats; the Canadian NDP. The other two cases cover shorter-lived third parties - the New Zealand Social Credit; and the UNP in South Korea. In each case the study examines the party's specific history and dynamics, looks at the social base of its support and its ideological positioning, explores the party's perceived efficacy, and analyses the articulation of the third party's strategy.

Two key themes emerge. First, plurality rule electoral systems impose severe constraints on third parties, but also create niches (such as one-party safe seats or regions, or unoccupied ideological space) within which a long-term third party can become established, flourish and develop strategies to partially overcome its lower perceived efficacy. Second, third party voting under plurality rule is not an isolated behaviour, but part of an integrated spectrum of choices (encompassing abstention, protest voting, tactical voting, and positive party support) which citizens make. People respond both to the ideological positioning and to the perceived efficacy of the competing political parties, within a specific voting context and using a collectively defined sense of what constitutes efficacious political behaviour.

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## PREFACE

When I first began this study, I was rather surprised to find out that relatively little systematic research has been undertaken analysing why people choose to vote for third parties in countries where these parties are almost programmed to fail. Even in Britain, where many people have speculated about the rise of third party support since the mid 1970s, the analysis has tended to be treated as one supplementary to studying the two major parties. This paucity of existing research rather encouraged me to explore uncharted territory. However, as is often true, there turned out to be some considerable difficulties in venturing into an area untilled by a great deal of previous literature. Information and data which is plentifully and reliably available for major parties in plurality rule systems, proved much harder to unearth for third parties. And in particular, to find equivalent information across all four cases covered in this study proved demanding. However, the effort was essential in order to achieve a requisite variety of case material, and in the process to cover a large proportion of the plurality rule systems operating world-wide.

In each case I undertook an extensive literature and documentation search, analysed election survey data, and mapped out an approximate analysis before visiting the countries outside the UK to consult with academics there and acquire further data and documentation. Assistance with the trip to New Zealand was provided by the University of London's Central Research Fund. I also received a grant towards the cost of the visit to Canada from the Canadian Studies Graduate Student Research Program. I wish to thank both Funds for their very helpful support. I am grateful also to scholars who willingly accepted interviews for my research during the field trip to New Zealand and Canada. Especially, I would like to thank Helena Catt and Raymond Miller, both at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and Keith Archer, from the University of Calgary, Canada.

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# Chapter I

## PLURALITY RULE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND NON-MAJOR PARTIES

### 1.1. PLURALITY RULE AND REPRESENTATION

It is widely accepted that electoral systems may have a great impact on the effective number of political parties. Duverger's classic 'law' set out a relationship between electoral systems and the number of parties such that a plurality (or majority) single-ballot system tends to reduce the number of parties to two regardless of the number of issue dimensions, whilst a second-ballot (majority) and a proportional representation system tend to produce more parties corresponding to the number of issue dimensions (Duverger, 1964). This famous argument has attracted a lot of attention from political scientists since it was first formulated.

Plurality rule electoral systems, often called 'first-past-the-post systems', award a seat to the candidate who gets the largest number of votes (a plurality) in a given constituency. The basic argument in favour of this system is associated with the virtues of a stable one-party government. Blais (1991: 240-3) summarised three virtues of this approach. First, plurality rule greatly increases the likelihood of a one-party government by 'manufacturing a parliamentary majority'. Second, there is a strong relationship between a one-party majority government and its durability in office - that is, the system leads to a more stable government. Third, since the outcome of an election is clear-cut, plurality rule elections are more decisive and in this way assure greater accountability.

However, plurality systems may also cause some problems. The decisiveness of an electoral outcome may weaken stability under certain

circumstances which are connected to the characteristics of territorial representation. The emphasis on territorial representation is likely to exacerbate differences between different areas or regions, and makes it more difficult for common interests to be weighed adequately in relation to particular geographical ones (Reeve and Ware, 1992: 119). If a governing party is dependent upon a strong regional base of support its legitimacy may be reduced compared with a governing party with a clear national mandate. In other words:

Where the basic cleavage in an industrialised country is socio-economic rather than territorial, it will encourage the growth of a two-party system, and moderate government is a likely result. Where, on the other hand, the political culture is less homogenous, but riven with territorial or ethnic cleavages, the system will work very differently, emphasizing geographical concentration of support, and stressing territorial issue at the expense of socio-economic, as in Canada, for example. It is not surprising, therefore, that the plurality system is found to be least workable in such divided societies. It presupposes consensus, but may also help to reinforce it. (Bogdanor, 1983a: 4)

The other problem of plurality rule electoral systems is its tendency to be disproportional and to produce a large number of 'wasted' votes. Since only the candidate with the most ballots is elected, the winner need not win the majority of votes. A two-candidate competition must produce a majority winner. However, the more candidates compete, the lower the share of votes which a winning candidate needs. If four candidates compete for a seat, in theory, just more than 25 per cent of the votes can enable a candidate to win. As a matter of fact, in the 1992 British General Election, four candidates were in a close competition in the Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber constituency.

Table 1.1. Voting result in Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber in the 1992 British General Election

	voters (%)	eligible electors (%)
Liberal Democratic party	26	19
Labour party	25	18
Scottish National party	25	18
Conservative party	23	17
Green party	2	1

The result was that a Liberal Democrat candidate was elected by just 26 per cent of the voters (Table 1.1), and consequently, 74 per cent of the voters failed to be represented - and their votes could be considered as 'wasted'. If abstentions are included, 81 per cent of the local eligible electorate were not represented by the victor's alignment.

Those voters who are concerned about potentially 'wasting' their vote may choose a likely candidate to win who is not their most-preferred one. Such tactical voting, in turn, reinforces the stability of the two-party system at the cost of non-major parties. That is, plurality rule elections produce a 'freezing of political cleavages' (Reeve and Ware, 1992: 128) by putting pressure on voters to choose between one of the two largest parties.

Consequently, the merit of a plurality rule electoral system - a stable and effective government - is not compatible with an ideal norm of democratic representation - proportionality. Rather, a plurality rule electoral system is a mechanism of *disproportional* representation (Rose, 1983: 30). Since the mandate for governing is decided in terms of seats received, not in terms of votes won, a further deviation from proportionality also commonly occurs when a government is formed in a plurality system. The party with a majority of seats in the parliament will not necessarily have received the majority of votes. More often than not, less than 50 per cent of votes will suffice for the leading party to gain the majority of parliamentary seats. Sometimes the share of votes of an incoming government party may even be less than that of an opposition party. For example, in the February 1974 general election in Britain, the Labour party

won the election with 301 seats from 37.1 per cent of total votes while the Conservatives got 297 seats with 37.8 per cent of the votes - although in this case Labour's failure to secure a majority of seats soon led to another general election nine months later.

Parties which are not large enough to count as one of the two leading contenders for office in a plurality rule system may be called 'non-major' parties. Non-major parties usually just have to come to terms with the disadvantages imposed on them under plurality rule. Most non-major parties are seriously under-represented, and a large proportion of their supporters' votes are ineffective in electing MPs and hence are 'wasted'. For example, in the 1983 British general election, Labour won 28 per cent of total votes and 209 seats while the Alliance secured only 23 seats from 25 per cent of the votes. The gap of about 3 per cent between the Labour's and the Alliance's share of the votes brought about a difference of as many as 186 seat (29 per cent of the Commons). Consequently, many votes for the Alliance barely affected the balance of party representation. Additionally, single-party majority governments commonly occur in plurality rule systems, and they do not provide any opportunity for non-major parties to take part in government, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Therefore, non-major parties are unlikely to improve their perceived efficacy at the level of national politics by achieving any share in managing the central government apparatus. In short, a plurality rule electoral system creates such difficult conditions for non-major parties that it may force them to remain permanently 'minor' parties.

Nevertheless, a large weight of empirical evidence goes against Duverger's notion. Some third or fourth parties have established wide support even under highly unfavourable electoral systems. In Britain, for example, the Liberal Democratic party is clearly a non-major party but has succeeded in increasing and consolidating support, even though it is still unable to compete for power at the national level on equal terms. To take another example, in the 1992 South Korean election a new party succeeded in breaking through under a plurality

rule electoral system which imposes systematic burdens upon non-established parties. These phenomena are intriguing and merit further study.

## **1.2. POLITICAL PARTIES UNDER PLURALITY RULE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

Countries adopting a pure type of plurality rule electoral systems are rather rare world-wide. New Zealand, which used to have a 'typical' two-party system under plurality rule elections, has now changed its electoral system to a German-style mixed member system, first used in 1996. The remaining countries which continue to employ plurality rule electoral systems are Britain, Canada, the United States, and some former British colonies such as Malaysia and India. If small variations are included under plurality rule then Australia (for lower house elections) and South Korea can also fall into this category. Apart from the United States, 'Duverger's law' no longer applies very well in practice across this group of countries. Everywhere except in the USA the effective number of parties in the legislative body is apparently far more than two. Even though non-major parties have not usually mounted enough of a threat to replace one of the two major parties, they have quite widely succeeded in articulating and increasing their support under an unfavourable electoral system. However, it is hard to continue treating all the wide variety of non-major parties as a single category because they are dependent on quite different types of support - variations addressed in the next section.

### **A Typology of Parties**

Some non-major parties under a plurality rule electoral system rely on geographically concentrated support, as is the case with the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru in Britain. Other non-major parties, such as the British Liberal Democrats, depend on regionally diffuse and rather volatile

support, and these two polar patterns more or less define the available range for non-major parties. Regionalist parties' parliamentary representation may not be greatly below their shares of votes, indeed it may on occasion even be exaggerated. By contrast, parties with regionally diffuse support are usually heavily under-represented under plurality rule.

This first contrast suggests two key criteria to be used in separating out different types of non-major parties: their geographical range of competition and the level of proportionality in their representation. The geographical range of competition distinguishes some non-major parties competing only in a limited area from other 'national' parties. Proportionality of representation shows whether a party's representation in the legislature benefits from a plurality rule, that is, whether it is over-represented or under-represented. The normal index used in this area is the 'proportionality ratio' statistic, obtained by calculating the ratio between the share of votes and seats of a party. That is,

$$R = (\% \text{share of seats} / \% \text{share of votes})$$

If the R score is 1, the party is represented in perfect proportion to its vote share - a rather rare outcome under a plurality rule electoral system. When a party is over-represented, the value of the ratio R will be larger than one; when under-represented, it will be smaller than one. If a party fails to win seats and so stays below the threshold of representation, then the ratio will be zero. Figure 1.1 shows the resulting typology of parties. There are four types of parties competing under plurality rule electoral systems. Type A are major parties competing for government nation-wide, which are over-represented by the electoral system and so have an R ratio which is usually larger than 1. Table 1.2 shows the extent to which two major parties under a plurality rule electoral system are over-represented.

Figure 1.1. A Typology of parties under a plurality rule electoral system

<i>representation</i>	<i>competition</i> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">→</span>	
↓	Nation-wide	Regionally
over-represented ( $R \geq 1$ )	A	B <sub>1</sub>
under-represented ( $R < 1$ )	C	B B <sub>2</sub>
below the threshold ( $R = 0$ )	D	B <sub>3</sub>

Type D consists of small parties which fail to overcome the high thresholds imposed by plurality rule electoral systems. As long as one of these parties fails to win seats, its R score is nil. As Reeve and Ware point out:

Indeed, the main barrier facing such parties (small parties) is not the size of the total electorate they must mobilize but the threshold, in terms of voter support, they must cross in plurality voting systems in order to elect representatives at any level (Reeve and Ware, 1992: 120).

Often this type of parties gain no representation in spite of being supported by quite large and active social movements, and they also suffer from internal conflicts between ideologically committed party activists and the party leadership (Kang, 1996). The Green Party in Britain is a typical example.

Parties in Type B (which have been described in various ways such as regionalist parties, autonomist parties, separatist parties or nationalist parties), are seeking support in a limited region of the state's territory, where the majority of the voters share a single exogenous quality such as ethnicity, language, or religion. Parties such as the Bloc Quebecois in Canada and the Scottish National Party fall into this category. These parties rely on a strong identity set which allows the people involved to distinguish 'ourselves' from

'others'. They often pursue a goal where it is hard to reach a compromise, such as independence or autonomy for the region. A firm and exclusive link to voters with a single exogenous characteristic often causes a backlash and eventually limits further support.

Table 1.2. The average seats/votes ratios ( $R$ ) for political parties in four plurality rule countries in the recent period

Britain (1974-1992)			Canada (1962-1988)		
Party	Type	$R$	Party	Type	$R$
Conservative	A	1.29	Conservative	A	1.16
Labour	A	1.20	Liberal	A	1.18
Plaid Cymru	B <sub>2</sub>	0.95	Bloc Quebecois <sup>1</sup>	B <sub>1</sub>	1.31
SNP	B <sub>2</sub>	0.37	NDP	C	0.54
Liberal Democrat	C	0.14			
Greens	D	0			

New Zealand (1978-1984)			South Korea (1992) <sup>2</sup>		
Party	Type	$R$	Party	Type	$R$
National	A	1.26	DLP	A	1.27
Labour	A	1.22	DP	A	1.08
Social Credit	C	0.15	UNP	C	0.58
Values	D	0	<i>Minjungdang</i>	D	0

1) in the 1993 Federal Election

2) seats won at the constituency level only.

*SNP* : Scottish National Party, *NDP* : New Democratic Party,

*DLP* : Democratic Liberal party, *DP* : Democratic party, *UNP* : Unification National party

Sources: calculated from Butler and Butler (1994: 218-9) for Britain; Jackson and Jackson (1994: 477) for Canada; Norton (1988: 6) for New Zealand; *Chosun Ilbo* (1992: 132-7) for South Korea.

Even though support for those parties concentrates on a certain part of national areas, the ratio between seats and votes varies from party to party. If a party succeeds in mobilising regionally-based voters, the geographically concentrated support will greatly exaggerate its representation, compared with other non-major parties. For example, in the 1992 British general election, Plaid Cymru secured four seats from 0.5 per cent of total votes while the Liberal Democrats

gained only twenty seats from 17.9 per cent of total votes; and in Table 1.2 Plaid Cymru has the highest R ratio of all the non-major parties. Its ratio even reached 1.3 in the 1992 election, so that the Welsh nationalists were more over-represented than even the Conservatives and Labour.

The party (Plaid Cymru) managed this because its vote was very effectively concentrated in the Welsh-speaking seats. Plaid Cymru's performance is proof, if proof were needed, that the first-past-post is unfair only to some small parties (Wilder, 1992: 5).

The success of Plaid Cymru also contrasts with that of the British Green party, which won more votes across the country nation-wide in the 1992 general election, but did not win any seats.

If a regionalist party represents a fairly populous region the successful mobilisation of the local voters' support can enable the party to replace one of major parties, as is the case of the Bloc Quebecois in the 1993 Canadian federal election, where it achieved an R ratio of 1.31. This sudden rise dramatically highlighted the advantage of regionally concentrated support under a plurality rule electoral system.

However, it should be noted that not every party in this category can succeed in exaggerating its representation. Table 1.2 shows that the ratios of some type B parties are lower than 1 (that is they lie in sub-type B<sub>2</sub> or B<sub>3</sub> rather than B<sub>1</sub>). A good example is the case of the Scottish National Party (SNP), which gained many more votes than the Welsh nationalists in the 1992 general election. The SNP won only three seats with about 630,000 votes while Plaid Cymru secured four seats with about a quarter of the SNP votes. Even in the October 1974 election when the SNP achieved its best outcome (11 seats, 2.9 per cent of the national votes), its ratio remains only 0.58, placing it in the B<sub>2</sub> category. These ratios reveal that the support for the SNP is quite diffused across Scotland.

By contrast, parties of Type C depend on geographically diffused support nation-wide, and suffer the greatest disadvantage under a plurality rule electoral system. Since supporters do not share a single and distinctive identity set,

support for parties in Type C is never solid. They compete in elections nationwide, and are severely under-represented with an R ratio much less than 1. The ratio of the Liberal Democrats in Britain is as low as 0.14. The ratio of Social Credit in New Zealand in the recent past was 0.15. (The ratios of the NDP in Canada and the UNP in South Korea are appreciably greater, but both have a degree of regional appeal and are thus more intermediate between Type B<sub>2</sub> and Type C). In spite of these low ratios, the parties involved nonetheless manage to survive or even increase their support under unfavourable conditions and without relying on regionally concentrated support. Thus, those parties in Type C pose a particularly acute problem for Duverger's law.

In short, Type A consists of major parties and the others are all non-major parties. Among the three, Type D is small parties which stay below the threshold of representation. Types B and C constitute the third parties<sup>1</sup> (except in the case of the Bloc Quebecois which became the official opposition from nowhere in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election)<sup>2</sup>. In the next section, the two types of third parties, Type B and Type C, are compared in detail.

### **Dunleavy's group distinction and two types of third parties**

Dunleavy (1991) developed some useful concepts by making a distinction between exogenous groups and endogenous groups:

Exogenous groups have an identity set, the ensemble of all the individuals who join the group, delimited by external factors. An exogenous group's potential members are not randomly scattered in society but share a common situation defined outside their individual or collective control.... This identity set is crucial for group activities, but its size and composition are fixed beyond the group's control. Endogenous groups are formed simply by the coming together of like-minded people. Only the actors involved determined what is common to an endogenous group's potential members (or

identity set). At an individual level the motivation for joining the group is self-selected (Dunleavy, 1991: 55).

Similarities can be found between exogenous groups and parties of Type B and between endogenous groups and parties of Type C respectively. Dunleavy's concepts were originally designed for restructuring the theory of groups, and so some of them are not directly applicable to political parties. However, his notion has some important implications for understanding party competition, especially with reference to third parties.

Dunleavy's definition of an endogenous group seems to apply to the characteristics of parties in Type C, which have a diffused and unstable identity set, and whose potential members are often socially invisible (Dunleavy, 1991: 66). As a result of lack of committed support, such parties often find that quickly-won voters can also quickly depart (Rose and McAllister, 1986: 138). By contrast, parties in Type B, like exogenous groups, have a compact identity set, and their potential support concentrates in particular spatial locations. Most parties in type B are linked to some form of exogenous group (like the relationship between the Scottish people and the SNP). Because of these similarities, parties in Type B can usefully be called the 'exogenous type' of third parties, and parties in Type C can be called as the 'endogenous type'.

Even though Dunleavy attempted a dichotomy between the two different groups, the notions of being 'endogenous' and 'exogenous' are to be regarded as lying along a continuum. One merit of the continuum is to include major parties in the same framework of explanation. Major parties have surely established a considerable degree of exogeneity. Dunleavy said:

They (major parties) solidify an appeal to people in defined social locations, make alliances with corporatist interests, manipulate the electoral system to prevent new parties entering competition and establish themselves as the dominant party in one area of the political spectrum - hence creating strong dependence effects amongst voters (Dunleavy, 1991: 84-85).

While building a distinct identity, major parties also deliberately avoid being seen to represent an exclusive and consolidated minority group identity, because it could undermine further support. Thus, major parties have developed a moderate but clear identity set, placing them somewhere in the middle along the continuum between being 'exogenous' and 'endogenous'. Table 1.3 summarizes these characteristics of the two types of third parties and major parties.

Table 1.3. The characteristics of major parties and two types of third parties

Type A	Type B	Type C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• major parties</li> <li>• moderate concentration of regional support</li> <li>• moderate but clear identity set</li> <li>• strong historical dominance in one part of ideological spectrum</li> <li>• benefit from plurality electoral systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exogenous</li> <li>• strong and compact identity set</li> <li>• often linked with some ascribed features</li> <li>• regionally limited and concentrated support</li> <li>• likely to be over-represented under plurality electoral systems</li> <li>• usually monopoly position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endogenous</li> <li>• weak and unstable identity set</li> <li>• regionally dispersed support</li> <li>• under-represented under plurality electoral systems</li> <li>• usually centre party on the political spectrum</li> <li>• several rival parties</li> </ul>

### Different front-lines: Two types of third parties in elections

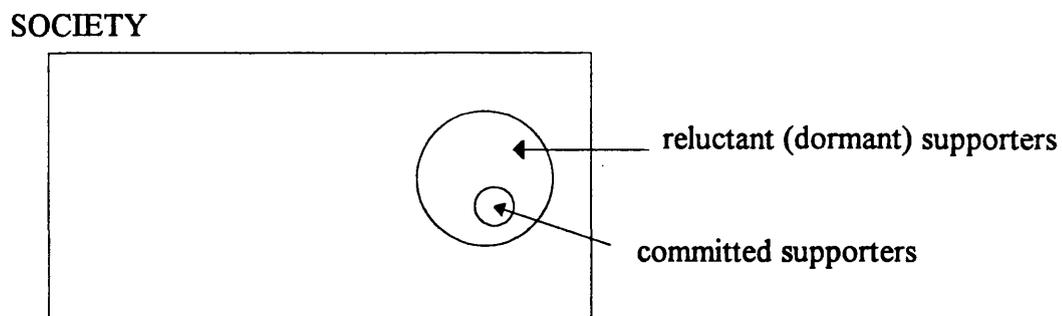
The characteristics of the endogenous-exogenous continuum can help differentiate between different 'kinds' of potential supporters and different electoral strategies of third parties. For example, the British Liberal Democrats would not adopt the same electoral strategy as that of the SNP.

The exogenous type of parties is based on a collective and binding interest of those who share a common exogenous characteristic. They have their own 'niche market' based on a shared common exogenous characteristic. In an attempt to mobilise potential voters, those parties often claim themselves as a

political wing to represent the collective interest of an exogenous group. For example, the SNP, the Lega Nord in Italy, or the Bloc Quebecois in Canada seek to advance their demand for autonomy (or independence) by attempting to forge a link in voters' minds between their immediate and specific material concerns, and the existence of a real or imagined territorial community (Newell, 1994: 136).

However, an individual voter's key exogenous characteristics need not necessarily coincide with his/her political identity. For example, being a Quebecker would not necessarily mean becoming an ardent supporter for the Bloc Quebecois even though he/she can be a potential supporter. The round area within the rectangle in Figure 1.2 indicates a set of potential supporters for an exogenous third party. The isolated round area indicates that the exogenous identity is not shared with other part of society. The potential supporters in a 'niche market' may be classified into two levels in terms of the intensity of their political identity: committed supporters and reluctant (or dormant) supporters. Committed supporters are those who endorse the third party as a political wing to represent those with the exogenous identity.

Figure 1.2. Two levels of support for the exogenous type of parties



Non-supporters may have two reasons. Firstly, they may not need to support the party since they believe that other 'national' parties satisfactorily represent

them. They can be called 'dormant' potential supporters. Secondly, some of them may be concerned about the low efficacy of the third party and its slim opportunity for winning, even when they are basically sympathetic. This type of person may be called 'reluctant' members of the identity set.

In addition, existing major parties tend to 'pre-occupy or pre-empt' potentially significant issues. Successful performance by existing parties would hamper any attempt to mobilise potential supporters for the exogenous type of third parties. Thus, the electoral outcomes achieved by an exogenous third party are contingent on how it can mobilise the reluctant or dormant members of the identity set it has defined (its potential supporters).

It seems adequate that the exogenous type of third parties focus on the intrinsic characteristic for mobilising potential supporters. Often such parties deliberately provoke or encourage a nationalistic sentiment, or try to intensify the feeling of discrimination against a minority group. If such uneasy circumstances are bound up with the intrinsic characteristic, then nobody in the relevant identity set can 'stop being consumer' of the party's efforts (Hirschman, 1970: 102). As Newell pointed out,

regional autonomy parties necessarily seek to make salient for voters their identities as members of some territorially based unit below the level of the state as a whole...The SNP never fails to make appeals to Scottishness (Newell, 1994: 142).

By contrast, third parties of the endogenous type (Type C) have neither a specified geographical boundary of potential supporters nor do they represent an exclusive and compact set of interests. This type of third parties do not have a particular niche market on their own, but rely on initially 'unidentified' or hard-to-identify voters to support them nation-wide. Typically they occupy a centrist position and in Downs' view they are likely to be squeezed by a convergence of two major parties towards the median voter's position. However, in spite of these apparently severe handicaps, empirical evidence shows a general growth of support for the endogenous type of third parties in the last two decades in plurality rule countries. The following chapters are

mainly devoted to exploring the underlying the logic of voters' seemingly 'irrational' choice to support the endogenous type of third parties.

### **1.3. RESEARCH SCOPE AND METHODS**

A basic perspective of this study is to focus on individual voters' choice to cast an apparently ineffective ballot by supporting a third party. Empirically, this study compares four different third parties in four liberal democratic countries. In this section, the research scope and methods are explained.

#### **Rational voters and Third party voting : The Public Choice approach**

A public choice approach assumes a rational actor who seeks to maximise his or her self-interest when participating in a collective choice. That is, it assumes that there are important forms of political behaviour which are the result of choices made with a view to the efficient achievement of given ends (Ward, 1995: 79). Affecting the outcome would be the major impetus of an individual choice. Everyone is eager to achieve their personally best outcome, even though the decision is made collectively - and so the approach is inherently individualistic.

However, the choice of an individual actor will be constrained by the surrounding environment. That is, rationality can be restricted by the institutional settings and conditions which could structure the availability of options (see Dowding, 1994). As Mueller pointed out:

The important differences that arise when alternative voting rules and democratic procedures are used illustrate the single, most important lesson public choice teaches - institutions do matter (Mueller, 1989: 6).

For example, the effectiveness of third party voting would be seriously hampered under a plurality rule electoral system because of its low likelihood

of government. But by contrast, at least in theory, under a proportional representation system no preference would be under-represented.

The basic perspective and assumptions here are in line with many other public choice accounts. However, instead of trying to build a pure form of algebraic model based on reasoning, this study employs an institutional public choice approach (Dunleavy, 1991: 1-2). Specifically, this study attempts to analyse in a formal theoretical way the logic of third party voting as a rational behaviour in conjunction with the institutional settings and conditions structured by plurality electoral systems, and to formulate hypotheses which can be subjected to systematic empirical investigation. Various public choice accounts of voting will be reviewed in the next chapter.

#### **Four third parties: A Comparative approach**

Even though studies of elections often focus on ‘apparently quite different phenomena’ (Eijk, 1993: 59), this study is rather interested in a contextual similarity in different settings. The purpose of this study is to explore a common political consequence of one electoral system - the rise of third party support under a plurality rule electoral system. A comparison is made between four third parties in four democratic countries: the Liberal Democratic Party in Britain, Social Credit in New Zealand, the New Democratic Party (NDP) in Canada, and the Unification National Party in South Korea (UNP). In spite of some institutional, cultural, or political differences between them, the four parties selected all represent the endogenous type of third parties (or parties of Type C in Figure 1.1) under plurality rule electoral systems. More importantly, each of the four cases has some good grounds to be labeled as a ‘successful’ third party.

It may be inadequate to call the Liberal Democratic Party in Britain as a ‘non-major party’ because it has won close to or more than a sixth of votes nation-wide in every general election since 1974 and has established a firm support base at the local politics level. But in spite of the growth in its support,

the party is still 'minor' in terms of its share of Westminster seats. The time period in this research covers the three elections from 1983 to 1992, over which the performance of the traditional third party has been greatly improved. Electoral results analysed here are geographically limited within Great Britain because the three main parties have not participated in elections in Northern Ireland.

Epstein once described Canadian party system as a 'two-party-plus' system (1964: 46-60). The New Democratic Party occupied the 'plus' position in the Canadian party system from its founding in 1961 until the 1988 federal election. From more radical left-wing origins, the NDP gradually adopted a moderate-left reform position that, at times, overlapped with centre-left Liberal positions (Jackson and Jackson, 1994: 421). The NDP managed to win 15-20 per cent of the votes in every federal election between 1961 and 1988. However, its support was not so solid as that of the other two major parties. As a third party, the NDP took no strong position over the country's major historic political issues such as the conflict between French and English Canadians. In the 1993 Canadian federal election, the New Democratic Party lost its traditional rank of the third party to the Reform Party. In a disappointing election result, the NDP garnered only 7 per cent of votes, and did not even form an official parliamentary party. The period covered in this study is prior to the sudden decline of the party support, and focuses on the 1984 and 1988 federal elections in which the NDP enjoyed good electoral performance.

Social Credit in New Zealand (renamed the Democratic Party in 1985) was formed in 1953 as a political arm of the Social Credit Association, a monetary reform organization dating back to the early 1930s. Among the four third parties of this study, Social Credit was the 'least successful' third party. Apart from a 'blip' period between 1978 and 1981, its share of votes usually remained below the 10 per cent level. In the 1978 and 1981 elections Social Credit won 16 per cent and 21 per cent of votes respectively. However, even when support for Social Credit was in its heyday, its share of seats remained minimal. The Party secured only one seat in 1978 and two seats in 1981. Even

though Social Credit was severely under-represented, the basic logic of its support was similar to that of the other three parties in this study. Miller said:

As well as functioning as a sectional party, the Democratic Party, as the 'third' party in a two-party dominant system fills the role of 'protest' party. Its electoral support has waxed and waned accordingly, with consequent distortions to its sectional character in times of heightened political unrest (1989: 248. Emphasis in the original).

Even though Social Credit retained two seats in the 1984 election, the contest effectively signified the party's political demise. This study mainly focuses on the growth of Social Credit support between 1978 and 1981.

The Unification National Party (UNP) in South Korea is rather a unique case amongst the four. The UNP was founded just before the 1992 National Assembly election by a successful businessman, Chung Ju-young. Chung is the founder and owner of the giant Hyundai Group which is one of the largest conglomerates in the country. Depending on his huge personal fortune Chung fought a energetic, pro-business election campaign, which attacked the economic record of the incumbent government. In the 1992 National Assembly election, the UNP made an impressive electoral performance, emerging as a strong third party by winning 17 per cent of total votes. However, when Chung decided to leave politics after his abortive presidential bid in December 1992, the UNP virtually began to collapse. This study focuses mainly on the electoral support for the UNP in the 1992 National Assembly election.

In comparing the four cases, both quantitative methods and a qualitative historical approach are employed. The qualitative historical approach is important to understand different backgrounds and conditions behind the 'success' of the four third parties. Voters' choices should vary according to different contexts constituted by different social-historical conditions. Quantitative methods are also used to analyse voting patterns and to understand the empirical evidence. The data sets used here include the survey data, aggregate election data and public opinion polls from each country (see

Appendix). However, because of different designs of the surveys, and more importantly, because of the different political settings in each country, this study does not try to implement a common statistical model which can encompass the four cases.

### **Comparison of the four cases**

In looking at some common effects of an electoral system on party politics, it is important to recognize that simply analysing apparently the same phenomenon cannot suffice without some contextual comprehension behind it. As Mackie and Marsh pointed out (1995: 182-3), 'same phenomena, different meanings' is a frequent mistake made in comparative studies. To avoid such mistakes, it is important to understand a phenomenon in terms of the context of where it occurs. Such differences may result from some inherent characteristics of the political systems which each country employs. For example, third parties in a federal state such as Canada could have a different political environment from those in an unitary state.

There are some substantial differences between the four cases. First of all, the four cases are different in terms of political systems (Table 1.4). Britain and New Zealand have quite similar political systems - a parliamentary government, unitary structure and pure plurality electoral system (until the 1993 general election in New Zealand). In addition, the two countries have been well known as stable two party systems, clearly orientated around left/right (or class-based) ideological differences (at least, until the 1993 election in New Zealand).

By contrast, Canada is the only federal state among the four cases, with two key levels of government: the central government and provincial governments, where each province is also a complete political and economic unit. Each province has developed its own identity, which is sometimes at loggerheads with each other.

In the federal form, the various levels of government obtain their respective powers from the country's constitution, not from each

other. Citizens owe some loyalty to more than one level of government, and both levels may act directly on the citizens (Jackson and Jackson, 1994: 240).

Patterns of party support often vary markedly from province to province. For example, the voting pattern of Alberta (not to mention Quebec) has been quite different from the other provinces.

Table 1.4. Differences of the four cases in political structure

<i>country</i>	<i>third party</i>	<i>electoral system</i>	<i>system of government</i>	<i>political structure</i>
Britain	Liberal Democratic Party	plurality rule election	parliamentary	unitary
New Zealand	Social Credit (renamed the Democratic Party in 1985)	plurality rule election (until the 1993 general election)	parliamentary	unitary
Canada	New Democratic Party (before the 1993 federal election)	plurality rule election	parliamentary	federal
South Korea	Unification National Party (in the 1992 National Assembly election)	additional member system (237 constituency seats by plurality rule; 62 seats allocated in proportion to the number of constituency seats won)	presidential	unitary

Between the four cases the South Korean case seems peculiar. She apparently lacks the historical relationship and the cultural, linguistic similarity which the other three countries share. Strictly speaking, the South Korean electoral system used in the 1992 National Assembly election was also a unique version of an additional member system, based on a plurality rule electoral system. It was designed to secure a strong government, rather than to enhance proportionality. In the 1992 National Assembly Election, there were 237 single-member constituencies, each electing a legislator by plurality rule. Then

a further 62 additional seats were allocated from party lists. However, the additional seats were allocated only to parties which qualified by winning more than 5 constituency seats. The number of seats allocated was not proportional to its share of votes, but to the number of *seats* that each party won nationally. It is obvious that a voter who voted for an unsuccessful candidate in his/her constituency wasted his/her vote twice (Morris, 1992/3: 60). In addition, a number of successful single independent candidates also contributed to deviating from proportionality because votes for such candidates could not affect the allocation of the additional seats. In the 1992 National Assembly election, there were twenty-one successful independent candidates who secured 12 per cent of votes in total. Thus, in spite of its formal differences, this system still contained the same characteristics as a 'normal' plurality electoral system - it was, if anything, even less proportional. For such reasons, the Korean electoral system is here treated as a kind of plurality electoral system.

South Korea is also the only country of the four cases to employ a presidential system. A voter in a presidential system operate in a different situation from one in a parliamentary system. In a parliamentary democracy, a general election means an event to choose both the executive and the legislature. Ballots cast can be interpreted as an expression of support or rejection of the current party government, which may be perceived as referenda on the party government (Taylor, 1984: 54). By contrast, a general election under a presidential system does not mean a choice of a new government. The meaning of a general election is attenuated to the event for electing members of the legislative body, and so it sometimes looks less important than a presidential election. However, the 1992 National Assembly election had a special meaning and drew much attention because it was held just nine months before a presidential election. So many South Korean voters regarded the legislative election as 'a dress rehearsal' for the upcoming presidential election. Party leaders (or potential presidential candidates) also considered the election as an opportunity to test the waters.

Secondly, another difference between the four cases can be found in terms of each party's ideological position. The four cases encompass three different ideological positions - the left, right and middle position. The Liberal Democratic party in Britain is a centrist party; the NDP has been a left-wing party; and both the UNP and s Social Credit were right-wing parties.

Thirdly, the aggregate distribution of preferences (ADP) of voters also varies considerably between the cases. Many analysts suppose that Britain and New Zealand have almost identically shaped ADP curves, with a single-peaked and symmetrical distribution where the median voter's position is close to the centre. By contrast, the ADP curves of both Canada and South Korea seems skewed to right, so that the median voter's position is also in the right-side, not at the centre. South Korea particularly is much further biased to right. The narrow ideological scale and a strong ideological bias against left-wing ideology are partly attributed to the bitter experience of the Korean war and the enduring military confrontation with the communist North.

Table 1.5. Ideological positions and Supporting groups

	ideological position	supporting groups	durability	period covered
Liberal Democratic Party	centre	none	yes	83-92
Social Credit	right	Social Credit Association	no	79-81
New Democratic Party	left	Trade Unions	yes	84-88
Unification National Party	right	Hyundai Group	no	92

Fourthly, three of the third parties included have a special relationship with a certain group of support - the exception being the British Liberal Democrats. Social Credit was based on the monetary reform movement - the Social Credit Movement. The New Democratic Party was created under the influence of

trade unionism in Canada. The UNP was dependent heavily on the Hyundai Group. Although the special relationship does not necessarily mean entire dependence on the group, the influence from these linkages cannot be ignored. For example, it was inevitable that some voters could not distinguish the image of those parties from that of their supporting groups. In fact, many Koreans identified the UNP with the Hyundai Group. The image of Social Credit, whether favourable or unfavourable, was owed to the monetary movement. Likewise, the image of the NDP was inseparable from the trade unions. Table 1.5 summarises some difference between the cases.

#### **1.4. THIRD PARTIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES: THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA**

Regardless of durability, the four cases in this study represent more or less 'successful' third parties under a plurality rule electoral system. However, in some countries employing the same (or a similar) electoral system non-major parties repeatedly fail to be represented. The United States especially has a rock-solid two-party system which has never allowed any serious third party intervention in legislative elections. In Australia third parties have also never won seats in the House of Representatives for which a majority electoral rule (the alternative vote) is adopted, and they have also had very limited success even under a more favourable electoral system for the Senate (where the single transferrable vote is used). In this section, the reasons why third parties in these two countries do not succeed in entering are briefly discussed in conjunction with the four 'successful' cases.

##### **Third parties in the United States**

The United States seems to be the only country in which Duverger's law still works almost perfectly. In spite of many attempts, no third party has seriously

threatened the two-party system. Some differences can be found between the four cases studied here and American third parties. First of all, compared with the four countries there is no single dominant political cleavage structuring American party politics. Even though the Republicans and Democrats represent conservative and liberal ideologies respectively, the ideological difference is not so wide as in Britain and in New Zealand. Unlike Britain switches of voting between the two major parties are usual. Many voters can easily shift from the Republican to the Democratic party and vice versa between elections. Party politics also tends to converge on the median voter's position, as Downs argued. The two major parties have successfully accommodated various new political demands over many decades, which otherwise a non-major party could raise. As Gillespie (1993) titled his book, third parties in America tend to represent 'politics at the periphery'. Almost all third parties appearing in America were fringe parties or single-issue parties, which tended to raise too extreme or too specific issues to draw wide support from the public in general. They can hardly threaten the existing two-party system. Unlike the four countries in this study the American two-party system has not allowed (and probably will not allow) a centrist third party to emerge.

Secondly, in the United States, a president himself, not his party, usually takes the whole responsibility for government performance. Thus, the popularity of a president has basically little to do with voters' evaluation of a local Congressman or Senator, even though its effect on a legislature election cannot be completely denied (often described as a 'coattail effect'). Besides, the relationship between a Congressman (or Senator) and the local electorate is rather personal in American politics. Seeking re-election politicians try to represent their constituency's interests in the legislature (see Cain *et al.*, 1987). Thus, a poor evaluation of an incumbent president would not necessarily greatly harm a Congressman from the same party as the president's. As long as the relationship between a legislative representative and the electorate is personal, collective dissatisfaction with an entire political party is unlikely to occur.

Thirdly, the primary system in American party politics also helps to discourage the rise of any successful non-major party. Since in the primary a local party candidate is selected by popular vote, a locally unpopular incumbent legislator can be unseated by party voters at that stage. As a result, a party's dominance (in a one-party dominant region) can be maintained by replacing an unwanted local legislator with a different candidate from the same party. Therefore, there is little need to resort to third party candidates to express dissatisfaction. Primaries also facilitate the incursion of new political elite (so long as they have money) into the established parties, making them even more ideologically flexible, and creating few incentives for any political entrepreneur to launch a party of their own. All these factors - the presidential system, convergence tendency of party politics, personal relationship with the electorate, and the primary system all effectively working against a rise of a third party - mean that although there have been a few isolated cases of successful independent candidates at the legislative level, it is very unlikely for a third party to become entrenched in the American party system.

### **Third parties in Australia**

Australia uses two different electoral system between the House of Representatives (the alternative vote) and the Senate (STV). Both systems allow voters to express more than one preferences. However, the former is a majority rule whereas the latter is a proportional system. The two different electoral systems produce different electoral fortunes for Australian third parties.

Under the alternative vote system voters indicate an order of preferences. If one candidate receives a majority of the first preference votes, he/she is elected. In the event no candidate receives a majority of first-preference the candidate with the fewest number is eliminated, and his/her second preferences are transferred to the remaining candidates. This procedure continues until one candidate receives a majority of votes. Compared with a plurality rule electoral system this preferential system tends to produce few 'wasted votes' because a

winner should gain the approval of a majority of voters. In theory, it suggests that:

parties with similar policies could nominate their own candidates without risk of helping the election of candidates of opposing parties, since voters for a candidate who did not receive many first preferences would be passed on to candidates shown as the next preference (Wright, 1986: 127).

In marginal constituencies second-preferences would play an important role in determining a winner. However, a geographically uneven distribution of party support will cause similar effects to those in plurality rule electoral systems. That is, the preferential system can work in a similar way to a plurality rule election in safe constituencies since no second-preferences are needed to decide a winner. In fact, Australia has many safe constituencies (Wright, 1986: 130) and there is commonly a large discrepancy between votes won and seats gained by one party. This is a similar effect to under plurality rule elections, and proportionality is not much improved in such situations.

Besides, the patterns of voting for the Democrats, Australia's main third party since 1977, are quite similar to other third parties in this study. In a research about the Australian Democrats Marks and Bean (1992: 327) concluded,

there are remarkable similarities between the support bases of the Australian Democrats, the British Liberals and Alliance and the New Zealand Social Credit/Democratic parties. They all have weak social-structural bases, a relatively small core of loyal partisans and very weak ideological bases to their support. They gain a good deal of their support from contemporary political factors, which explains the fluctuations in their vote, but does not argue well for their future sustainability.

However, the Australian third party has never won seats in elections for the House of Representatives, although the Party secured some seats in the STV elections for the Senate. In spite of seemingly 'remarkable similarities', there is

an essential difference between the preferential electoral system and a plurality rule electoral system in terms of third party voting. In a safe constituency in Australia dissatisfied voters would face different options from those under a plurality rule electoral system.

For example, suppose there is a dominant party (A) in a safe constituency. If no candidate wins a majority required, due to sufficient support for the third party C, then second preferences will matter. Because voters in the safe constituency have developed a certain degree of long-term commitment to the dominant party A, many voters are likely to still prefer the party A to a major opposition (B) even when they are disappointed with party A. That is, many dissatisfied voters, who chose the third party C as the first preference, still stick with the dominant party (A) by choosing it as their second preference. If there is no absolute winner in first preference votes, the dominant party will have a clear advantage over the third party (C) by collecting a greater number of the second-preference ballots. Even when a third party C is seen as a viable alternative, party C cannot possibly win a seat unless it is able to secure a majority of the first preferences, which is unlikely to occur in a safe constituency. This systematic barrier against third parties undermines growth of the non-major parties under the alternative voting system. Thus, the second-preference functions as a safety-valve to deter a sudden rise of third parties in Australia.

Unlike the House of Representatives, the STV system provides more favourable conditions for third parties, and the Australian Democrats have gained some seats in the Senate. Moreover, the Democrats have exercised a 'balance of power' in the Senate since 1980. However, non-major parties still have some disadvantages in spite of the proportional rule. Regional variations in party support - including the distribution of other than first preferences - still matter, especially when the district magnitude is not usually large enough to produce accurate proportional outcomes. As Katz (1984: 137) said, STV tends to localize and personalize politics. Seats in the Senate represent each state. At an ordinary Senate election, six seats from each state are being elected. (At a

double dissolution, twelve seats from each state are being elected.) Since a state is the unit of allocation for seats, concentrated support for a non-major party in one or two states would be effective to gain seats. By contrast, evenly distributed support for a non-major party across the states would be 'wasted' when it is not large enough to reach the allocation quota. For example, in the 1984 election, the Nuclear Disarmament Party gained 7.2 per cent of first preference votes nation-wide. However, the Party gained only one seat in the Senate.

Their role in holding the 'balance of power' did not boost the Democrats' electoral fortunes, either. In spite of their greater prominence, their electoral results stayed the same or even declined. In the 1983 election the Democrats gained 9.6 per cent of vote for the Senate, which is the tiny increase from 9.3 per cent in 1980. However, its share fell to 7.6 per cent one year later (in the 1984 election). This shows that the Democrats do not build a solid base of support. As Papadakis and Bean said (1995: 97),

(the Australian Democrats and other third parties) lack a distinctive clientele in the form of a consistent appeal to well-defined social groups and they face institutional arrangements, such as electoral systems, which favour entrenched interests. Both of these factors make minor parties susceptible to sudden changes of fortune (even if they enjoy a run of success for a time) and constitute major challenges to their long-term political prospects.

In spite of different electoral systems, the Australian Democrats have suffered similar problems to other third parties of the endogenous type under plurality rule electoral systems. In elections for the House of Representatives, the second preferences in safe seats work against third parties. Under the STV elections for the Senate, a relatively small district magnitude functions as a hidden barrier to growth of third parties.

## 1.5. CONCLUSION

This study deals with one political consequence of an electoral system. As Duverger argued, plurality rule electoral systems tend to create unfavourable conditions for non-major parties. There are two types of third parties with parliamentary seats under a plurality rule electoral system : the exogenous type of third parties and the endogenous type of third parties. The former seeks a kind of political 'niche market', appealing to a defined group sharing some exogenous trait. The parliamentary representation of such parties are sometimes exaggerated because of geographically concentrated support. By contrast, the endogenous type of third parties has diffused and unstable support, and they are seriously under-represented. The rise of support for the endogenous type of third parties is intriguing because those parties depend on 'unidentified' and 'uncommitted' voters.

The four parties covered in this study all represent the endogenous type of third parties. In spite of the differences in their political systems, the four parties are also all more or less successful third parties. The four cases are sharply in contrast to the United States and Australia (the House of the Representatives) where no viable third parties have yet emerged. This contrast suggests the importance of the contextual settings in which the options of voters are affected.

## NOTE

1. The term 'third parties' may seem problematic, because some of the parties included under it are actually fourth or fifth parties in terms of their share of seats in the legislative body. However, there seems no widely accepted term and definition for non-major parties. As Smith pointed out:

There is no uniform 'small' party, and the wealth of described terms - minor, micro, splinter, fringe and 'third' - indicates that the concept of 'smallness' has a variety of connotations as well as levels (Smith, 1991: 23. Emphasis in the original).

A plurality rule electoral system usually represents a 'duality of tendencies' in Duverger's terms, and two major parties stand for each pole of the duality. Even though non-major parties are not uniform, they constitute some form of third force which stay outside the duality of tendencies. Therefore, the term 'third parties' seems suitable to the non-major parties analysed in this study. In addition, the four parties of this study actually took a third position in the legislative body in terms of numbers of seats during the period covered.

The term 'third parties' here refers to those non-major parties with seats in the legislative body. Third parties range from a party with a single seat to a party with more than 20 per cent of the share of vote nationwide such as the Liberal Democrats in Britain. However, those parties are forced to stay 'minor' because none of them is able to govern on their own. For the sake of distinction, non-major parties with no legislative seats are here called as 'small' parties. The term 'non-major' parties includes both third parties and small parties in this study.

2. A major party in Westminster model (or under a plurality rule electoral system) is assumed to be able to form a single-party government with the majority of seats in parliament. However, it is very unlikely for a party in Type B to form a single-party government on its own. As a matter of fact, the Bloc Quebecois could never win a majority of seats unless it competes nation-wide,

which would inevitably weaken its regional basis of support. The number of parliamentary seats allocated to Quebec is 75 out of 295 seats (or 25 per cent of total seats). The position of the Bloc Quebecois as the second largest party was largely caused by other forces - the landslide victory of the Liberals, and the even division of the opposition seats between the Bloc Quebecois (with 54 seats) and the Reform Party (with 52 seats). Thus, it seems inadequate to define the Bloc Quebecois as a major party even though it is not a third party. The case of the Bloc Quebecois is regarded as an exception.

## Chapter II

### REVIEWING EXISTING ACCOUNTS OF PARTY COMPETITION AND THIRD PARTIES

Elections are one of the most important mechanisms for liberal democracy, so that many intellectual efforts have been made to improve understanding of them, and to illuminate party competition. But non-major parties have not drawn so much intellectual attention. This is not surprising because the first concern of most political scientists is to develop models of competition between major parties which seek to govern on their own. For example, Downs assumed that voters would cast ballots as part of a government selection process, not as an expression of preference (Downs, 1957: 48). As a result, many existing accounts of voting behaviour tend not to produce satisfactory explanations about a 'defiant' choice, such as a decision to cast a 'wasted' vote by supporting third parties under a plurality electoral system.

The focus of most existing work is on discovering whether or not equilibrium positions for parties' policy positions can be shown to exist theoretically (Enelow and Hinich, 1984), and whether party competition will be stable or unstable over time. The significance of many of these arguments and counter-arguments has been difficult to establish, and the empirical analysis of parties' manifestos has only recently proceeded far enough to connect up effectively with some of the simpler models (Budge, 1994). The focus on macro-features of party competition has meant that smaller phenomena, such as protest voting and abstention, have tended to be neglected. Yet there is considerable evidence that these ignored processes may hold the key to understanding important political dynamics.

For example, in the UK protest voting has been defined as voters reacting against specific policies or failures of their 'natural' parties rather than being

positively attracted to another party (Heath *et al.*, 1985: 113). The growth of third and fourth party support since 1960 seems to have been closely linked to possible protest voting. Liberal and Liberal Democrat support has tended to be higher under Conservative governments than when Labour was in power, perhaps because Tory voters look for an intermediate position to support when dissatisfied with 'their' governments, but revert fully back to supporting the Conservatives to get Labour out if they become unhappy with Labour's policies when in government. The suggestion is that the rising base-level of third and fourth party support represents a partial consolidation by these parties of votes initially intended as 'protest' votes. Protest voting fuels third and fourth party fortunes, and they then convert some of this otherwise ephemeral backing into permanent support in coral reef fashion.

Protest voting has been conventionally regarded as an expression of disaffection against the party one traditionally supports, which connotes negative feelings. For example:

The (British) Liberal vote is a vote of disaffection; it represents movement away from a party rather than movement to the party; it is a vote signifying departure rather than arrival (Himmelweit *et al.*, 1985: 162).

From a Downsian perspective protest voting is basically irrational. If voters do not cast their votes for their first preference party A, then they should not vote at all. (On the other hand, if voters no longer prefer A but instead rank party B higher, then protest voting disappears in favour of a simple switch of alignments). However, very dissatisfied (negative) voters have other options: deliberate abstention or voting for an extremist party or fringe candidates. Protest voting need not be only an expression of disaffection; it may also have an element of attraction.

The notion that the Liberal vote signifies departure rather than arrival is a rather curious one. If people wish to express disaffection there are many other equally or even more potent ways in which to do it -

staying at home on polling day, for example, or voting for an extremist party like the National Front or for one of the many fringe candidates who appear, particularly at by-elections. The fact that voters chose the Liberal party as the vehicle for their protest suggests an element of attraction as well as disaffection (Heath *et al.*, 1985: 114).

The accretion of third party support via protest voting is also problematic given *where* it takes place. A plurality rule electoral system will usually impose systematic disadvantages on non-major parties, and hence a new challenger (especially a centrist party) confronts particular difficulties in winning some localities.

Since existing models have mainly concentrated on major parties, they have neglected to provide logical explanations about the electoral progress of non-major parties. It seems that non-major parties under plurality rule electoral systems have played a more important role, given the fact that the traditional model of the British-style two-party politics is hardly met in real politics. In this chapter, existing models of party competition are discussed in light of third party voting. The first section reviews public choice accounts on voting and party competition. The second section considers accounts of abstention and participation in voting. The third section examines existing explanations about tactical voting.

## **2.1. EXISTING PUBLIC CHOICE ACCOUNTS OF PARTY COMPETITION**

In spite of its enormous contribution to understanding party competition, existing public choice accounts have not come up with satisfactory explanations about rise of third party support. One reason for their failure is associated with the lack of contextual understandings about third party voting. This section

briefly reviews existing public choice accounts by examining some of their assumptions.

### **Downs and the proximity model**

Since Anthony Downs published his seminal work, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), economic models of party competition, often called public choice theory or rational choice approach, have been greatly developed. The logic of Downs' model of party competition is based on the rationality of pure office-seekers and the principle of proximity. Downs saw party competition as a government selection process and the rationality of parties (or candidates) lies on winning election. That is: 'parties formulate policies in order to win election, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies' (1957: 28). An individual voter is assumed to have a most preferred position along the spectrum (single-peaked preferences) and to vote for a party closest to his/her optimum position. Ideology is regarded as a 'short cut' to save the cost of being informed about a wider range of issues. Parties move their location along the political spectrum to capture the maximum number of voters, and the typical consequence of party competition (under certain assumptions) is convergence on the median voter's position, resulting in an equilibrium.

In the proximity model party competition is seen as a market where parties compete to 'sell' their policies to voters. It is assumed that a voter will choose a party which occupies a position along the policy spectrum nearest to her own preference - just as holiday-makers buy their ice-cream from nearest stalls on a beach, and ice-cream stalls take positions where they will attract the maximum number of customers. Downs argues that:

support will be highest at the point of the candidate's position along the ideological spectrum, and will decline as the distance of positions between voters and the candidates increases. Thus a party must be

nearer a large number of voters than any other parties are (1957: 128).

Eventually, the centre position is where two competing parties meet.

This centre area becomes smaller and smaller as both parties strive to capture moderate votes; finally the two parties become nearly identical in platforms and actions...Like the two grocery stores in Hotelling's famous example, they will converge on the same location until practically all voters are indifferent between them (1957: 117).

In a two-party competition, thus, converging on the median voter's views maximises the pool of voters from whom either party or candidate in a competition may hope to draw support. Moving away from this position will lose votes, and eventually control of government to the rival party or candidate.

The majority of researches in the spatial model have provided similar findings. For example, Davis, Hinich and Ordeshook (1970) also found that candidates converge even in a bimodal distribution of preference. Considering the concept of the sensitivity of turnout to variations in strategy, they argued that if the sensitivity is low, candidates can change their positions without worrying about losing votes, and so will converge even under a bimodal distribution of preference.

Even though the median voter theorem has been repeatedly confirmed, some of Downs's assumptions such as complete information, one-issue dimension, and a uni-modal, symmetric preference distribution have been criticised for being unrealistic. Many attempts to revise his assumptions have been made. It is well known that the median voter theorem can be well applied to party competition in one-issue dimension, but that parties are not likely to reach equilibria in a multi-issue dimension because of cycling of preferences and subsequent instability (for example, see Mueller, 1989: Chapter 10 and 11).

By distinguishing plurality maximisation and vote maximisation, Hinich and Ordeshook (1970) showed that in a multi-candidate election a candidate will try to maximise the difference in the vote between herself and her nearest competitor - plurality maximisation. Thus, candidates would focus more on a particular segment of the electorate, and would be less concerned with the preferences of all votes. They demonstrated that two competing candidates who maximise plurality diverge from the mean of a symmetric and unimodal distribution of preferences.

Dunleavy and Ward (1981) raised a question about Downs' assumption that voters' preferences are fixed. They criticised other approaches for assuming that politicians exclusively pursue preference accommodating strategies. Instead, they paid attention to governmental role to influence the electoral process. According to them, people's preferences are determined endogenously within the process of party competition:

In any public choice account, the party of government is run by rational leaders anxious to maximize their chances of re-election. For them state power has the qualities of a free good which can be used for securing partisan advantage. Wherever their party is not certain of winning enough support to be elected, leaders should logically exploit this free good to create at least a minimum majority. In conditions of acute uncertainty party leaders may want to build up a secure margin of victory. In either case it makes sense to use their control of government so far as they can to accomplish changes in aggregate (and hence individual) preferences favourable to their party (Dunleavy, 1991: 118. Chapter by Dunleavy with Ward).

According to the 'preference-shaping model', political parties do not necessarily in a passive way accommodate a 'given' distribution of preference, but party leaders instead try to reshape or accommodate people's preferences to move them closer to their parties' position. This approach is more feasible in

political systems with party-based competition than in countries where competition is essentially candidate-based (Dunleavy, 1991: 141).

Generally speaking, Downsian models have not produced feasible explanations about 'success of centrist third parties'. Those accounts simply imply that third parties are to be squeezed by the convergence of two major parties on the median voter's position. As Downs said, the winner-take-all outcome of a plurality electoral structure tends to narrow the field to two competing parties (1957: 124). From his point of view, this convergence would leave little room for entry of a third party at the centre, which does not correspond with some empirical evidence.

### **Distribution of voters' preferences and third party support**

The basic Downsian approach assumes two-party competition. When more than two parties join the competition, such explanations as the median voter's theorem are not likely to be applicable. Taking into account the existence of third parties, some political scientists put forward findings which are different from the median voter's theorem. For example, Brams and Straffin (1982) and Palfrey (1984) suggested that when there is a prospect of third-party entry at either extreme, two parties will not necessarily converge to the median voter's position. Similarly, Cox (1985) proved that candidates do not have an incentive to converge toward the centre of the political spectrum in multi-candidate plurality rule elections. He suggested that multi-candidate equilibria under a plurality rule are either nonexistent or noncentrist - that is, some candidates will locate at extreme positions relative to the distribution of voters. Adopting a different approach from Cox's position, Feddersen *et al.* (1990) argued that candidates enter at the median voter's position, assuming strategically rational voters under a plurality electoral system with a unimodal distribution of preference. In their view voters want to maximise expected utility over policy outcomes, rather than simply voting for the closest candidate. In addition,

Fedderson *et al.* recognised that the number of parties is an endogenous feature, opposing the view that the number of competing parties can assumed to be given.

However, the purpose of those arguments is to seek a point of equilibrium along the spectrum which enable third parties to enter. Assuming a fixed number of parties, they tried to find equilibrium points or to justify the 'existence' *per se* of third parties (candidates). The context and circumstances behind the equilibrium are usually neglected, which restricts their ability to produce plausible explanations about different outcomes in a similar setting - such as the different entry points of third parties in Britain and Canada under the same electoral system. In addition, given the fact that plurality rule electoral systems tend to penalise candidates from a non-major party, proximity will not necessarily be a single principal determinant to understand these parties' performance. The major parties will have a much stronger influence over voters than non-major parties, and their slim chances of winning power makes third party candidates effectively unable to compete on equal terms.

In his simplest model Downs assumed that all voters' preferences are single-peaked and slope downward monotonically on either side of the peak (Downs, 1957: 115-6) . He considered a number of ADP configurations, ranging from an even distribution of voters, through a symmetric bell-shaped distribution, to lop-sided ADP curves. But the image of the bell-shape has been rather more influential than the others, fitting closely with conventional assumptions about established liberal democracies. However, even if this image was appropriate nationally, the shape of the voters' aggregate preferences at a sub-national level may not necessarily be a bell-shaped distribution. In many countries regions with a more homogenous class character and socio-economic status display a similar political propensity. If a region is composed of a homogenous set of people, its distribution of preference could be asymmetrically skewed and/or multi-peaked. Mueller was also aware of the existence of 'bias'. He noted :

The assumption that interest groups are biased toward or away from certain candidates or parties accords with observed voting patterns. Whites in the South and blacks everywhere in the United States tend to vote Democratic. Yankee farmers tend to vote Republican (Mueller, 1989: 203).

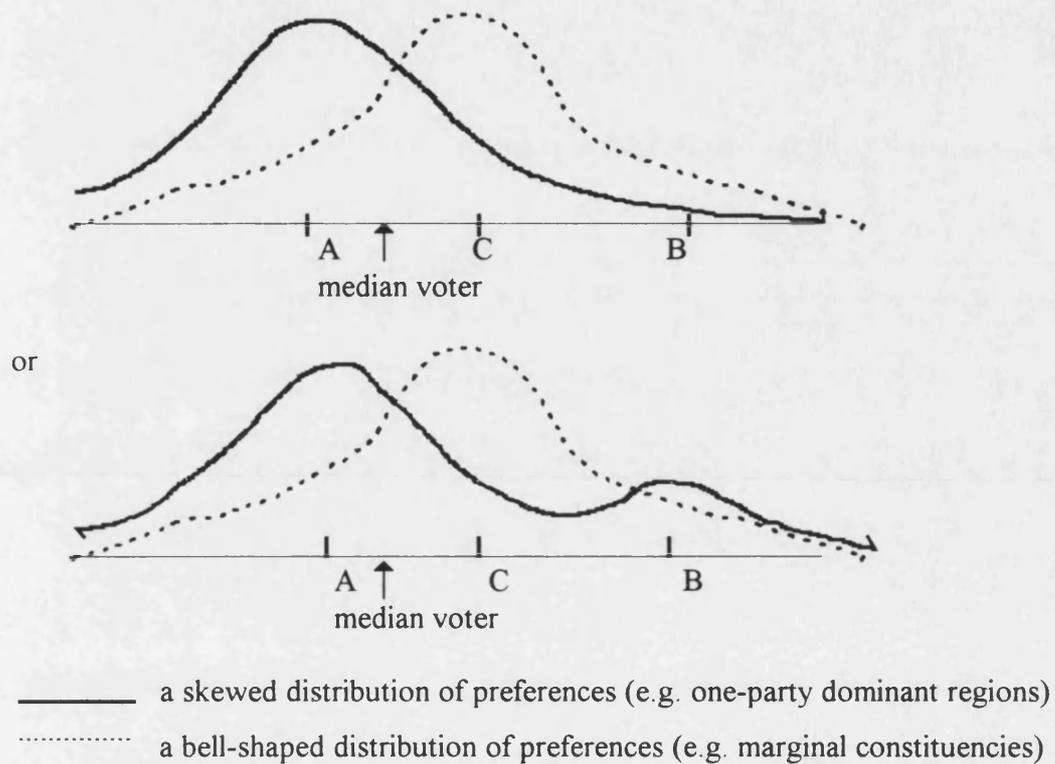
He understood that the 'biased' distribution of preferences increased the influence of interest groups on candidates or parties. Thus, the 'bias' is seen to be irregular because he thought that the bias from influence of interest groups leads the principle of one man, one vote to be 'distorted' (Mueller, 1989: 205). However, he did not recognise a regional variation of distribution of voters' preferences.

Yet it is well known that plurality electoral systems tend to create regional polarisation because of geographically uneven distribution of preferences. As a result, these electoral systems tend to produce many one-party dominant regions where the leading party has consolidated stable support over a long time and where the other parties cannot be considered as serious challengers. Besides, the 'dualism tendencies' of plurality rule electoral systems (in Duverger's terms) sometimes creates immobility of party choice between two major parties. Such immobility of party choice is especially conspicuous in one-party dominant regions where the majority of local voters share a similar tendency

Figure 2.1 shows possible distributions of the local preferences (the thick lines) where the median voter's position is assumed to have moved to the left, and where parties A and B are major parties nationally. But locally the leftist party A is close to the median voter's position while the right-wing party B is out on a limb. Compared with other areas where the preferences are a bell-shaped distribution (the dotted lines), party B is not likely to be a viable competitor locally against the dominant party A, and is likely to be a permanent loser. Instead, a centrist third party C is closer to the median voter's position than party B, which implies that the non-major party remains as a second-preference among the majority of the local voters. In a certain circumstance,

the non-major party C can be an alternative to the dominant party A. Third party voting is related to the immobility of party choice and the skewed distribution of the local preferences.

Figure 2.1. Skewed distribution of aggregate preferences



In Britain the number of marginal seats has fallen and regional polarisation of voting has grown. Many articles have reported that substantial and increasing regional voting patterns in recent elections (for example, see Johnston and Pattie, 1987, 1989; Bodman, 1985; McAllister and Studlar, 1992; Curtice and Steed, 1986). The existence of regional distributions of preferences, which could differ from one at the national level, plays an important role in third parties' support. As Bogdanor (1983a: 7) said, under the plurality system, the

number of seats a party gains will depend upon the distribution as well as the size of its support.

As noted, Downs implied that a convergence of two (major) parties on the middle to capture moderate voters would always squeeze out a centrist third party. However, this explanation is applicable *only* to marginal constituencies where two major parties compete closely. By contrast, once we consider the existence of many safe constituencies (and regions) it seems clear that a centrist third party can always continue to compete with the major parties, at some level. Without considering the aggregate distribution of preferences at a sub-national levels, third party support will not be properly explained.

It seems paradoxical that one-party regions (the most difficult terrain in terms of winning seats) seem to be more favourable conditions for the growth of third parties than marginal constituencies. Yet it is hard for a non-major party to attract votes where two major parties compete closely, because the major parties' pull of influence over voters is much stronger than that achieved by any non-major parties. Hence in two-party marginal constituencies voters are more likely to remain loyal to their first preference choice, and less likely to support a third party even if they are dissatisfied with their normal party's policies or behaviour (Johnston, 1984a:104). Conversely, a one-party dominant region can provide helpful conditions for a third party, as Pinard noted in his study of Canadian provincial elections. He identified one-party dominance as one of the crucial 'conducive' conditions for the rise of third parties. Third parties in an established two party system benefit from a protest vote, particularly when one of the major parties is locally weak. His logic is based on a double frustration.

After a long period of dominance by a strong party, a dissatisfied electorate turns *in part* to the traditional opposition party. But if this party is *soon* considered to have failed...then the electorate is not ready to return so rapidly to the dominant party it just repelled; they

shift instead to a third party (Pinard, 1975 : 26. Italics in the original).

Eagles and Erfle (1993) tried to empirically test Pinard's one-party dominance thesis and the influence of community solidarity or cohesion on the form of political mobilisation.

Although both Pinard's and Eagles and Erfle's studies suggested that one-party dominant region should be a favourable conditions for third parties, they did not pay attention to an underlying logic of individual voter's voting decision such as why he/she protest votes instead of abstaining.

### **Intensity of preference and partisan commitment**

Many public choice approaches tend to follow the analogy of elastic consumers in a free market ready to respond to change in price. When the price rises, consumers stop buying. When the price goes down, consumers want to buy more. The choice in the market should vary according to changes of price. Likewise, Downsian approaches assume that voters are kept well aware of change of parties' policy positions, and the calculation of party differential leads to a choice in each election. That is, voters are assumed to be elastic enough to respond to changes in policy positions. Downs assumed that 'all parties are faced by the same citizenry' (1957: 100), and ideology is regarded as simply a cost-saving devices when calculating party differentials.

Parties are also assumed to move their position fairly freely, just as producers respond to changes of demand and price. From Downs' point of view, the party differential could be endogenously changed according to movements of a party along the ideological spectrum. Downs assumed that there is nothing to restrict the perfect mobility of parties unless they move ideologically past each other. In his model,

political parties are not agents of specific social groups or classes;  
rather they are autonomous teams seeking office *per se* and using

group support to attain that end (1957: 97).

As a result, two parties may become nearly identical in platforms and actions (1957: 117).

However, consumers' behaviour is sometimes inelastic in spite of changes of price. Some consumers are so familiar with a product that they may refuse to stop buying the product or to move to another similar product in spite of change in price, which Barry called 'brand-loyalty'. Barry noted:

For brand loyalty, as I understand it, is precisely the unwillingness of a customer to switch from one brand to another even when the other brand is either objectively better or objectively identical but cheaper, more easily available, etc. (Barry, 1974: 98).

Even though such 'brand-loyalty' seems irrational from an economist's point of view, the analogue can be applied to the relationship between political parties and committed voters. When the relationship between a party and voters has been established over a long period of time, any change of party position would not much influence voters' view of the credibility of the party.

It is a frequently expressed criticism that a public choice approach does not properly explain voters with partisan commitment (or party identification). Rather, the significance of partisan commitment (or party identification) has to be understood in terms of the cleavage structure of a society. It is often the case that each (major) party in a two-party system is perceived to represent one of two competing poles along the main cleavage in society. In addition, plurality rule electoral systems tend to 'freeze' the cleavage by reducing the number of parties. Voters are likely to be aligned with a party which is perceived to represent 'their side' of the cleavage. Even though proximity matters, there is basically a party 'for' me ; and there is a party 'against' me. That is, party competition is not a free market and the party differential is rather exogenous. Where political parties colonise a certain section of the electorate, voters will not shift between the two major parties so much as Downs assumed. For

example, for a committed Labour supporter a move by the Conservatives to shift their policy position towards him/her would be meaningless.

The long-term relationship between voters and a party also limits the feasibility zone in ideological space within which a party can move to attract the majority of voters. If a party is dependent heavily on a certain section of voters, for example, working class voters, then the priority of the party policy has to be bound to the voters' preference, such as social welfare policies. Wittman (1983) argued that candidates (or parties) have preferences over policies, opposing the assumption that politicians are pure office-seekers:

To have policy goals does not mean that the politician is ideologically dogmatic, unconcerned with winning, or values a platform position as an end itself, but rather that candidates, like voters, are interested in policy implementation....Certainly it would be strange to assume that all the voters are interested in policy but that the candidates are not, especially when many government policies are public goods (or bads) consumed by all (1983: 142-3).

He found that policy-oriented candidates would be closer to the median voter in more competitive districts (1983: 150). In other words, only in marginal constituencies will the median voter's theorem work; in safe seats a change in the party's policy position will have a negligible effect.

The directional model is also opposed to the assumption of the Downsian model that most people have specific policy preferences. The alternative directional assumption is that voters have only a general or diffused sense of which direction they prefer to move in. Thus, they choose a party in terms of alternative directions in the policy spectrum rather than in terms of an ordered set of alternatives. That is:

the strongest support for the candidate comes at one extreme and the strongest antagonism comes at the other extreme, except the neutral candidate who receives identical evaluations from everyone...The more intense a candidate is on an issue, the more the candidate

generates intense support or opposition with regard to that issue.  
(Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989: 98)

In another article, they also said:

The centre is not a position of advocacy; it is a neutral zone of indifference between the two issue alternatives. Thus, in order to generate issue-based support, a party must stimulate voter interest by taking fairly strong stands on some issues. There are simply no rewards for hugging the centre (Macdonald *et al.*, 1991:1123).

According to the directional model voters prefer candidates who are on their side of issues and adopt intense positions. Thus, this model leads to different views about what constitutes effective political strategy. Whereas there is a strong incentive for candidates to be centrist in the Downsian proximity model, there is a strong incentive for candidates to be non-centrist when they are on the popular side of an issue in directional model (Macdonald and Rabinowitz, 1993: 61). Briefly, in the proximity model voters ask 'How close are your positions to mine?'; whereas according to the directional model they ask 'Are you on my side?' (Macdonald *et al.*, 1991 :1126).

Even though the directional model implicitly suggests that voters' choice would be influenced by a cleavage structure which divides between 'ours' and 'theirs', this model also fails to explain successful 'centrist' third parties:

A location at the exact center of the space conveys complete neutrality. At the center the vector has no length, indicating no intensity and no direction. A candidate at the exact center of the [issue] space should be equally liked and disliked by everyone, since such a candidate would stimulate no emotions, either favourable or unfavourable (1989: 101)

This view cannot properly address the reasons for the existence of relatively successful centrist parties such as Liberal Democrats.

Most rational choice theorists assume transitive preference orderings. As long as the consistency requirements of an Arrovian weak ordering are met, any

choice can be interpreted as rational (Riker, 1990: 173). In Downsian terms, if party A is closer to a voter than B, and B is closer than C, then party A is closer than party C. The voter is expected to vote for A because party A is closest. However, as Green and Shapiro pointed out, the ordering does not indicate the intensity of preference.

Transitivity assumes nothing about the intensity of preferences or the amount by which the different outcomes are valued in comparison with one another ... Transitivity requires only minimal consistency within preference orderings (1994: 15).

In party competition, the same distance would not mean the same degree of intensity of preference. Closeness to a voter's position along the spectrum only indicates the ordering of preferences. According to Downs, the closer a party is to a voter, the more preferred it is.

Centrist third parties are not likely to be the first preference for many voters where two-party politics predominates. However, because of the strong rivalry built up between two major parties, centrist parties are also not likely to be the least preferred choice. Instead, centrist third parties are usually placed as a second preference. The logic of third party voting is closely related to two-party politics and voters' commitment to any of the two parties. Contrary to Downs' assumption, voters under a plurality rule electoral system are not 'elastic consumers' ready to stop buying a product. Rather, a long-term commitment has often been built up between voters and parties, which makes voter behaviour 'inelastic'. Because of commitment and rivalry, and the consequent immobility of party choice, centrist third parties can be seen as a second preference. Contrary to the directional model, centrist third parties have a certain kind of preference, although it could be passive, reactive, and responsive.

## Prospective voting, retrospective voting and evaluation

Downs saw elections as means of selecting a government. The rationality of voters focuses on deciding the benefits which would flow from implementation of party A's policies if A wins an election. Like a consumer who wants to choose the best product which will reward him/her the best utility, voters are assumed to choose the best among different packages of policies offered by parties.

Citizens in our model cast their ballots only to influence government policies. They are interested in each party's statements only insofar as those statements serve as guides to the policies the party will carry out when in office (Downs, 1957: 107).

Downs assumed that voters would support a party by calculating a future return from their decision. Voters are assumed to vote for the party they believe will provide them with a higher utility income than any other party during the coming parliamentary period. In formal theories (for example, see Riker and Ordeshook, 1968), voters are assumed to be concerned with the different expected utility incomes from period  $t+1$ , that is, expected payoffs in the future. Fiorina also pointed out:

Downsian retrospective voting is a means to prospective voting. The Downsian citizen compares the challenger's and the incumbent's platforms, interpreting the latter in light of the incumbent's past performance (Fiorina, 1981: 13).

However, a strong emphasis on prospective voting creates problems in explaining non-major party voting. From a Downsian point of view, only a party which can win a government would guarantee voters' maximum utility. Voting for a third party which is unlikely to win should be irrational because the party would never be in a position to provide any higher utility by implementing its policies.

Instead, Fiorina argued that voters vote retrospectively. He addressed three differences between prospective and retrospective voting (1981: 6-11). Firstly, electoral outcomes may signify quite different things, depending on whether citizens are in a primarily retrospective or prospective frames of mind. For example, the victory in Gulf War appealed only to a certain part of American voters. Secondly, prospective voting presumes a policy orientation in the electorate, whereas retrospective voting presumes a result orientation. Fiorina noted:

The traditional theory of retrospective voting implicitly assumes that citizens are more concerned about actual outcomes than about the particular means of achieving those outcomes, that citizens care about results rather than the policies that produce those results - for example: "End the war. Whether you bomb them back to the Stone Age or withdraw and claim victory, just end the war." (1981: 8).

Thirdly, voters in general are not well-informed and not well aware of policy differentials. He argued that retrospective voting requires far less of the voter than prospective voting. Thus:

Politicians need not discern the precise policy preferences of their constituents. They need not only *anticipate* the *reactions* of their constituents to the conditions brought about by the policy instruments they adopt (1981: 11. Italics in the original).

From Fiorina's point of view, the Downsian approach is not much different from retrospective voting approach. He noted:

the competency theory of retrospective voting merges with the Downsian theory in that approval or rejection of the past is tantamount to approval or rejection of existing policies and presumably their continuance (1981: 14).

Retrospective voting can be understood as contributing to a dominant cleavage under plurality rule elections, in that voters are divided in line with a cleavage and the two major parties usually represent each pole of the cleavage.

Because voters already recognise the party differentials they will predict the prospective outcomes and know which party will provide a higher utility. For example, Conservative voters would be worried about a Labour government even though 'New Labour' seems attractive.

Fiorina's notion is in line with Key's punishment-reward theory (Key, 1966). The basic logic is that if the incumbent has performed well then we will vote for them as a reward. Otherwise, we would vote for the opposition as a punishment. As Fiorina titled his book, he tried to explain voting in American national elections in which a sociologically-based cleavage structure is not salient and many voters easily switch between the Republican and Democrats party across elections.

By contrast, if we assume a society in which two parties represent two poles of a strong social cleavage (such as class, ethnicity or region), the terms 'punishment' and 'reward' have different meanings. Fiorina considered the evaluation of the performance of the incumbent party (or candidate) as a starting point. However, where there is a long-term relationship between parties and voters, the evaluation of *his or her* party only matters, whether in government or not, because the other major party always remains less preferred. Poor performance by a Conservative government will naturally strengthen the relationship between the Labour party and supporters attached to Labour. The poor performance of the Conservative government will seriously affect Conservative voters. Thus, the options available to attached voters are *between endorsement or protest*, not between two competing parties. If a traditional party 'satisfies' them they will vote for it. However, even if the party does not satisfy them, it does not necessarily mean that they will vote for the other competing party. For many committed Conservative voters the options are not between (and never will be between) the Conservatives and Labour.

Retrospective voting in this kind of set-up is not a means of punishment-reward. Instead for attached voters it allows a choice only between

endorsement-protest. And the most likely beneficiary of 'protest' would be likely a third party, even a centrist one.

## **2.2. EXISTING PUBLIC CHOICE ACCOUNTS OF ABSTENTION**

The most acute problem for rational choice accounts of protest voting and abstention is Downs' famous argument that voting in general is irrational. Downs thought that the return from voting would never be likely to be larger than the cost of voting.

Since time is a scarce resource, voting is inherently costly...When there are costs of voting, they may outweigh the returns thereof; hence rational abstention becomes possible even for citizens who want a particular party to win. In fact, since the return from voting are often minuscule, even low voting cost may cause many partisan citizens to abstain (Downs, 1957: 256).

Riker and Ordeshook (1968) developed Downs' argument, and described a calculus of voting by assuming that 'voting' as well as 'not voting' could be rational. Their model is:

$$R = PB - C + D$$

where R : utility from act of voting

B : the differential benefit

P : the probability that a voter will bring about the benefit from voting

C : the cost of voting

D : political satisfaction or benefit

They recognised that voters gain political satisfaction (benefits) from voting which helps to encourage them into the polling station. Emphasizing the probability of participation in voting, they were also concerned with how voting can be pivotal. Like many other accounts on voting they also considered that

the benefit from voting can only be obtained from a winning candidate or from influencing the outcome. Thus:

The citizen's decision task ... is that each is trying to estimate his probability of affecting the outcome.. which is a function of what he believes all others will do (Ordeshook, 1986: 228).

The study of specific (rather than generalised) forms of abstention within public choice has also tended to be neglected. Although Mughan (1986) emphasized the importance of short-term political contexts independent of long-term forces in influencing voting turnout, there are relatively few sustained empirical studies of abstention, and few of these consider rational choice explanations. However, some basic ideas have been developed. Consider a bell-shaped aggregate distribution of preferences along a single issue dimension, with a peak close to the median voter position, and two-party competition (Figure 2.2).

Conventionally rational choice accounts identify two possible sources of specific abstention. Abstention through indifference occurs if the two parties A and B converge so closely that the party differential is no longer sufficient to create a benefits stake offsetting voting costs. 'Abstention from indifference occurs when the utility difference between the two candidates fails to exceed a certain positive threshold' (Enelow and Hinich, 1984: 90). If parties have converged towards indistinguishability, then abstention through indifference can presumably occur in a certain number of voters at any point on the ideological spectrum (as in Figure 2.2).

Abstention through alienation occurs where a party moves 'too far' away from a section of its previous supporters for them to see any positive benefit from backing it. With median voter convergence pressures this form of abstention is expected to occur chiefly with 'extreme' voters on either pole of the issue dimension. 'When a voter abstains from alienation, the utility difference between the two candidates may be great, but neither candidates is liked' (Enelow and Hinich, 1984: 90).

Figure 2.2. Abstention through Indifference and through Alienation

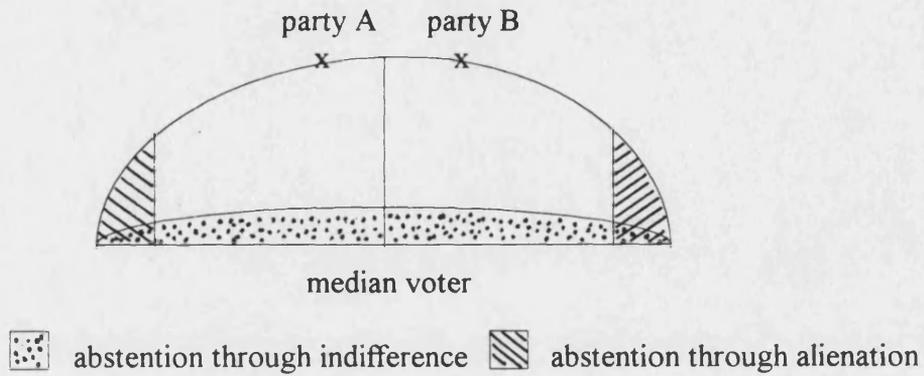
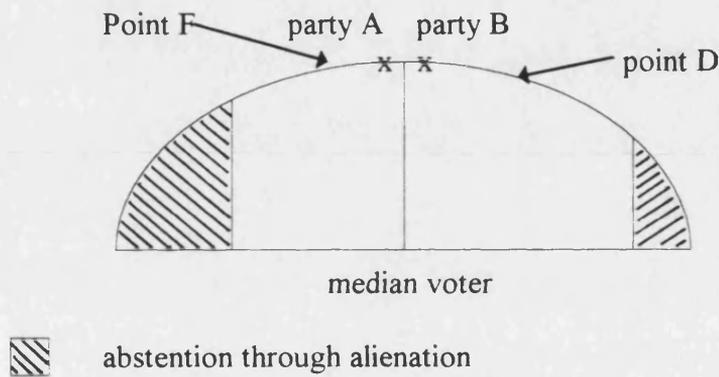


Figure 2.3. Differential Abstention and Party Equilibria



NOTE: Point D and F are indicative only.

Differential abstention through alienation could be crucial for the development of party competition. For example, consider Figure 2.3 where we envisage that left voters (for party A) have a considerably greater propensity for alienation abstention than do right voters (for party B). If A attempts to move to the median voter position it must chronically lose to party B; it can only successfully compete by shifting rightwards of the median voter, which in turn entails that it must be able to 'leapfrog' over party B. If A cannot leapfrog then B will simply sit close to the median and win permanently. If A can leapfrog

then the party competition process may not stabilise anywhere close to the median. Instead it will tend to migrate rightwards over successive elections, with increasing levels of abstention by left voters as a result, perhaps stabilizing at a point such as D in Figure 2.3. Beyond D either party may win by breaking out of the rightward drift and shifting radically back to a point left of the median voter (such as F) and reactivating left voters.

Until the notion of generalized rational abstention can be tackled, explanations of specific abstention are severely undermined. The experiential approach, adopted by Dunleavy and Margetts (1994), stresses the importance of voters' objective situations in defining their experience of democratic involvement or political participation. They criticize existing rational choice theory for giving no clear justification for assuming a priori that voters should adopt a demanding and unrealistic 'objective' standard - so that the touchstone for my participation is personal decisiveness. Instead, they suggest that:

[a] more plausible starting point might be that individuals define an appropriate "aspiration level" against which to judge their involvement, continuing to participate if this level is achieved, and dropping out if it is not (1994: 176).

In another article, they also say that:

rational actors will operate with 'aspiration levels' for their personal influence or efficacy which are fixed endogenously within the political process itself (Dunleavy and Margetts, 1995: 86).

They raise serious questions for the view that 'rational' voters should abstain by showing that most participants in an election (73 per cent of all voters in the 1992 British general election) are a 'winner' on at least one of three levels of success - national, regional or constituency level. Dunleavy and Margetts suggest a potential linkage between the proportion of voters who count as 'winners' and the levels and trends in turnout (1994: 177-9).

Their notion is based on the perception that voters have a 'subjectively owned' benefit from participation in voting, denying the importance of

pivotality in voting. By classifying four kinds of benefits which an individual voter can get from voting, they suggest that voters' 'subjectively owned outcome' could be a substantial influence on their voting decision (Dunleavy and Margetts, 1995: 68), even when a no-hope party or candidate cannot satisfactorily provide benefits from government or social approval. People are more likely to have such a 'subjectively owned outcome' where party choice is immobile and divisive, and partisan attachment is solid. Dunleavy and Margetts (1995:20) said:

Default or party benefits are likely to be substantial in comparison with both kinds of expressive benefits, especially in polarized situations where political alignments are adversarial or are closely associated with different social locations (for example, social class or ethnicity).

The emphasis on the pivotality as a main drive for voting contradicts empirical evidence. In most democratic countries the majority of citizens still participate in voting. More importantly, some voters participate by supporting an apparent loser. If voting is inherently costly, as Downs said, voting for a party which is unlikely to win seems more irrational. Dunleavy and Margetts's suggestion is significant because they projected voting as a 'rational' action for the vast majority of electors, and hence threw into focus specific reasons for abstention or for changes in preferences. Third party voting is also to be understood in conjunction with the contextual circumstances influencing the decision about whether or not to participate.

### **2.3. EXISTING ACCOUNTS OF TACTICAL VOTING**

Sometimes voters do not vote sincerely. They could desert a more preferred candidate with a lesser chance of winning for a less preferred candidate with a better chance of winning. This tactical thought may change the result. As

noted, Feddersen *et al.* showed that when voters behave tactically (or are 'strategically rational' in their terms) the entrance of new candidates will occur at the median voter's ideal point (1990). Tactical voting occurs when voters opt for their second-choice party B in order to defeat their least-favoured party C in conditions where their first-preference party A has little hope of winning. From a rational voter's point of view, people should not be expected to cast their votes for a party with little hope of winning because to maximise a voter's utility in elections a first condition is simply to escape casting a 'wasted vote'. Hence rational voters will instead vote for the second-preference party which seems to have better chance of winning and thus producing a greater amount of utility. Downs says:

A rational voter first decides what party he believes will benefit him most; then he tries to estimate whether this party has any chance of winning. He does this because his vote should be expended as part of a [government] selection process, not as an expression of preference. Hence even if he prefers party A, he is 'wasting' his vote on A if it has no chance of winning because very few other voters prefer it to B or C. The relevant choice in this case is between B and C. Since a vote for A is not useful in the actual process of [government] selection, casting it is *irrational* (1957: 48. Italics added).

Accordingly, non-major parties under plurality electoral systems have been often regarded as held back by the tendency towards tactical voting, because rational voters are assumed not to waste their votes by supporting a hopeless party.

In recent years the study of tactical voting has become 'something of a growth industry' (Niemi *et al.*, 1992: 229), even though tactical voting *per se* is not a new phenomenon. Particularly, the growing interest in tactical voting in Britain seems to be related to the higher levels of third party support. As Galbraith and Rae say:

In a de-aligned electorate with a more 'consumerist' as opposed to 'solidary' approach to voting, the major barriers to tactical voting arising from class or party identification are removed (1989: 128).

The proportion of voters supporting the two major parties in Britain had fallen from 97 per cent in 1951 to 70 per cent in 1983. In addition, fewer MPs can claim to represent a majority of the voters in their constituencies. Thus, it is likely that tactical voting in conjunction with third-party support could more often play a critical role in deciding a winner.

Major parties frequently try to encourage tactical voting in their favour, persuading voters that supporting a non-major party would not be effective but only help the rival major party (presumptively their supporters' least-favoured party) to win. For example, in the run-up to the 1992 British general election campaign John Wakeham, the then energy secretary and Tory party campaign co-ordinator, tried to capitalise on tactical voting, saying in a letter to his constituency at Colchester South and Maldon:

Liberals everywhere must therefore make a crucial decision over the coming months about how most responsibly to exercise their vote. They can decide to stick with their party, risk *letting Labour in through the backdoor* and consigning their own party to generations in the wilderness. Or they can come over to the Conservatives (The Times, January 13, 1992. Italics added).

As a matter of fact, the leadership of the Liberal Democratic party during the electoral campaign period made efforts 'to tackle head-on the party's biggest electoral handicap, the belief of a large proportion of the public that a vote for it will be wasted' (The Times, February 13, 1992). Despite their efforts, the percentage of Liberal Democratic votes cast for successful candidates turned out to be only 7 per cent of its 6 million votes in 1992. (By contrast, the percentage of 'successful' Conservative votes was 71 per cent of its total votes won, and the percentage of 'successful' Labour votes was 57 per cent of its total number of votes in 1992.)

Nevertheless, the support for the Liberals and the Liberal Democrats has increased by eight times from 3 per cent in 1951 to over a quarter of the vote in 1983. The growth seems to strikingly contradict what the rational voter assumption implies, but existing accounts have usually neglected some features. Firstly, a non-major party is not always a victim of tactical voting; it could also be a beneficiary if the former voters of one of the two major parties vote for a non-major party. Tsebelis called this phenomenon ‘inverse tactical voting’ (1986). He argued that the flow of votes is not only from small parties to big parties, but also vice versa. However, he had a proportional representation system in mind when writing about ‘inverse tactical voting’. Studying Japan’s single non-transferable vote, Cox (1994) also suggests:

in multi-member districts voters who care only about the outcome of the election will strategically desert both candidates who are “too weak” and candidates who are “too strong”. Such outcome-oriented voters desert weak candidates in multi-member districts for the same reason as in single-member districts. They desert strong candidates when those candidates have one of the *M* seats sewn up but there are other seats still up for grabs; for then the voter’s vote has a much greater chance of affecting the outcome if cast for one of the “marginal” candidates - those on the edge between winning and losing (1994: 616. Emphasis in the original).

However, few studies have paid attention to ‘inverse tactical voting’ in plurality rule electoral systems. Michael Steed claimed in his analysis of the 1974 British general election:

A very special form of this centrist vote for the Liberals is the tactical vote, which has contributed critically to the election of Liberal MPs. Apart from the Scottish Highlands and Islands and from Montgomery, *every Liberal seat* won in the last 25 years has owed much to the preference of a majority of Labour partisans for Liberal

Party over the Conservatives, or to the similar anti-Labour preference of Conservatives (1979: 89. Italics added) .

It seems controversial whether 'every' Liberal seats won from 1950s to 1974 depended 'critically' on tactical voting, and Steed did not give any analytic proofs to back up his argument.

'Inverse tactical voting' under a plurality rule electoral system can be well observed at the sub-national level. As Riker pointed out aptly, which of the several parties is weakened by tactical voting depends on conditions in the constituency.

If the third party nationally is the weakest locally, then sophisticated voting by its supporters weakens it. However, if the third party nationally is one of the two large parties locally, then sophisticated voting by supporters of the weakest party (i.e. one of the two large parties nationally) strengthens the third party (Riker, 1982: 762).

That is, 'inverse tactical voting' is another product of the immobility of party choice under plurality rule electoral systems. Where one major party (A) is dominant and the nationally opponent party (B) remains a permanent loser, some of the former supporters for party B could tactically vote for a viable third party. Their immediate concern could be to reduce or remove the party's dominance. 'Inverse tactical voting' is a local phenomenon based on regional variation of party support under a plurality rule electoral system. For example, in a study about the 1987 British General Election, Curtice and Steed (1988) said:

The influence of the tactical situation upon the propensity of Labour voters to switch to the Alliance is very clear... we divide the Conservative/Alliance seats according to how far the Alliance were ahead of the third-placed Labour candidate in 1983....it appears that the willingness of Labour voters to defect was dependent more on how hopeless their party's situation was, than on how close the Alliance was to winning' (Curtice and Steed, 1988: 336).

Secondly, tactical voting has often been confused with protest voting. No chance of winning for the first preference party has been doubtless regarded as *the* important reason to bring about tactical voting in most existing public choice accounts and electoral studies - which could lead people to support a party which is also still unlikely to win (usually a third party) by voting tactically.

However, in their research on tactical voting, Franklin, Niemi and Whitten admit that:

many voters cast their votes for the other one of the two leading parties; some supported the third party in the constituency, showing no evidence of trying to avoid a 'wasted vote'....indeed, even among 'main reason' tactical voters, nearly half behaved in a way that does not accord with the wasted vote hypothesis. Consequently, *the anomalous behaviour* owes little to the manner in which we identified tactical voters (1994: 549-50. Italics added).

They tried to explain this 'anomalous behaviour' by distinguishing non-wasted-vote tactical behaviour called 'expressive' tactical voting from 'instrumental' tactical voting which seems close to its traditional meaning.

This general expression (expressive tactical voting) is intended to cover all instances in which individuals might vote not so as to alter the winner in their constituency but instead to send some message or signal, to their own party or to some other. For example, a voter might wish to humble a party that is poised to win by an overwhelming margin or register some support for a party that cannot win. Sometimes a voter might expressively vote for a small party in order to show support for the policies espoused by that party in the hopes that the voter's preferred party might be induced to adopt them. To distinguish the more traditional, 'wasted-vote' form of tactical voting, we will call it 'instrumental' because its intent is to

help determine the winner of the race in a constituency (Franklin *et al.*, 1994: 552)

However, as Heath and Evans (1994) pointed out correctly, 'expressive tactical voting' would be close to the term of protest voting. Although Franklin and colleagues (1994) recognised a need to distinguish protest voting from tactical voting, they did not identify the inherent differences between tactical voting and protest voting.

There is an apparent similarity between protest voting and tactical voting. Both types of voting occur when voters deliberately choose a party to which they are not really committed. Thus, both protest voting and 'inverse tactical voting' seem to be a temporary response to the situations which voters face. Such a temporary response with lack of commitment indicates one reason why support for the endogenous type of third party is unstable. In other words, both forms of behaviour are not sincere voting. However, tactical voting is different from protest voting in terms of *where* it occurs and *against which party* voters cast their ballots, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 2.4. CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, existing public choice accounts of voting and party competition do not seem to produce convincing explanations about third party support. Most attention in public choice has focused on competition between major parties who seek to govern. Politicians are assumed to be pure office-seekers who want to enhance the likelihood of being elected. Under appropriate conditions parties tend to converge to the median voter's position to attract maximum votes. This convergence process leaves effectively no room for a centrist third party which should be squeezed out. From a voter's point of view, there is also no reason why he/she will vote for a non-major party. The benefit to citizens from voting is assumed to come from backing a winning

candidate, and will reach its apex when the vote is decisive. As Downs assumed, voters should cast ballots as part of a government selection process. Since in a plurality rule electoral system a non-major party has no real chance of joining a government, 'rational' voters should not vote for the third party.

However, these accounts run against much empirical evidence because some third parties have succeeded in widening and consolidating their support. One reason for this gap is that the basic unit of analysis is normally taken as a political system as a whole, and variations inside within the unit of analysis can easily go unchecked. However, if the unit of analysis goes down to the sub-national level, the assumption of the uniformity should be changed. Third or fourth party voting can be understood in their regional or local context.

Existing accounts are also likely to follow the analogy that voters behave like consumers in a perfectly competitive market. However, voters in plurality rule electoral systems are forced to choose in an imperfect competition because the entrance of new parties is limited. Moreover, the established parties tend to represent (or are perceived to represent) each part of the major social cleavage in the country, which further develops the relationship between the party and voters. Contrary to Downs, voters are not necessarily 'elastic consumers' ready to switch from buying a familiar product to any available alternative. A long-term relationship is usually established, which makes the voters' behaviour 'inelastic'.

If the relationship is long-term, the payoff of a party is already recognised. Voters know which party will benefit him/her (and will not). From prospective voting, securing a government is important because the government party will be able to implement policies. To committed voters, the basic momentum of decision is evaluation of performance of his or her party, whether in government or not. As long as the party *satisfies* him/her, the relationship will be stable. The alternatives available to attached voters are 'endorsement or protest', not 'reward or punishment'.

Even though non-major parties often fall victim of tactical voting in major party marginals, these parties can also benefit from 'inverse tactical voting'. This phenomenon is closely related to the immobility of party choice and to regional variations in party support under a plurality rule electoral system, which indicates again the importance of context for third party voting. Existing public choice accounts tend to overlook the context within which a voting decision about a third party occurs.

Due to lack of the contextual understanding, existing approaches do not produce a comprehensive explanation of the full range of voters' choices such as protest voting, tactical voting or abstention. Rather, each choice of voting has been explained as if it were an isolated phenomenon. An alternative approach encompassing a full range of connected electoral choices is considered in the next chapter.

## Chapter III

### AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH : THE QUALITY-SATISFICING APPROACH AND THIRD PARTY VOTING

The starting point for an alternative public choice approach to third party voting has to lie with the basic behavioural postulate of public choice, as for neo-classical economics, is that man is an egoistic, rational, utility maximizer (Mueller, 1989: 2), which we saw in Chapter II was taken to imply that voters would only be 'rewarded' when a ballot goes to a winning side, most particularly when their vote was pivotal, that is, the critical increment which brings a choice of government about. However, the likelihood that a non-major party wins an election is effectively zero, yet in spite of this apparently low effectiveness, some voters choose to support them. To criticise 'pivotal choice theory', Dunleavy suggested that a rational actor is not necessarily preoccupied with an immediate outcome (or payoff) of his/her decision. He instead emphasized

a focus upon "having a useful effect" and recognising the separation of objective probabilities and subjective probabilities and collective stake discounting rates for rational actors in collective action contexts (Dunleavy, 1996: 26. Emphasis in the original).

This chapter suggests an alternative approach to analysing third-party voting, called the quality-satisficing approach. This approach assumes that rational voters will seek satisfaction in conjunction with a pooled level of benchmark, rather than aiming at maximisation of their utility. The chapter also pays attention to the contextual conditions which a plurality rule electoral system tends to create, such as immobility of party choice and geographically uneven distributions of preferences. The chapter begins with Hirschman's 'exit, voice

and loyalty' approach, which can be usefully transposed to analyse protest voting and specific forms of abstention. The following section introduces a satisficing account of voting, and discusses the logic of third party voting in relation to protest voting and abstention. The last section addresses how a third party draws support from inverse tactical voting.

### **3.1 HIRSCHMAN'S APPROACH**

By using the variation of familiar demand function in economics, with the difference that quality bought is made to depend on changes in quality rather than price, Hirschman argued that a decline of quality results in a loss of revenue, as consumers respond to the worsening quality of goods (Hirschman, 1970). When the quality of a good declines in a market, there are two ways for the firm's customers or the organisation's members to respond: exit and voice. The former option is to stop buying the firm's products or to leave the organisation, whereas the latter means to express their dissatisfaction directly to management or to some other authority. He argued that people take up voice options rather than exit options when they believe a quality decline to be remediable, or whenever the exit option is unavailable. He basically assumed that 'repairable lapses' are inevitable, and exit and voice are the key mechanisms of recuperation. Hirschman said:

in perfect competition...the firm is not deprived of an effective correction mechanism because performance deterioration, which cannot possibly affect either quality or price, is reflected directly in a decline in revenue (due to increasing costs) (1970: 25)

Even though he thought that the notions of exit and voice are applicable to every level of organisations, including the political world, as the sub-title of his book implied, a direct application of Hirschman to party competition requires some revisions. Firstly, Hirschman understood the political world only as a general political system. Consequently, he thought exit options are unlikely to

be used in politics and he pointed out, in particular, that full exit from a state is impossible (Hirschman: 31, 99). Since the starting point of the Hirschman's notion is about firms in a competitive market and the consumers' response, the analogy between firms and political parties is more appropriate. Unlike citizens in the state, voters can take the exit option in elections by simply deserting a political party which they used to support.

Secondly, in elections voters may have another available option to express their dissatisfaction besides resort to voice or exit, namely abstention. If 'voice' means to stay anyway and 'exit' means to desert, Hirschman's dichotomy seemingly leaves no room for the case of abstention. Abstention can be a response to a decline in quality, but it does not apparently mean 'exit' - 'leave the organisation' in Hirschman's terms. Rather, abstention may imply choosing to reserve a decision or to be in-between exit and voice.

Barry (1974) extended his ideas, pointing out that the two options of exit and voice are inherently different categories with each other. He said:

to speak of a choice between exit and voice is in fact to collapse two separate choices into one another. One choice is between exit (leaving) and non-exit (staying), the other is between voice (activity, participation) and silence (inactivity, non-participation). In any situation, one choice has to be made out of each pair of options, even if only by default. (Barry: 1974: 91)

According to Barry dissatisfied customers have four possible options: be silent-and-stay, stay-with-voice, be silent-and-exit, and exit-with-voice. However, when these four options are applied to voters in an election, there is effectively little difference between 'being silent-and-stay' and 'stay-with-voice' in elections. Stay-with-voice could be different from silent-and-stay in that the former option may include actions such as a visit to the party headquarters for protest or sending letters for appeal. However, the two options are identically expressed in elections - voters continue to cast their ballots for the traditional party.

The working assumption here is that voters will normally respond to a change of quality provided by their party. However, we do not expect all voters to behave in the same way. Some voters do not signify any deterioration of quality; they take the 'non-exit' option. Downs saw uncertainty about the course of events as bringing about this 'inertia', saying: 'voters are not always aware of what government is or could be doing, and often they do not know the relationship between government actions and their own utility incomes' (Downs, 1957: 80-81). Such uncertainty includes not only lack of information but also a lack of confidence about the information. As long as a voter is not aware of the decline of quality, he/she will keep voting for his/her traditional party.

However, normally when a voter recognises a loss of quality, he/she will tend to respond and to express his/her dissatisfaction. The response of a dissatisfied voter will vary depending on whether he/she has another alternative party to vote for or not. Where there are only two parties (A and B) available, the options to respond to the decline of quality from party A are to shift to party B; abstention; or stick with party A. As noted in the previous chapter, plurality rule elections tend to produce immobility of party choice, so that the other opponent party B cannot be an acceptable alternative. Thus, a voter's available options are effectively reduced to abstention or continuous support for the previous party A. Those who want to respond to the decline of quality would have only one option: abstention. Where party support is more polarised, more voters would be forced to abstain when they are dissatisfied with their previous party because they are still reluctant to endorse the rival party.

If voters have an alternative (party C), another possible response is protest voting. Here, instead of directly shifting to a rival major party B, voters just want to give their party A some warning by suggesting the possibility of long-term losses. In Hirschman's terms, this is a mixed option between exit and voice, because its content is a kind of voice, but its form is evidently an exit. Hirschman saw this kind of response as a 'mechanism of recuperation' (1970:

3): 'The immediate and most obvious reaction is a determined search for ways and means to take up the slack, to retrieve the ideal of the taut economy' (1970: 13). In particular, the underlying assumption of voice is that a decline in organisational performance is remediable (Hirschman, 1970: 31). Barry suggested:

Voice should be conceived of not only as a possible "response to decline" but as a possible response to the belief that a firm or other organization could do better...constant quality may be associated with the belief that improvement is possible.(Barry, 1974: 90)

Thus, protest voting is an 'exit-with-voice' option, in Barry's terms, which voters deliberately choose to express their dissatisfaction. The belief that party A could do better only arises if the voter has an established confidence in A. Protest voting occurs among fairly consistent supporters, and where a party has strongly established its support for a long time, as in one-party dominant regions. The underlying assumption is here that a certain degree of commitment has been developed between local voters and the dominant party. In other words, the response of protest voting functions as a 'mechanism of recuperation' for sustaining a long-term relationship.

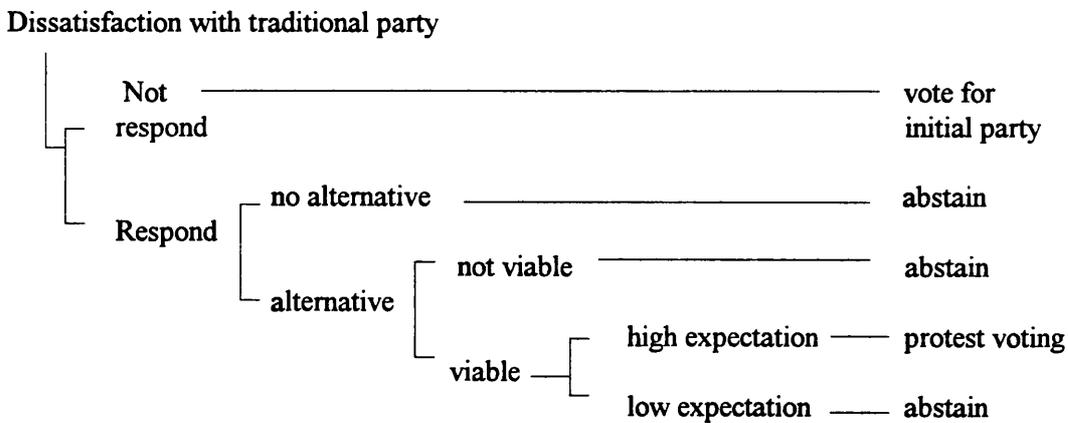
The choice of protest voting as 'exit-with-voice' is associated with two conditions. Firstly, according to Barry, the expected value of exercising voice will have to be higher than another currently available alternative plus the cost of exercising voice. Only when the expected value of the change in policy produced will outweigh the time and effort expended, will people want to exercise voice (Barry, 1974: 92-4). That is, those with higher expectation are more likely to protest vote. Secondly, the choice of protest voting relies on viability of an alternative. When an unhappy voter with his/her previous party has an alternative which looks viable, he/she will be more likely to protest vote for it. In sum, if the combination of the expectation of improvement and the viability of an alternative party offsets (or compensates for) the amount of the declined quality, he/she exercises voice option. That is:

$$U(\text{dissatisfaction}) \leq \text{Alternative} + \text{Exp}(\text{voice}) \quad (3.1)$$

where 'U(dissatisfaction)' is the amount of dissatisfaction with the performance of a traditionally supporting party;  
 'Exp(voice)' is the expected value of the improvement secured by protest voting instead of abstention;  
 'Alternative' is the difference in value between the best two alternatives.

When a voter does not expect sufficient improvement to meet the inequality above, he/she will abstain. In addition, a big difference between the best two alternatives can lead a dissatisfied voter to abstain because the alternative is not viable. Thus, protest voting will increase where the quality gap between the best two alternatives is small and voters expect considerable improvement.

Figure 3.1. Possible options of protest voters in one-party dominant region, responding to decline of quality



By employing Hirschman and Barry's ideas, available options which an individual voter may have in elections are summarised as Figure 3.1. Choices are influenced not only by the decision whether or not to respond, but also by the existence of a viable alternative party and by voters' personal expectations about participation in voting. The figure above shows that the decision to

abstain can occur for different reasons, the first of which (context) is addressed in the next section.

### **3.2. 'QUALITY' LEVELS, SATISFICING AND VOTERS' DECISIONS**

The core of Hirschman's notion is that consumers will 'respond' to a decline of quality. By assuming that perceptions of political 'quality' focus on both a party's efficacy and its ideological proximity, this section explores how voters will respond to a quality decline.

#### **Efficacy and Ideology**

To adapt Hirschman's approach to cope with the analysis of voting behaviour it is necessary to introduce a few changes into the conventional apparatus of spatial models. As seen in the previous chapter, the standard approach relies on the proximity assumption that voters choose the party closest to them in ideological space (Downs, 1957). An individual's support will be most enthusiastic when the party's position is exactly the same as the voter's optimum point. In the simplest spatial models, all voters closest to party A support it: only the greater proximity of other parties would change their minds (or in some circumstances lead a decision to abstain because of indifference). More recent work stresses a probabilistic approach, where some uncertainty is irreducible: here the further away a party is from a voter's own best position, the less likely he/she becomes to vote for it (Hinich and Munger, 1994, 166-76). Conventionally the Downsian spatial model also focuses on elections held under systems (such as plurality rule) where voters must make only a single choice, and hence where only their first preferences seem to matter. However, dissatisfied voters who are ready to 'respond' to a quality decline would consider their 'second' preference. Where two major parties take an extreme pole along the left-right spectrum, a centre position should be the second

preference in terms of proximity.

As noted, directional theory suggests that as voters prefer candidates who are on their side of an issue and intense in their stance, the strongest support comes for candidates with distinct (but not 'extreme' or unfeasible) positions, denying the proximity theory that voters will support parties that are closest to them on an issue (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989). According to the directional approach closeness does not count when a party is centrist on an issue. That is, the centre is not a position of advocacy (Macdonald *et al.*, 1991:1123). The usefulness of this approach is apparently weakened by some empirical evidence of growth of support for centrist parties such as the British Liberal Democrats through the 1980s. This approach neglected to perceive that in a polarised politics the centre could be the second choice from either side of the spectrum, although the centre might not be a position of advocacy.

To understand third party voting, it seems insufficient to suppose that some voters unhappy with party A shift to the nearest party C simply due to proximity. What voters really want is a government positioned near their optimum position, rather than just a party nearby. When they support any party most people want to achieve concrete benefits in policy, as well as to simply represent their views in a public fashion. The concept of party efficacy is useful as the (perceived) capability of the party to carry its policy positions into effect. That is, party efficacy is an individual voter's projected expectation that a party will (or can) do 'something good for me'. If a party is more capable of implementing policies which its supporters favour, its efficacy will rise. However, it is noteworthy that how voters evaluate the efficacy of a party does not always coincide with its objective capability or accomplishments. For example, a gradual recovery in the economy often does not boost support for the governing party. Voters' subjective evaluation of party efficacy will also vary, for example, depending on whether the election is local or national.

As a matter of fact, voters' decisions in local elections are obviously

influenced by national events as well as local politics. Local elections (and by-elections) are frequently claimed by opposition parties as a referendum to measure national opinion and the credibility of the incumbent government at that time. If we assume that a voter's evaluation of parties in a local election consists of national and local efficacy, it can be summed in a simple equation:

$$U_{\text{eff}/A} = p \cdot U_n + q \cdot U_l \quad (3.2)$$

where  $U_{\text{eff}/A}$  indicates a voter's evaluation of party A's efficacy;  
 $U_n$  is the party A's efficacy level in national politics;  
 $U_l$  is the party A's efficacy level in local politics;  
 $p$  is voter's subjective evaluation parameter at the national level;  
 $q$  is voter's subjective evaluation parameter at the local level;  
and  $p+q = 1$ ,  $0 \leq p \leq 1$ ,  $0 \leq q \leq 1$ .

Major parties provide more efficacy at the national level because they have a realistic chance of forming the national government, and so they obviously a high score of  $U_n$ . Non-major parties may demonstrate efficacy at the local level, but they cannot match major parties on equal terms at the national level. Their score of  $U_n$  remains fairly low, but the score of  $U_l$  can be higher. Particularly where they have built up confidence and credibility in local politics, the score of  $U_l$  will rise further.

	party A	party B
$U_n$	90	40
$U_l$	60	80

The table above is a numerical example to show a different evaluation of party efficacy depending on whether the election is local or national. Each number in the table, which is arbitrarily chosen, points an individual voter's evaluation score for party A and B. Party A is a major party which secures a high level of efficacy at the national level, but party A is locally less successful. Party B is a third party which has a limited efficacy at the national level under a

plurality rule electoral system, but the party B has raised its efficacy locally.

Parameter  $q$  will be higher than  $p$  in local elections, given that the major concern of local elections is usually local affairs. Suppose  $p=0.2$  and  $q=0.8$  in a local election, then a voter's evaluation of efficacy of party A and B will be:

$$U_{\text{eff/A}} = 0.2 * 90 + 0.8 * 60 = 66$$

$$U_{\text{eff/B}} = 0.2 * 40 + 0.8 * 80 = 72$$

The result demonstrates that the non-major party B has a higher efficacy score than the major party by 6 points in spite of its low efficacy at the national level. This example shows that the voters' locally-made evaluations could be different from the assessment at the national level. It also gives an important clue to explain why some non-major parties under a plurality rule electoral system such as the Liberal Democrats in Britain have produced better results in local elections than general elections. Under ideologically polarised party politics, differences in efficacy between the major parties can also be large. Those voters who have a clear preference between competing parties could hardly consider a rival major party to be an alternative. In one-party dominant regions where most people have a shared propensity toward politics, differences in efficacy between the competing major parties will be enormous.

As noted in the previous chapter, Dunleavy and Margetts (1994) argue that voters' perceived 'success' may be a key to understanding why people vote, and who they vote for, given the regional and local context of their decisions. Similarly, it is here argued that the subjective evaluation of the party efficacy plays an important role in third party voting. Although most studies have considered party efficacy mainly in national politics, efficacy in local politics might also matter, particularly in local elections.

That is, an evaluation of a party consists not only of ideological proximity but also of party efficacy, though at the local level.

## **A pooled standard of quality**

Spatial models have traditionally assumed that voters are utility maximisers. Already qualified by the notion of probabilistic voting, an alternative approach here, namely a 'quality-satisficing' account<sup>1</sup> assumes that an individual voter sets a minimum required level of quality below which they will not consider voting for a party. People will support a party which delivers a higher level of 'quality', consisting of both efficacy and ideological proximity, than their minimum required level. A party which successfully provides better quality than the required level will keep voters happy and loyal; otherwise, they would be dissatisfied with the performance of that party and want to express it.

If more than one party meets the required level, then on a quality-satisficing model it becomes difficult to predict how voters will behave. They may choose in a fine-grain way to support the party with the highest quality level; or they may decide randomly between them; or they may abstain through indifference (especially if one of the several acceptable parties in contention is very likely to win, and no unacceptable party is likely to win).

How do people arrive at estimations of quality, and how do they set a minimum required level? Conventionally spatial models have tended to see these processes as individually resolved. However, both as a way of simplifying the analysis, and as an empirically supported proposition, this study instead assumes that a much more socially- or contextually-influenced process is at work - a pooled standard which a group of people share for estimations of quality.

A pooled standard implies that people in a similar setting tend to develop similar views and to respond in a similar way. As often discussed, an environmental structure surrounding a set of voters makes influences on their preferences.

There seems to be no simple way in which we can empirically disentangle the effects of this variation from any underlying social

patterning of costs and benefits invariant across agents. Nevertheless, in certain cases, there may be such great similarities between preference rankings of the actors that there is a strong proposition that such social patterning exists. Further, if a certain option, or small range of options, stand out in the preference rankings of all the actors involved, whether positively or negatively, we might speak of a *strong social patterning* of agents' preferences (Ward, 1987: 606. Italics in the original).

'A strong social patterning of preferences' can be interpreted in the way that people in a similar environment are likely to develop a certain degree of collective homogeneity of preferences. As a matter of fact, when Hirschman said 'decline of quality', he had implicitly assumed an aspiration level with which consumers generally agree. That is, their reactions (or responses) as a 'mechanism of recuperation' implies consumers' wish to get the quality back up to the 'normal' level. Unless a reaction occurs purely individually, or just a few customers want to react, the normal level of quality (or an aspiration level of quality) will be shared collectively in a market. Since Hirschman understood the options of voice and exit as functions to remedy some 'slack' in the economy (1970: 1-15), it seems certain that he had a pooled standard of quality in mind (or 'the ideal of the taut economy' in his terms).

We can also see some empirical evidence that many people respond to a certain event (or situation) in a similar way. For example, when Gurr (1970) formulated a theory of rebellion, he focused on collective frustration and relative deprivation, saying "[d]iscontent arising from the perception of relative deprivation theory is the basic, instigating condition for participants in collective violence" (1970,13). The term of 'relative' deprivation indicates that there is a collectively-shared aspiration level which dissatisfied people desire to reach. That is, such kind of a collective action, though violent, implies a 'response' to a lapse of quality in relation to a pooled standard, sending their wish to get the quality back up to the aspiration level.

Besides, turnout rates in local elections (and by-elections) tend to be quite consistent and shows a stable pattern over time, though they are relatively low in many countries. Similarly, widespread distrust of existing political parties in the wake of a political scandal or unrest often leads to low turnout in elections, as shown in the 1996 Japanese election and in the 1997 Pakistani election. These examples also indicate that many voters similarly view (and evaluate) a political situation they commonly face.

A pooled standard of quality seems more noticeable where residents are homogeneous in terms of socio-economic conditions because they are likely to develop and share a similar political disposition. Taking the regions of a country as the key context, this approach assumes that voters as a whole construct a pooled standard of the 'quality' level against which political parties' performance should be gauged. This is an established way of thinking and perceiving within that region, or a collectively-shared 'aspiration level'. This social norm or widely-accepted standard reflects not only a national evaluation but also regional circumstances.

### **Simon's approach and the quality-satisficing account**

The term 'satisficing' was originated by Herbert Simon (1947). He argued that: 'Administrative theory is peculiarly the theory of intended and bounded rationality - of the behaviour of human beings who *satisfice* because they have not the wits to maximize' (1947: xxviii. Italics added). My point seems similar to Simon's argument because this study assumes that people with an aspiration level will respond when the quality provided goes below the aspiration level (that is, it fails to 'satisfy' them). In other words, both assume individuals using standard operating procedures as a heuristic device and a shorthand guide to rational action (Ward, 1995: 81).

However, this study takes some substantially different viewpoints from Simon's. Firstly, according to Simon administrative man can make his choice without examining all possible alternatives, and with relatively simple rules of

thumbs. Simon assumes limited calculating ability is a major obstacle to rationality. The 'bounded rationality' which he assumed comes from 'lack of a complete ordering of the pay-offs' (1955: 109). When Simon said the limited rationality, he had a 'sequential' decision-making process in mind. For example, Simon (1955: 115-7) said,

We suppose that an individual is selling a house. Each day (or other unit of time) he sets an acceptance price:  $d(k)$ , say, for the  $k$ th day....If he receives one or more offers above this price on the day in question, he accepts the highest offer; If he does not receive an offer above  $d(k)$ , he retains the house until the next day, and sets a new acceptance price  $d(k+1)$ ....It is interesting to observe what additional information the seller needs in order to determine the rational acceptance price, over and above the information he needs once the acceptance price is set. He needs, in fact, virtually complete information as to the probability distribution of offers for all relevant subsequent time periods. Now the seller who does not have this information, and who will be satisfied with a more bumbling kind of rationality, will make an approximation to avoid using the information he doesn't have.

By contrast, I assume a voter who examines all possible alternatives with a complete order of preferences in a given situation. That is, this study is based on 'a well-organised and stable system of preferences' (Simon, 1955: 99). The term of 'satisficing' is closely related to the immobility of party choice caused by a plurality rule electoral system. In a system of polarised party politics, one party would be close to a voter while the other would stay away. Under the circumstances in which voters are committed to a party, the evaluation would be made over whether *the* party satisfies the actor, not over which party can maximise utility. If the term 'rational' indicates that the means are assumed to be consistent with the ends (Stevens, 1993: 18) (or it just means the Arrowian definition of rationality), the quality-satisficing approach does not breach the assumption of rationality. In one-party dominant regions under plurality rule

electoral systems where there is an established set of preference ordering among parties, uncertainty around the bounded rationality is inherently limited. In other words, the whole set of possible alternatives is simultaneously given, rather than it needs to be sequentially searched for one by one.

Secondly, Simon paid attention to 'procedural rationality'.

The models of problem solving describe a person who is limited in computational capacity, and who searches very selectively through large realms of possibilities in order to discover what alternatives of action are available, and what the consequences of each of these alternatives are (Simon, 1985: 295).

That is, Simon assumes that a rational man 'searches' for an alternative which can ultimately satisfy him. The alternative which he chooses can be the one with a lower level of quality than the initially-set level. Using the example in the quotation above, the newly set level of price  $d(k+1)$  must be cheaper than the original acceptance price  $d(k)$ . The aim of searching is to seek an alternative to which he/she can *accommodate* in a given situation in which he/she has 'the limit of computational capacity'.

By contrast, the quality-satisficing model pays attention to the mode of 'mechanism of recuperation' in Hirschman's terms when the aspiration level is not met. My point lies on 'response' to the lapse of quality. The aim of responding is to 'restore' an initially-set level of quality, not to search for a possible alternative with a lower quality. The purpose of such a response is rather instrumental to get things back to 'normal' ones. Thus, the meaning of 'satisficing' is different between the Simon's and the quality-satisficing approach. For Simon, 'satisficing' is a process of accommodation in uncertain situations. By contrast, the quality-satisficing approach assumes a fixed benchmark level of satisfaction.

The third one is related to Elster's criticism of Simon's approach. Elster said:

In the theory of the firm, for instance, rational theory needs only one assumption, namely, that the firm maximizes profits. Satisficing theory needs many assumptions, stipulating one aspiration level for each of the many subroutines of the firm and, when that level is not attained, one

search mechanism for each routine (1990: 42).

This study is not completely free from Elster's criticism because the aspiration level could be different from region to region. However, as noted, one important assumption of this research is a pooled level of quality. Plurality rule electoral systems tend to exist where there are regions in which a certain degree of political homogeneity has been established, a trait which the electoral system in turn enhances. In those regions many people are likely to share a similar level of expectations about a party's performance. That is, an aspiration level can be socially influenced and relatively standardised within a region. This study is concerned with individual voters' choices in terms of a locally standardised aspiration level.

### **Protest voting and one-party dominant regions**

This quality-satisficing approach may look especially appropriate in the kind of one-party dominant regions, which are fairly socially homogenous, and where voters in general see politics similarly. As noted, the incidence of protest voting seemed to be higher in one-party regions than in areas where two or more major parties contest with each other on even terms. One-party regions also allow the analysis to be simpler by restricting the range alternatives voters have to consider.

Figure 3.2 demonstrates an individual voter's choice in a one-party dominant region, taking as an example a left-wing region such as northern England or central Scotland. The figure includes two levels: individual (Figure 3.2a) and collective (Figure 3.2b). In Figure 3.2a the horizontal axis shows a conventional left/right ideological spectrum along which any individual voter is located according to their preference. Parties take up different positions along the scale by choosing policy positions. The vertical axis measures party quality, composed of efficacy and ideological proximity. The line  $r$  in the figure shows the minimum required level of quality for voters in this region. The quality provided will be at its highest for voters whose personal optimum is exactly at a

party's position. Quality levels decline for voters further away from that party's position, as assumed in proximity theory. Line Q1 indicates the amount of quality which party 1, the dominant major party in the region, provides. Line Q2 indicates the quality supplied by a third party at the centre, while line Q3 is the quality line of the rival major party on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum.

The underlying assumption is the immobility of party choice. While the centre party may improve its provision of quality, the opposite major party in the region has difficulty improving its quality among the ideologically biased voters. Thus, its quality line (Q3) stays low. Line Q4 indicates the quality line of an extremist party which (as drawn) can provide better quality than Q2 and Q3 until point p.

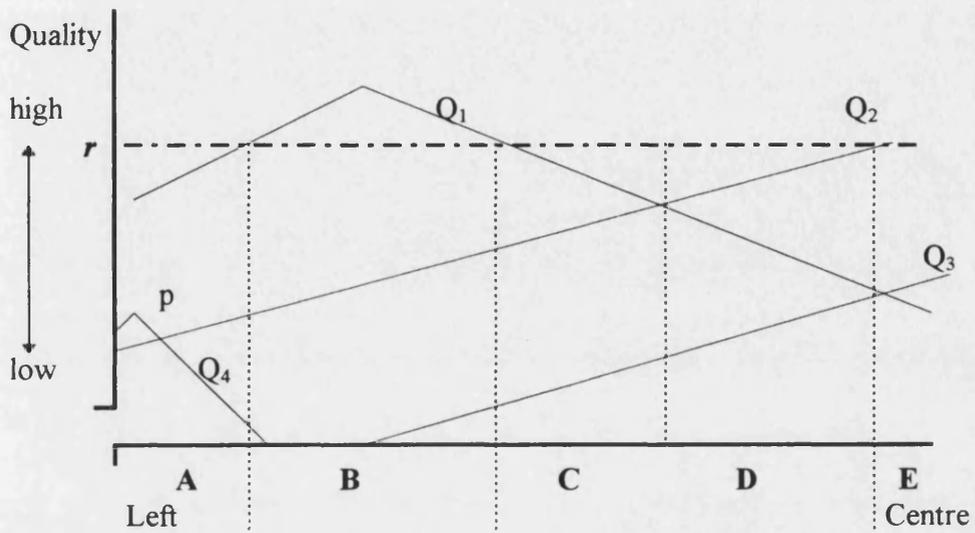
There are five zones in Figure 3.2a : A, B, C, D, and E. As long as one party's quality line is higher than the minimum  $r$  level (and only one party), the voters in zones B and E of the graph will remain loyal to that party. Voters in zone B where Q1 is above the minimum required level are firm supporters of the traditional party. Voters in zone E also feel sufficiently satisfied with the quality provided by the centrist third party.

By contrast, in zones A, C and D where all the parties' quality lines are below the  $r$  level, people will be disaffected and seek another possible option to their previous alignment. Voters in these zones do not make a clear choice among parties because of the lower quality than the aspiration level  $r$ . They are unstable (or undecided, floating) voters who might be captured by other parties or give up voting altogether.

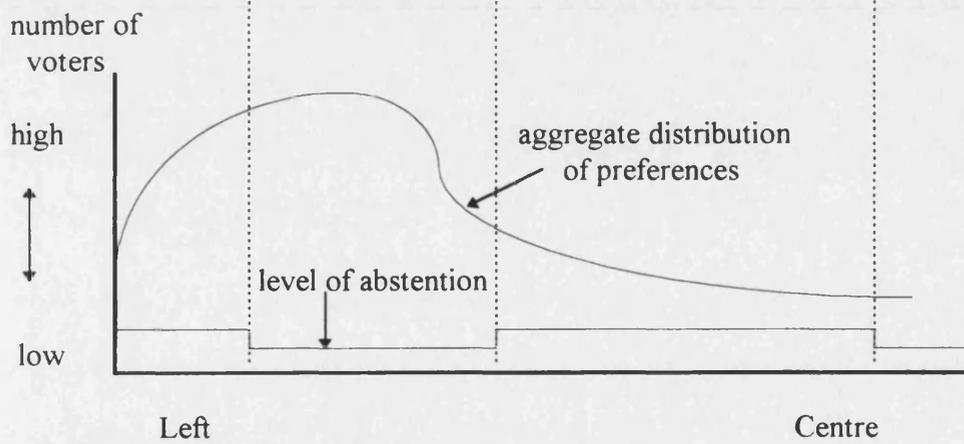
However, a one-party dominant region can create favourable conditions for a centrist party (Q<sub>2</sub>). In Figure 3.2a, the centrist party competes for the unstable voters (zone C and D) with only one contender (Q<sub>1</sub>). Because of this situation the centre party can not only escape from being squeezed between two major rivals but also emerge as a viable alternative in quality terms for at least some voters.

Figure 3.2. The basic framework (in the left)

a) *individual level*



b) *collective level*



- Q1 : quality provided by the dominant (left-wing) party 1 in the region
- Q2 : quality provided by the centrist third party 2
- Q3 : quality provided by the rival major (right-wing) party 3
- Q4 : quality provided by the extremist (left-wing) party 4
- $r$  : minimum required level of quality (the aspiration level of quality)

Even though the unstable voters in zones A, C and D in Figure 3.2a are all dissatisfied (because no party's quality line is above the  $r$  level), there is a clear difference in how voters behave across the three areas. Line Q1 is still higher than Q2 in zone C, while Q1 is below Q2 in zone D. The centre party in zone D is considered better than the established dominant party, but cannot satisfy the voters either. Voters in zone A may behave as almost pure ideologues. As the quality drops, they begin to feel alienated. An extremist party (denoted by Q4) might grow up to express their views. However, it is very unlikely that such a party could be a viable alternative. Under a plurality rule electoral system it will tend to have low efficacy, and may often attract social censure (as with racist parties in the UK). Thus, protest voting in zone A will rarely occur, except when voters in zone A expect that some great improvement will follow from their protest.

The distinction among the three zones will become more distinct by applying the inequality 3.1 to Figure 3.2a. In zone D in the figure, people will protest vote for party 2 if

$$U_D(Q - Q_1) \leq U_D(Q_2 - Q_1) + EXP_D(\text{voice}). \quad (3.3)$$

i.e.  $U_D(Q - Q_2) \leq EXP_D(\text{voice}).$

Here the  $(Q_2 - Q_1)$  term is certain to be positive ( $Q_2 - Q_1 > 0$ ), that is, the alternative party 2 has a higher value than the traditionally supported party. By contrast, in zone C, the same equation gives:

$$U_C(Q - Q_1) \leq U_C(Q_2 - Q_1) + EXP_C(\text{voice}). \quad (3.4)$$

i.e.  $U_C(Q - Q_2) \leq EXP_C(\text{voice}).$

Here the difference of quality provision between the dominant party and the centrist party, given by the  $(Q_2 - Q_1)$  term, is always negative ( $Q_2 - Q_1 < 0$ ). In other words, the value of the best alternative is lower than that of the traditional party. For a voter in zone C to use protest voting to exercise voice they must

have a higher expected value of improvement than in zone D. In both zones C and D if the relevant conditions above are not satisfied, voters will abstain.

Finally the likelihood of protest voting in zone A depends on where  $Q_4$  is located. If  $Q_4$  is well below  $Q_1$  as drawn here ( $Q_1 \gg Q_4$ ), the likelihood is low. Thus, protest voting will rarely occur, except when voters in zone A expect that a great improvement will follow their protest. The relevant inequality for protest voting for  $Q_4$  is:

$$U_A(Q - Q_1) \leq U_A(Q_4 - Q_1) + EXP_A(\text{voice}). \quad (3.5)$$

i.e.  $U_A(Q - Q_4) \leq EXP_A(\text{voice})$ .

If this condition is not satisfied, they will abstain. However,  $Q_4$  may be much closer to or even above  $Q_1$ : similarly there is no a priori reason why  $Q_4$  might not be above the level  $r$  in some situations.

### **Abstention and quality-satisficing approach**

Summing up the discussion above, where voters have no realistic alternative apart from supporting their traditional (but declining quality) party, then abstentions are likely to be higher - that is, in zones A, C and D. Assuming probabilistic voting anyway, the implied pattern of abstentions is shown in Figure 3.2a, where the vertical dimension of the graph shows the bunching of voters at different points along the left/right ideological spectrum. (The aggregate distribution of preference is skewed to the left side because we are modelling a one-party dominant region of the left.) Zone A corresponds well to the alienation form of abstention suggested in existing public choice accounts. However, the increase in abstentions in zones C and D is not predicted by existing accounts for two reasons. Although centrist abstention from alienation is a possibility, in established models voters must use the same ideological proximity threshold to rate all available parties. Given the strength of pressures on parties to converge on the median voter, centrist alienation should be quickly

eliminated in established models. Here the introduction of the quality measure combining both ideological positioning and efficacy, set against a required level of efficacy, effectively allows voters to apply different proximity thresholds to different parties. Even with strong median convergence pressures, considering party quality helps to explain why in a one-party dominant region with a third party as the ideologically proximate alternative to a traditionally chosen party of declining quality, centrist abstention through ‘alienation’ is likely to occur.

This approach also illuminates how changes in party positioning can affect centrist abstention. Figures 3.3a,b,c show a stable  $Q_2$  curve, but a number of shifting positions for  $Q_1$ . When  $Q_1$  is well to the left (Figure 3.3a), then  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  intersect at  $w$  below the  $r$  level, and the C and D zones from Figure 3.2a lie between  $v$  and  $x$ . Given that zones C and D include dissatisfied voters, centrist abstention should be high here.

If party 1 now shifts to the right to  $Q'_1$  (Figure 3.3b), then the intersection with  $Q_2$  takes place instead at  $x$ , which lies on the  $r$  line. Here centrist abstentions would be eliminated unless a voter expects improvement by protest voting (that is,  $U(Q - Q'_1) = 0$  and  $U(Q_2 - Q'_1) = 0$ ). If party 1 shifts further to the right at  $Q''_1$  (Figure 3.3c), then the intersection with  $Q_2$  takes place at  $y$ , above the line  $r$ .

Figure 3.3a. Situations when  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  intersect below the level of  $r$

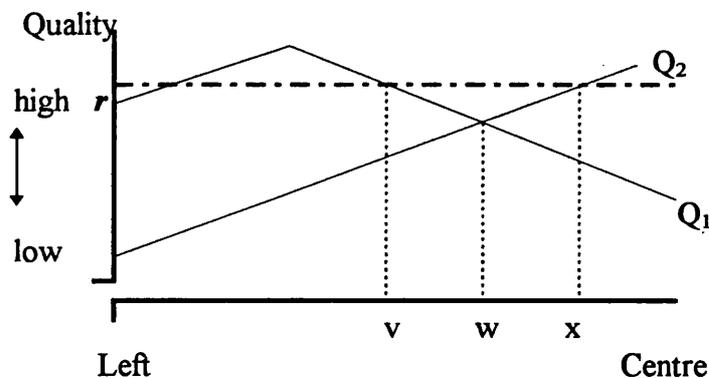


Figure 3.3b. Situations when  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  intersect on the level of  $r$

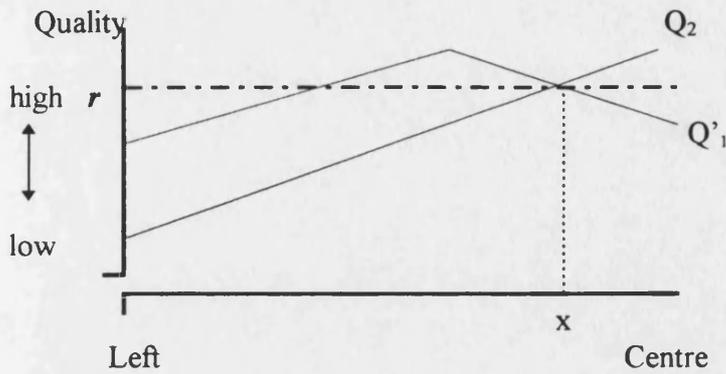
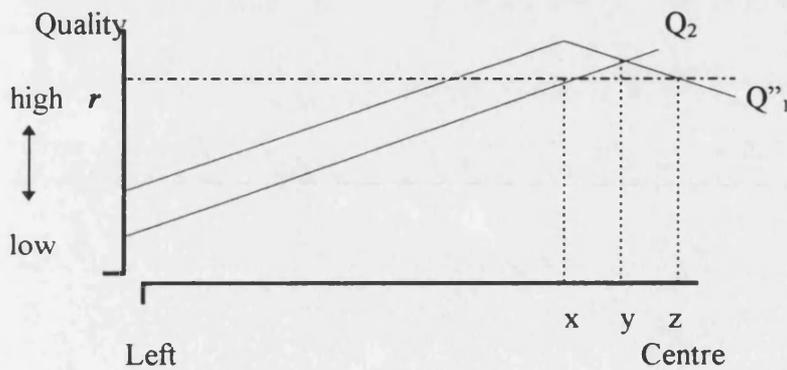


Figure 3.3c. Situations when  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  intersect above the level of  $r$



New forms of zones C and D open up between  $x$  and  $z$ , where maximising voters will still have strong incentives to participate, but the kind of satisficing voters envisaged here may again abstain because whoever wins will deliver satisfactory quality - a phenomenon which has been characterised as 'positive indifference'. Thus, this approach shows some important continuities between abstention from alienation and from indifference, an insight missing in existing work.

### Variation of quality provision and voters' decision

We can consider the most likely reason why abstentions or protest voting

should increase generally in an electorate, namely, that voters perceive that the quality offered by one or more of the parties in competition has declined, as shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4. The impact of reduced efficacy for party 1 ( $Q_1$  shifts down)

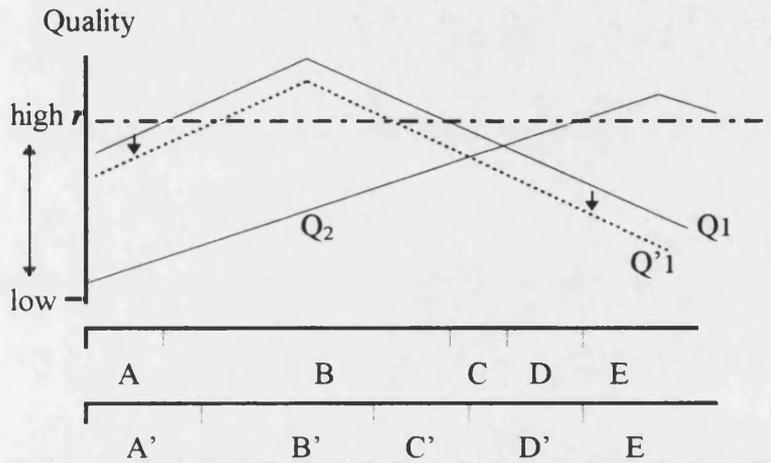
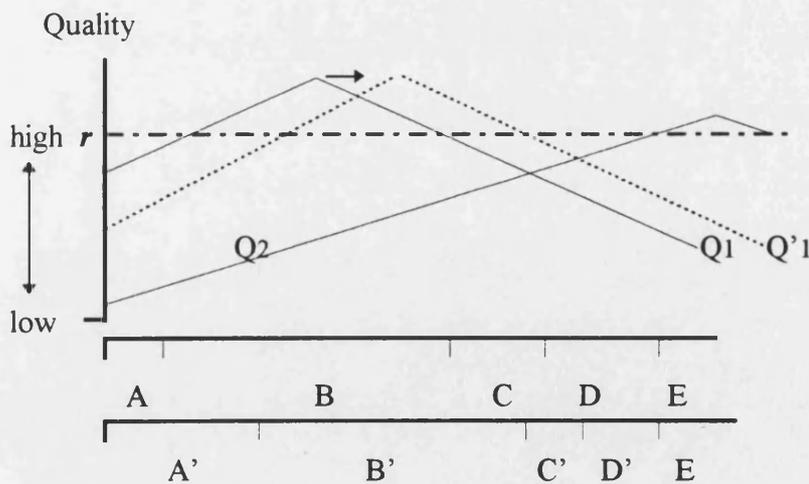


Figure 3.5. The impact of change of party 1's ideological position ( $Q_1$  apex moves toward centre)

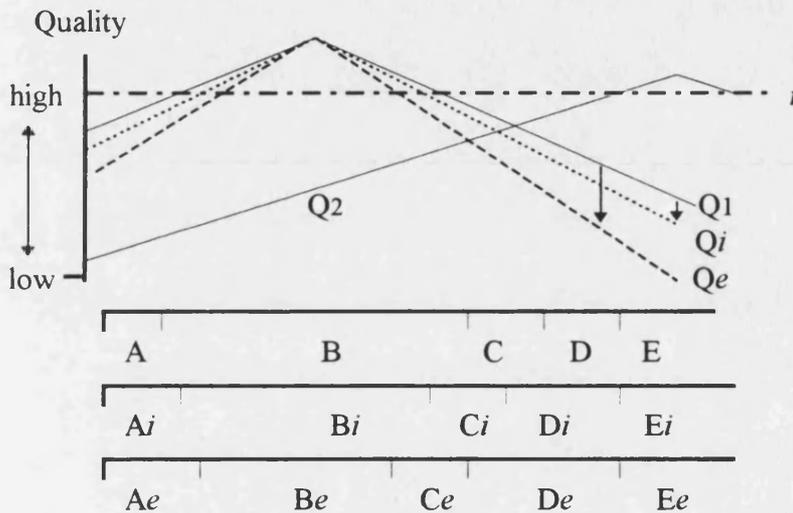


In Figure 3.4, party 1 stays at the same spot in ideological terms, but  $Q_1$  simply

drops vertically down to  $Q1'$ . Zones A, C and D on the horizontal axis, that is, the zones for unstable supporters, all enlarge at the same time.

Figure 3.5 is the same situation as Figure 3.3 (but the intersection between  $Q1$  and  $Q2$  still occurs below  $r$ ), where the dominant party has moved its ideological position towards the centre. As a result, Zones C and D near the centre all reduce, which shows that the move satisfies some unstable voters in Zone C and D. By contrast, this move alienates ideologically committed supporters in Zone A. Zone A enlarges.

Figure 3.6. The impacts of different swings of the dominant party



In a one-party dominant region, the leading party has established its links with fairly consistent supporters. However, repeated poor performance would eventually undermine established confidence in a dominant party. As seen Figure 3.6, the lost credibility will be reflected by steeper decline of quality line. Across one-party dominant regions there must be difference in terms of voters' loyalty or commitment to the dominant party. If voters in a certain region are assumed to be more strongly committed and loyal supporters, their response to the decline of quality will not be so sharp. In economic terms, they

are like inelastic customers to change of price. In Figure 3.6,  $Q_i$  represents less elastic supporters than  $Q_e$ . Zones  $A_i$ ,  $C_i$ , and  $D_i$ , indicating unstable voters created by the decline from  $Q_1$  to  $Q_i$ , are not so large as  $A_e$ ,  $C_e$  and  $D_e$  created by line  $Q_e$ . Protest voting or abstention will occur at lower levels among inelastic voters responding to a decline in quality.

In fact, the changes pictured in Figure 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 are only a small sample of the applications to which the basic diagram in Figure 3.2 lends itself. Table 3.1 shows some strong predictions which the model makes about the consequences of different kinds of changes in the shape or positioning of  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$ , assuming that the intersection between the two curves takes place below the level of  $r$ . As Table 3.1 shows, the zones of undecided (unstable) voters, C and D will increase in three cases: poor performance by the locally dominant party ( $Q_1$  swings down) ; where there is a move toward a more extreme position by the locally dominant party 1 ( $Q_1$  apex moves toward extreme). Both these instances indicate that support for the centrist party depends passively on the poor performance of the dominant party.

The third case needs to be explained. A good performance by the third party could absorb some dissatisfied voters. However, a poor performance by the third party ( $Q_2$  swings down) also increases the zones of unstable voters, reducing zone E where there are satisfied voters with the third party. As the inequality 3.1 suggests, abstention can be an alternative to protest voting. When the centrist third party shows a poor performance, that is, the alternative to the locally dominant party is not viable, dissatisfied voters will abstain.

The ability to generate so many testable propositions about conditions encouraging abstention and protest voting illustrates the strength of the approach adopted here. It should provide a firmer basis upon which to found an empirical investigation of these issues, and of the conditions under which third party support can grow under the difficult conditions of plurality rule elections

Table 3.1. The impact of different changes in Q1 and Q2  
on the zones where voters may protest vote and abstain

CHANGE	ZONE				
	A	B	C	D	E
Q <sub>1</sub> swings (shifts) down	+	-	+	+	0
Q <sub>1</sub> swings (shifts) up	-	+	-	-	0
Q <sub>2</sub> swings (shifts) down	0	0	+	+	-
Q <sub>2</sub> swings (shifts) up	0	0	-	-	+
Q <sub>1</sub> apex moves toward centre	+	0	-	-	0
Q <sub>1</sub> apex moves toward extreme	-	0	+	+	0

+ = area gets larger ; - = area gets smaller ; 0 = no change

### 3.3. THE QUALITY-SATISFICING APPROACH AND TACTICAL VOTING

One merit of the quality-satisficing approach is to provide an integrated explanation of the full range of voters' choices. As noted above, the basic framework in Figure 3.2 is assumed left-voters in a left-wing dominant region. This section examines the choices available for right-wing voters in the left-dominant region.

#### 'Inverse' Tactical voting

As pointed out in the previous chapter, non-major parties can benefit from tactical voting. That is, third parties can attract tactical voters as well as protest voters. Such 'inverse' tactical voting also results from the immobility of party choice, which may be greatest in one-party dominant regions. There are two differences between protest voting and tactical voting. Firstly, protest voting occurs where someone's traditional party is expected to win or remains a strong competitor. By contrast, tactical voting occurs when there is little hope for their first-choice party to win. For example, in a one-party dominant region, a minority of voters support the national rival party to the locally dominant party.

They are overwhelmingly outnumbered and so hardly expect their votes to be effective under plurality rule. For these voters tactical voting could be attractive to 'get the dominant party out' by choosing a second-preference centrist party. So an important difference between tactical voting and protest voting is *where* it occurs along the ideological spectrum. In one-party dominant regions, for example, protest voting comes from voters with *the same* ideological preference as the dominant party, while tactical voting occurs among *opposing* voters who are in the minority.

Secondly, protest voting amongst the majority in a region occurs when voters expect some improvement from their traditional party. Tactical voting, on the other hand, does not depend on such an expectation of improvement. By calculating differences of the expected utility of a voter between an individual's first and second preferences as measured by the feeling thermometer scores, Caine argued that the choice of the strategic voter depends less on participation utilities and more on the relative comparison of alternatives (Caine, 1978). Caine apparently assumed that the decision motivating tactical voting comes from comparison of positive utilities between alternatives. However, as Catt argued, the first step towards tactical voting is strong negative feelings towards one candidate, particularly in rather polarised party politics.

So you are not really looking for a better outcome, which is uncertain, but for an outcome which may be better but will not be worse than the expected outcome of your sincere vote. (Catt, 1989: 550)

Existing accounts have explained that because voters see the expected utility from choosing a likely party to win is greater than from choosing their first preference party, they vote tactically. However, the utility won from averting a loss (by helping the second preference party to defeat the least preferred) could be more important because the initial momentum of tactical voting should be the negative feeling against an incumbent party. Tactical voting may not be a voting of 'for', but voting of 'against'. Therefore, while protest voting is an

expression *from expectation of improvement*, tactical voting basically comes *from disapproval* of other party. As Catt aptly pointed out:

It is the intention nor the effect which makes a tactical vote...the first important aspect is my loathing...This gives the motive for considering a switch from the party that is my favourite and which I would normally vote for. Secondly, I considered the chances of the other candidates. I did not just randomly vote for any of the parties I do not loathe but instead sought information on the efficacy of a vote for each option. Thirdly, I was prepared to vote for a party that was not my favourite. In other words, instead of voting to show which party I like best, I actually made a switch away from that party.

(Catt, 1989: 549)

Niemi and colleagues also suggested that tactical voting is related to negative feeling about the party winning the constituency (or dislike of the leading party, in their terms) (Niemi *et al.*, 1992: 236).

When a voter's traditional party has effectively no hope of winning, the choice is normally over whether he/she sticks with that party or abstains because of the immobility of party choice. However, the same question as protest voting arises here. Why do people decide to vote tactically instead of abstaining, given the cost of voting?

Given that a voter's first preference party has no hope of winning, he/she will have three available options: to keep loyal to the party; to abstain; or to vote tactically. In spite of it having no hope of winning locally, some voters will still vote for their party. But if a voter is not satisfied with their traditional party (because it has little hope of winning, or low quality provision, etc.), then he/she must decide between abstention and tactical voting.

If protest voting needs 'expectation of improvement', tactical voting will need a strong sense of 'disapproval' against the least preferred party. Replacing 'expectation of improvement' with 'disapproval', we can revise the inequality 3.1. A condition for tactical voting will be as follows:

$$U(\text{dissatisfaction}) \leq \text{Alternative} + U(\text{disapproval}) \quad (3.6)$$

where 'U(dissatisfaction)' is the amount of dissatisfaction with the performance of a traditionally supporting party;  
 'U(disapproval)' is the intensity of dislike for (and the desire to defeat) the opposition major party;  
 'Alternative' is the different value between the best two alternatives.

When a voter does not have a sufficiently negative feeling against the likely winning party, he/she will abstain. When the second-choice party seems more viable and less disapproved; that is, the party provides good quality (or higher party efficacy and more acceptable ideological proximity), then tactical voting will increase.

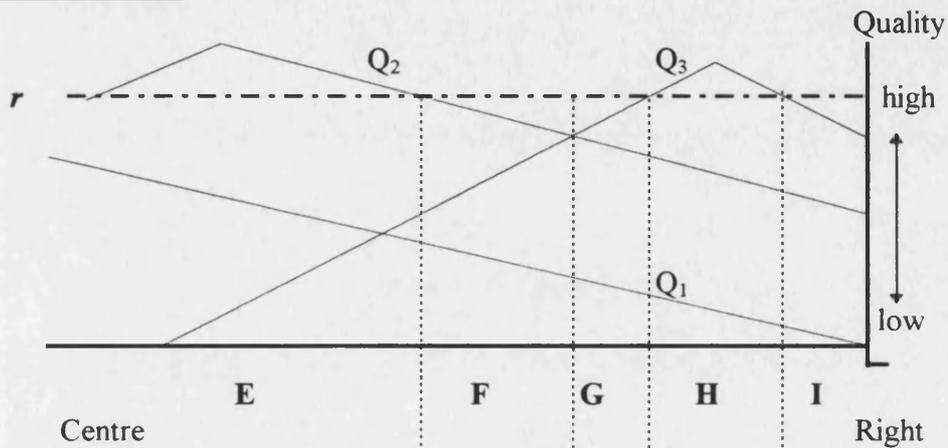
Figure 3.7 looks at choices among the right-wing voters in a left-wing dominant region, based on Figure 3.2. Party 1 is assumed to be the left-wing dominant party in a region, party 2 is the centrist third party, and party 3 is a rival major (right-wing) party. Among right-wing voters  $Q_1$  may well be the lowest quality curve in spite of the party's locally dominant position. Figure 3.7b shows that the number of voters in the centre to right section of the ideological spectrum is relatively small as this region is a left-wing dominant region.

There are five zones in Figure 3.7b: E, F, G, H and I. As assumed, as long as one party's quality line is above the minimum required level  $r$ , voters will stay loyal. Voters in zone E and H are satisfied with the quality which the parties 2 and 3 provide respectively. So some voters (in zone H) still stick with a party which is highly unlikely to win. However, zones F, G and I are all below the level  $r$ , and so here dissatisfied voters seek another possible option. The basic logic behind tactical voting is the same one that lead dissatisfied (left-wing) voters to choose protest voting, as explained above. The curve  $Q_3$  is higher than  $Q_2$  in zone G, but  $Q_2$  is higher than  $Q_3$  in zone F. If party 2's performance has locally won a good reputation, or its ideological position

seems acceptable as an alternative, then party 2 is likely to be a beneficiary of tactical voting.

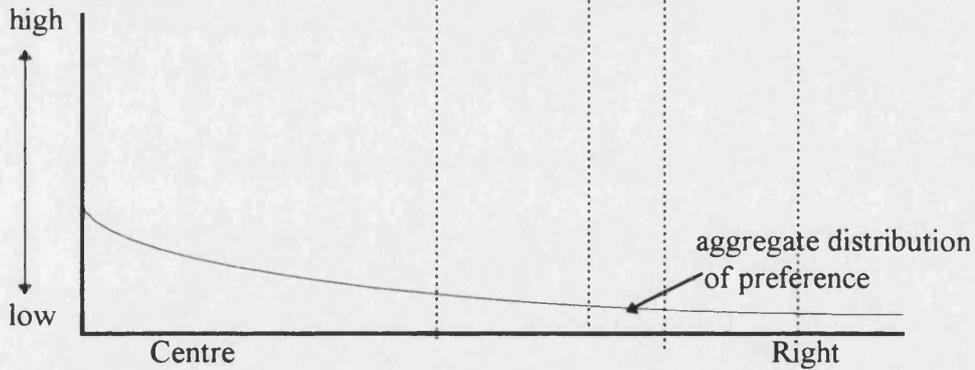
Figure 3.7. The basic framework (in the right)

a) *individual level*



b) *Collective level*

number of voters



- $Q_1$  : quality provided by the dominant (left-wing) party 1 in the region;
- $Q_2$  : quality provided by the centrist third party 2;
- $Q_3$  : quality provided by the rival major (right-wing) party 3;
- $r$  : minimum required level of quality.

Where an alternative does not look viable, however, tactical voting is unlikely

to occur unless a voter has a strong sense of disapproval against the leading party. In zone I where  $Q_3$  is lower than the minimum quality line  $r$ , voters are not satisfied with their traditionally supported party 3. If there is no viable alternative, that is no better quality provision than  $Q_3$  (as drawn here), voters will abstain.

By employing inequality 3.6 the difference between two zones will be distinct. In zone F in the figure, voters will tactically vote if:

$$U_F(Q - Q_3) \leq U_F(Q_2 - Q_3) + U_F(\text{disapproval}). \quad (3.7)$$

i.e.  $U_F(Q - Q_2) \leq U_F(\text{disapproval}).$

Here the quality gap between their preferred party 3 and the centre party 2,  $U_F(Q_2 - Q_3)$  is certain to be positive ( $Q_2 - Q_3 > 0$ ) because  $Q_2$  is higher than  $Q_3$ . In contrast, in zone G, the same inequality will be as follows:

$$U_G(Q - Q_3) \leq U_G(Q_2 - Q_3) + U_G(\text{disapproval}). \quad (3.7)$$

i.e.  $U_G(Q - Q_2) \leq U_G(\text{disapproval}).$

In zone G, the difference in the quality provided by  $Q_2$  and  $Q_3$  is always negative (that is,  $Q_2 - Q_3 < 0$ ). Compared with zone F, for tactical voting to take place amongst people in zone G, they must should have a strong sense of disapproval against party 1, the dominant party locally.

Likewise, the likelihood of tactical voting among voters in zone I relies on how much they dislike the dominant party 1.

$$U_I(Q - Q_3) \leq U_I(Q_2 - Q_3) + U_I(\text{disapproval}). \quad (3.7)$$

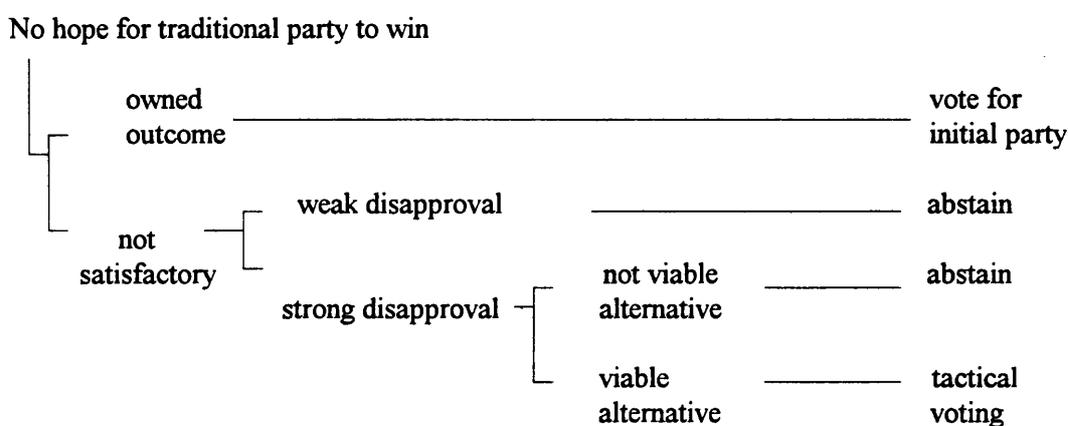
i.e.  $U_I(Q - Q_2) \leq U_I(\text{disapproval}).$

Here the difference between two best alternatives is much larger than in zone G, (that is  $Q_2 - Q_3 \ll 0$ ). Thus, tactical voting would hardly occur without a

deep loathing for the dominant party 1. If this condition is not satisfied, then voters will abstain.

Figure 3.8 summarises available options of an tactical voter in one-party dominant region. Choices may vary depending not only on the decision whether or not to respond, but also on the existence of a viable alternative party, as is similar to protest voting.

Figure 3.8. Possible options of tactical voters in one-party dominant region



### Variations in quality provision and tactical voting

One of the conditions for tactical voting which Heath and colleagues (1988) suggested is that tactical voting will increase as one's preferred party goes further from contention. Figure 3.9 shows that the size of each zone will change as the provision of quality declines. When  $Q_3$  shifts down to  $Q'_3$  (that is, one's preferred party moves further away from being in contention), dissatisfied voters in zones F, G and I will greatly increase. More voters would be expected to vote tactically, if they have a strong enough feeling of disapproval.

Figure 3.9. The impact of reduced efficacy of party 3 ( $Q_3$  shifts down)

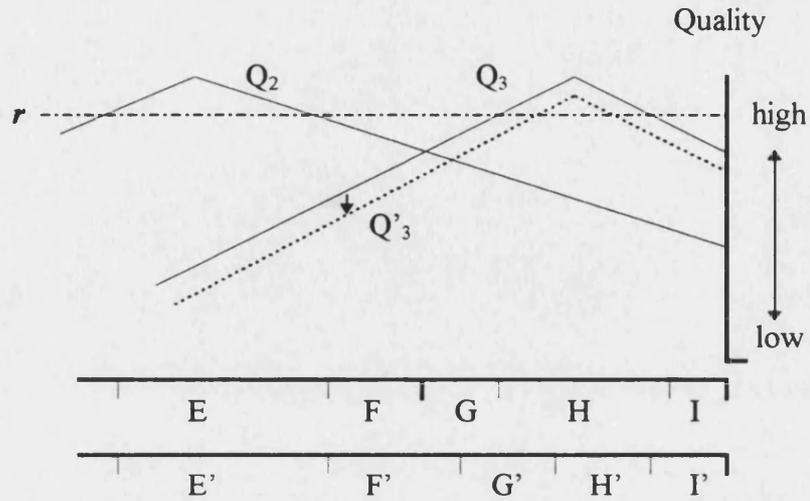
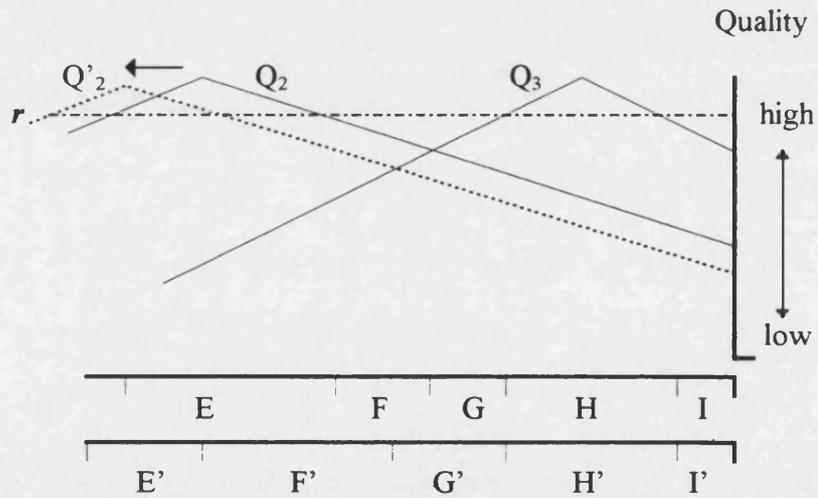


Figure 3.10. The impact of change of party 2's ideological position ( $Q_2$  apex moves toward centre)



In Figure 3.10, the ideological position of the centrist party moves to the right, where it is closer to the majority voters in the region. As a result, zones F and G enlarge greatly at the cost of zone E. As noted in the earlier section, this move can provide a more favourable condition to the centrist party because it may fit the ideological preference among the majority in the region. Thus,

the centre party could attract more votes from the majority of the left, even though the move loses some supporters on the right, perhaps as many as the reduced area of zone E. However, this move creates more unstable voters in zones F and G, who lose a viable party for tactical voting. As a result, more voters in zone F' and G' will abstain.

Table 3.2 shows the predictions about the changes of each zone's size according to movement of quality lines  $Q_2$  and  $Q_3$ . Zones F, G and I (in particular F) are the possible areas of tactical voting. A positive sign in the table implies more tactical voting. Table 3.2 shows that tactical voting will occur more frequently when a voter's first-preference party does not perform well ( $Q_3$  swings (shifts) down); or his/her second-choice party has increased its efficacy nationally or locally ( $Q_2$  swings (shifts) up); or a voter's first-preference party ( $Q_3$ ) moves to a position more opposed to the local majority of voters (making it much less likely to win); or  $Q_2$  moves closer to position of median voter in the region (and so becomes a more acceptable, and viable, alternative among the majority of voters). These explanations generally coincide with findings in existing accounts of tactical voting, but illustrate more clearly the similarities with and differences from protest voting, and the relatively complex relationship between both and abstention.

Table 3.2. The impact of different changes in  $Q_2$  and  $Q_3$  on the zones where voters may tactically vote and abstain

CHANGE	ZONE				
	E	F	G	H	I
$Q_3$ swings (shifts) down	0	+	+	-	+
$Q_3$ swings (shifts) up	0	-	-	+	-
$Q_2$ swings (shifts) down	+	-	-	0	0
$Q_2$ swings (shifts) up	-	+	+	0	0
$Q_2$ apex moves toward centre	-	+	+	0	0
$Q_3$ apex moves toward right	0	+	+	0	-

+ = area gets larger ; - = area gets smaller ; 0 = no change

### **3.4. CONCLUSION: PROTEST VOTING, TACTICAL VOTING AND THIRD PARTY SUPPORT**

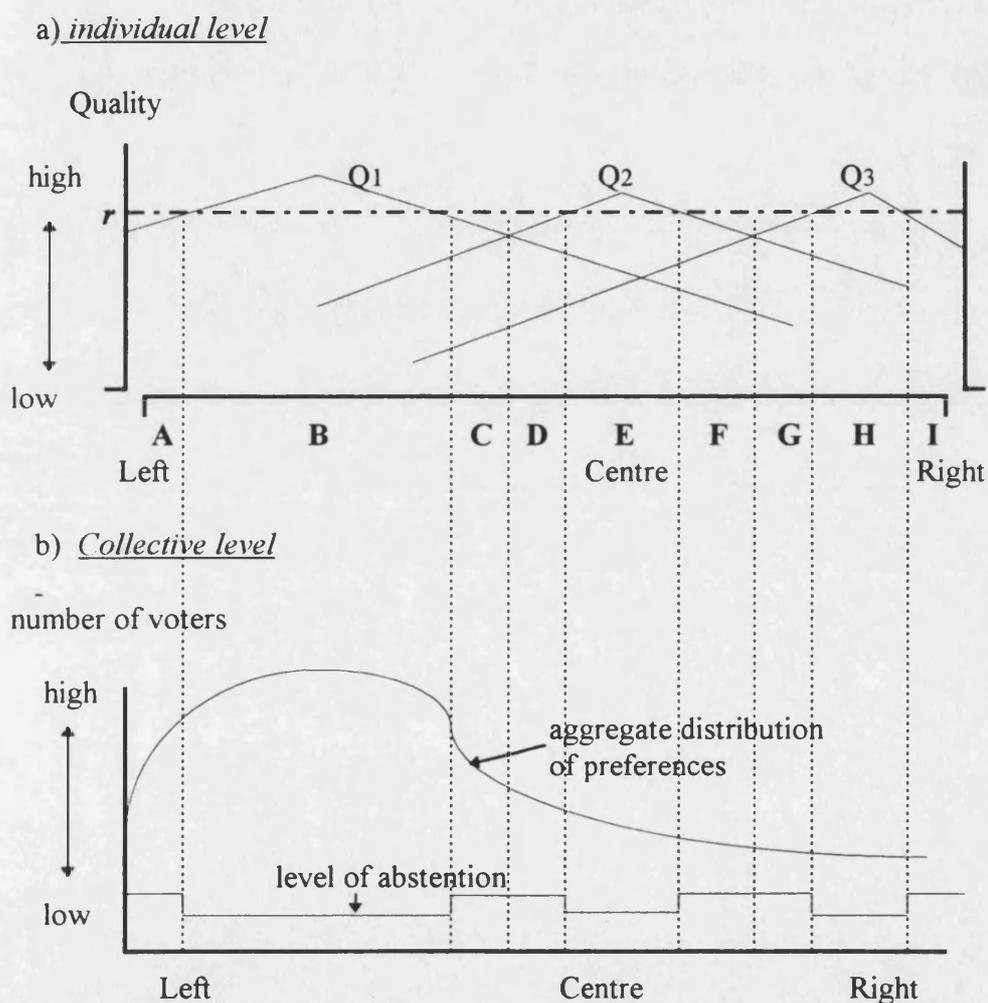
Although many election analyses use the term protest voting or tactical voting to explain change of alignments, the distinctive definition of the concepts has remained obscure. In addition, abstention has been understood particularly in terms of too simple a cost-benefit perspective in most public choice accounts. As a result, the fact that abstention can be one of effective tools to express voters' discontent is often ignored among political scientists.

By focusing instead on the variable 'quality' provided by political parties, the quality-satisficing approach allows us to frame a comprehensive explanation of the choices between protest voting, abstentions and tactical voting, which in existing accounts often seem discrete or unrelated to each other. Figure 3.11 is a comprehensive figure, based on Figure 3.2 and 3.4 (again assuming a predominantly left-wing region). As noted before, voters from zone A to I are in different situations with each other. Voters in zones where each party's quality line is higher than the minimum required level  $r$  are all satisfied with the previous party: zone *B* for the left-wing party, zone *E* for the centre party and zone *H* for the right-wing party. Voters outside these three zones are discontented with the quality provision from their initial party, and thus they want to express their dissatisfaction or respond to a quality deficit in some way.

Voters in each zone will respond differently depending on which party they have previously supported and whether or not there are alternatives. Voters in zones *A* and *I* have no alternatives, and thus the most dissatisfied are likely to abstain. This is abstention from alienation, as explained in existing accounts. People who have alternative parties of some positive quality but in more remote ideological locations could protest vote. Voters in zones *C* and *D* who used to be loyal to the locally dominant party have two options. Depending on their expectation of improvement and viability of the centrist party 2, they will either

abstain or protest vote. By contrast, zones *F* and *G* indicate the possible area of tactical voting or abstention. If voters there have a strong feeling of disapproval against the dominant party, they will vote tactically; otherwise, they will abstain.

Figure 3.11. The comprehensive framework



- $Q_1$  : quality provided by the dominant (left-wing) party 1 in the region;
- $Q_2$  : quality provided by the centrist third party 2;
- $Q_3$  : quality provided by the rival major (right-wing) party 3;
- $r$  : minimum required level of quality

Table 3.3. Likely options for dissatisfied voters in each zone

zone	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
vote for initial party		satisfac-tion			satisfac-tion			satisfac-tion	
abstain	aliena-tion		indifference			indifference			aliena-tion
shift to the centre party			protest voting			tactical voting			

As seen in Table 3.3, the centrist party's possible areas for winning votes range from zone C to zone F. Except in zone E where voters are satisfied with that party, its support depends heavily rely on protest voting or tactical voting. It may be that, as in the case of the Liberal Democrats in Britain, support for a centrist party under a plurality rule electoral system fluctuates across elections, and the characteristics distinguishing the party's voters may not be not easily classified. In fact, such traits are rather distinctive characteristics of the endogenous type of third parties, depending of course on the relative sizes of the zones (which is set by the parties' mutual positioning and performance in relation to the socially-set efficacy level,  $r$ ), and how many voters are located in each zone (which is set by the social context in different regions). In Figure 3.11a as drawn, centrist party support would be fluid because compared with the size of the zone E (the party's satisfied and loyal voters), zones C, D, F and G are quite large; and the amount of votes from inverse tactical voting would not exceed the number of protest voting (because as drawn in Figure 3.11b, inverse tactical voting comes from those who locally constitute the minority).

The motivation of much third party voting may be reactive and negative, and if so, these voters' decision to back a centrist party is more influenced by the evaluation of other parties than by the third party itself. In Figure 3.11a, when Q2 moves toward the centre by taking moderate policies, zones E, F and G would get smaller. The move can make the major party absorb the unstable

voters in zones F and G and satisfy only those voters in the centre (zone E).

Cox argued that except in special circumstances centrist candidates will find their support eroded as the remaining candidates converge toward them (Cox, 1985). According to directional model, the centre is not a position of advocacy. Similarly, Duverger argued that the centre does not exist in politics (Duverger, 1964: 215). Besides, as non-major parties apparently have less strong pull of influence over voters, particularly under a plurality rule electoral system, it is hard to consolidate their support. Thus, a centrist party must seek to take advantage of dissatisfaction among other parties' voters. Its key means of attracting them is to try and enhance the 'quality' it can provide by raising its perceived efficacy, at least at the local level, and by adopting an ideological position flexible enough to adapt to different regional situations.

## **Chapter IV**

### **THIRD PARTY SUPPORT IN BRITAIN: THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1983-1992**

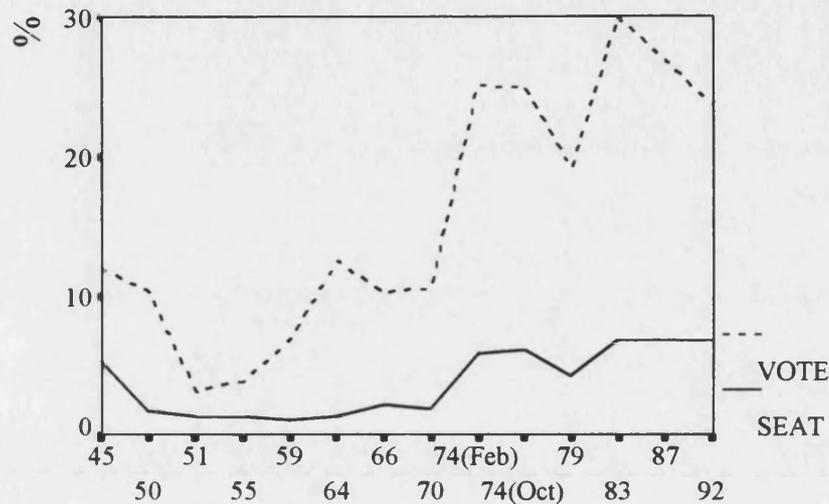
#### **4.1. THIRD PARTY POLITICS IN BRITAIN**

Since the end of World War II, the British party system has been widely considered a typical example of two-party politics, and seen as a key element in the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy. Voters are divided into two classes, middle-class and working class, and a competition occurs between two parties, Conservative and Labour, each dependent upon distinctively divided support of class. Pulzer's (1967: 96) famous dictum about British politics was that: 'Class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail'. However, this notion is rather simple and exaggerated although the relationship between class and party choice still holds true. The Conservative and Labour parties did not exclusively draw electoral support from their 'own' class even at the peak period of the two-party system. The Conservatives in particular have won considerable support from working class at most elections (see Dunleavy, 1989: 184, Figure 6.3), and Labour has also attracted some middle-class voters.

In theory, the Westminster model assumes that each of two major parties seeks a mandate of its own by winning the majority of votes nation-wide. In practice, no British government since 1945 has secured a majority of seats on the basis of a majority vote. The majority of seats in the House of Commons have been often 'manufactured' by a plurality rule electoral system, rather than earned by a political party. To foster a stable and effective government, the British system gives some institutional strong advantages to the two major

parties. That is, the Westminster model is characterised by a single party government and two-party dominance, supported by the disproportional representation.

Figure 4.1. Share of votes and seats won by all non-major parties (1945-1992)



Source: calculated from Butler and Kavanagh (1992).

However, the pattern of two-party dominance does not look as firm as it used to be, particularly in terms of votes. When the Conservative and Labour monopolized politics in the 1950s, the two parties jointly won more than 90 per cent of votes and secured more than 98 per cent of seats. But the share of votes polled by the two parties fell to 70 per cent in the 1983 election. Third parties, particularly the Liberal party (or the Alliance, the Liberal Democrats) filled the gap instead (Figure 4.1). Whereas 89 per cent of constituencies saw Conservative and Labour candidates share first and second place in 1964, only just over half (52 per cent) did in 1987 (Heath *et al.*, 1988: 52). As seen in Figure 4.1, the rise of third party support is a fairly stable one, in spite of the large gap between their shares of votes and seats.

Class loyalty has been considerably diluted, and the belief that Britain has a two-party system cannot be properly sustained since the February 1974 election (for various explanations and debates about partisan and class dealignment, see Denver, 1994: 52-84). According to Crewe:

partisan dealignment in all its manifestations - a plummeting of party membership, a weakening of party identification, a wavering and prevarication among major party supporters, negative voting, and a growing instability and unevenness of electoral change - have all occurred, indeed, accelerated, over the past three decades (1982: 279).

The table below gives the odd ratios of a non-manual person voting Conservative rather than Labour compared to the odds of a manual worker voting Labour rather than the Conservative. There is a striking contrast between the period 1945-70 and the period after 1979, which clearly indicates that class politics has become relatively less relevant. This change has been closely linked to the rise of third party support.

Table 4.1. Odd ratios of class voting

	Average 45-70	1979	1983	1987	1992
odds ratio	5.6	2.6	3.0	2.6	2.4

Source: Crewe (1993: 99).

### **The Liberal Democrats and third party support**

The Liberal Party, the predecessor of the current Liberal Democratic Party, used to be a powerful governing party before the First World War. In the 1906 general election, the Liberal party, fielding 539 candidates, gained a huge majority of as many as 400 seats out of 670 in the House of Commons. However, since the 1918 election which has been considered as 'a hinge-point

between the sectarian and religious-based allegiances of the inter-war years' (Stevenson, 1993: 8), the Liberals' electoral fortune was dramatically on the wane in the face of Labour's advance. The surge of the Labour support in the 1945 general election, in particular, 'swept away the last vestiges of the Liberal Party's pretensions to being a contender for government or even a realistic third force' (Stevenson, 1993: 24). Through the 1950s the Conservatives party and Labour dominated elections whereas the Liberal party struggled to avoid its political demise. In the 1951 General elections, for example, the Liberal could only put up 109 candidates, and won only 2.5 per cent of vote and gained six seats. To make matters worse, more than half of the candidates lost their deposit (Table 4.2). This disastrous electoral performance continued in the 1955 election, when the Liberals came to the brink of extinction as an independent political force.

However, in other ways the 1955 election marked a watershed in the Liberal's electoral revival. It was the first election in which the Liberals not only halted the decline but also made any improvement on their previous performance since 1929. The party's Gallup poll ratings also began to increase to two-digit figures in late 1957. More importantly, the Liberal began to win seats in by-elections. Their first by-election victory since 1945 was at Torrington in March 1958, which seems to be an isolated victory rather than a harbinger of the party's revival. With the by-election victory at Orpington in March 1962, 'for the Liberals, after a generation in the wilderness, the promised land seemed at last to have arrived' (Cook, 1993: 141). Two years later, the Liberal party achieved the biggest electoral success since 1945, at least in terms of votes polled. In the 1964 election it garnered 11.2 per cent of votes, almost doubling the previous result, and secured three more seats. The ratio of lost deposit also impressively fell to 14 per cent.

The party's electoral fortune again turned downward. In the 1970 general election, its share of votes dropped down to 7.5 per cent, and it won only six seats. The ratio of lost deposits rocketed up to 55 per cent (Table 4.2), so that

the Liberals' support seemed ephemeral. Yet in the February 1974 General election, the Liberals won almost one fifth of total votes and 14 seats. The ratio of lost deposit fell down to only 4 per cent - apparently the best performance since 1945. However, only eight months later, following its leader's involvement in a bizarre scandal with sexual undertones, the party earned only a disappointing outcome. Its share of votes fell by 1.2 per cent and it lost one seat. In particular, the ratio of lost deposits greatly increased to 20 per cent, almost a fourfold rise. This slower decline continued to the 1979 election, in which all the electoral results were worse. The party's ratio of lost deposits rose again to more than 50 per cent.

It was when the Alliance was set up in March 1981 following the formation of the new Social Democratic Party (SDP) that the third force was for the first time in the post-war period seen as a potentially credible alternative to compete for government power. Voting intentions surveyed by Gallup evened out across the three parties when the Alliance began. In December 1981 the polling rate of the Alliance reached a peak of 50 per cent. Even though the Alliance achieved an unprecedented outcome, the election result in 1983 revealed that its credibility as an alternative governing party still remained in doubt. The Alliance repeated a similar pattern of Liberal support, which was evenly spread across the population. Moreover, they failed to carve out a distinctive socio-economic section of the electorate (Studlar and McAllister, 1987: 48; Curtice, 1983: 111-6).

The sudden rises of third party support, in 1962, in 1974 and in 1983 were more or less associated with preceding by-election victories. However, such surges of the Liberal support always apparently ended in one-off blips. While the Liberal (Democrats) often enjoyed successes in by-elections and in local elections, support for the major parties still seems solid when it comes to the matter of choosing a government. After the 1987 election it was apparent that the SDP's high hopes of 'breaking the mould' of British politics was gone.

Table 4.2. Election results of the Liberal Democratic party, 1945-1992

Election	Share of vote (%)	Seats	No. of candidates fielded (A)	No. of lost deposit (B)	ratio: B / A (%)
1945	9.0	12	306	76	25
1950	9.1	9	475	319	67
1951	2.5	6	109	66	61
1955	2.7	6	110	60	55
1959	5.9	6	216	55	26
1964	11.2	9	365	52	14
1966	8.5	12	311	104	33
1970	7.5	6	332	184	55
1974(Feb)	19.3	14	517	23	4
1974(Oct)	18.5	13	619	125	20
1979	13.8	11	577	303	53
1983 <sup>1</sup>	25.4	23	633	10	2
1987 <sup>1</sup>	22.6	22	633	25	4
1992 <sup>2</sup>	18.3	20	631	11	2

Source: The figures except the ratio B/A in the table are collected from various parts of Butler and Butler (1994).

Until 1979 the figures are about the Liberal party.

1. the Alliance.
2. the Liberal Democrats.

However, the three-party competition in British politics seems confirmed in the 1992 election after the formal merger of the Liberal party and the SDP into the Liberal Democratic Party (originally called the Social and Liberal Democratic Party). The election marked the first time since 1945 that the third party continued to secure high rates of support in three consecutive elections. As seen in Table 4.2, its share of votes since 1983 has fallen but stayed around the 20 per cent level, and the number of seats won has been between 20 and 23. The party's ratio of lost deposits also improved, but this effect was partly due to a 1985 decrease in the threshold for retaining the deposit from 12.5 to 5 per cent (a change made at the same time as the deposit level was increased). This shift, plus increased support, meant that the symbolic stigma of 'losing its deposit'

was almost removed from the Liberal Democrats after 1985, also giving their financial position a boost.

Even though the Liberal Democrats still cannot compete for national government on equal terms, the party now plays a significant role in elections at every level. This chapter deals with the performance of the Liberal Democrats (including the Alliance) during the period between the 1983 and 1992 elections. To make the exposition simpler, the term 'Liberal Democrats' often includes the period of the Liberals and the Alliance.

#### **4.2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRAT VOTERS**

In spite of the Liberal Democrats' resurgence since 1970s, it seems very unlikely that the British third party can ever reclaim the leading role which it played before the Second World War because its pattern support looks diffuse and lacking in very solid attachments.

##### **Soft voters and dispersed support**

The oscillating upward trend of Liberal Democrat support in Table 4.2 demonstrates that a big rise in one election did not produce a consistent rise in support at the subsequent election, and several times ended in a rather isolated success. Many analysts have argued that the Liberal Democrats have not established firmly committed support:

electoral support for the Liberal Democrats is "soft" ... people who vote for the party tend to lack any sense of continuing psychological attachment to it. While they may support the Liberal Democrats at one election, they are just as likely to switch to other parties subsequently (Denver, 1993: 126. Emphasis in the original).

The 'soft' support can be related to the fact that the pattern of the Liberal Democrat votes cannot be easily described in terms of social cleavages. The party's support is not clearly organised in terms class divisions or the other important social background characteristics linked with alignments in mainland Britain:

The 1992 figures broadly confirm what has long been known about the British electorate's political preferences: that the Conservatives tend to draw their support disproportionately from older voters, non-manual workers, non-unionised workers, owner-occupiers, and people employed in the private sector; that, in contrast, Labour support tends to be stronger among the young, manual workers (particularly if they are employed in the public sector), trade unionists, and council tenants; that the Liberal Democrats tends to draw their (lower levels of) support *from all groups more or less evenly* (Sanders, 1993: 188. Italics added).

This social 'softness' of the Liberal Democrat vote carries over also into patterns of regional support. Plurality rule electoral systems inherently contain the notion of territorial representation, and such systems usually impose a higher threshold for entry than a proportional representation system. Under such circumstances, widely dispersed support tends to be ineffective. In the 1983 general election, for example, Labour won 27.6 per cent of total votes and 209 seats while the Alliance secured only 23 seats from 25.4 per cent of the votes, overwhelmingly because Alliance votes were evenly spread up and down the country. Only a handful difference in the two parties' votes made a huge difference in terms of seats. As a result, a large number of votes for the Alliance did not affect the decision of winner and were 'wasted'. Under a pure proportional representation system, approximately 180 seats would have been allocated to Labour and about 165 seats to the Alliance.

Table 4.3 shows the average votes needed for each party to win one seat, calculated by dividing the number of votes polled by the number of seats gained

by a party. The fewer votes needed per seat, the more effectively can a party transform votes into seats. Geographically concentrated support helps a party to win seats comfortably.

Table 4.3. Ratio of Votes won divided by Seats secured

election year	Average of all parties	Con	Lab	Lib-Dem (Alliance)
1983	47	33	41	338
1987	50	37	44	334
1992	52	42	43	300

unit: 1,000 votes

Table 4.3 reveals that both the Conservatives and Labour have benefitted, as expected, with their figures markedly below average. By contrast, the Liberal Democrats were greatly under-represented. To win one seat in 1983, for example, the Liberal Democrat required 10 times as many voters as the Conservatives.

Although the Liberal's electoral fortune successfully revived from the nadir in the 1950s, the party has never built up a 'fortress' of core support, socially and geographically. Its relatively fewer consistent voters and lack of geographical concentration have tended to block the Liberal's further progress, and make their support constantly sway.

### Dealignment and protest voting

Given that the Liberal Democrat voters are inconsistent and volatile, many psephologists have repeatedly concluded that its vote is very much a protest vote, derived mainly came from negative reasons rather than from positive identification. Himmelweit *et al.* (1985: 162) described the Liberal vote as a vote of disaffection.

However, protest voting for a Liberal Democrat candidate looks inherently less effective than voting for a major party, given the Liberals' heretofore minor role in the Commons' two-party system. What makes dissatisfied voters choose a third party like Liberal Democrat? Downs considered that in a two-party democracy a large measure of ideological consensus among its citizen is a precondition for stable and effective government:

In a plurality structure, since a two-party system is encouraged and the two parties usually converge, voters' tastes may become relatively homogeneous in the long run (Downs, 1957: 125).

In spite of the relative weakening of the classical form of class politics, the ideological tastes of the British voters are not homogeneous enough for the Conservative party and Labour party to converge on nearly identical platforms and philosophy. On the contrary, each party retains a distinct ideology and priorities over issues. Voters also have apparent party preferences. According to Crewe:

The electorate has a clearer perception of the parties' priorities and past record. The prevalence of priority and performance voting is reflected in the historical constancy of the public's preference for one party over the other on each issue: the Conservative and Labour parties each 'own' certain issues but very rarely 'capture' one from the other (1993: 111. *Emphasis in the original*; see also Budge and Farlie, 1983).

Therefore, a dissatisfied voter, who used to have a set of party-linked issue priorities, would be very unlikely to directly switch to the rival major party. A committed Conservative voter, for example, would be reluctant to support Labour even when he or she is deeply disappointed with a Conservative government. According to Butler and Stokes' BES panel data, for each pair of the consecutive elections between 1959 and 1979 the proportion of direct switches between the Conservative and Labour parties never exceeded 5 per cent of all respondents, and its average is under 4 per cent (Crewe, 1982: 311,

Note 11; see also Butler and Stokes, 1974: 268-275). Direct switching of support between the Conservatives and Labour, in recent elections, is also small. Only 3.2 per cent in 1983 and 5.1 per cent in 1987 of former Conservative supporters defected to Labour respectively; 5.1 per cent in 1983 and 4.3 per cent in 1987 of Labour supporters in the previous election voted the Conservatives (Johnston and Pattie, 1991). So an immobility of party choice between the major rivals still characterises British politics. The plurality rule electoral system allows only one preference to be expressed. As a result, it tends to force voters to make a choice between the two major parties, and consequently to reduce the effective number of parties, as Duverger (1964) suggested. Where a class cleavage is dominant, a plurality rule electoral system helps to maintain the cleavage by restricting voters' choice between the two classes.

The British evidence seems to fit quite well with the idea (set out in Chapter III) that most voters deliberate not about which major party they will support, but over whether or not to continue supporting their previous party. In a quality satisficing model, voters have in mind a *benchmark* against which to evaluate the issue positions or performances of their traditional party. As long as the party is considered to meet the *benchmark* or to accomplish what voters think should be done, they will continue to support; otherwise, their remaining choice is either abstention or protest voting. Thus,

while Liberal voting may be induced by a balanced or jointly negative evaluation of the Conservative and Labour parties, it may still be true that the more immediate trigger to a Liberal vote is *the voter's evaluation of just one of those parties* .... It seems probable that the joint negative evaluations of many Liberal voters arise out of a combination of long-standing dislike of the major party they do not normally support plus a more immediately generated dislike of some aspect of their usual party (Curtice, 1983: 106. Italics added).

The partisan dealignment in British politics need not necessarily mean that the traditional style of class politics has come to end. Class still remains the single most important social factor underlying the vote in Britain (Crewe, 1993: 100). Instead, it could mean that voters become less patient with a disappointing performance of their traditional party and more ready to respond to it - in which case protest voting for a third party is more likely to occur. The weakness of traditional class politics as well as the immobility of party choice under a plurality electoral system provide favourable conditions for dissatisfied voters to protest vote. And the Liberal Democrats, located neither close enough to be the first preference nor far away enough to be the least preference along the left-right ideological spectrum which still dominates British political debates, seem its main beneficiary.

### **Voters' Perception of the Liberal Democrats**

The 'softness' of Liberal support signifies a lack of deep conviction about the voting choice. What made dissatisfied voters choose a party which looks so strikingly less effective than the major parties? How do voters perceive the Liberal Democrats in practice?

#### *Vague policies :*

Although protest voting inherently comes from negative reasons, there must also be some positive facts behind it. Criticising Himmelweit *et al.*'s argument that the Liberal vote signifies departure rather than arrival (1985:162), Heath *et al.* suggested the importance of 'an element of attraction as well as disaffection' (1985: 114) enough to choose the Liberals.

However, Liberal policies do not seem to attract much attention from the public. Rather, the general impression of the Liberal policy position is that they are only roughly or dimly perceived. For example, Curtice argued:

the Liberal party has a rather *diffuse image* amongst the electorate. It tends not to be evaluated on the basis of its policies and thus, if its policies do not attract voters, neither are they an encumbrance in the search for electoral support. Rather, the (Liberal) Party tends to be evaluated on *vague* aspects of style and there is also some tendency to regard it as having neither one quality nor the other of two polar extremes (Curtice, 1983: 107-8. Italics added; see also Crewe, 1982).

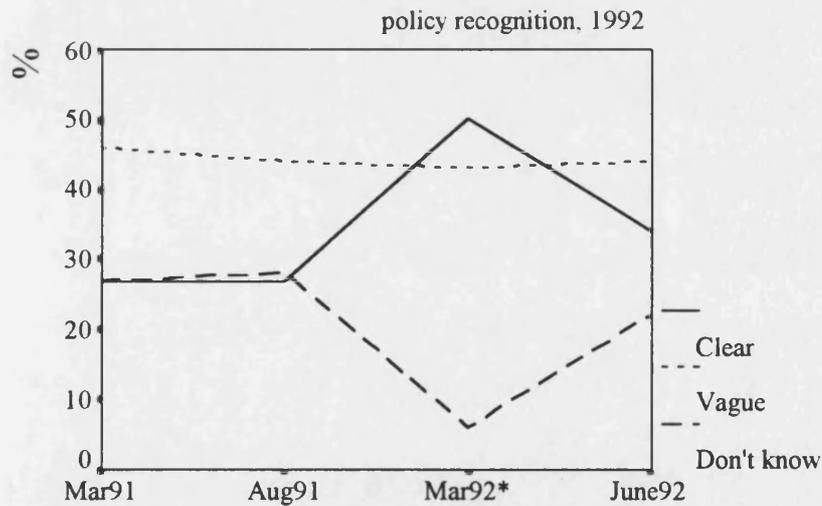
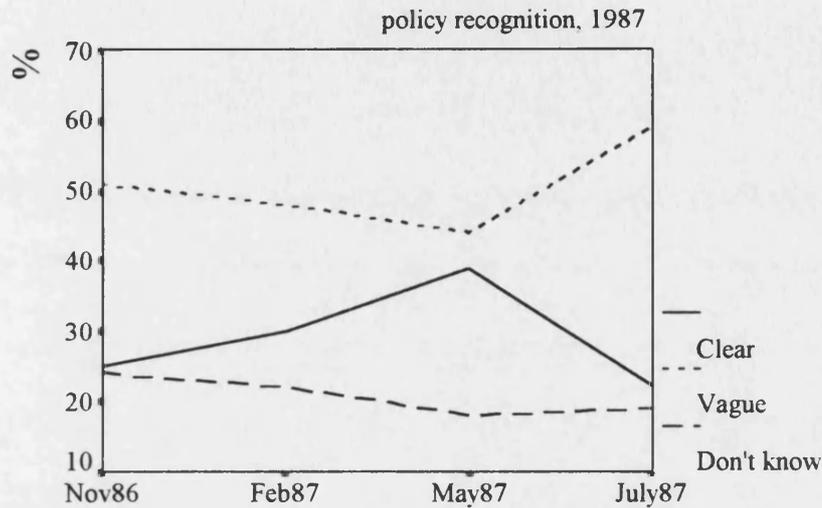
Figure 4.2 confirms the diffuse image of the Liberal Democrat policy. Around a half of those surveyed, as seen in both figures, thought Liberal policies to be vague. If the category "Don't know" is also included, the percentage of vagueness rises sharply. By contrast, both figures show that those who had clear perceptions of Liberal policies remained only at 30 per cent level in 'normal' times.

However, as an election comes closer, voters gradually become more informed of the Liberal Democrat policies. The proportion of respondents in 1987 who felt that the party had 'clear policies' increased from 25 per cent up to 39 per cent in the near-election period. Similarly, the proportion recognizing 'clear policies' rose from 27 per cent to 50 per cent during the course of the 1992 campaign. By contrast, the percentage of people answering that it had 'vague policies' did not much change. This increased awareness in campaign period reflects that the third party can have a nearly equal opportunity of coverage from the media then (see Semetko, 1989).

Nevertheless, the effects of election campaigns on policy recognition for the Liberal Democrats is rather fleeting. As seen in both figures above, the percentage of people recognizing 'clear policies' fell rapidly from 39 to 22 per cent soon after the 1987 election, and at the same time, the proportion saying the party had 'vague policies' increased from 44 to 59 per cent. The same pattern is also found in 1992. The percentage of those who had a clear view

dropped from 50 to 34 per cent, and the proportion of the 'ambiguous' answers (don't know, neither/both) rose from 6 to 22.

Figure 4.2. Policy recognition for the Liberal Democrats (Alliance)



Source: BES 1983 Cross-section survey; Gallup Political (& Economic) Index, May 1987, July 1987, March 1992 and June 1992.

The questions were asked about each of three parties including the Conservative and Labour. Only the data for the Liberal Democrats (Alliance) are extracted here.

The question was 'Do you think the Liberal Democrat Party have.....?' The categories given were 'Clear policies', 'Vague policies', 'Neither/both', and 'Don't know'. The last two categories were taken together here.

\* were differently asked - 'Thinking of what the Liberal Democrats stand for, would you say that you yourself have a very clear idea what they stand for, a fairly clear idea or not any clear idea of what they stand for?'. Here the categories of 'very clear' and 'fairly clear' collapsed to 'clear policies'.

The sudden change of recognition indicates that voters do not normally give much consideration to the third party's policies. The declining awareness of the third party policy strikes a contrast with the case of the two major parties. The percentage of 'Clear policies' for the Conservative increased from 71 per cent to 78 per cent after the 1987 election; the percentage for Labour also rose from 38 per cent up to 45 per cent in the same survey in July 1987.

The recognition of the Liberal policies appears to be neither clear nor durable, understandably since rational voters need not to be much concerned with its policies because the party's influence on serious national or international affairs is certainly limited. The occurrence of a superpower crisis or a war involving Great Britain, for example, also tends to have a negative effect on the third party popularity (Clarke and Zuk, 1989). Consequently, Figure 4.2 shows that the third party's lack of efficacy under plurality rule undermines its credibility in policy-making process.

#### *A Centrist party:*

One of the most general perceptions of the Liberal Democrats that they are a centrist party. Heath *et al.* said,

it seems fair to regard the Alliance voter as lying at the centre of the main ideological continuum that differentiates both the classes and the Conservative and Labour parties. So on these class values, the conventional view that the Alliance is a centrist formation is broadly correct (Heath *et al.*, 1985:114) .

Figure 4.3 confirms the idea that the public see the Liberal Democrats as being 'in the middle' between the Tories and Labour on virtually all economic and social issues (Dunleavy, 1993: 149).

The figures below suggest three characteristics. Firstly, voters consistently put the Liberal Democrats (or Alliance) on the almost exact middle point 5 on scales running from 1 to 9. In addition, the perceived position of the Liberal Democrats has varied little over the three elections. By contrast, voters' own perceived positions and the other two major parties' positions have changed. In voters' perceptions, the Liberal Democrats almost always stay put in the middle as a centrist party.

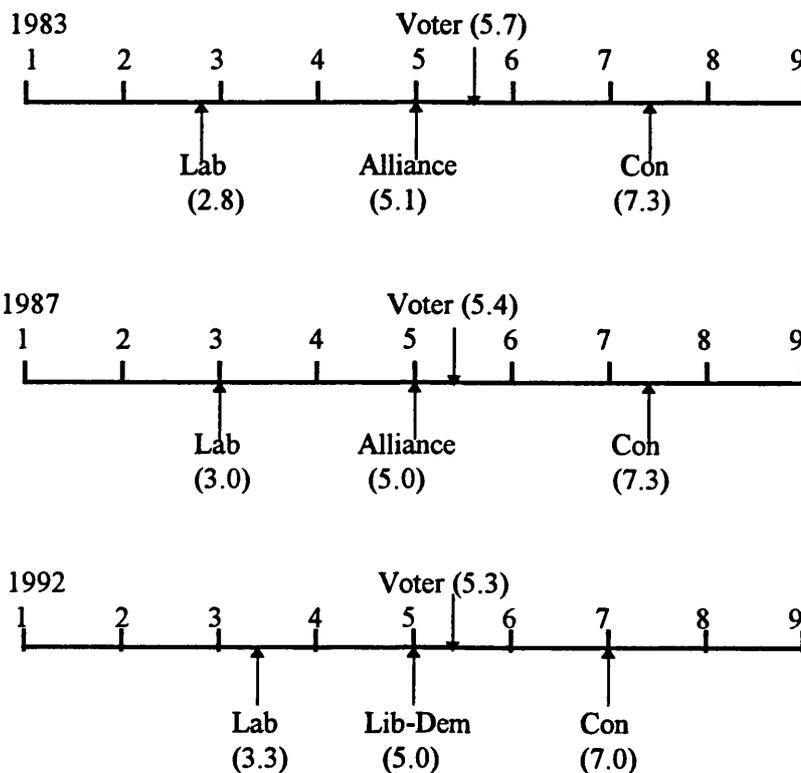
Secondly, Figure 4.3 shows that the mean of voters perceptions of their own position was slightly on the right-side in 1983, and has gradually shifted more to the centre (5.7 in the 1983 election, 5.4 in the 1987 election and 5.3 in the 1992 election). And as a result, the distance between the mean for all voters and the Liberal Democrats have also reduced. However, the position of the Liberal Democrats (or Alliance) has consistently been slightly on the left-side of the mean voters' position, in spite of its perceived centrism.

Thirdly, the Liberal Democrats are also placed almost exactly in the middle of the major parties. The distance between Labour and the Alliance was 2.3 and between the Conservative and the Alliance was 2.2 in 1983. Voters perceived the centrist party as being effectively the same distance away from the Conservatives and Labour. In 1987, however, the distance between the Labour and Alliance was 2.0 while the distance between the Conservatives and the Alliance was 2.3. In 1992 both major parties moved towards the centre. The distance between Labour and the Alliance reduced to 1.7, and the distance between the Conservatives and the Alliance reduced to 2.0.

By analysing electoral programmes Budge suggests that in objective terms the Liberals (including the Alliance and the Liberal Democrats) have taken a closer position to Labour on key issue than to the Conservative since the late 1970s (see Budge, 1994: 459, Figure 1a). Yet Figure 4.3 shows that voters

tend to perceive the Liberal Democrats as staying in-the-middle along the ideological spectrum, irrespective of their electoral programmes. However, it might just be possible to argue that voters see the third party as slightly left-leaning because most respondents consistently perceived the Liberal Democrats (or Alliance) as located to the left of their own position.

Figure 4.3. Voters' perception of party position on Left-Right Scale  
(mean position)



1 - far left; 2 - substantially left; 3 - moderately left; 4 - slightly left;  
5 - middle of the road;  
6 - slightly right; 7 - moderately right; 8 - substantially right; 9 - far right.

Source: calculated from Gallup Political (& Economic) Index, June 1983, July 1987, and April 1992.

The figures are averages of two surveys closest to the election.

The figures of the Alliance is an average of the Liberal and SDP in 1983 and in 1987.

*A Moderate party:*

In contrast with its vague and middle-of-the-road image, Liberal leaders have repeatedly tried to build up an image of themselves as a 'radical' reform party. The word 'radical' may mean that the centrist party wishes to consolidate its own distinctive principles. However, the leaders' wish does not seem to have been achieved. As Stevenson put it:

Ever since Jo Grimond set out to give the Party a distinctive place in the political spectrum as a non-socialist *radical* party, it has remained the preferred position to which successive third-party leaders have returned ... If Tony Benn was a radical and Keith Joseph was a radical, where exactly did the Liberal Party stand when it used the term to describe itself? (1993: 136-7. Italics added)

According to the directional model of party competition, the centre is not a place of attraction (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989; see also the (anecdotal) examples of the Liberal Democrat positions on the NHS and nuclear weapon issues in Dunleavy, 1993: 149-152).

In fact the Liberal image has always been as a 'moderate' party, a view closely linked to voters' perception that the Liberal Democrats are in the middle. Table 4.4 clearly shows that the Liberal image is quite different from those of the other parties. Only 5 per cent of those surveyed in 1987 and 1992 thought that the Liberal party was extreme, and more than 60 per cent of the respondents said that it was moderate. Even though the image of the two major parties also became quite moderate in 1992, the majority identifying the Liberal Democrats as moderate rather than extreme remained two thirds of respondents, while for the major parties the same figure was less than a third. Thus for most people in Britain a centrist party could not help but be a moderate one, and not a radical one.

Table 4.4. Party images as 'extreme' or 'moderate'

(%)

Year	1983			1987			1992		
	Con	Lab	Alli	Con	Lab	Alli	Con	Lab	Lib-Dem
Extreme (A)	49	49	6	47	49	4	31	29	7
Moderate (B)	40	37	74	40	37	69	60	61	74
Neither, Both	6	8	6	6	7	9	4	4	6
Don't know*	6	6	14	7	7	18	6	6	13
A - B	9	12	-68	7	12	-65	-29	-32	-67

Source: computed from BES 1983, 1987, 1992 Cross-section surveys.

\* includes 'not answered'.

The Liberal Democrat image of a moderate, centrist party is also supported in Table 4.5 where many voters have a strong image of both the Conservatives and Labour as 'good for only one class'. In spite of the two major parties' more moderate image in 1992 (Table 4.4), the difference between those perceiving them as 'good for only one class' and 'good for all classes' changed little over the three elections.

In contrast, people tended to see the Liberal Democrats as 'good for all classes'. Approximately 60 per cent of the respondents in 1987 and 1992 (and 45 per cent in 1983) saw party in this light. This image of Liberal Democrats is surely associated with the fact that the party has not established a 'core' social identity based on a distinctive social background. While fewer than one in twenty respondents found it hard to respond to this question in relation to either major party, for the Liberal Democrats the percentage of 'don't know' responses rises to over one in five. The image of being 'good-for-all-classes' implies that the Liberal Democrats are neither close to nor far away from most voters. Even though the centrist third party is not a first preference, it cannot be the least preference. For those who seek 'a place of temporary refuge from their normal Conservative or Labour home' (Curtice, 1983: 104), the image of a party which is good for all classes helps to lower these voters' psychological barriers. In fact, the Conservative party, facing the Liberal Democrats' strong

challenge, attempted to tarnish the Liberal Democrat image as ‘the nice guys of British politics’ before the 1994 local and European elections (The Times, 4 January 1994).

Table 4.5. Party image as ‘good-for-class’

Year	1983			1987			1992		
	Con	Lab	Alli	Con	Lab	Alli	Con	Lab	Lib-Dem
Good for one class (A)	58	54	8	59	56	10	57	52	10
Good for all classes (B)	35	34	64	36	31	56	36	37	65
Neither. Both	4	8	8	3	9	11	4	7	7
Don't know*	3	4	20	3	5	23	3	5	18
A - B	23	20	-58	23	25	-46	21	25	-55

Source: computed from BES 1983, 1987, 1992 Cross-section surveys.

\* includes ‘not answered’.

The ‘nice guy image’ of the Liberal Democrats can make the party ‘everyone else’ second preference’ (Curtice, 1983: 115). Table 4.6 apparently demonstrates that the Liberal Democrats are the second choice among most Conservative and Labour voters. Only a handful of the Conservative voters thought Labour to be an alternative, and vice versa. By contrast, around 70 per cent of the Conservative voters named the centrist party as an alternative; and more than 50 per cent of Labour voters considered the Liberals as their second choice.

It is also noteworthy that the Liberal Democratic party seems more popular among the Conservative voters. In all three election surveys of Figure 4.6, a greater number of Conservative voters chose the centrist third party as an alternative. Particularly in the 1983, the difference between the Conservative and Labour voters among those who selected the Liberal Democrats as a second choice amounted to 17 per cent - perhaps reflecting the fact that Labour’s vote was so low that it included more ‘bedrock’ supporters, who will only ever vote

for it. And among Liberal Democrat voters, a greater number selected the Conservative as their second choice than Labour. In 1987, the gap was as large as 18 per cent.

Table 4.6. Party of Second Choice

	(%)								
	<i>Voted for</i>								
	Conservative			Labour			Liberal Democrats*		
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> choice</i>	1983	1987	1992	1983	1987	1992	1983	1987	1992
Con				13	17	12	42	50	40
Lab	5	8	7				35	32	35
Lib-Dem <sup>1</sup>	76	70	64	59	59	49			
Others <sup>2</sup>	1	2	8	6	8	20	3	4	9
Don't know <sup>3</sup>	18	20	21	21	16	18	18	14	16
<i>N</i>	<i>1447</i>	<i>1414</i>	<i>1255</i>	<i>920</i>	<i>994</i>	<i>1047</i>	<i>794</i>	<i>751</i>	<i>476</i>

Source: computed from BES 1983, 1987, 1992 cross-section surveys.

1 - includes the Alliance.

2 - includes the SNP, Plaid Cymru, Green Party and others.

3 - includes 'Not Answered'.

See also Dunleavy, Margetts and Weir (1992: 4).

We noted above that shifts of party support were much more likely to occur via the centrist third party, rather than directly between the Conservatives and Labour. Conservative voters especially seem far more ready in this period to accept the Liberal Democrats as an alternative than Labour voters. This asymmetry is intriguing because the Liberal image, as seen above, is generally moderate, in-the-middle and good-for-all-classes.

### 4.3. SOCIAL BASE, ISSUE POSITIONS AND LIBERAL SUPPORT

As a third party, the Liberal Democrats are certainly less effective in terms of party policy because they have so little likelihood of their policies being implemented. The vague perception of the party's position is related to the

ineffectiveness of the Liberal voting. But did the issue positions of the Liberal Democrats not matter at all in differentiating them from the other parties? This section analyses the social bases of Liberal Democrat support and the effect of issues on it.

### The Conservative voters and Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats tend to draw their support more or less evenly across all the social sectors. However, as Table 4.6 suggests, the centrist party appears to appeal more to Conservative voters. Traditionally, the Liberal has played a role to absorb dissatisfied voters against an unpopular Conservative government (Stevens, 1993: 118).

Table 4.7 also confirms the pattern that people in preponderantly Conservative-aligned social strata are more likely to consider the centrist party as an alternative. More support for the Liberal Democrats came from the 'upper' or 'professional and managerial classes' classes than from the manual working class. In recent three elections. The difference in Liberal support between the 'professional and managerial classes' and the 'manual working classes' amounted to 10 per cent in the 1992 election.

Table 4.7. Votes by social classes (%)

Year	1983			1987			1992		
Party	Con	Lab	Alli- ance	Con	Lab	Alli- ance	Con	Lab	Lib- Dem
Professional & Managerial (A)	56	13	30	53	17	28	55	19	23
Intermediate & routine non-manual (B)	53	19	26	54	21	23	56	26	16
Manual working	35	43	21	34	44	21	34	50	13
A - B	21	-30	9	19	-27	7	21	-31	10

Source: Crewe *et. al.* (1995: 19).

Table 4.8 shows correlation coefficients about monthly opinion poll figures for voting intention and disapproval of the Conservative government during the period between January 1981 and March 1992. It is not surprising that voting intentions for Conservative are inversely related to the disapproval rate of government performance (- 0.86). Interestingly, however, the government disapproval rate is positively associated with support for the Liberal Democrats (0.21) and with 'don't know' responses (0.51), not with Labour. Likewise, the voting intention for the Conservative has an inverse association with Liberal Democrat (- 0.38) and with 'don't know' responses (-0.60). That is, dissatisfied voters, especially Conservative voters, seem either to envisage reserving their support or to consider the Liberal Democrats to be a viable alternative. Table 4.8 suggests that disapproval of the Conservative government did not necessarily lead to support for Labour. Rather, the Liberal Democrat tended to attract more support with rising disapproval of the Conservative government.

Table 4.8. Voting intention and government disapproval (correlation estimates)

	Con	Lab	Lib-Dem*	Don't know
Government Disapproval	- 0.86 <sup>a</sup>	- 0.04	0.21 <sup>b</sup>	0.51 <sup>a</sup>
Con		0.04	- 0.38 <sup>a</sup>	- 0.60 <sup>a</sup>
Lab			-0.14	- 0.15 <sup>c</sup>
Lib-Dem				0.11

Source: computed from Gallup Political (& Economic) Index, from January 1981 to March 1992.

\* includes the Liberal, SDP, and Alliance.

a:  $p < 0.01$ , b:  $p < 0.05$ , c:  $p < 0.10$

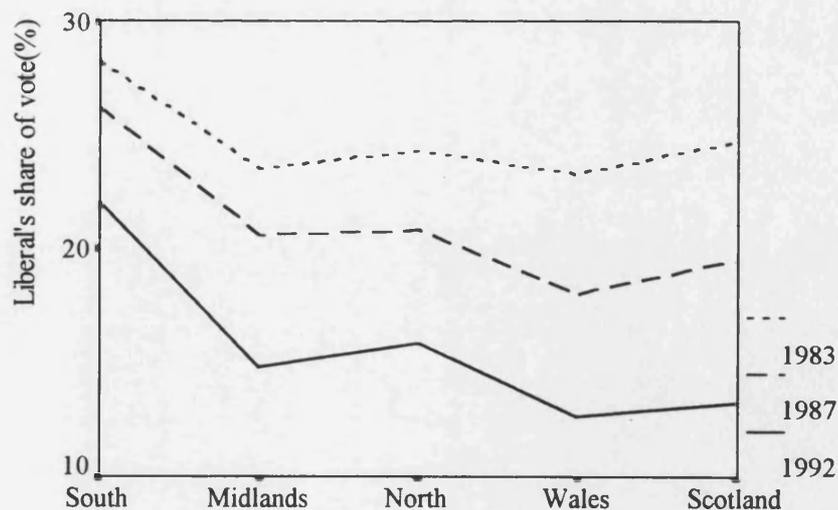
However, this finding seems paradoxical because the Liberal Democrats seek

to replace the Labour Party as the principal party of opposition and the kind of voters the party has attracted.....It has been notable that at no time have Liberal, Alliance or Liberal Democrat leaders ever espoused publicly the aim, not of replacing Labour, but of replacing the Conservatives (Stevenson, 1993:138).

These social characteristics can be more easily traced in the regional context. As a result of the development of geographical polarisation in British politics, the number of marginal seats has fallen, and the number of one-party dominant regions have increased. According to Curtice and Steed, all regions (except Wales)

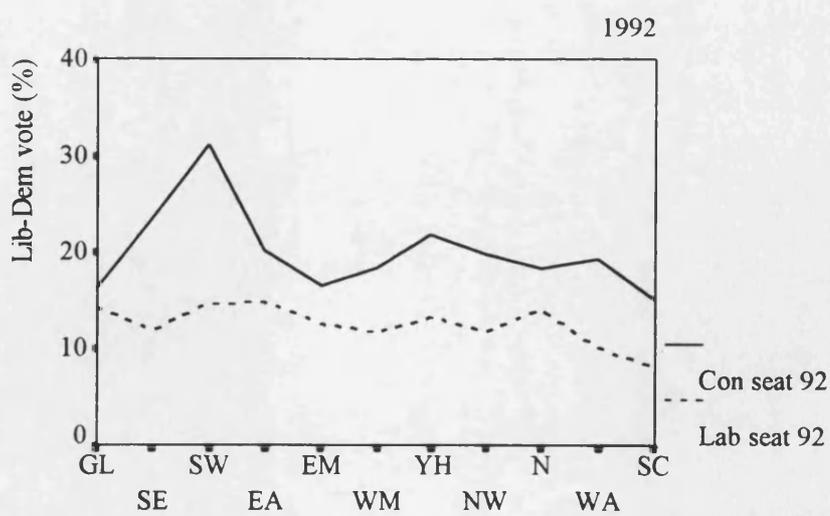
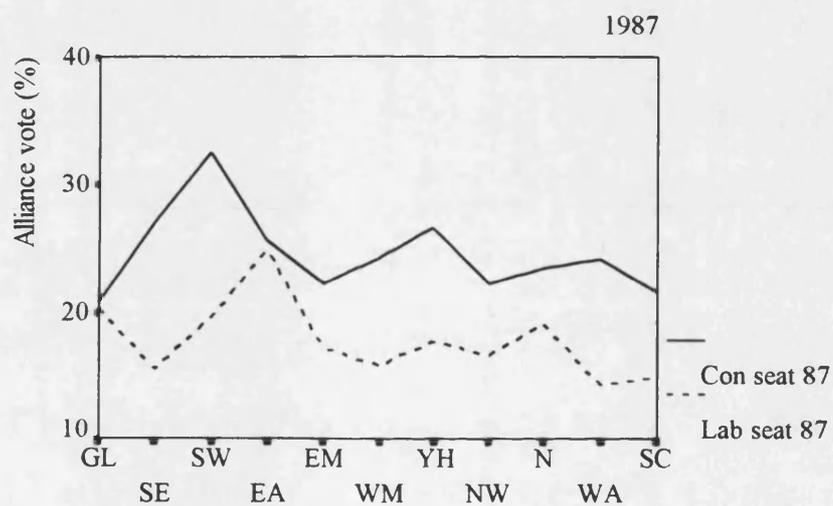
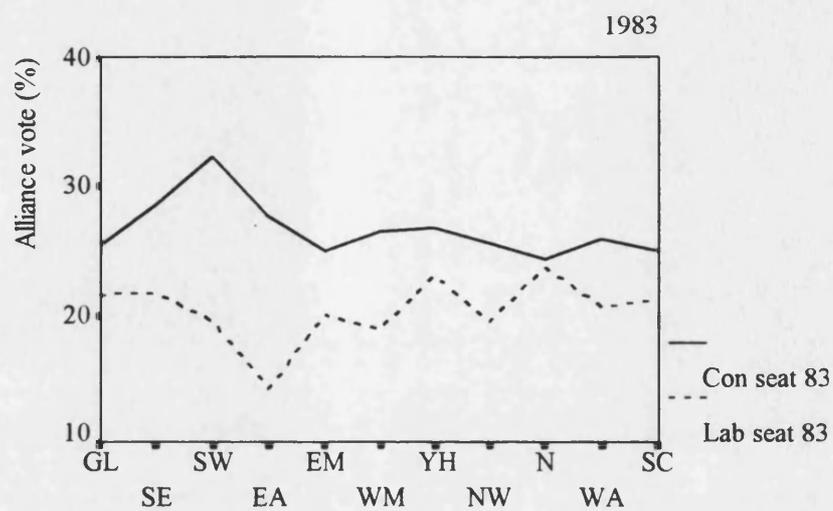
have moved fairly consistently towards either Labour or the Conservatives since 1955....At one extreme, Scottish cities have experienced a total deviation of some 27.5 percentage points towards Labour, while rural constituencies in Southern and Midland England have moved altogether some 15 percentage points towards the Conservatives (1986: 212-3).

Figure 4.4. Regional pattern of Liberal support



Source: computed from Dorling (1993) *British General Election Results 1955-1992*.

Figure 4.5. The Liberal Democrats' share of the votes by region and seat



Source: computed from Dorling (1993) *British General Election Results 1955-1992*.

GL-Greater London; SE-South East; SW-South West; EA-East Anglia; EM-East Midlands; WM-West Midlands; YH-Yorkshire & Humberside; NW- North West; N-North; WA-Wales; SC-Scotland

Yet even though Liberal Democrat support is geographically more evenly distributed than that for the major parties, there is some distinctive regional patterning of support. Figure 4.4 reveals that the Liberal Democrats gained more support in southern England - the south east, south west and East Anglia than in the northern parts of Britain. In spite of the decline in third party votes since 1983, the pattern of regional support has been preserved almost intact over the three elections. Given that southern England is a heartland of Conservative support, it is clear that Liberal Democrat support geographically overlaps most with Conservative voting.

More significantly, the Liberals tend to win more votes in Conservative seats than in the Labour seats up and down the country (Figure 4.5). In regions where the Conservatives have strongly established their support such as the south east and south west, the gap in the third party vote share in Conservative seats and in Labour seats became wider. By contrast, wherever Labour is regionally strong, the centrist party does not seem to be such a viable alternative. However, this pattern apparently contradicts the general image of the Liberal Democrats as a party in-the-middle and good-for-all-classes. What made the Liberal Democrats more attractive among Conservative voters than among Labour supporters?

### **Issue positions and Liberal support**

Despite the general perception of Liberal Democratic policies as vague, there are some 'traditional' Liberal issues. As Stevenson said:

Often split down the middle on particular questions, the (Liberal) Party could still attempt to push particular 'Liberal' issues, such as constitutional reform in the shape of reform of the Lords and electoral reform, regional issues and internationalism. There was also a growing pressure group within the Party for the cause of civil liberties (Stevenson, 1993: 33)

However, the problem is that voters' awareness of such 'Liberal issues' does not often square with voters' of these issues. For example, in spite of the Liberal's salient position on the European issue, Liberal Democrat voters did not pay special attention to the issue (Table 4.9) compared with those backing the major parties. Only 41 per cent of Liberal voters surveyed said that the influence of the EC issue was important on their voting choice whereas 56 per cent thought Europe was not an important issue. By contrast, more number of Conservative voters (52 per cent) answered that the issue was important.

Table 4.9. The influence of the Europe issue on Liberal voting, 1992 election

<i>Europe seen as:</i> (%)	Conservative	Labour	Lib-Dem
important <sup>1</sup>	52	40	41
not very important	34	40	45
not at all important	8	11	11
don't know <sup>2</sup>	5	9	3

Source : computed from BES92.

1 - includes 'extremely important'

2- includes 'not answered'.

Table 4.10 shows voters' evaluation of party policy on various issues. Inflation, defence, industrial dispute, law and order, and Europe are all the Conservatives' key issues; Labour dominates welfare issues such as the NHS, homeless, transport and pensions. By contrast, the Liberal Democrats were not seen as the most preferred party on any single issue. Himmelweit *et al.* also found that Liberal voters did not consider their party to be best at handling the

major problems like inflation, taxation, unemployment, industrial relations or law and order (1985: 164). However, the Liberals received a relatively good evaluation on such issues as education, environment and the NHS.

Table 4.10. Evaluation of Parties by Issues

Year party issue	1983			1987			1992		
	Con	Lab	Alli- ance	Con	Lab	Alli- ance	Con	Lab	Lib- Dem
inflation & price	56	20	10	53	24	10	44	29	9
unemployment	32	35	15	31	41	14	25	47	10
national defence	55	19	13	53	22	13	52	21	8
industrial dispute	48	27	10	49	28	10	47	30	8
NHS	30	41	13	26	44	16	25	50	11
education & school	37	33	13	33	38	17	27	40	19
law & order	50	20	10	43	27	12	41	27	9
homeless <sup>1</sup>							19	48	11
*environment <sup>1</sup>							22	22	19
Europe <sup>2</sup>	48	23	12	40	22	9	47	24	12
public transport <sup>1</sup>							24	45	10
taxation <sup>1</sup>							42	31	11
pensions <sup>1</sup>							29	46	8
women <sup>1</sup>							24	35	11

Source: Gallup Political (& Economic) index, June 1983, June 1987, April 1992.

The question in all surveys except in the 1992 post election survey was "Which party do you think has the best policy to deal with?"

The question in the 1992 post election survey was "I am going to read out a list of problems facing the country. could you tell me for each of them which party you personally think would handle the problem best?"

Each figure in the table except in the 1992 survey is an average of the four consecutive week polls conducted just before each election.

1 - were not asked in 1983 and in 1987.

2 - was asked about 'Common market' in 1983 and 1987.

\* The share of the Greens was 20.3 in the 1992 election survey.

Three characteristics of the issue evaluation for the Liberal Democrats are noteworthy. First, the Liberal Democrats tend to appeal on 'everyday' or 'family' issues like social services, education, and health, rather than 'grand national issues' like management of the economy or defence. In a study of the

1987 election, Miller *et al.* also discovered that the Alliance was relatively salient only in such issues as health, social services and education (1990: 280). Issues such as education, environment and the NHS are ‘tangible’ issues that the public would encounter in daily life, and where Liberal Democrat councillors may also have established some credibility or recognition of the party’s position.

Table 4.11. Most important issues by party support (1987) (%)

<i>Issue</i>	Conservatives	Labour	Alliance
prices	24	25	24
unemployment	36	57	33
taxes	33	23	21
defence	47	29	31
health/social services	32	35	35
crime	23	11	23
education	37	32	43

Source: computed from BES 1987 cross-section survey.

The data above was extracted from the question ‘...which three were the most important issues facing you and your family? ....start with the most important, and then the second, and then the third’. This table only includes the percentages of those citing the issue as in the most important three issues.

Similar results can be also found in Table 4.11. Labour voters in 1987, understandably, were intensely worried about unemployment, followed by health and social services and then education. Among Conservative voters defence was easily the most salient issue, followed by unemployment, education and taxes. By contrast, Alliance voters were more concerned about education, then health/social services, and with unemployment ranking third.

Issues such as education, health, and social services are ones on which local authorities can have some impact, even though these are controlled nationally. The Liberal Democrats can wield some influence on policy processes locally, and partly offset its lack of efficacy at the national level. Therefore, the relatively high evaluation of the Liberal Democrats on such issues seems related

to its growing support in local politics. As Johnston and Pattie discovered in an analysis of the 1992 general election:

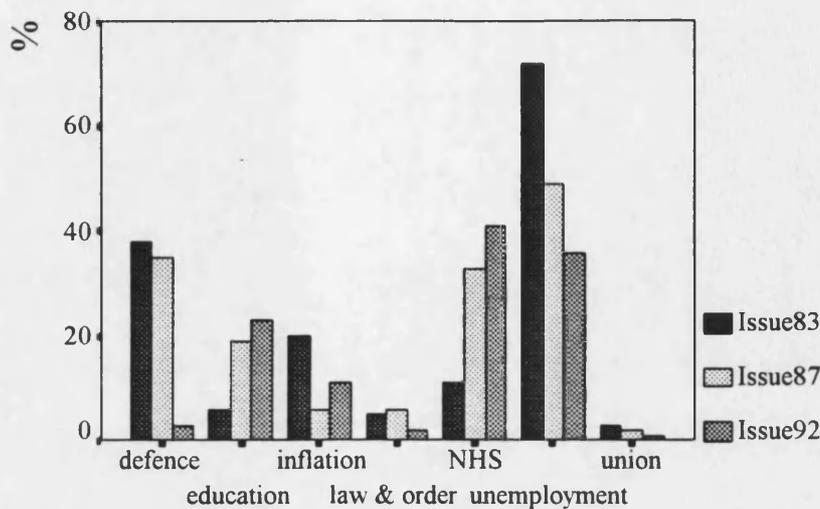
each of the three (parties) performed better in the constituencies where it also controlled the local government(s): both Conservative and Labour parties performed particularly badly in constituencies where the Liberal Democrats were in control locally (1993: 202).

Among the 'tangible' issues, education is the most striking one. The proportion of the public saying that the Liberal Democrats had the best education policy consistently increased from 13 per cent in 1983, to 17 per cent in 1987, and to 19 per cent in 1992 (Table 4.10). The Liberal Democrats also have tried to highlight the issue. For example:

Mr. Ashdown renewed his appeal to voters to treat Thursday's (local) elections in England and Wales *as a referendum on the Government's treatment of education*. The Liberal Democrats were the only party to say education was the number one priority (The Guardian, 29 April 1995. Emphasis added).

Secondly, the Liberal's issue ratings in Table 4.10 seem easily affected by dominant election issues, particularly 'grand national issues' such as unemployment or defence (Figure 4.6). The relatively high evaluation of Liberal (Democrat) on such issues may be more related to growth of public interest and the media coverage, rather than its policy position itself. The more hotly an issue is debated during a campaign period, the more likely it is that the third party has opportunities to address its policy to the public. For example, Labour's unpopular policy of unilateralism provoked debates both in the 1983 and 1987 elections. The Alliance kept a relatively high rating on the defence issue, but, as a matter of fact, facing the 1987 election the Alliance did not take a united position on defence position. At their 1986 conference it suffered a 'damaging split on defence policy between the Liberals and the SDP' (Miller *et al.*, 1990: 106).

Figure 4.6. Salience of issues (selective)



Source: computed from Gallup Political (& Economic) Index, BBC Election Survey (June 1983, July 1987); Post-election Survey (April 1992).

The question was 'Think of all the urgent problems facing the country at the present time. When you decided which way to vote which TWO issues did you personally consider most important?'

Such issue ratings can easily disappear as the salience of the issues diminishes and the media assign less time to it, in which case public recognition of Liberal Democrat policies can soon disappear, too. As seen in Table 4.10, the Liberal's rating on unemployment was apparently the party's most salient in 1983 (15 percent), but its percentage declined to 10 percent in 1992, along with the general decrease in the public concern (from 72 to 36 per cent of all respondents) (Figure 4.6). This is also the case with the national defence.

Thirdly, in terms of issue evaluation, the Liberal Democrats are inversely related to the Conservative, except on the national defence in 1983 and 1987 (Table 4.10). The Liberals were ranked low where the Conservatives were rated high on such issues as inflation, industrial dispute, law and order, and Europe. The Liberals were rated comparatively high where the Conservatives were assessed low (that is, where Labour was rated high). Miller *et al.* also found out that the pattern of Alliance ratings on issues was most similar to

Labour (Miller *et al*, 1990: 280, 281, Table 8.6). Thus the Liberal Democrats gain more support socially and regionally where the Conservatives are strong, but do better on 'Labour' issues than on 'Tory' ones.

Table 4.12. Effect of evaluation of issues on party choice (logit model)

Effect	1987	1992
<i>vote by crime</i>		
Con	0.35 <sup>1</sup>	0.03
Lab	-0.14 <sup>1</sup>	0.07
Alliance	-0.21 <sup>1</sup>	-0.10
<i>vote by education</i>		
Con	-0.06 <sup>1</sup>	-0.20
Lab	-0.04	0.14 <sup>1</sup>
Alliance	0.10 <sup>1</sup>	0.06 <sup>1</sup>
<i>vote by unemployment</i>		
Con	-0.29 <sup>1</sup>	-0.07
Lab	0.20 <sup>1</sup>	0.07
Alliance	0.08 <sup>1</sup>	-0.01
<i>vote by living standards</i>		
Con		-0.36 <sup>1</sup>
Lab		0.24 <sup>1</sup>
Alliance		0.12 <sup>1</sup>
<i>vote by NHS*</i>		
Con	-0.46 <sup>1</sup>	-0.57 <sup>1</sup>
Lab	0.36 <sup>1</sup>	0.44 <sup>1</sup>
Alliance	0.10 <sup>1</sup>	0.12 <sup>1</sup>
<i>vote by prices</i>		
Con	0.23 <sup>1</sup>	0.35
Lab	-0.11 <sup>1</sup>	-0.01 <sup>1</sup>
Alliance	-0.13 <sup>1</sup>	-0.34 <sup>1</sup>
Likelihood Ratio Chi-square		
	165.40	131.54
Concentration		
	0.09	0.21

Source: computed from BES 87, 92.

The question was 'Since the last general election.... , would you say that prices have increased or fallen?' The answers included 5 ordinal categories. Here they collapsed into two - increase or fall. The questions were not asked in the 1983 survey.

The figures in the table are additive estimates ( $\tau$ ).

1 : z-score > 1.96

\* asked about 'social service' in the 1987 surveys.

This relationship between issues and Liberal (Democrat) voting is also found in a logit model seen in Table 4.12. The estimates show the effects of a critical assessment of each issue on party choice. The positive sign indicates a positive effect on voting for a party, and the negative sign means a negative effect. Those who were concerned about crime and prices tended to vote Conservative. Those with critical assessments on unemployment, living standards and the NHS were likely to choose Labour. Negative evaluations of crime and prices - Conservative issues - had inverse effects on Liberal voting. By contrast, those who were dissatisfied with the quality of education, the NHS and living standards were more likely to vote Liberal Democrat. This is the same pattern of issue salience as in Table 4.10 and 11. Clearly the Liberal Democrats appealed more to those worried about 'Labour issues' than to those focusing on 'Conservative issues.'

Even though the Liberal Democrats tend to win more support from former Conservative voters, the centrist party cannot appeal to middle-class voters by preaching Tory attitudes on issues where the Conservative party is perceived as the champion. However, (dissatisfied) Conservative voters can be impressed when the Liberals adopt moderate left policy positions on 'Labour issues', which are usually the Conservative's weakness. Thus, the Liberal's issue appeal seems more effective when dissatisfaction arises directly from the Conservative's mishandling of education, environment or social services, all issues where the Liberal Democrats can do something at least at local level, and can raise their credibility.

In addition, a governing party is likely to be vulnerable to criticism from opposition over time, which can be effective. The long-standing Conservative government since 1979 partly helped to raise the Liberal Democrat's electoral fortune by producing a steady stream of dissatisfied Conservative voters. For Labour supporters the Liberal's salient issues do not look impressive, since Labour is a more effective vehicle. Liberal Democrat cannot afford to play a

similar 'supplementary' role to Labour because 'Conservative issues' like inflation, defence, law and order are national issues beyond the third party's capabilities. Thus, the Liberal Democrats may be a less attractive alternative among Labour supporters even when they are not satisfied with Labour's performance.

#### **4.4. THE IMAGE OF THE PARTY LEADER**

Although traditionally in a parliamentary system campaigns are party-centred rather than simply leadership-focused, a study of leadership effects on the 1992 election showed that John Major was a considerable asset to his party compared to both his Conservative predecessor and his Labour counterpart (Crewe and King, 1994: 133). Even in the 1983 and 1987 elections, the leadership factor had some important effects on voters' choices (see Graetz and McAllister, 1987; Stewart and Clarke, 1992; Bean and Mughan, 1989). Graetz and McAllister (1987: 485) pointed out that three major reasons for the increasing role of leadership effects in British politics: weakened partisan commitment, reduced party abilities to mobilise mass support through traditional door-to-door canvassing, and the exploitation of modern mass communication. As a result:

Party strategists, recognizing that party leaders are dominant figures on the political stage and receive enormous coverage in the mass media, make the leaders focal points of their electioneering efforts, and thereby reinforce their salience in the public mind (Stewart and Clarke, 1992: 468).

In a sense, it is not surprising that voters pay attention to who will be 'a leading figure' in the executive. By contrast, third party leaders tend to draw less attention because of their low likelihood of becoming 'a leading figure'.

However, the impact of leadership of a third party can still be considerable in other ways, because the leader may well be the only personality within the

party to keep drawing regular attention from the media. His (or her) personal performance and evaluation often play a significant role in building up the favourable or unfavourable image of the party. Crewe and King explain the impact of party leadership on voting as a three-way relation.

Party leadership can influence the electoral fortune of his party in either or both of two distinctive ways. First, he can influence the party he leads - its ideology, its policies, its image - in such a way that the party as a whole, including himself as leader, is made more or less attractive to voters; that is, he can influence voters indirectly via his influence within his party. Second, he can influence voters directly via the effects that his own personality, characteristics and style have upon them, irrespective of the image of his party as a whole. It goes without saying that personality images and party images are bound to affect each other; and the leaders' so-called direct effects are largely mediated in practice by television and the press (Crewe and King, 1994: 126-7).

They argue that leadership effects on voting are rather indirect in Britain.

However, third party leaders seem more likely to have a direct influence on voters' choice because his/her party is relatively weaker and its stances less well known. More often than not, third party leaders may attract high opinion poll evaluations which are then undermined by the lower assessment of his/her party. Table 4.13 shows the difference between party leader's personal popularity (Table 4.13a) and the overall evaluations of their leadership, taking into account their party (Table 4.13b).

Thatcher gained some additional points when voters bore her party in mind; Major relied more upon his personal rating. Kinnock enjoyed a higher personal evaluation in 1987 than when his party was taken into account. However, the relationship switched over in 1992. There is a yawning difference between the personal popularity of third party leaders and their overall ratings. Personal approval ratings for third party leaders were usually more favourable than the

public's overall estimation of them, especially for Steel (in 1983) and Ashdown (in 1992).

Table 4.13. Evaluation of Party leaders

a) when considering leadership only

leader	leadership only*		
	1983	1987	1992
Thatcher	46	42	
Major			47
Foot	13		
Kinnock		31	21
Steel	35	10	
Jenkins	6		
Owen		17	
Ashdown			22
Don't know	7	7	9

Source: Gallup Political (& Economic) Index (June 1983 ; July 1987 ; April 1992).

\* was asked " Leaving aside your general party preference, who would make the best prime minister ..... (party leaders)? ".

b) when taking everything into account

party	taking everything into account**		
	1983 <sup>1</sup>	1987 <sup>1</sup>	1992
Conservatives	51	53	39
Labour	17	20	37
Liberal	10		
SDP	5		
Alliance	4	15	
Lib-Dem			12
others	0	0	2
don't know	14	9	10

Source: Gallup Political (& Economic) Index (June 1983 ; July 1987 ; April 1992).

\*\* was asked "Taking everything into account, which party has the best leader?"

1: the average of two consecutive surveys. Decimals rounded.

To take a slightly closer look at the effects of party leaders on party popularity, a simple regression (OLS) analysis was conducted on Gallup

opinion poll data for the period 1981-92 (Table 4.14). As expected, the popularity of major party leaders made a significant impact on voting intention. The regression coefficient of Thatcher is as high as 0.72, and the coefficient for Foot is 0.53. By contrast, a third party leader's influence on voting intention is not so great. In spite of the high personal popularity of Steel and Ashdown (as seen in Table 4.13), the corresponding coefficients are only 0.11 and 0.18 respectively. David Owen had the highest coefficient among the third party leaders.

Table 4.14. The effect of party leaders on voting intentions, 1981-92  
(regression estimates)

		intercept	<i>b</i>	t-ratio	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Con</b>	Thatcher	4.31	0.72	21.09	0.79
	Major	18.80	0.30	1.60	0.15
<b>Lab</b>	Foot	15.75	0.53	4.78	0.42
	Kinnock	2.70	0.86	1.59	0.02
<b>Lib</b>	Steel	2.46	0.11	2.19	0.06
<b>SDP</b>	Jenkins	0.7	0.23	3.58	0.56
	Owen	-8.64	0.35	14.91	0.76
<b>Lib-Dem</b>	Ashdown	2.51	0.18	8.31	0.61

$$\text{VoteInt} = a + b * \text{ApvLeader}$$

*a*: intercept

VoteInt : voting intention for a party

ApvLeader : approval of party leader

Source: computed from Gallup Political (& Economic) Index (January 1981 - March 1992).

However, it is important to distinguish between evaluations of party leaders in the mid-term period and in election campaigns. Whereas voters tend to make a more serious assessment to a party as an election comes closer, they are more ready to express dissatisfaction straightforwardly in mid-term period, frequently reflected in by-election results.

Table 4.15. The effects of party leaders on voting intentions in near-election periods (regression results)

1983 (Jan.1982 - May 1983)		intercept	<i>b</i>	t-ratio	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Con	Thatcher	-3.80	0.87	15.03	0.94
Lab	Foot	15.54	0.52	2.26	0.25
Lib	Steel	16.00	- 0.13	- 0.89	0.05
SDP	Jenkins	- 0.61	0.25	3.58	0.59

1987 (Jan. 1986 - May 1987)		intercept	<i>b</i>	t-ratio	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Con	Thatcher	2.68	0.77	7.09	0.77
Lab	Kinnock	11.68	0.47	5.39	0.66
Lib	Steel	2.01	0.11	1.99	0.21
SDP	Owen	-17.19	0.51	2.99	0.37

1992 (Jan.1991 - March 1992)		intercept	<i>b</i>	t-ratio	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Con	Major	16.94	0.33	1.78	0.20
Lab	Kinnock	20.89	0.33	0.84	0.05
Lib-Dem	Ashdown	- 6.01	0.34	2.79	0.37

\* Source: computed from Gallup Political and Economic Index (January 1991-March 1992). The same regression equation as Table 4.15 was applied here.

Table 4.15 shows regression results for the 13 to 15 months immediately before general elections. Generally speaking, the effects of party leadership tend to increase in these near-election periods. Particularly, Thatcher's approval rate was strongly associated with voting intention for Conservative in 1983 and 1987, while the Labour leadership in this period had relatively less effects on voting intention. Among the Liberal leaders, Ashdown's role was quite impressive in 1992. He was the only leader with consistent results. As seen in Table 4.13, his personal popularity was fairly high, and as associated with Liberal Democrat voting as the other party leaders in the near-election period.

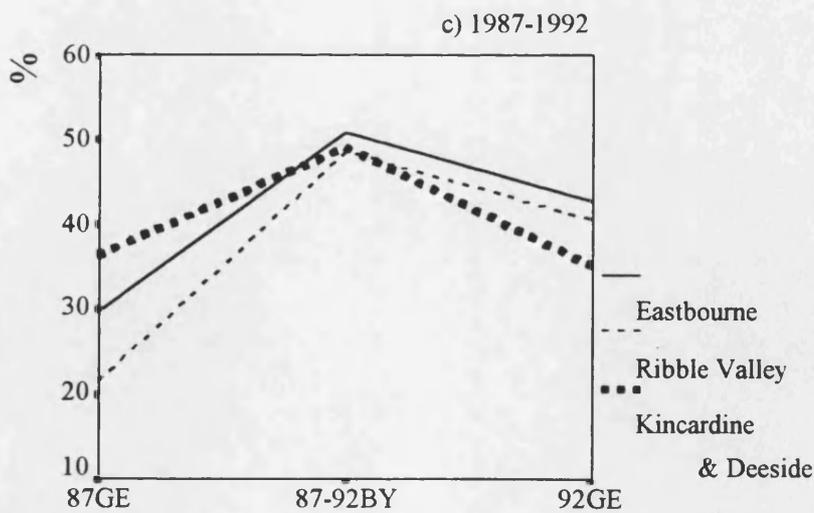
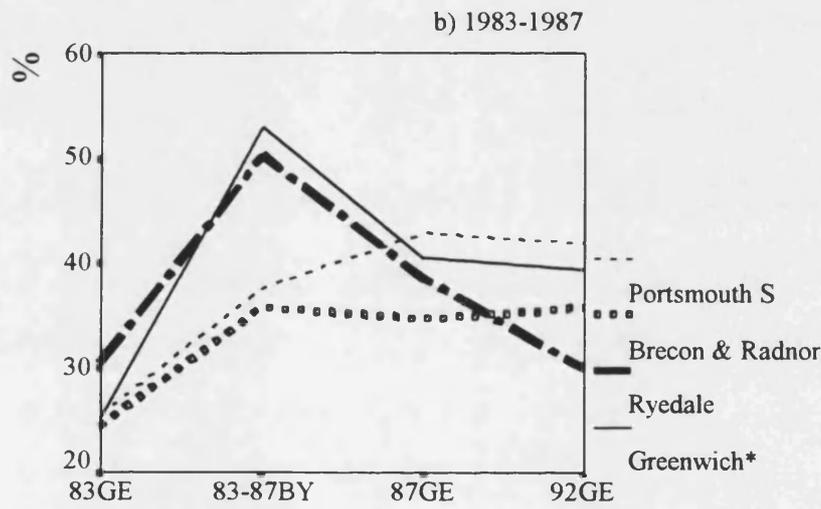
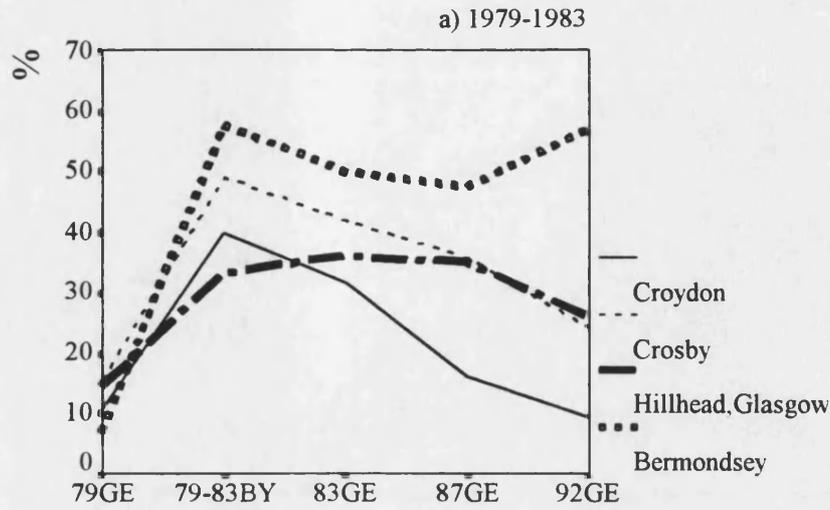
#### **4.5. BY-ELECTIONS AND LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SUPPORT**

The Liberal's lagging electoral fortunes often bounced back as a result of a sudden by-election victory, as at Orpington in 1962. The high popularity of the SDP when it was launched was partly attributed to a string of by-election victories. Between 1955 and 1979, the Liberals obtained 27 seats from by-elections, which is equivalent to a third of total number of parliamentary seats taken by the Liberal party during that period. From 1979 to 1992, the Liberal Democrats (including the Alliance) scored 11 by-election victories.

Figure 4.7 shows that almost every by-election victory of the Liberal Democrats (Alliance) was accompanied by sudden large rises in support. Especially, the victories under the 1979 conservative government effectively came from nowhere. Even though the Liberals had disappointing results in 1979 (about 10 per cent share of vote), the Alliance raised its share of votes by as much as 35 per cent on average in the next four by-elections, and the pattern of large increases was then an enduring one.

The increased share of the Liberal Democrats (Alliance) votes sometimes maintained increased support up to the first ensuing general election. However, Figure 4.7 shows that in most cases by-election victories do not seem to have established the long-term support. The Liberal Democrats have successfully defended only four seats out of eleven by-election victories since 1979 in the ensuing general elections (Bermondsey, Glasgow Hillhead, Greenwich, and Brecon and Radnor). By 1992 the Liberal Democrats managed to retain only one seat (Bermondsey) among seats won in by-elections since 1979. Norris and Feigert also found out that support mobilised for third parties in British by-elections proved largely ephemeral (Norris and Feigert, 1989).

Figure 4.7. Changes of Liberal support following by-election victories



Source: computed from Butler and Kavanagh (1980,1984,1988,1992)

\* The sitting SDP MP Rosie Barnes in Greenwich did not join the Liberal Democrats, remaining as Independent SDP candidate in the 1992 election. The Liberal Democrats did not put up a candidate. The figure of the 1992 election was the vote share of Barnes.

There are some similarities in the pattern of Liberal support in general elections and in by-elections. Firstly, the Liberal Democrats fared better in former Conservative seats. As seen in Table 4.16, the Liberal Democrats won nine victories out of eleven from the Conservatives, capturing three seats from the Conservative party in each Parliament period. By contrast, the Liberals gained only two seats out of 28 by-elections in former Labour seats between 1979 and 1992. Particularly during the 1987-92 period, the Liberal Democrats captured none of thirteen by-election seats previously held by Labour. In addition, whether they won or lost, the Liberal Democrats tend to garner more votes, in Conservative seats, running on average 10 per cent higher support in by-elections in former Conservative seats compared with former Labour seats (Table 4.17). The idea that the Liberal Democrats have been broadly seen as a more acceptable alternative among Conservative voters than among Labour voters is reinforced (see Figure 4.5).

Table 4.16. The number of Liberal (Alliance, Liberal Democrats)'s by-election victories, 79-92

Year	Liberal's seat(s)		
	gained from Con (no. in competition)	gained from Lab (no. in competition)	retained (no. in competition)
79 - 83	3 ( 7 )	1 ( 9 )	
83 - 87	3 ( 9 )	1 ( 6 )	1 ( 1 )
87 - 92	3 (10)	0 (13)	
Total	9 (26)	2 (28)	1 ( 1 )

Source: computed from Norris (1990) and Butler and Kavanagh (1980, 1984,.1988, 1992).

Table 4.17. The Liberal Democrat share of the vote in by-elections (79-92)

Seat in competition	Mean (%)	Std Dev	Cases
previously Conservative	32	13	26
previously Labour	22	15	28
previously Liberal Democrat*	60		1
All seats	27	16	55**

Source: computed from Norris (1990) and Butler and Kavanagh (1980, 1984, 1988, 1992).

\* The Liberal Democrats retained the seat in the by-election at Truro in March 1987.

\*\* There were all 56 by-elections from after the 1979 general election to before the 1992 general election. Liberal Democrat did not put up its candidate in the by-election at Glasgow Central in June 1980.

Secondly, the Liberal Democrats won more support in less marginal seats. Where the Liberal Democrats captured seats in by-elections, the size of a majority in the previous general election - the difference between the winner and the next runner-up - amounted to 22 per cent, as shown in Table 4.18. So the Liberal Democrats have tended to achieve rather unexpected by-election victories in quite safe (usually Conservative) seats with a more than 20 per cent margin of victory, whereas Labour victories have come in much less 'safe' seats.

Table 4.18. Majorities at the previous general elections in seats changing hands in by-elections, 1979-92

Changing seats	Mean (%)	Std Dev	Cases
to Conservative	(1)		1
to Labour	12	10	6
to Lib-Dem	22	14	11

Source: computed from Norris (1990) and Butler and Kavanagh (1980, 1984, 1988, 1992).

Thirdly, Liberal issue positions in by-elections had some similar effects on voters' choices as in general elections. Before the Fulham, Rydale, and West Derbyshire by-elections, in March 1986, the BBC surveyed the saliency of a

series of fourteen issues in the election, and approval of the government's performance on these issues (Norris, 1990: 155). As in general elections the most notable issues among the Alliance voters were unemployment, education and the NHS - on all of which Alliance voters showed high rates of disapproval of government performance. That is, the Alliance by-election voters too were interested in such 'Labour issues' even though many of them previously voted Conservative. Because of the immobility of major party choices, dissatisfaction on these 'Labour' issues was not enough to make them directly shift to Labour; instead they backed the Liberal Democrats (Alliance) by protest voting.

Liberal Democrat support in by-elections is thus dependent on basically the same reasons as in general elections. The centrist third party has attracted many dissatisfied Conservative supporters in fairly safe Conservative seats. The main difference is that voters are less reluctant to express dissatisfaction with the governing party in by-elections. As a result, the Liberal's by-election victories often resulted from abrupt increases in support. However, such support quickly gained in a by-election may be just as quickly lost (Norris, 1990: 225).

#### **4.6. TACTICAL VOTING AND THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

The impacts of tactical voting on third party are fairly complex, and are explored in Table 4.19 which looks at those 1992 BES respondents who said that they voted for a party which was not their most preferred choice in the general election. As expected, the Liberal Democrats lost many votes for tactical reasons. Over four fifths of the tactical voters for the Conservatives, and over half those for Labour, answered that they really preferred Liberal Democrats. (Labour's figure reflects the fact that they also absorbed tactical voters who really preferred other parties, particularly the SNP in Scotland).

Table 4.19. Tactical voting in the 1992 general election

	voted Conservative	voted Labour	voted Lib Dem
% who really preferred			
Conservative	-	14	29
Labour	7	-	64
Liberal Democrats	84	55	-
others	9	30	8
(N)	(55)	(69)	(80)

Source: computed from BES92

\* Respondents who gave 'don't know, not answered' are excluded from the N and the % figures.

People giving answers irrelevant to tactical voting (such as the same choice between the real choice of voting and the really preferred party) are also excluded.

However, Table 4.19 also demonstrates that the Liberal Democrats were a beneficiary of tactical voting. Many Labour identifiers especially voted for the third party, amounting to nearly two thirds of tactical voters for the Liberal Democrats. Given that Liberal Democrats were strong in the Conservative heartland, their viability attracted tactical choices among Labour identifiers where their first preference party has little chance of winning.

Table 4.20. The regional locations of tactical voters for the Liberal Democrats in the 1992 election

really preferred	Conservatives	Labour
North	5	8
Midlands	3	6
South	6	32
Wales	2	0
Scotland	7	5
Total N	23	51

Source: computed from BES92.

The same standards were applied as in Table 8.2.

Given the small numbers of tactical voters uncovered by the particular BES question, we cannot explore the regional distribution of tactical voters for the

Liberal Democrats very deeply. However, although the small numbers data in Table 4.20 needs to be treated with caution, it is striking that nearly two thirds of those who really preferred Labour but voted for the Liberal Democrats were from southern England. By contrast, there is no distinctive regional pattern of tactical voting among Conservative sympathisers, although it might be higher in Scotland. Overall the balance of tactical voting effects measured in the BES was rather even: the Liberal Democrats attracted 80 tactical voters from all other parties, and lost 90 to the two major parties combined.

#### 4.7. LIBERAL DEMOCRAT VOTING AND ABSTENTION

In many western countries, voters who are poorer or placed 'lower' on socio-economic grades are usually more likely to abstain than are well-off or 'upper class' voters (Pacek and Radcliff, 1995). Thus, turnout rates are usually higher in right-wing party strongholds, while leftist parties (those left-of-centre in Pacek and Radcliff's terms) often win most support in low turnout constituencies. Such a relationship between class and turnout rate is also found in the three British elections between 1983 and 1992.

Table 4.21. Turnout rate and Party support (correlation coefficients)

election year	Con	Lab	Lib-Dem	<i>N</i>
1983	0.31	-0.38	0.27	633
1987	0.27	-0.33	0.23	633
1992	0.56	-0.51	0.24	634

Source: computed from Dorling (1992) British General Election Results 1955-1992. All figures in the table are statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

Table 4.21 shows that the coefficients of Labour vote are pretty negative, which suggests Labour tends to win votes where the turnout rate is low.

Interestingly enough, the correlation became inversely stronger in 1992 while the actual turnout rate rose by 2.4 per cent in comparison with the previous election. By contrast, the correlation coefficients of Conservative and Liberal Democratic vote (including the Alliance) are positive. Both parties tend to win vote where the turnout rate was high. The positive sign of the coefficients of the Liberal Democrats seems understandable given that support for the Party is largely overlapped with the Conservative.

However, this correlation does not mean that an increase of participation in voting would be favourable to the Liberals. In fact, in spite of the increase of the turnout rate since 1983, the share of the Liberal Democratic vote has fallen. In particular, between 1987 and 1992, its share reduced by 5.4 per cent in Great Britain.

Table 4.22. The effects of changes in turnout rates and the safeness of seats on voting for the Liberal Democrats in 1992

	Great Britain	South <sup>1</sup>	South <sup>2</sup>	North <sup>3</sup>
intercept	0.18	0.17	0.14	0.18
Turnout9287	-0.93	-1.03	-1.62	-0.72
ConLab87	0.23	0.28	0.45	0.19
r <sup>2</sup>	0.35	0.28	0.40	0.26
F	170.20	48.58	55.14	28.05

$$LD = a + b_1 * \text{Turnout9287} + b_2 * \text{ConLab87}$$

LD: the share of Liberal Democrat vote in a constituency in 1992

a : intercept

Turnout9287: change of the turnout rate between 1987 and 1992 in a constituency

ConLab87: difference in the share of vote between Conservative and Labour in 1987 in a constituency

Source: computed from *British Election Results, 1955-1992*.

1. South includes South East, South West, and East Anglia, and London.

2. excludes London

3. North includes North, North West and Yorkshire-Humberside.

Table 4.22 shows the results of a regression analysis of the effects of changes in turnout rate between 1987 and 1992, and the Conservatives' 1987 strength in a constituency, on Liberal Democratic support in 1992. The Liberal Democrat share of the vote is positively related to prior Conservative strength. The safer Conservative seats had been in the previous election, the higher share of votes the Liberal Democrats tended to win in 1992. This relationship is especially conspicuous in south England excluding London where the Conservative predominance has traditionally been very strong.

In spite of the positive correlation between the turnout rate and Liberal Democrat voting, the Liberal Democratic vote is inversely associated changes in the turnout rate. As more people decided to participate in voting in comparison with the previous election, so the Liberal Democrat share of the vote decreased, even though the actual turnout rate rose in 1992. In other words, the decrease of the Liberal vote occurred together with the rise of turnout rate. This pattern is most obvious in southern England, where the association is very strong (its estimate in South England is -1.62).

The quality-satisficing approach argues that abstention as well as third party voting can occur together (see Chapter III). Even though a third party can be an alternative to abstention, the two choices basically share the same causes - negative evaluation of major parties. Thus, an increase in the turnout rate which reflects reduced dissatisfaction with the government or both major parties would also reduce the likelihood of third party voting. The inverse association between increases of the turnout rate in 1992 and Liberal Democrat voting suggests such a relationship. A more detailed or rigorously tested relationship between turnout rate and party choice seems quite difficult to trace because of the complicating impacts of various socio-economic factors.

#### 4.8. CONCLUSION

The Liberal Democrats are not a 'minor' party any more, since they have won above or close to 20 per cent of votes consistently since 1983 in a wide variety of elections - for the House of Commons, and in local elections. However, the main attraction of the third party does not lie in its policy appeal, since many voters perceived Liberal policy as being vague probably reflecting their estimation that it has only a low likelihood of being effective. Instead Liberal Democrat voting seems to be strongly associated with the immobility of party choice in Britain, where they can serve as an acceptable vehicle for dissatisfied major party voters who will not cross-over completely by supporting the rival party. The Liberal Democrats' image of being moderate and middle-of-the-road helps the party maximize this role.

The geographical polarisation so evident in British politics has also provided favourable conditions for Liberal support. The joint occurrence of a collective aversion to the major rival party and dissatisfaction with the traditionally supported party in a region has a potential to make expressing a second preference for the third party seem more viable. In spite of its image as a centrist party, the Liberal Democrats seem to have been a more acceptable alternative to former Conservative voters than to Labour supporters - even though the salient issues for the Liberal Democrats is close to those for Labour. When traditional Conservative voters are disillusioned, the Liberal Democrats can capitalize on some of the key issues involved, and can often develop a local profile on such welfare issues, thereby enhancing their apparent efficacy. By contrast, the Liberal's issue position is not so attractive to Labour supporters because it widely overlaps with Labour's. In spite of the long-term growth and consolidation of their support, the Liberal democrat voters also still lack a firm identity and are less durable than people who back the major parties. If the causes of the dissatisfaction are solved or mitigated, then the protest voters may soon return to their traditional fold.

## **Chapter V**

### **VOLATILE VOTERS AND THIRD PARTY SUPPORT: THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN CANADA (1984-1988)**

#### **5.1. PARTY POLITICS IN CANADA**

In the 1993 federal election, Canadian party politics seems to enter into a new stage. The Liberal Party came back to power after ten years in exile with a clear majority of seats. By contrast, the previously ruling Progressive Conservative party was almost demolished. The number of its seats declined from 165 to only two, and the Conservatives' political prospects looked uncertain. Contesting its first federal election, the Bloc Quebecois grew from nowhere to become the official Opposition party. A new party, the Reform Party, attracting voters in the western provinces, emerged as a strong third party, and the previous third-ranked federal party, the New Democratic Party (NDP) could not even form an official parliamentary group, winning only 9 seats.

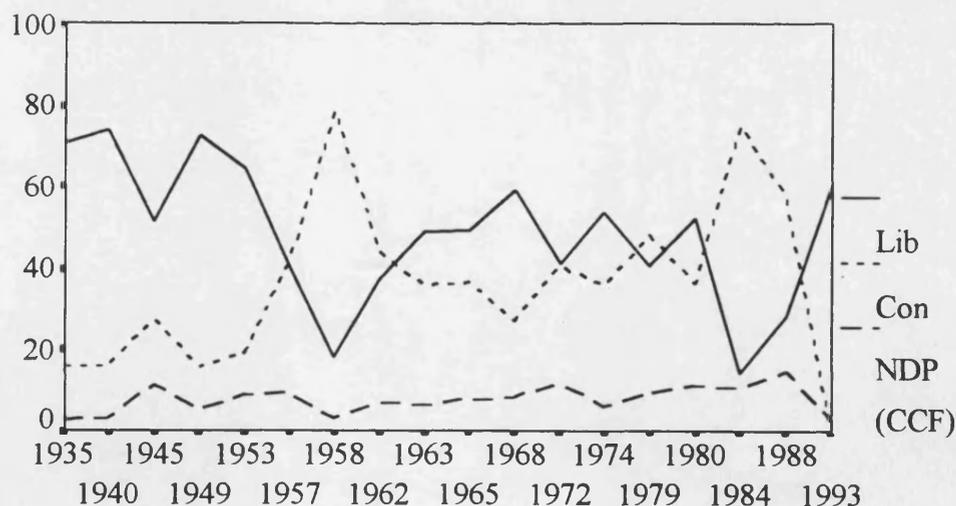
Although abrupt changes on quite this scale are very unusual, the 1993 result is not an completely isolated case in Canadian elections. There are some characteristics in Canadian politics which enable such a huge swing of support to occur. This section examines basic features of Canadian party politics, focusing on the period up to the late 1980s when federal politics was dominated by the Conservative vs Liberal rivalry, with the NDP as the long-time third party which survived (and indeed flourished) under Canada's plurality rule system.

### Volatile voters and weak ideology

Party support in Canadian elections has frequently fluctuated (see Figure 5.1). Apart from the 1993 election, another great change of party support is to be found in the 1950s. Between 1949 and 1958, the number of the Conservative seats rose from 41 to 208, while the tally of Liberal seats fell from 190 to 48. Particularly, in 1958, the Conservatives won 96 more seats than in the previous year's election, and the Liberals lost 61 seats only in one year's time. By contrast, the CCF/NDP has never exceeded a 20 per cent of share of seats between 1935-1993.

Such recurrent fluctuation suggests that Canadian voters are volatile and that their long-term partisan commitment is weak. According to LeDuc (1988: 39-46), 41 per cent of a national sample between 1974 and 1980 changed their federal party identification. Even in a short period between 1979 and 1980, 32 per cent of voters failed to support the same party.

Figure 5.1. Parties' shares of seats in the House of the Commons, 1935-1993



Source: computed from *Canada votes, 1935-1988*. The 1993 election result was added.

\* CCF: 1935-1958

\* NDP: 1962-1988

This volatility of Canadian voters has influenced the characteristics of the party system, making it flexible and non-ideological. It is often called a 'brokerage' party system:

Rather than having well-defined support from one election to the next based on long-term loyalties of social groups, brokerage parties re-create coalitions at each election. Rather than dividing the electorate among themselves along clear and relatively stable lines of social cleavage, such parties constantly compete for the same policy space and the same voters....They organize around leaders, rather than around political principles and ideologies (Clarke *et al.*, 1991: 9-10).

Thus, the policy positions of parties are not always consistent. For example, the Conservative party used to take a negative position towards free trade, but initiated the controversial Free Trade Agreement with the United States in 1988. By contrast, the Liberal Party, a pro-free trade party in the past, came out against the FTA in 1988 (see Johnston *et al.*, 1992 : 78-111).

Voters' volatility and the flexibility of party policies can be related to the weakness of class politics. In Canadian politics, ideology is not so strong a binding force between parties and voters as it is in many European countries. For instance, the NDP, which claimed to form a Labour party for Canada when it was launched, has not been very different from the other two parties in terms of ideology and policy positions. The party did not depend heavily on support from working class voters, and most industrial workers did not choose the NDP as their first preference party. As Clarke *et al.* pointed out:

While it might be difficult to imagine working-class trade unionists from the English Midlands supporting the Conservative party of Margaret Thatcher, it is much easier to envision their Canadian counterparts moving easily between any of the three main Canadian parties (1991: 46).

So party choice of Canadian voters is not likely to be programmed by ideology. Short-term factors such as issues, leaders, and government style and

performance tend to play an important role in party choice instead of clearly defined ideological programmes.

### **Party support and regional cleavages**

However, there are other social cleavages which strongly influence voters' choices. The most distinct cleavage is the ethnic-cultural cleavage between French Canadians and English Canadians. Particularly since Quebec nationalism developed in early 1960s, a phase often called the 'Quiet Revolution,' the ethnic-cultural agenda over Quebec's constitutional position have often commanded Canadian politics, through to the 1995 referendum on Quebec's independence. For example, the Official Language Act of 1969 was enacted in response to the 'Quiet Revolution', declaring Canadian federal institutions to be officially bilingual. In 1971, an attempt was made to seek 'patriation' of Canada's constitution, plus an amending formula and a charter of rights and freedoms, known as the Victoria Charter, but this move was rejected by Quebec. In 1987 the Meech Lake Accord was proposed for constitutional change, but the accord was not ratified in the provinces of Manitoba and Newfoundland. Another proposal for major constitutional change was tabled in 1992, and an agreement was hammered out between the prime minister and 10 provincial premiers, called the Charlottetown Accord. However, the Charlottetown Accord was massively rejected in a referendum in 1992. All these events were focused on Quebec's claims for special constitutional status, and the backlash against them in some English-speaking provinces.

In addition to the ethnic-cultural cleavage between English and French Canada, there is another important cleavage: a core-periphery divide between the centre and the western provinces. Since the Confederation, the eastern part of Canada, essentially Ontario and Quebec, has dominated industry, business and politics. In the other provinces, especially in the four western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia), a long-standing sense

of grievance against the East has been developed. There is a common belief that people in the western provinces are exploited by the 'Easterners'.

This feeling is based on the perceived economic and political domination of the rest of the country, especially by the tiny Golden Horseshoe area of southern Ontario and Montreal ... The main thrust of western discontent... hinges on a feeling of marginalization and alienation from the centres of economic and political power (Jackson and Jackson, 1994: 119).

The western provinces feel that they have been regarded as an 'appendage' to the Canadian Confederation, as a Saskatchewan premier once described it (Blakeney, 1977: 240). The discontent has simmered on even as the local economy in the western provinces grew strongly:

Made confident by their enormous resource revenues, the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, in particular, sought greater political clout within the federation to match their recent wealth (Jackson and Jackson, 1994: 248)

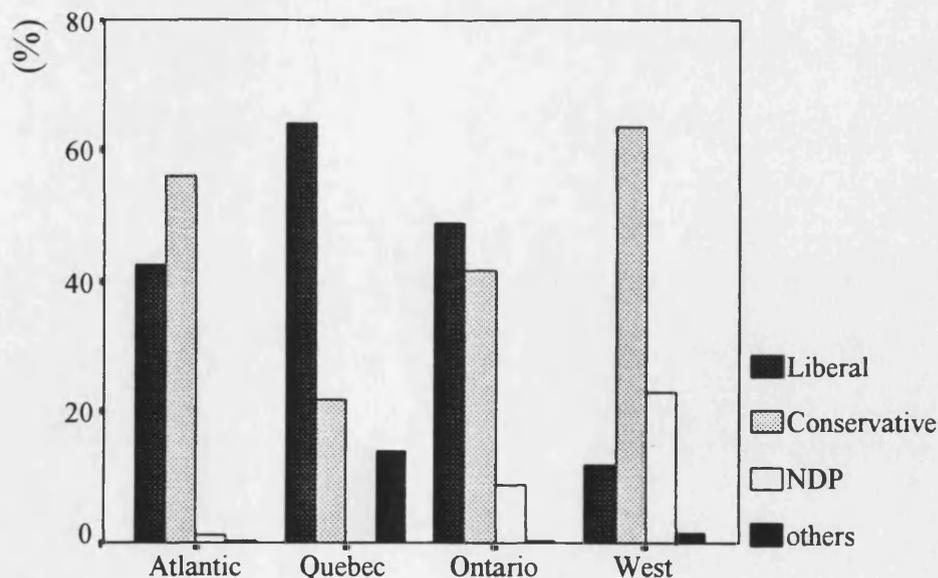
In terms of party politics, the Liberals have never been a viable alternative in the Canadian-west until the Conservative collapse in the 1993 election. The normal pattern was for the NDP to be the main competitor with the Conservatives in the western provinces. In spite of the core-periphery conflict, the western provinces are part of 'English Canada' so that they are not sympathetic to the cultural and linguistic aspiration of the Quebeckers.

Four provinces in the Atlantic region (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick) form another periphery. Those provinces are relatively 'have-nots', and tend to depend on subsidies from the federal government. However, they do not have a strong feeling of 'exploitation or deprivation', and more importantly, the Atlantic provinces have not established as a strong political identity as the western provinces have. In spite of its peripheral status, voting patterns in the Atlantic region have been very similar to those amongst Ontario's voters.

Consequently, the two political cleavages co-exist in Canada - between French Canada and the English Canada and between central Canada and the west - and partly cross-cut each other. Particularly in the western provinces, the ethnic-cultural cleavage is juxtaposed with the core-periphery cleavage. Clarke *et al.* argue that the existence of 'many' cleavages forced parties to play a role as a broker to integrate the nation (1991: 10). In spite of the characteristics as brokerage parties, political parties in effect depended more upon some parts of the country than upon others. Figure 5.2 shows a different pattern between regions in terms of parties' shares of seats.

In the period between 1962 and 1988, the Liberal Party dominated federal elections in Quebec where its share of seats was 64 per cent. Indeed before the 1984 election, the Liberal's share of seats in Quebec was on average 76 per cent. By contrast, the Liberals did not win much support in the western provinces where the party took only 12 per cent of seats. Especially in each of the three elections during 1979 to 1984, the Liberals won only 2 or 3 seats out of 80 in the western provinces.

Figure 5.2. Regional share of seats, 1962-1988



Source: calculated from *Canada Votes, 1935-1988*.

\* The West includes the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

The Conservatives received strong support in the western provinces, where their share of seats was 64 per cent between 1962 and 1988. In contrast, the Conservatives stayed weak in Quebec until the Party won unexpected landslide victories in both the 1984 and 1988 elections. Apart from these two unusual surges, the Conservatives have won only 7 per cent of seats there. The weakness of the Conservatives in Quebec is closely related to its normal image as an English party. As Perlin pointed out the Conservative party's

inability to find accommodation on major issues has contributed to its alienation of key social groups - most importantly French Canadians ... The reduced presence of francophones in the Conservative caucus left it in the control of an anglophone majority unsympathetic to French concerns, with the result that when new issues arose touching on these concerns the party took positions that led to further francophone defection..... Since Quebec elects one-fourth of the members in the House of Commons, the effect was to put the Conservatives at a permanent national disadvantage (Perlin, 1988: 79-80).

Regional variation of support also strongly affected the NDP. The NDP depended greatly upon voters in the western provinces where the Party took 23 per cent of seats between 1962 and 1988, about twice the Liberals' share of support there. In Ontario, the NDP gained 9 per cent of the total seats. By contrast, the NDP was not popular in Quebec. Even though the NDP kept garnering around 10 per cent of vote in Quebec during the period, it failed to secure a single seat in French Canada. The NDP also gained extremely poor results in the Atlantic provinces, gaining only four out of the 323 local seats during the 1962-1988 period.

It is clear that there were different patterns of party competition between regions. As Johnston *et al.* (1992: 63) said, no party was truly national. A basic pattern of cleavage and party competition can be drawn as in Figure 5.3. The

three parties took a different position in terms of the two cleavages : between English Canada and French Canada and between the core and the (western) periphery. In Quebec, the Liberals enjoyed a predominant support until the mid 1980s, and the Conservatives took a minor position. In the west, the Conservatives generally competed with the NDP while the Liberals were locally not in contention. Only in Ontario, was full three-party competition established (or at least ‘two-and-a-half’ party politics as it was often dubbed). The NDP traditionally took the ‘half’ position. In the Atlantic region, the two major parties have competed, and in spite of its periphery status in political and economic terms, voting pattern there was generally similar to Ontario’s, except that the NDP was weaker.

Figure 5.3. A basic pattern of cleavage and party competition

	English Canada	French Canada
Core	Liberal, Conservative NDP	Liberal (Con)
Periphery	Conservative, NDP (Lib)	

### The CCF and the NDP

Although the two major parties had been continuously dominant in every election before 1993, many third parties emerged and disappeared in the twentieth century, a pluralization which is also associated with the characteristics of the ‘brokerage’ party system. Given that Canada is a federal state in which each province has different economic, historical and cultural backgrounds, it has often proved difficult for the two parties (even ‘catch-all’

parties) to appease people from all parts of the country. New parties have usually emerged in periphery regions, based on voters' discontent with the two major parties. Gagnon and Tanguay (1989: 222) called them protest parties, 'since their emergence and growth invariably signal the failure of the two traditional parties to articulate the demands or act on the grievances of significant social groups (ethnic, regional, class, or linguistic)'. Once the major parties could accommodate discontent, protest parties typically began to lose their momentum of support. Few third parties could extend support beyond the one province where they had originated, accentuating their difficulties in building up durable support in competition with the major brokerage parties.

In terms of the durability as well as the regional range of their support, the New Democratic Party had been the most successful third party in Canadian politics. The roots of the NDP date back to the Depression of the 1930s when its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was formed. The CCF was initiated by the farmer-labour Ginger Group in Parliament composed of some remnants of the Progressive party and labour members. In 1932, the delegates gathered in Calgary and decided to form a Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) to incorporate 'the three major classes in the community whose interests are the same - industrial workers, farmers, and the middle class' (Lewis and Scott, 1943; quoted in Archer, 1990: 11). The CCF was composed of farmers, labour representatives and intellectuals. Although trade unions participated in the CCF, it was not supposed to be a party of organised labour, because

affiliation was to take place at the level of union locals rather than federations or national and regional councils... In addition, both a block vote at party conventions and block representation on the party council were rejected in favour of a system of representation which gave affiliated unions less representation per capita than constituency organizations had (Archer, 1990: 15-6).

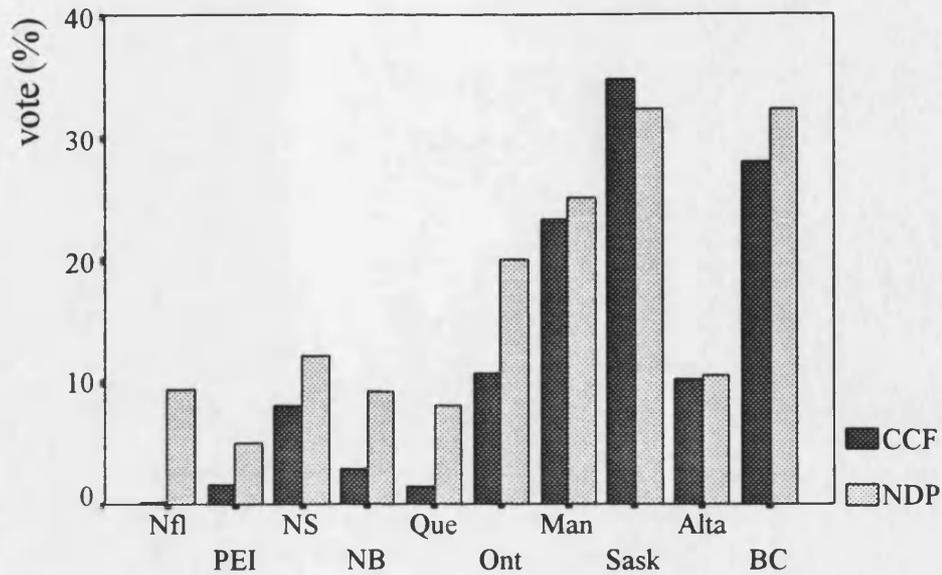
The CCF depended heavily upon electoral support in the western provinces. Among the 112 seats which the CCF gained from 1925 to 1958, all except 12 came from the west (the exceptions being four seats from Nova Scotia, and eight from Ontario). However, the CCF never secured a single seat in Alberta where a rival third party, Social Credit, was strong. After 1945, the CCF's support as well as union enthusiasm ran out of steam, partly because of the lack of a formal linkage with organised labour, and partly because of the heavy parliamentary dependence on MPs from rural, agrarian western provinces.

In 1958, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) proposed the need for a broadly based people's movement which would embrace the CCF. In 1961 the CCF was formally dissolved and the New Democratic Party was launched. The NDP sought to represent working class interests much more than the CCF. No farm organisations have ever been affiliated with the NDP. Rather, the NDP combined organised labour and individual members represented through constituency associations, with the balance of power held by the latter (Archer, 1990: 24).

Although it was an apparent successor to the CCF, the new party generally secured improved support across most regions (see Figure 5.4). The NDP won more support in all provinces except in Saskatchewan where its average vote slightly declined by 2 per cent between 1962 and 1988. The most conspicuous change took place in industrial Ontario where its support considerably increased by about 10 per cent, reflecting an initially clearer appeal to class politics, in contrast with CCF's more farm-orientated image.

However, in spite of this slight improvement, the formation of the NDP did not massively boost the party's fortunes. The NDP's support basically remained the same pattern as the CCF, although the support for the NDP was more regionally extended.

Figure 5.4. Support for the CCF and the NDP by Province



Nfl - Newfoundland; PEI - Price Edward Island; NS - Nova Scotia; NB - New Brunswick; Que - Quebec; Ont -Ontario; Man - Manitoba; Sask - Saskatchewan; Alta - Alberta; BC - British Columbia

Source: based on Whitehorn (1991: 326. Table 1).  
 North western territories and Yukon were excluded.  
 \* CCF: 1935-1958 \* NDP: 1962-1988

The limited success of the NDP was partly attributable to the two party system in Canada produced by the plurality rule electoral system. Like other countries adopting the Westminster model, Canada has never experienced a coalition government (except the wartime coalition in 1917). Each of two major parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, has taken over government for lengthy periods while third parties have stayed out of office. In addition Canadian voters often seem to display a 'split identity' between the federal and provincial level. Federal election results are often different from those at provincial level. For example, the Progressive Conservatives in British Columbia used to be a dominant party in federal elections, before 1993 at least. However, the Conservative party has been extremely weak in the provincial elections, winning only 1 per cent of the vote in British Columbia in the 1983 and the 1986 provincial elections, although they were in government at the

federal level. By contrast, Social Credit, which was completely obliterated in federal politics since 1980, has maintained a strong position in British Columbia's provincial politics.

If the evaluation of a governing party's performance in a provincial government has little to do with party support in a federal election, third parties could hardly enhance their efficacy at the federal level as long as they had no likelihood of winning a federal government. In spite of the general growth of its support since 1962, the NDP has not overcome its perceived lack of efficacy at the federal level, which in turn forced the party to come to terms with playing a minor role in federal policy decision-making.

## **5.2. PARTY CHOICE IN THE 1984 AND 1988 FEDERAL ELECTIONS : A LOGISTIC ANALYSIS**

Compared with other elections, the two elections held in 1984 and 1988 show some different features. First of all, in the 1984 federal election, the Progressive Conservatives secured a majority of seats in all of the four regions (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the West) for the first time since the 1953 election (Table 5.1). In particular, the Conservatives won an unusual landslide victory in Quebec where the party used to be weak, garnering 58 out of 75 seats. It was a huge leap of support in comparison with the previous election in which the party had won only one Quebec seat. Overall the Conservatives occupied 75 per cent of the seats in Parliament. This pattern of Conservative support continued in the 1988 election, where the party won a majority of seats in the three largest regions (losing its majority in the Atlantic region only), and suffered only a modest decline in its share of seats in Parliament, down to 57 per cent. The Conservatives even added 5 more seats in Quebec at the expense of the Liberals in 1988. In contrast to the Conservative's breakthrough in

Quebec, the Liberal party did not overcome the weakness in the west. The NDP also did not extend its support beyond its 'traditional' pattern.

In an attempt to analyse the pattern of the NDP support in both elections, a logistic regression analysis was attempted: (for the survey data used here, see Appendix 1). Four variables were taken into account: region, income, leadership and election issue. As noted, region is an important category influencing party support in Canada. Ten provinces were collapsed into five regions : the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairie provinces, and British Columbia. To see whether class makes impact on voting, party choice by household income was considered. If class matters, voters from low income household should be more likely to vote for the NDP and less likely to support the Conservative party.

Table 5.1. Seats won by region 1984-1988

	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario <sup>1</sup>	West <sup>2</sup>
1984				
Liberal	7	17	14	2
Conservative	25	58	67	61
NDP	0	0	13	17
others	0	0	1	0
1988				
Liberal	20	12	43	8
Conservative	12	63	46	48
NDP	0	0	10	33
others	0	0	0	0

Source: *Canada votes, 1935-1988*.

1 : The number of seats in Ontario increased from 95 in 1984 to 99 in 1988.

2 : The number of seats in the four western provinces increased from 80 in 1984 to 89 in 1988.

As pointed out earlier, short-term effects were important in Canadian elections. Two variables to represent short-term effects were included: leadership and election issues. The leadership effect was measured by a thermometer scale which ranged from 1 to 100 degrees. The higher the thermometer goes, the more satisfied voters are with a leader. Election issues

were based on an open-ended question in each election survey about the most important election issue.

In the tables below, coefficient (b) for categorical variables estimates the log odds of being in one category over the others. For continuous variables such as party leadership, the coefficient estimates the change of the log odds on the response for a one-unit increase in the thermometer. Exp(b) is the multiplicative estimate. The results are given in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

Table 5.2. A logistic regression of party choice in 1984

variable	Liberal		Conservative		NDP	
	b	Exp(b)	b	Exp(b)	b	Exp(b)
constant	-3.99 <sup>1</sup>		-4.43 <sup>1</sup>		-4.99 <sup>1</sup>	
Party leader	0.05 <sup>1</sup>	1.05	0.08 <sup>1</sup>	1.08	0.06 <sup>1</sup>	1.06
Region						
Atlantic	0.77 <sup>1</sup>	2.16	-0.28	0.75	-0.29 <sup>3</sup>	0.75
Quebec	0.45 <sup>1</sup>	1.57	-0.07 <sup>3</sup>	0.93	-0.26 <sup>3</sup>	0.77
Ontario	0.19	1.21	-0.15	0.86	-0.03	0.97
Prairie	-0.49 <sup>1</sup>	0.61	0.20	1.22	0.16	1.18
B.C.	-0.92 <sup>1</sup>	0.40	0.30	1.35	0.42 <sup>2</sup>	1.52
Issue						
general economy	0.24	1.28	-0.19	0.83	0.01	1.01
unemployment	0.17	1.19	-0.13	0.88	0.32 <sup>2</sup>	1.38
change government	-0.59 <sup>1</sup>	0.56	0.50 <sup>1</sup>	1.65	-0.45 <sup>2</sup>	0.64
others	0.17	1.19	-0.18	0.84	0.12	1.12
Income						
low	-0.13	0.88	-0.11	0.89	0.24	1.27
middle	0.08	1.09	0.14	1.15	-0.17	0.85
high	0.05	1.05	-0.02	0.98	-0.07	0.93
	-2Loglikelihood = 1016.6		-2Loglikelihood = 1158.7		-2Loglikelihood = 993.4	
	Chi-Square = 187.1 (p<0.001)		Chi-Square = 439.2 (p<0.001)		Chi-Square = 186.3 (p<0.001)	
	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.18		R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.27		R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.19	
	N = 1928		N = 1928		N = 1928	

<sup>1</sup> p < 0.01 ; <sup>2</sup> p < 0.05 ; <sup>3</sup> p < 0.1

Table 5.3. A logistic regression of party choice in 1988

variable	Liberal		Conservative		NDP	
	b	Exp(b)	b	Exp(b)	b	Exp(b)
constant	-3.28 <sup>1</sup>		-3.66 <sup>1</sup>		-5.67 <sup>1</sup>	
Party leader	0.04 <sup>1</sup>	1.04	0.06 <sup>1</sup>	1.06	0.07 <sup>1</sup>	1.07
Region						
Atlantic	0.84 <sup>1</sup>	2.31	-0.10	0.90	-1.05 <sup>1</sup>	0.35
Quebec	-0.09 <sup>1</sup>	0.92	0.06	1.06	0.40 <sup>2</sup>	1.49
Ontario	0.40 <sup>1</sup>	1.49	-0.08	0.93	-0.24	0.78
Prairie	-0.29 <sup>3</sup>	0.75	0.24	1.27	0.10	1.10
B.C.	-0.86 <sup>1</sup>	0.42	-0.12	0.89	0.80 <sup>1</sup>	2.22
Issue(FTA)						
in favour	-1.29 <sup>1</sup>	0.28	1.84 <sup>1</sup>	6.28	-0.97 <sup>1</sup>	0.38
opposed	1.29 <sup>1</sup>	3.64	-1.84 <sup>1</sup>	0.16	0.97 <sup>1</sup>	2.63
Income						
low	-0.24 <sup>2</sup>	0.79	-0.02	0.98	0.28 <sup>2</sup>	1.32
middle	0.07	1.07	-0.02	0.98	-0.08	0.93
high	0.17	1.18	0.04	1.06	-0.20	0.82
	-2 Log likelihood = 1034.9		-2 Log likelihood = 778.9		-2 Log likelihood = 898.9	
	Chi-Square = 568.0		Chi-Square = 1100.1		Chi-Square = 445.3	
	(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.35		R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.41		R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.33	
	N = 1946		N = 1946		N = 1946	

<sup>1</sup> p < 0.01 ; <sup>2</sup> p < 0.05 ; <sup>3</sup> p < 0.1

Some clear patterns of party support can be extracted from the two tables. First of all, the results from the logistic regression confirm that party choice varied between regions. In the western provinces including the prairie provinces and British Columbia, the Liberals remained weak. By contrast, the NDP won good results in the west, particularly in British Columbia. Its multiplicative estimates in British Columbia were 1.52 in 1984 and 2.22 in 1988. Support for the NDP was extremely poor in the Atlantic. Interestingly enough, the

multiplicative estimate of Quebec for the NDP was 1.49 in 1988, which indicates that Quebec voters were one and a half times more likely to vote for the NDP than would be expected if regions were unrelated to vote choices. However, the party failed to win any seats there. Another interesting finding is that the  $b$  coefficient of Quebec for the Liberals, the traditionally dominant party in Quebec, was slightly negative (- 0.09) in the 1988 election (about Quebec voters in 1988, see also section 5.7). For the Conservative party, which won much support across the country, most coefficients turned out not to be statistically significant.

Secondly, party leadership made a considerable impact on vote choice. In both elections the coefficients of party leadership were positive for all three parties. Given the disadvantage of third parties, the influence of the NDP leader, Ed Broadbent, was remarkable. The multiplicative estimate for him in the 1988 election was the highest among the three leaders, at 1.07. Each additional point he gained on the thermometer is thus estimated to have increased the odds of voting for the NDP by 7 per cent.

Thirdly, some election issues also made a significant impact on vote choices, with a clear pattern of party support over issues. For example, in the 1984 election the issue of 'change government to the Conservatives' was crucial to voting choice. The multiplicative estimate of the then ruling Liberal was 0.56 while the estimates for the main opposition (the Conservatives) was 1.65. The third party, NDP was disadvantaged in terms of this issue (its estimate was 0.64), since it could not present itself as a credible alternative government to the Liberals, a common problem for third parties under plurality rule. However, on unemployment issue the NDP, as Canada's most leftist viable party, tended to attract voters.

In 1988, the Free Trade Agreement with the United States dominated the election. Voters clearly aligned their party positions around the issue. At this point the Conservatives were the only party in favour of the FTA, while both opposition parties were against it. Voters who favoured the FTA were 6.3

times more likely to vote for the Conservatives than if the FTA issue was not related to the vote choice. By contrast, voters who said 'No' to FTA tended to choose the Liberals or the NDP. The estimates are 3.64 and 2.63 respectively.

Fourthly, the effects of household incomes on voting did not emerge clearly. Even though voters from low income households were more likely to vote for the NDP (for example, 1.32 times as likely as if no relationship is assumed in 1988), most coefficients were not statistically significant in either election. The logistic analysis confirms that ideology was not an overriding factor in voting choice in Canadian politics. Rather, short-term factors such as election issues and party leaderships made a significant impact on voters. Regions are so important that the influence of short-term factors varied from region to region. With the findings here, the relationship between each factor and the NDP voting is addressed in the following sections.

### **5.3. ELECTION ISSUES AND NDP VOTING**

Even though the logistic analysis suggests that election issues affected voters' choice, it still seems dubious how much the NDP voting is related to its issue positions. As a third party, the NDP's role in federal policy-making has certainly been limited. This section looks in more details at the effects of election issues on NDP voting.

#### **The NDP support and Issues in the 1984 and 1988 elections**

Canadian voters tend to regard an election as an opportunity to evaluate the performance of a government party, particularly when economic conditions are not favourable, or voters are not satisfied with government performance:

Most campaigns provided an occasion for voicing concerns and grievances, rather than for offering fundamentally different long-term

strategies to ease economic troubles... There is, indeed, a tendency to see elections as an opportunity to “throw the rascals out” more than one of directing the future (Clarke *et al.*,1996: 21. Emphasis in the original).

Table 5.4. Election issues in the 1984 federal election

issue	unemployment	general economy	time for change	others
per cent	37	32	17	14

Source: computed from PSC84

The categories were regrouped depending on an open-ended question about the most important election issue. Unspecified answers like don't know, no issues were excluded.

In the 1984 federal election economic issues were important. Table 5.4 shows that just under two in every five respondents rated unemployment as the most important election issue. If issues of general economic performance are included, 69 per cent of those polled took economic issues seriously. Whereas economic issues are frequently important in many countries' elections, a notable special factor in 1984 was a the time for a change concern, with over one sixth of respondents putting 'changing government to the Conservatives' as the most important issue in the 1984 election. At this stage the Liberal party had dominated Canadian politics since 1963. The Liberal party uninterruptedly governed the country between 1963 and 1979. In the 1979 election the Progressive Conservative succeeded in taking over government. However, only seven months later they had to hold a new election because of a defeat over the budget. In the ensuing 1980 federal election, the Liberals took power back from the Conservatives. Therefore, the need for change was not only about the four-year Liberal government since 1980 but also about a long-standing Liberal dominance since 1963. Moreover, economic dissatisfaction tends to the government party being blamed for mismanagement, and elections in Canada tend to be seen as an opportunity to 'throw the rascals out'. Among

dissatisfied voters the categories of economic issues and need for change of government could indicate the same meaning: discontent against the incumbent government.

Table 5.5. Evaluation of government in handling the economy by party choice (1984) (%)

evaluation \ voted for	Liberal	Conservative	NDP
Good job	52	24	26
Poor job	34	66	64
depends / don't know	14	11	11

Source: PSC84

The original question had five ordinal categories (except don't know), which collapse into two ordinal categories here.

As shown in Table 5.5, evaluation of government performance in handling the economy clearly varied between the Liberals and opposition parties. Two third of voters for opposition parties such as the Conservative and the NDP were dissatisfied with government performance on the economy. Although about a half of the Liberal voters took a positive view, a third of them were also unhappy with the government's performance.

In the 1988 federal election, there was effectively a single issue - the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States. While prime minister, Murloney supported the project, many Canadians worried about FTA's negative impacts:

Besides its uncertain economic effects, free trade might be represented to the public as a policy that could have a multiplicity of negative *noneconomic* consequences - namely, that it would open Canadian borders to American cultural and political domination (Kornberg and Clarke, 1992: 202. Italics in the original).

The FTA became *the* important electoral issue when John Turner, the then opposition Liberal party leader, blocked the passage of a comprehensive free

trade agreement with the United States using the Liberal majority in the Senate, saying

the issue is so fundamental that the people of Canada deserve and must have the right to judge....I think the issue becomes democracy. Let the people decide (*Globe and Mail*, 21 July 1988; quoted in Johnston *et al.*, 1992:3).

Table 5.6. Election issues in the 1988 federal election

issue	Free Trade Agreement	Meech Lake Accord	abortion	fiscal deficit	environment	others
per cent	93	1	1	1	1	3

Source: computed from PSC88 (post-election survey).

The categories were regrouped depending on an open-ended question about the most important election issue. Unspecified responses like 'Don't know, none, etc.' were excluded.

Table 5.7. Voting choice by Attitude toward the FTA (1988) (%)

Attitude to FTA	Liberal	Conservative	NDP
in favour	14	95	19
opposed	86	5	81

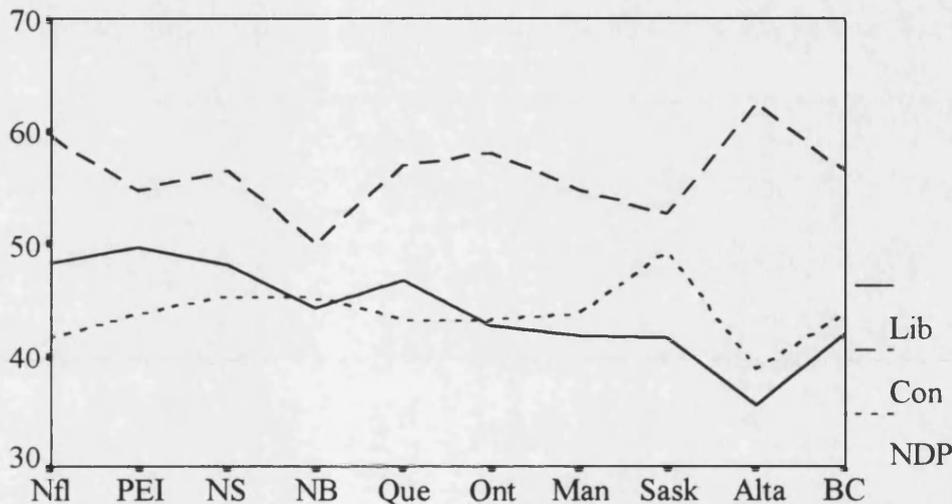
Source: computed from PSC88 (post-election survey).

Throughout the campaign period, the FTA issue dominated the media and voters' attention. Over nine tenths of those polled thought that the FTA was the most important issue in the 1988 federal election (see Table 5.6). Attitudes towards FTA were almost completely divided along party lines, with supporters of the ruling Conservatives the only ones to favour the Agreement, and opposition parties' voters strongly opposed (Table 5.7).

However, party positions on a certain election issue were differently appreciated between regions. In 1984, even though the Liberal government was very unpopular and the perceived need to 'change government to Conservative' was high, the evaluation of each party varied from region to region (Figure

5.5). The then opposition Conservatives' popularity ran high across the country. However, while the NDP was the second favourite in the western provinces and Ontario (where the Liberal party's popularity was lowest) the NDP's ratings were lower than the Liberals in most provinces in the Atlantic region and Quebec.

Figure 5.5. Party thermometer\* in the 1984 federal election by province



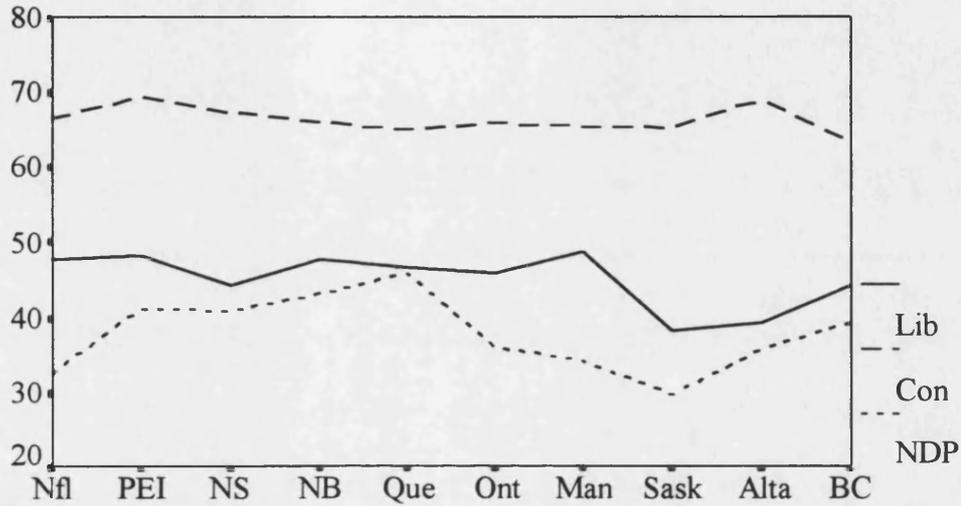
Source: PSC84.

\*The scale used here runs from a completely negative score of 0, to a completely positive score of 99. The values in the figure above were mean values of party thermometer by province.

A similar pattern of party thermometer scores occurred in the 1988 federal election (see Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.7), when the Conservatives enjoyed their highest evaluation among 'yes-voters to the FTA' (Figure 5.6). The NDP ranked lowest across all the provinces in this group of voters. Predictably the Conservative had lower thermometer scores among 'no-voters to the FTA' than the Liberals and the NDP (Figure 5.7). Generally speaking, the ratings for the Liberals gradually declined as one moved westward from the eastern provinces, while on the whole the NDP's scores gradually rose with the same transition. Even though the Liberals had a higher thermometer score in Alberta and

Manitoba than the NDP, the trend of party support looked similar to the pattern in the 1984 election shown in Figure 5.5.

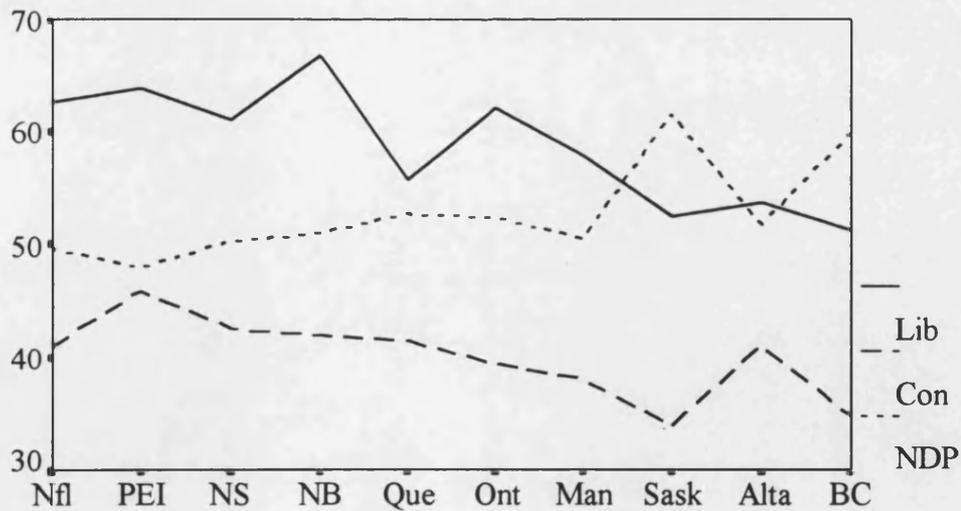
Figure 5.6 Party thermometer of Yes-voters to FTA in 1988



Source: PSC88.

\*The scale used here runs from a completely negative score of 0, to a completely positive score of 99. The values in the figure above were mean values of party thermometer by province.

Figure 5.7. Party thermometer of No-voters to FTA in 1988



Source: PSC88.

\*The scale used here runs from a completely negative score of 0, to a completely positive score of 99. The values in the figure above were mean values of party thermometer by province.

Even when the NDP's position on a certain issue like the FTA appealed to some voters, its support varied from region to region, running lowest in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec, but beating the Liberals in most western provinces.

### **Competence, unemployment and NDP voting**

Nadeau and Blais (1990) argued that voters' perception of party competence differed between parties. Using Gallup survey data they found that the NDP (which has never been in government) was consistently ranked low in terms of 'national unity' and 'international affairs', unlike the two major parties. They also found that the evaluation of a party's competence to handle inflation was related to the party's popularity, often reflecting public discontent with the government. Nadeau and Blais, therefore, concluded that:

the data highlight the very serious problems facing the NDP. On the two important issues of international affairs and national unity, only about 10 per cent of respondents selected the NDP as the most competent party.... Moreover, it is difficult for the party (NDP) to improve its image substantially, since the evidence seems to indicate that voters' perceptions are mainly affected by the performance of the party forming the government (1990: 330-1).

The low evaluation of the NDP's competence on 'national unity' reflects a perception that the party could not excel at resolving conflicts between regions and ethnic groups in Canada. As Whitehorn pointed out:

the public generally perceives the NDP as less relevant on constitutional issues than on social programmes or on the environment. The re-emergence of extensive debate upon the twin topics of constitutional matters and Quebec's status is not likely to bode well for the NDP (1991: 337)

Another issue on which the NDP sought votes was 'unemployment', and here by contrast, the NDP was highly evaluated. Table 5.3 showed that the odds ratio of the unemployment issue to the NDP was 1.32, which means that voters were 1.32 times more likely to vote for the NDP than if the issue was not related to vote choice. As a left-wing party which advocates social welfare and full employment, the fact that the NDP has been trusted on unemployment issue is not surprising. However, the effectiveness of the NDP on unemployment issue is still doubtful. As long as the NDP stayed out of government, the third party will not be able to resolve such a national economic issue.

By studying the CCF-NDP popularity and economy, Erickson (1988) tested a hypothesis that the popularity of social democratic parties would be positively related to increasing unemployment, and would suffer in a period of rising inflation. Given CCF's origin in a time of a high unemployment in the Depression, and the CCF-NDP's ideological disposition, the hypothesis seems plausible. However, her findings were against the hypothesis. The CCF-NDP tended to lose support in periods of high unemployment. Instead the NDP's popularity appeared to increase with inflation:

CCF-NDP economic policies were *not* substantially different from those of the major parties. They presented no real alternative to the economic models and solutions offered by the Liberals and Conservatives. Thus, in periods of rising unemployment, the major parties would attract support from the CCF-NDP because they have more experience in governing and in the private sector (Erickson, 1988: 114-5. Italics in the original)

According to her finding, the NDP was not seriously seen as a competent party to handle even 'unemployment'. It is interesting that the NDP's popularity rose in high inflation periods although the third party was unlikely to govern, and Nadeau and Blais showed that attitudes on inflation were closely related to performance of a governing party. It seems that the NDP's popularity in the

periods of rising inflation mainly came from negative reactions against government performance rather than the efficacy of NDP policy prescription, and thus took on a protest voting character.

The general picture for the NDP is that although it was credited in voters' minds with concern for the 'unemployment' issue, and could attract protest voting in high inflation periods, in both cases voters were expressing worry about the government's handling of the issue rather than being attracted positively by the NDP's policy positions, which they did not expect to be implemented.

#### **5.4. LEADERSHIP EFFECT AND THE NDP SUPPORT**

Party leadership images have been an important short-term factor influencing Canadian voters' choices. Where parties do not differ much in terms of ideology and policies, the style and competence of a party leader can help voters to distinguish between them, as Tables 5.2 and 5.3 above shown. The logistic analysis suggested that the NDP leader, Ed Broadbent enjoyed fairly high popularity.

Of the three leaders, Ed Broadbent seemed the most comfortable in the role .... Under his leadership the NDP had moved up to 20 percent of the total vote; in 1980 and 1984 the party's election-day share was higher than most observers predicted from pre-election polls, which redounded to Mr Broadbent's credit (Johnston *et al.*, 1992 : 170-1).

In the 1988 election under his leadership, the NDP won their best electoral result - 43 seats and 20 per cent of votes.

In Canada, TV debates are conventionally held between party leaders during an election campaign. Given the importance of short-term factors in Canadian politics, TV debates can make a strong impact on a party leader's personal

popularity and his/her party image. Particularly, TV debates during a campaign period provided good opportunities for the third party to attract media attention, even though non-major parties often tend to be ignored over various important national and international issues. Broadbent's popularity was partly attributed to his good performance in TV campaign debates in 1984: 'As happened in 1979, Mr. Broadbent's effective, sometimes witty, use of the stiletto helped him turn in the best performance in the strict sense' (*Toronto Globe and Mail*, quoted in Morley, 1988 :134).

Table 5.8. Thermometer score for party and leadership (mean)

Thermometer*	Liberal voters		Conservative voters		NDP voters	
	Lib leader	Lib party	Con leader	Con party	NDP leader	NDP party
1984	46	44	59	57	53	43
1988	45	51	50	54	53	46

Source: PSC 84 and PSC 88 post-election survey.

\*The scale used here runs from a completely negative score of 0, to a completely positive score of 99.

Table 5.8 displays that there is a clear distinction in the feeling-thermometers between parties and leadership. Broadbent's personal popularity exceeded his party's popularity by 7-10 points. In 1984 both the Conservative Prime Minister Murloney and the Liberal leader ran a couple of points ahead of their parties, but by 1988 both were running behind them again by 4 and 6 points respectively. In 1984 Broadbent was ranked second amongst party leaders, and top in 1988. Given the NDP's low scores, it is clear that Broadbent's personal popularity was a key asset for the party (see Figures 5.8 and 5.9).

Although Broadbent's performance was highly regarded, there was a difference in his evaluation between regions, reflecting the NDP's traditional pattern of support. As seen in Figure 5.8 and Figure 5.9, his ratings were high in Ontario and in the west (especially in British Columbia). By contrast, he was

ranked relatively low in Quebec in 1984, and in the Atlantic provinces in 1988, where the NDP was traditionally weak.

Figure 5.8. Thermometer of party and leader, 1984 (NDP)

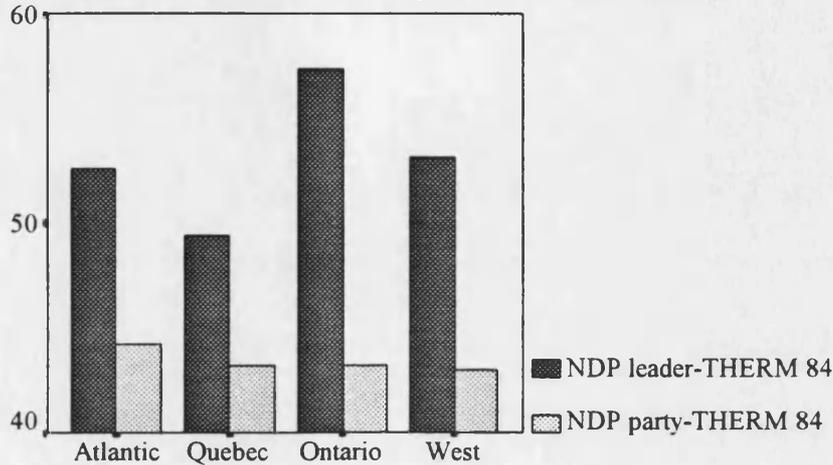
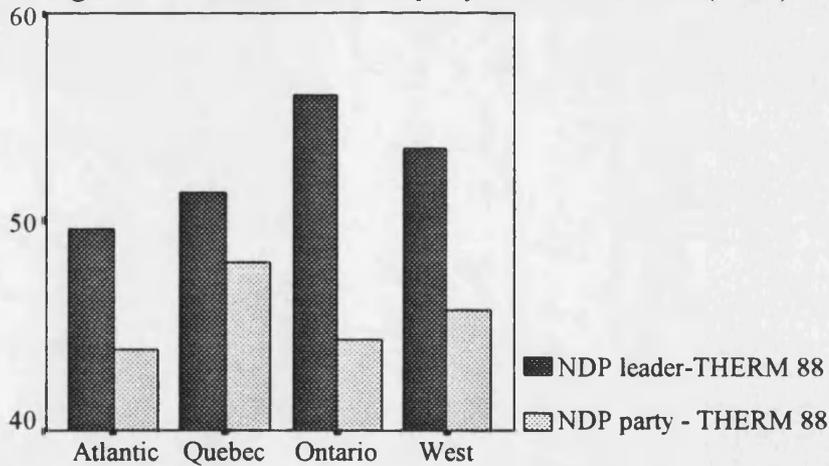


Figure 5.9. Thermometer of party and leader, 1988 (NDP)



However high Broadbent personal popularity was, the image of the party leadership did not necessarily convert people to support for the NDP. One reason could be voters' concern about 'wasted votes'. Besides, where a party has a strong negative image this effect can overshadow the party leader's

image. For example, among those who disliked the NDP's image as a working class party, the party leader's good image did not help to boost party support.

As Clarke *et al.* (1991: 96) say:

The negative aspects of Broadbent's public image had less to do with the man than with his party. To a large extent, Broadbent tries to move the party closer to the centre of the political spectrum, and to present a moderate, thoughtful alternative to the Liberals... Broadbent, like his predecessors, could never completely break free from an identification with party and ideology. "Don't like the party that he leads...too socialist...not Broadbent himself, but some of his ideas...who sides with...his party".

Table 5.9. Reasons for vote choice

why \ voted for	1984			1988		
	Lib	Con	NDP	Lib	Con	NDP
leaders	19	31	23	16	23	17
candidates	39	21	19	23	23	18
parties	40	46	57	57	50	63
all/don't know	3	2	2	4	3	3

Source: PSC 84 and PSC 88 post-election survey.

The question was 'In deciding how you would vote in the recent Federal election, which was the most important to you?'

Table 5.10. Impact of performance in TV debates on party choice (1988)

choice \ TV debate*	Turner (Lib)	Murloney (Con)	Broadbent (NDP)
Liberal	48	5	22
Conservative	29	88	21
NDP	21	5	54
others	3	3	3

Source: PSC 88 post-election survey.

\* The question was 'Thinking just about the debates, which of the leaders impressed you the MOST favourably?'. It allowed multiple choices like 'Turner and Murloney, etc.', which were excluded here. Unspecified answers such as 'don't know/N.A.' were also excluded.

Table 5.9 confirms the discrepancy between leadership popularity and voting choice. About 60 per cent of the NDP voters answered that party image was the most important reason for their electoral choice, which was higher than any other parties. In spite of Broadbent's successful performance and popularity, the influence of the party leadership on the NDP voting was not so strong. Only 17 to 23 per cent of the NDP voters were impressed by the party leadership. Interestingly, the effect of the NDP party leadership went down from 23 per cent in 1984 to 17 per cent in 1988 while the thermometer score for the NDP leadership was highest among the three leaders in 1988 (see Table 5.8). A similarity can be found in Table 5.10. Only half of those who were impressed with performance of Turner or Broadbent in the 1988 TV debates voted for the Liberals or the NDP. The favourable image mattered only for Mulroney. Nearly nine tenths of those impressed with his performance on TV voted the Conservatives.

So even if Broadbent's popularity was quite high, its impact on the NDP voting must not be overestimated. To some extent, the image of the party leader could play a complementary role to the party's image and policy positions. For the NDP the regional variation in leadership perceptions was important because any good performance by its leader would not make the same impact geographically. Where the party had already established its support, a favourable image of the party leadership contributed to boosting votes. But where the NDP was unpopular, the popularity of the party leadership was hardly influential.

## **5.5. THE NDP SUPPORT IN ONTARIO**

Apart from the western provinces, the NDP has continued to gain support in Ontario which is the centre of Canadian economy and politics. Since the aggregate distribution of Ontario voters' preferences is relatively balanced

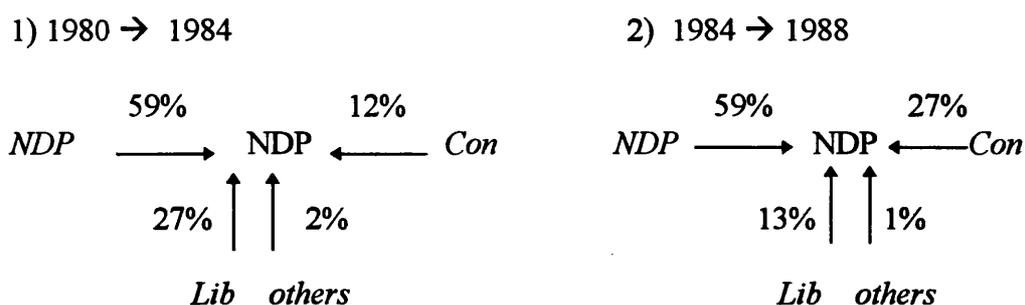
between parties, NDP voting there is less likely to rely on the immobility of party choice. Rather, support for the leftist NDP could possibly be associated with the fact that working class voters concentrates in Ontario. This section examines the characteristics of the NDP voting in Ontario in comparison with its support in western provinces.

### Regional support: Ontario and the West

Voting for the NDP was influenced by ‘who was in government’, as seen in Figure 5.10. In the 1984 election when the Liberal was in government, former Liberal voters accounted for 27 per cent of the NDP vote nationally. By contrast, in the 1988 election when the Conservatives were a governing party, former Conservative voters contributed 27 per cent of the NDP vote nationally, in spite of the seemingly large difference of ideology between the two parties.

At a sub-national level, however, patterns of vote shifting to the NDP were again different between regions.

Figure 5.10. Shift of vote to the NDP



Source: computed from PSC 84 and 88 post-election surveys.  
 \* Parties in italics indicate party choice in the preceding election.

Figures 5.11 and 5.12 show that patterns of vote shifting were different between the western provinces and Ontario. Two features are noteworthy.

Firstly, the NDP attracted more former Liberal voters in Ontario than the national average, amounting to 30 per cent in 1984. Even when Liberal support in Ontario greatly increased in 1988, the NDP vote there was not much eroded; former Liberal voters still made up over a fifth of the NDP vote in 1988.

Secondly, NDP support was more likely to be related to the Conservative support in the western provinces. In 1984 when support for the Conservative increased, the NDP did not capture those who had voted for other parties. By contrast, when the Conservative popularity fell (its number of seats in the west decreased from 61 in 1984 to 48 in 1988), the NDP drew support mainly from the former Conservative voters. The percentage of the former Liberal voters in the western provinces stayed almost the same.

Figure 5.11. Shift of vote to the NDP (Ontario)

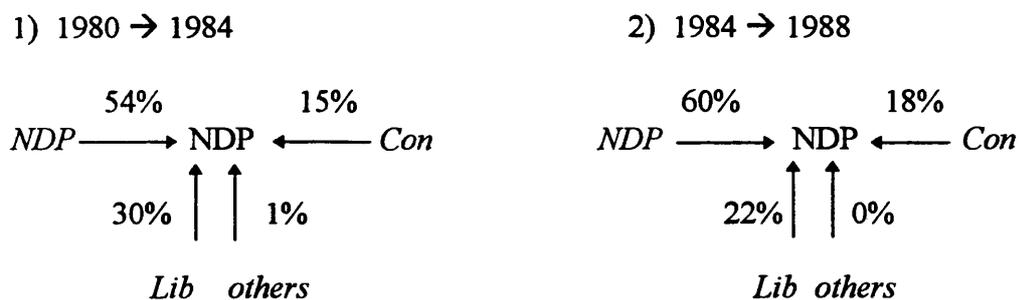
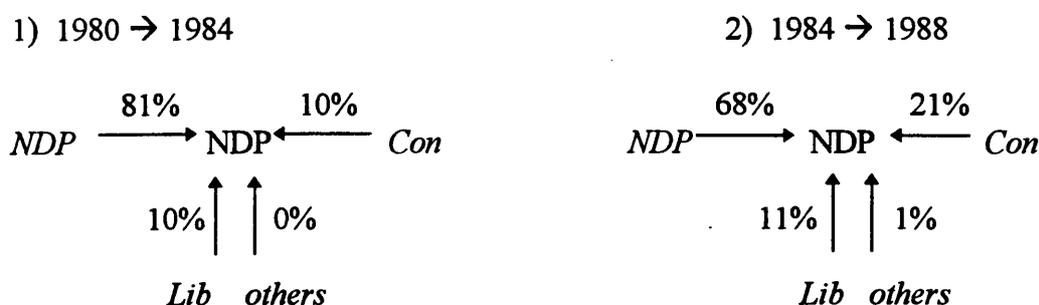


Figure 5.12. Shift of vote to the NDP (the western provinces)



Source: computed from PSC 84 and 88 post-election survey (both for Figure 5.11 and 5.12).  
 \* Parties in italics indicate party choice in the preceding election.

The difference between Ontario and the West can be also found in the regional shares of seats. Table 5.11 shows that in the West when the Conservatives increased their seats, the NDP's seats declined, and when the Conservatives lost seats, the NDP increased its representation. In contrast, the Liberal's seats changed little in the western provinces. By contrast, the NDP was not a major contender in Ontario, where shifts of seats mainly occurred between the two major parties. Nevertheless, changes in the NDP's small numbers of seats were inversely related to the Liberal Party and positively related to the Conservative party.

Table 5.11. NDP seats in the West and Ontario

1) West		(%)					
	1979	1980	(79-80)	1984	(80-84)	1988	(84-88)
Liberal	4	3	(-1)	3	(0)	9	(+6)
Conservative	74	64	(-10)	76	(+12)	54	(-22)
NDP	23	34	(+11)	21	(-13)	37	(+16)

2) Ontario		(%)					
	1979	1980	(79-80)	1984	(80-84)	1988	(84-88)
Liberal	34	55	(+19)	15	(-40)	43	(+28)
Conservative	60	40	(-20)	71	(+31)	46	(-25)
NDP	6	5	(-1)	14	(+9)	10	(-4)

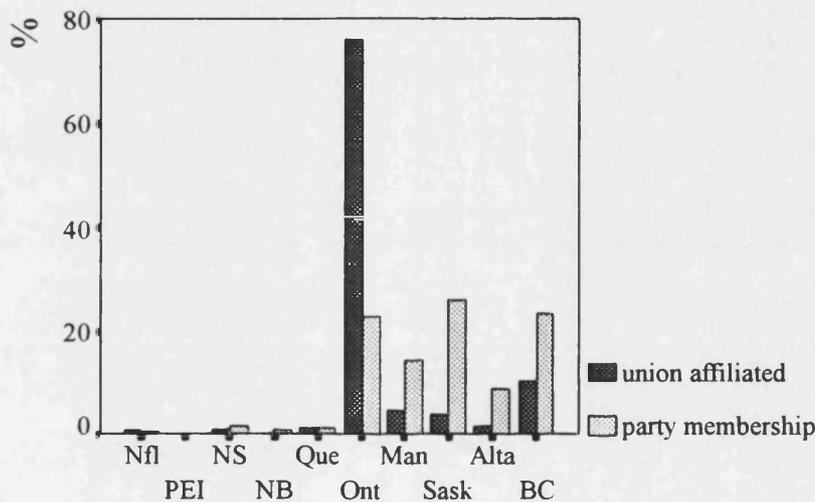
Source: calculated from *Canada votes, 1935-1988*

### The NDP voting and the trade unions

Ontario is not only the industrial centre of Canada but also the centre for the trade union movement, and NDP voting there may indicate some impact of class voting: 'The NDP's new-found strength in Ontario ... represented the injection of class politics ... Neither of the old parties could readily displace the NDP's connection to the union movement' (Johnston *et al.*, 1992: 63). Union-

affiliated members are geographically concentrated in Ontario. In 1987, for example, 76 per cent of unions affiliated with the NDP were located only in Ontario (see Figure 5.13) Even though the NDP party membership was distributed in the western provinces of Ontario, trade union movements were never active outside Ontario. Thus, the impacts of the trade union membership on the NDP voting, if any, would be limited to Ontario. In the other provinces, its impact was small enough to be ignored.

Figure 5.13. Affiliated unions and NDP party membership by province (1987)



Source: computed from Whitehorn (1991: 329, Table 4, 5).

We noted above that the role model for the NDP was the British Labour party. Unlike its predecessor, the CCF, the NDP intended to build up stronger ties with organised labour. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), having formed just before the launch of the NDP, was one of main driving forces to set a working class party. However, the linkage between trade union and the NDP still remained weak. Archer analysed the reasons for weaknesses of the linkage (Archer, 1990: 27-40). First of all, the newly launched party failed to integrate the whole trade union movement. When union affiliations to the NDP

reached their apex in 1963, the percentage of affiliation was only 15 per cent of total union members. Even when the number of union members later went up, the percentage of affiliation declined to less than 10 per cent. So the NDP had not been regarded as the predominant political wing of Canada's labour movement. In addition, the relations between the trade unions and the NDP were individual rather than a formal organisational link.

Secondly, the largest component of NDP party finance came from individual contribution rather than affiliated unions. In 1986, for example, individual contributions provided 61 per cent of the finance for the federal party, whereas affiliation dues composed only 15 per cent. Even though 'other unions' (especially national and international union headquarters) contributed a great deal to the party in election years, individual donations have yielded the lion's share of the party's finance.

Therefore, the relationship between union membership and the NDP voting was never as strong as in Britain. Contrary to the intention to strengthen the organisational linkage between the party and trade union, the NDP did not attract much support from industrial workers: 'Being working class did not increase the odds that a union member would vote NDP. In other words... it did not make a nation-wide class cleavage in voting more likely' (Gidengil, 1989: 583).

Table 5.12. Union status and the NDP vote

election year	union status voted for	non-unionist	members of non-affiliated unions	members of affiliated unions
1979	Liberal	42	41	40
	Conservative	43	32	29
	NDP	12	20	30
1984	Liberal	26	25	8
	Conservative	60	54	54
	NDP	13	20	39

Source: rearranged from Archer (1990: 62-3. Table 12 and Table 13).

As seen in Table 5.12, more members of NDP-affiliated locals members supported the Liberal party in 1979 and the Conservative in 1984 than the NDP. However, union-party affiliation had a moderately positive effect on the NDP vote. In Table 5.12, union members, whether affiliated to the NDP or not, were more likely to vote for the NDP than non-union workers. In particular, NDP voters among affiliated union members were about three times more common than among non-unionists in both elections.

## 5.6. TACTICAL VOTING AND THE NDP SUPPORT

As noted in previous chapters, the logic of 'inverse' tactical voting is based on regional variations in party preferences. And considering the regional variations of party support in Canada, the NDP could attract the 'inverse' tactical voters.

Table 5.13 shows how much the NDP is disadvantaged by tactical voting. Nearly nine in ten respondents who said that they voted tactically for the Liberals really preferred the NDP, as did more than a third of those who voted tactically for Conservatives.

Table 5.13. Tactical voting by parties in Canada (1988)

voted for (%)	Conservative	Liberal	NDP
really preferred			
Conservative	-	2	10
Liberal	38	-	72
NDP	34	87	-
others	28	12	17
(N)	(85)	(52)	(29)

Source: computed from Political Support in Canada Study (PSC) 88.

\* The respondents of 'don't know, not answered' are not included.

\*\* Those answers irrelevant to tactical voting, such as giving the same choice the really preferred party and actual choice of voting are also excluded.

However, the NDP was, at the same time, a beneficiary of tactical voting, in particular from the Liberal identifiers, even though the number of the cases is smaller (N=29). Over two thirds of those who voted tactically for the NDP really preferred the Liberals. Unlike Great Britain, where the slender available evidence suggested that tactical inflows and outflows from the Liberal Democrat support were more or less even, in Canada the outflows due to tactical voting were about two and a half times greater than the inflow. The numbers of self-conscious tactical voters for the NDP is too small for detailed analysis, but half of them came from the western provinces in 1988.

### **5.7. ABSTENTION AND THE NDP VOTING**

Participation in Canadian federal elections is modest by international standards, while not low in an absolute sense (Clarke *et al.*, 1991: 37). The turnout rates of 75-76 per cent in the 1984 and the 1988 elections were close to the historic average. There is some variation of the turnout rate according to spatial and socio-economic factors (Eagles, 1991). For example, the turnout rate in Newfoundland is normally lower, and young and mobile people are also less likely to take part in voting.

The relationship between third party voting and abstention can be well traced in Quebec in 1988. While most Quebecers were in favour of the FTA<sup>1</sup>, their traditional first preference party, the Liberals, took an opposed position on the issue, putting some Quebecers in an awkward position in terms of party choice, and a key issue was whether they could accept the pro-FTA Conservatives as an alternative. Even though the Conservatives had previously been very unpopular in Quebec, the 1984 election brought them an unexpected surge of support. So where the Conservatives had gained support in 1984, pro-FTA voters in Quebec could vote for the Conservatives again in 1988. By contrast, where the share of the Conservative vote did not increase in spite of

the surge of its support across Quebec in 1984 (or where the Liberals defended their votes), pro-FTA Quebec voters could be frustrated. They were likely either to abstain in 1988 because there was no viable alternatives or to vote for a third party. Therefore, we might expect that support for the NDP or other third parties in Quebec would tend to increase where the turnout rate was low or where the Conservatives fared badly in 1984.

Table 5.14. Turnout rate and NDP voting in Quebec, 1988 (regression estimates)

<i>estimate</i>	<i>vote for NDP</i>	<i>vote for Non-major Parties</i>
intercept	46.62	66.30
b <sub>1</sub> (turnout rate)	-0.33	-0.51
b <sub>2</sub> (Conservative1984)	-0.16	-0.22
<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup> = 0.11		
F = 4.38		

$NDP = a + b_1 * Turnout + b_2 * Con84$

NDP : the share of the NDP votes in a constituency (or in a riding in Canadian terms)

Turnout rate : turnout rate in 1988 in a constituency

Con84 : the share of the Conservative votes in 1984 in a constituency

Source: computed from Eagles *et al.* (1991) *The Almanac of Canadian Politics*.

Table 5.14 confirms this hypothesis. The turnout rate was inversely associated with the NDP (-0.33) and all non-major parties (-0.51). The association between turnout rate and non-major parties (as well as the NDP) voting turns out to be fairly strong. The share of the Conservative votes in the previous election (1984) was also inversely related to support for the NDP (-0.16) and third parties (-0.22). This finding partly explains why the odds ratio of the NDP voting in Quebec rose abruptly in 1988 (see Table 5.2 and 5.3). The estimates of the NDP voting in Quebec changed from -0.26 (in 1984) to 0.40 (in 1988). By contrast, the estimate for the Liberals dropped in 1988 (Table 5.3).

## 5.8. CONCLUSION

One of the most distinct characteristics of Canadian politics is the fact that ideology did not make much impact on voting choice. Voters were so flexible that they did not tend to firmly commit themselves to a party. Rather, short-term factors such as election issues and party leadership were more influential, but there were also marked regional patterns in voting. In spite of the 'brokerage' role of major political parties, each party by the 1980s still depended effectively on some parts of the country:

The Liberal party could no longer command regular pluralities virtually anywhere outside Quebec.... the Conservatives had become the dominant party in English Canada but their ability to generate support in Quebec declined... (Johnston *et al.*, 1992: 63)

Although the NDP claimed to be a working class party equivalent to the Labour Party in Britain when it was formed, the party could not compete on even terms in the face of the dominant regional and ethnic cleavage. The NDP has never won any seats in French Canada where the Liberals were a dominant party. Only in English Canada - the west and Ontario - has the NDP secured seats consistently. As a left-wing party, it also has had no strong position or impact on the country's major French/English cleavage (Jackson and Jackson, 1994: 432).

The NDP mainly represented dissatisfied western voters in federal elections, people with a sense of alienation and deprivation against Ontario and Quebec, so that the Liberal party was not taken seriously as a competitor against the locally dominant Conservatives. When the Conservative support increased, the NDP support decreased in the West, and vice versa. By contrast, in Ontario where trade unionists concentrated, the NDP tended to attract more former Liberal supporters.

Figure 5.14. Vote Shifting and political cleavages

1) the 1984 federal election

	English Canada	French Canada
Core	Liberal → Conservative → NDP	Liberal → Conservative
Periphery	NDP → Conservative	

2) the 1988 federal election

	English Canada	French Canada
Core	No Vote → Liberal Yes vote → Con	No vote → Lib Yes vote → Conservative
Periphery	No vote → NDP Yes vote → Con	

Based on the basic pattern of party support introduced in Figure 5.3, vote shifting in the 1984 and the 1988 elections can be better understood. In the 1984 election the Liberals were unpopular and voters wanted to replace the Liberal government. In Quebec where the NDP was weak, the anti-Liberal vote shifted to the Conservatives. By contrast, in the west where the Liberals were historically weak, the swing to the Conservatives eroded NDP support. In Ontario, the Liberals' unpopularity helped the NDP gain 13 seats (compared with 5 seats in the 1980 election), although the Conservatives were the main beneficiary (Figure 5.14-1).

In the 1988 election in which the Free Trade Agreement issue was predominant, voters who supported FTA voted for the Conservatives, but those who were opposed made a different choice in the western provinces and in Ontario. In the west where the Liberals were weak, 'no-voters' tended to

choose the NDP. However, the NDP was not as a viable alternative as the Liberals among 'no-voters' in Ontario (Figure 5.14-2). Most Quebecers were in favour of the FTA, which gave the Conservatives another victory in Quebec.

Basically then, NDP voting depended on negative reasons.

Although the NDP was never feasible ...as a government, it became steadily more important *in a negative sense*. It almost always barred the Conservatives' way to plurality and it often blocked the Liberals from majorities (Johnston *et al.*, 1992: 64-5. Italics added)

The NDP has absorbed discontented voters by accommodating itself to the regional cleavage. In particular, for many voters in the western provinces the NDP was the alternative English Canadian party to the Conservatives, rather than a class-based party. However, the NDP had the same problem as other third parties under the plurality rule electoral systems. Support for the NDP could be ephemeral, as the 1993 plunge in votes demonstrates, which again suggests that it was a temporary choice to express discontent rather than attach support.

## NOTE

1. Opinion about the FTA considerably varied according to regions. As Table 5.15 shows, in Ontario and British Columbia opinion was evenly divided. In the Atlantic region, opponents of FTA outnumbered those in favour of it. By contrast, the balance was greatly tilted in favour of the FTA in Quebec.

Table 5.15. Opinion about the FTA by region (%)

	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairie	British Columbia
in favour	44	70	49	59	50
opposed	56	30	51	42	50
<i>N</i>	336	428	484	287	201

Source: computed from PCS88.

The answers of 'don't know' were excluded.

## Chapter VI

### THE RISE OF A THIRD PARTY IN SOUTH KOREA : THE UNIFICATION NATIONAL PARTY IN THE 1992 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Party politics in South Korea have been dominated by conservative parties since the Korean War, an 'all-out ideological war' (taking place in the hottest period of the 'cold war') from which nothing could escape (Ko, 1995: 289). During the three years of the war more than one million people were killed, and almost all social structures were demolished. Psychologically, the war left deep-seated animosity and distrust between people in both parts of the Korean peninsula.

The long-standing military confrontation with the communist North after the truce has repeatedly strengthened the antagonism towards the communism among people in the South. And the prevalent 'red-complex' was often deliberately exacerbated and reproduced by the authoritarian military regime which lacked the legitimacy of the ruling democratically. The military sought to justify their intervention into politics on the pretext of preserving the country from another possible attack from North Korea.

Apart from the red-complex and its illegitimate political abuse, the suppression of the left was also associated with the industrialisation policy. The authoritarian regime pushed forward a state-led industrialisation policy based on low-income labour from the early 1960s. To keep incomes level low, trade union movements were tightly regulated and controlled by the state apparatus. The repression of labour movement as well as other left-wing political movements was in a tacit agreement with big business groups (*chaebols*). The *chaebols* needed to control demand from working class because:

As the Korean economy was dependent upon foreign investment, it was critical for Korean bourgeoisie to maintain a favourable environment for foreign investors. Thus, the bourgeoisie had to repress industrial workers for the sake of political stability which was a necessary condition for foreign investment (Jaung, 1995: 8).

Consequently, South Korean politics for several decades represented only variants of a strong conservative ideology characterised by anti-communism and a rapid industrialisation policy. In terms of party politics, this 'biased' ideological distribution left effectively no room for left-wing parties. Not only every governing party but also all major opposition parties have been conservative parties. Socialist parties, if any, were oppressed by the military regime, often falsely charged with being allied with the communist North. In spite of democratisation the lingering effects of the 'red-scare' are still so dominant that no socialist party has yet succeeded in winning seats in the legislature.

Yet in other ways party politics in South Korea has been transformed into a different stage along with the democratisation process. This chapter pays attention to the cleavage structure in South Korean society which has influenced elections after democratisation. The sudden rise of the Unification National Party (UNP) is to be understood in the context of the formation of a new cleavage supplementing the old-established one. The first section looks at the background and process of establishing a new cleavage since democratisation began. In the second part, a log-linear model is applied to analyse party support in the 1992 National Assembly Election. In the third part, the reasons for the rise of the UNP support are addressed in the context of a regional cleavage.

## **6.1. DEMOCRATISATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PARTY POLITICS**

After more than 25 years of the authoritarian regime, politics in South Korea entered into a new stage of democracy in 1986. In the wake of the mass protest for democracy, the military regime promised to restore political freedom and rules for fair elections. The democratisation brought about a new environment of party politics, which ultimately served as a conducive condition for the rise of the UNP.

### **Party politics under the authoritarian regime**

Since the first military involvement in 1961, South Korea had been under the military-backed regime. During this period, party competition was progressively established between pro-democracy forces and the authoritarian regime. Opposition parties represented pro-democracy forces, and a ruling party served the regime. Elections were regularly held, where the military regime sought a belated legitimacy for their pattern of rule and tried to mobilise people. As far as the opposition was concerned, elections provided good opportunities to articulate a pro-democracy stance.

It is noteworthy that opposition support often merged into a single party, which usually represented a 'unified' pro-democracy force in the legislative body. Those who supported the opposition tended to vote 'tactically' for the largest opposition party to allow it a leading role. Not surprisingly, a unified single opposition party was seen as more effective when competing against the military regime. Throughout Park Chung-hee's regime (1962-1979), the New Democratic Party was effectively *the* only opposition party competing against the government's Democratic Republic Party. Similarly, the newly formed New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) suddenly emerged as a single unified opposition party against the military-backed Chun Doo-hwan's regime (1981-

1987). The NKDP won 29 per cent of vote in the 1985 election, replacing the existing opposition parties.

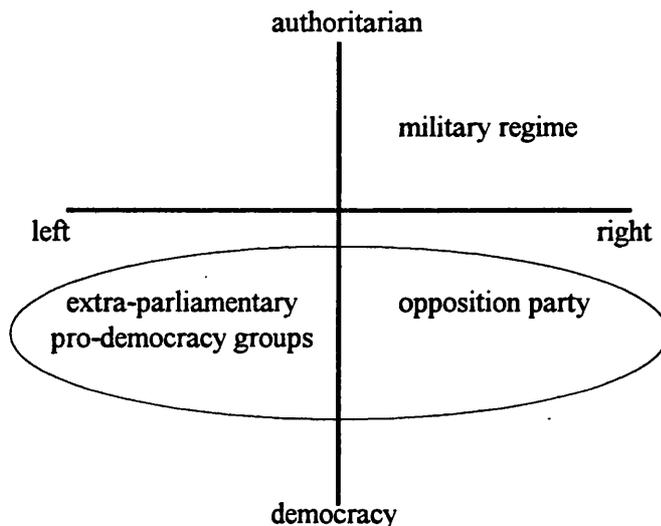
In addition to an opposition party in the legislative body, there developed various kinds of extra-parliamentary and pro-democracy groups fighting the authoritarian regime. Those groups demanded more radical changes than the legislative opposition. Until the 1970s, the pro-democracy movement largely relied upon high profile leaders from religious, cultural groups or intellectuals, and lacked organisational networks. In the 1980s many autonomous organisations such as the labour movement, the student movement and human rights groups were created, and they often attempted to build up an umbrella organisation to unite the entire pro-democracy movement. The ideological position of those movement groups was quite diverse, ranging from the moderate right to extreme left. However, the main trend of the movement generally represented a leftist ideology in South Korean context, advocating the interests of the working class and the poor. The activists in those groups wanted a comprehensive change of society, demanding economic justice as well as political freedom. In spite of the ideological difference, those movement groups often gathered around the 'conservative' legislative opposition for the purpose of fighting the regime. One reason for this co-operation was that the extra-parliamentary groups were not regarded as a responsible alternative by the electorate, and so they could not win electoral support on their own (Im, 1994: 275).

These united efforts played a critical role particularly in the 1985 election, which provided the initial momentum for democratisation. At this point, the extra-parliamentary groups launched a pro-democracy initiative. Those group members did not trust the then legislative opposition because they saw them as 'part of the regime', serving as democratic embellishment. The opposition parties had been scornfully called 'the second (infantry) company and the third company', following the ruling party of 'the first company'. The extra-parliamentary opposition groups greatly contributed to the electoral

breakthrough of the New Korea Democratic Party in the 1985 election. The new official opposition party was effectively led by two well-known opposition leaders - Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. Both had been forced to stay out of politics once a new military faction took over in 1981. In the wake of the unexpected electoral breakthrough, the NKDP took up the initiative of the pro-democracy movement.

Figure 6.1 represents party politics during the authoritarian periods, particularly in the 1980s. The vertical axis stands for the authoritarian-democracy cleavage and the horizontal axis represents the left-right cleavage. In spite of the rapid industrialisation and the consequent growth of working class, the left-right cleavage was not very salient. The extra-parliamentary groups generally represented the leftist ideology, but their efforts did not result in a class-based party politics. The dominant cleavage before democratisation was along the authoritarian-democracy axis. The opposition party and the extra-parliamentary forces formed a kind of alliance in spite of their ideological differences, united against the military regime.

Figure 6.1. Cleavage structure during the authoritarian periods (in the 1980s)



## **Democratisation through compromise between conservative parties**

The most important election platform of the NKDP in the 1985 election was reform of the presidential election system. The existing rule provided for an indirect election of South Korea's powerful President by an electoral college. Many people believed that a change to a direct election would be fairer and was essential to establish a democracy. Besides, opposition leaders reckoned that electoral reform would likely bring them electoral victories, making it an immediate priority. To win a direct presidential election, it is necessary to have a nationally well-known candidate. The opposition party had two well-known leaders, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. By contrast, it was unlikely that an authoritarian leader would allow a would-be competitor for power to stay within the regime.

Even though the extra-parliamentary groups also saw electoral reform as the best way to end the military rule, they had a more radical agenda of the comprehensive transformation of society, emphasising a more equal distribution of wealth. As Choi (1993: 30) pointed out about the labour movement in the 1980s, 'the collective vision that emerged from the workers' struggles was radically egalitarian and communitarian'. Even though those groups wanted the NKDP to adopt their agenda, the party was reluctant to embrace such 'radical' demands.

The mass protest for democratisation reached its apogee in the summer of 1987, and the regime finally promised to restore political freedom and to accept the demands for a directly elected president. However, the mass protest ended in a compromise (see C-S Ahn, 1994; Im, 1994, 253-297). The opposition leaders accepted the pact offered by the regime instead of asking for an unconditional surrender. The compromise could not ultimately satisfy the extra-parliamentary groups because it was a political pact between the conservative parties (Y-H Kim, 1994: 98), ignoring 'economic democracy' on which the extra-parliamentary groups had strongly insisted.

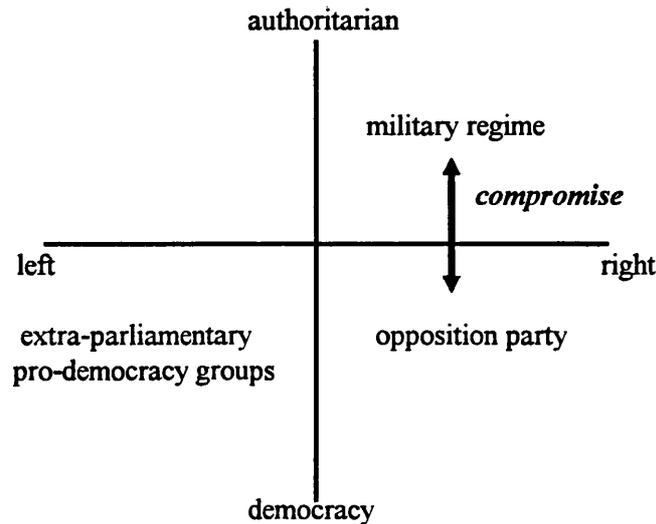
There may be two reasons why 'the pact' could be agreed, alienating the extra-parliamentary groups. First, the NKDP (or as it was renamed the Unification Democratic Party<sup>1</sup>: UDP) was inherently a conservative party, although the Party tried to accommodate various demands including those of the left. In ideological terms, there was little difference between the ruling Democratic Justice Party and the opposition. The opposition leaders needed new electoral rules in order to win government. Thus, by accepting the compromise the opposition leaders obtained what they claimed through the democratic struggle against the military regime. The opposition party as well as the ruling party did not want any revolutionary change of the existing political and economic system. Moreover, since the legislative opposition saw its electoral support in the 1985 election as an approval of its party platform of 'electoral reform to a direct presidential election', it did not need to listen to demands from the extra-parliamentary groups.

Secondly, even though politicians in the opposition party had fought the military regime, they were also part of the South Korean establishment, and so had no real wish for a radical change. Above all, the opposition leaders were office-seekers who wanted to maximise their chances of forming a government. When they strongly believed that they would win under the new rule, it was very unlikely they would refuse the compromise. In fact, each of the two opposition leaders, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung firmly believed that his side would shorten the odds respectively. Figure 6.2 shows the compromise within the conservative bloc, leaving aside the extra-parliamentary groups isolated on the left.

Consequently, this compromise within the conservative blocs alienated the left, consolidating the invincible conservative dominance of South Korean politics. In spite of its active role in the pro-democracy movement, demands from the extra-parliamentary groups were ignored by their former allies. After the compromise, when industrial action erupted in the wake of democratisation, the legislative opposition neglected trade-unionists' demands,

pleading instead for moderation. The party leaders worried that a clumsy intervention would lose conservative voters.

Figure 6.2. Compromise between the conservative parties



### Regionalism and the formation of the DLP

In spite of the ideological bias in Korean politics, the compromise within the conservative bloc brought about some significant changes. First, the compromise weakened the authoritarian-democracy cleavage. During the authoritarian period, the demand for democracy used to be the most effective electoral issue for the opposition. Once the compromise had been made, the cleavage became less relevant. Although the extra-parliamentary groups insisted on clearing out the old guard of the past authoritarian regimes, many voters were not seriously worried about this issue.

Secondly, the political influence of the extra-parliamentary groups was considerably reduced. Since the conservative parties took the initiative during the critical transition period, those groups were left behind. Along with democratisation, the trade union movement gained strong momentum, and the

need for building a working class party increased. However, all working class parties (or candidates) failed to be elected, except for one candidate in a local election. The elections confirmed the conservative dominance of politics. A plurality rule electoral system, newly employed for legislative elections, also contributed to barring a successful entry by any new working class party (Kang, 1996).

What is worse, the extra-parliamentary pro-democracy groups were severely divided over the relationship with the opposition leaders and the policy line. Even though those groups provided the initial momentum of the pro-democracy movement, they did not maintain their unity as a single force any more. Some of the leading figures were absorbed into the opposition parties, which further weakened the prospect of the leftist movements.

Thirdly, a new regional cleavage between Kyongsang and Cholla became visible. This is a kind of a core-periphery cleavage because the Cholla region historically has been alienated from central politics. The authoritarian regime, all of whom came from the Kyongsang region, capitalised on the historical discrimination against Cholla to consolidate support from the non-Cholla regions. In addition, the state-led industrialisation policies resulted in uneven regional economic development, which systematically favoured the Kyongsang region (M-H Kim, 1995). Authoritarian leaders such as Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan usually recruited political elites from their home region, Kyongsang. By contrast, Kim Dae-jung had been oppressed by the regime, becoming a political symbol of the Cholla region, his homebase.

Election results after democratisation show that voters were firmly aligned along the regional division. In the first presidential election after democratisation in December 1987, Roh Tae-woo, a former military general, was elected president. His victory was in large part attributable to the disunity of the opposition as well as to the regional cleavage. The four candidates standing in the presidential election each depended on support from different parts of the country.

Later the 1988 National Assembly Election repeated the same pattern as the previous presidential election, as Table 6.1 shows. The seats in competition were divided between the four parties led by the four presidential candidates. The Democratic Justice Party (DJP), the military-backed ruling party, dominated in North Kyongsang. The Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), led by Kim Young-sam, won the lion's share of seats and votes in South Kyongsang; the Party of Peace and Democracy (PPD), led by Kim Dae-jung, dominated Cholla whilst the New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP), led by Kim Jong-pil, one of the leading members of the 1961 military coup, gained much support in Chungchong. Strong regionalist sentiment sweeping the Cholla and Kyongsang regions caused a bandwagon effect among Chungchong voters, helping Kim Jong-pil to revive politically.

Table 6.1 . The distribution of seats in the 1988 National Assembly Election<sup>1</sup>

party(leader) region	DJP (Roh Tae-woo)	RDP (Kim Young-sam)	PPD (Kim Dae-jung)	NDRP (Kim Jong-pil)
Seoul	10	10	17	3
Chungbu <sup>2</sup>	30	8	1	7
Chungchong	9	2	0	15
N. Kyongsang	25	2	0	2
S. Kyongsang	13	23	0	0
Cholla	0	0	36	0
additional seats	38	13	16	8
<i>Seat total</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>59<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>70</i>	<i>35</i>

Source: Central Election Management Commission, 1988.

1. Apart from the four parties, independent candidates won nine seats, and a minor party secured one seat in the constituency level.

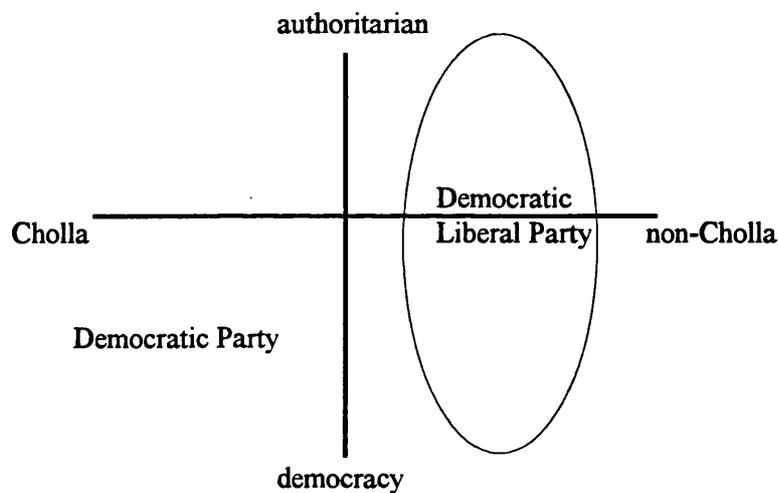
2. includes Incheon, Kyonggi, Kangwon, and Incheon.

3. The RDP won one seat in Cheju Island. The remaining two seats in Cheju were won by independent candidates.

However, regionalism took a further twist when three of the four parties - the DJP, the PPD and the NDRP - decided to formally merge, forming the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) in 1990. The main reason behind the merger

was very practical. From the ruling DJP's point of view, the immediate purpose of the merger was to establish a majority in the legislature because the ruling party failed to win the majority of seats on its own. On the other hand, Kim Young-sam, the RDP's leader, believed that the merger would increase his chances of winning the next presidency.

Figure 6.3. Emergence of regional cleavage before the 1992 South Korean National Assembly Election

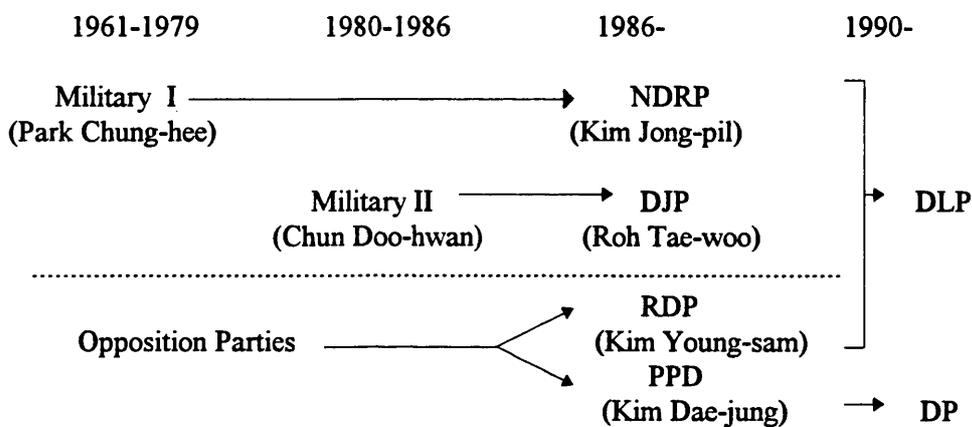


The merger alienated Cholla, the south-western part of the country upon which the PPD overwhelmingly depended. The newly-formed party (DLP) was a kind of a ruling coalition against the opposition PPD, which was renamed the Democratic Party (DP) after absorbing a small party. Thus, the 1992 election became a competition between a party of Cholla and a non-Cholla coalition.

This merger meant that the former authoritarian regime and part of the opposition party were now united into a coalition force (see Figure 6.3 and 6.4). Not surprisingly, the decision provoked strong opposition particularly from the extra-parliamentary groups, who regarded Kim Yong-sam's decision to join the DLP as a betrayal. However, this merger signified that the old conflict between the authoritarian and pro-democracy forces was significantly

weakened. In spite of the widespread distrust and dissatisfaction in the wake of the launch of the DLP, politicians who joined the DLP believed that the issue of establishing democracy was no longer salient. What mattered politically was the regional cleavage. The 1992 election result showed that their calculation was right.

Figure 6.4. Formation of the DLP in a historical perspective



## 6.2. VOTING CHOICE IN THE 1992 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION

The 1992 National Assembly Election confirmed the dominance of the regional cleavage rather than the previous authoritarianism vs democracy cleavage. As the election results suggest (Table 6.2 and Figure 6.5), it is clear that the competition was made between a party of Cholla and a non-Cholla coalition. The DLP, the non-Cholla ruling coalition, gathered more than 45 per cent of the votes in Kyongsang and Chungchong regions where the former three parties of the DLP had won much support in the previous elections. However, the DLP remained weak in Cholla, winning only two seats. By contrast, the Democratic Party earned 64 per cent of the Cholla region's votes and secured

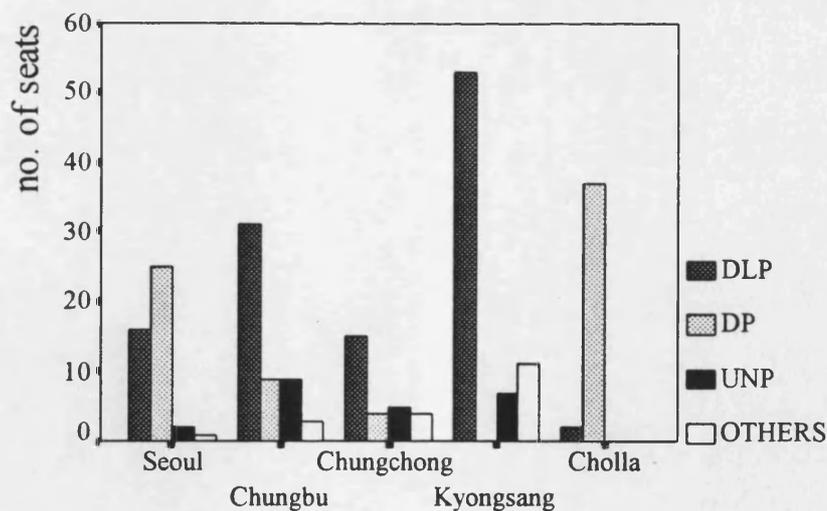
all but two of the seats, whereas they had fairly poor results in all the other places except the capital city, Seoul. The DP's relatively good result in Seoul was attributable partly to a large number of immigrants from Cholla. In addition, Seoul residents tend to be more critical of government performance. However, the DP was unpopular in Kyongsang region, the major regional rival with Cholla, winning only one eighth of the vote.

Table 6.2. Share of vote in the 1992 National Assembly Election (%)

region*	DLP	DP	UNP	others
Seoul	35	37	19	4
Chungbu	37	25	24	10
Chungchong	45	23	20	16
Kyongsang	48	12	19	18
Cholla	22	64	5	8
Mean	39	29	17	12

\* Votes in Cheju Island are excluded

Figure 6.5. Distribution of seats to parties by region in the 1992 National Assembly Election



\* Four seats for Cheju Island are excluded.

\*\* Others were independent candidates except one seat taken by a small party in Seoul.

The electoral result in the Chungbu region indicates that the cleavage was extended to non-Cholla regions beyond the Cholla-Kyongsang rivalry. The DLP won 31 seats in Chungbu whereas the DP earned only 9 seats. As Lee pointed out,

regionalist feelings spiralled as the parties and candidates concentrated on appealing to the loyalties of their home region. The strongest regional cleavages are between Cholla people and non-Cholla people, and specifically the high self-esteem of the Cholla people and the corresponding distrust of them by non-Cholla people.

(K-Y Lee, 1994: 754)

However, the DP benefitted more than any of the other parties from the plurality rule electoral system, owing to its geographically concentrated support. By contrast, the DLP lost a considerable number of seats, which was widely regarded as a serious defeat for the government.

The party which showed the most impressive electoral performance in 1992, however, was the Unification National Party (UNP). Set up just two months before the election, the UNP leapt to a strong third party placing from nowhere by winning 24 seats at the constituency level, and a further seven seats at the top-up seats stage, securing 31 seats in total, a sudden success described as a 'Cinderella-like progress' (Park, 1993a: 6). Given the fact that the UNP was not directly involved in the regional rivalry between Cholla and non-Cholla, its regional pattern support is quite interesting. The party gained 13 seats in the Kyongsang and Chungchong regions, where the three former parties within the DLP used to be strong. By contrast, the party mustered only 5 per cent of votes and won no seats in the Cholla region. This pattern indicates that the UNP was also strongly influenced by the regional cleavage.

### **Voters' choice in the 1992 election : log-linear analysis**

To analyse the factors which influenced voters' choice, log-linear analysis was applied. Log-linear analysis seeks models to express the expected cell frequency as an additive function of several 'effects' expressed in terms of odds ratio (Demaris, 1992: 6-7). In log-linear analysis, the hypothesised model can be confirmed by a small value relative to the degree of freedom.

Three independent variables were analysed here - region (R); social status (S), which should reflect class politics influences if there are any; and attitude (A) toward the merger of the three parties into the DLP, tapping the continuing effects of the authoritarianism vs democracy cleavage. The data set used here was the 14th Korean National Assembly Election Study (hereafter KES92). (For the details, see Appendix 1). Regional categories (R) were collapsed into 5 regions: Seoul, Chungbu (including Kyonggi, Kangwon, and Inchon), Chungchong, Kyongsang and Cholla. Voting choice (V) contained four categories: the three parties, the DLP, DP and UNP, and 'Others' (most of whom were independent candidates). Social status (S) was also reduced to four categories: professional/ managerial, middle, manual, and people outside the labour force. Attitude (A) toward the merger of the three party into the DLP was originally 5 levels of ordinal categories (including 'don't know'), but these were collapsed into two categories: positive and negative. Because the 'don't know' respondents showed quite similar party preferences to those who had a positive attitude, they are included in the category of 'positive'. The result is shown in Table 6.3.

The model of all two-way effects [VR, VA, VS, RA, RS, AS] cannot be improved significantly by the addition of any single term nor can any possible term be removed from this model without a significant loss of fit. Standardised residuals also indicates that there are few significant deviations between the observed cell frequencies and the frequencies expected under this model. According to Knoke and Burke a log-linear model with a p-value between 0.10

and 0.35 can be accepted as fitting the data (1985: 31). The p-value of this model [VR, VA, VS, RA, RS, AS] comfortably fell into that range, and it can be accepted as the 'best' available fit with the data.

Table 6.3. Selected log-linear models

	model	likelihood ratio $\chi^2$	df	p
(1)	[VR,VA,VS]	208.4	124	.000
(2)	[VR,VA,VS,RA] <i>add [RA] to (1)</i>	191.1 17.3	120 4	.000 .001
(3)	[VR,VA,VS,RA,RS] <i>add [RS] to (2)</i>	139.0 52.1	108 12	.024 .000
(4)	[VR,VA,VS,RA,RS,AS] <i>add [AS] to (3)</i>	117.8 21.2	105 3	.185 .000
(5)	[VA,RA,AS,VRS] <i>add [VRS] to (4)</i>	70.7 47.1	69 36	.422 .102
(6)	[VR,VA,VS,RAS] <i>add [RAS] to (4)</i>	105.8 12.0	93 12	.172 .443
(7)	[VR,RA,RS,VAS] <i>add [VAS] to (4)</i>	111.7 6.1	96 9	.131 .726
(8)	[VS,RS,AS,VRA] <i>add [VRA] to (4)</i>	110.1 7.7	93 12	.109 .807

So voting choice was associated with all the three other variables. However, given the conservative dominance and little ideological difference between parties, the effect of social status needs a further examination to see whether it indicates effect of class politics. To measure the separate effects of each variable on voting choice, a logit model was employed - which can provide parameter estimates to measure the strength of each factor. The dependent variable here is voting choice (V) with R, S and A as independent variables. The results are shown in Table 6.4.

These tables provide some interesting points. First, the logit estimates confirm that the regional cleavage dominated the 1992 election. Party choice clearly varied according to region, particularly between the DP and the other parties. In Cholla, the estimate of the DP was 3.97 while the DLP was 0.56. That is, the odds of voting for the DP among Cholla voters were about four times what would be expected if region locations were unrelated to voting. By contrast, the estimates of the DP were less than 1 in all the other regions except Seoul. Particularly in Kyongsang region, the estimate of the DP was just 0.40. Compared with other parties, the DLP won votes evenly across the other regions except Cholla. Kyongsang voters were more likely to vote for the DLP (its estimate was 1.59). Support for the UNP was also limited in non-Cholla areas. The new party appealed especially to Chungbu voters.

Secondly, manual workers tended to vote for the DLP 1.56 times more than would be expected if social status was not related to voting. By contrast, upper class voters preferred 'non-major' parties. The estimate of professional/managerial category for 'Others' is 1.70, and for the UNP 1.55. Given that the DLP was perceived to be ideologically further to the right than the main opposition DP, this result confirms the weakness of left-right ideological influences on Korean party politics. Although voting choice was different between social status as the log-linear model in Table 6.3 suggested, the concept of class voting does not seem suitable to explain much Korean voting behaviour.

Thirdly, voters' attitude toward the merger of the three parties into the DLP was another crucial determinant of voting. Those who favoured the merger were about twice as likely to vote for the Party. By contrast, those who were opposed to the merger were likely to vote for other parties. The estimate of negative attitude for DP voters is 1.75. The estimate for the UNP is 1.45 and the estimate for 'Others' is 1.27. This suggests that the launch of the DLP provoked considerable dissatisfaction amongst its component parties' previous supporters, which lead appreciable numbers to defect.

Fourthly, the patterns of the estimates between the UNP and ‘Others’ are quite similar. Those who took a negative attitude toward the merger were more likely to vote for the UNP or Others. In terms of social status, upper class voters tended to choose either the UNP or ‘Others’ while the estimates for working class people are relatively low. Regionally, both the UNP and ‘Others’ were unpopular in Cholla. In non-Cholla regions the UNP and the ‘Others’ seem to divide support. In Seoul and Chungbu, the UNP won relatively good results. In Kyongsang and Chungchong, the ‘Others’ gained more support. In sum, both the UNP and ‘Others’ drew support from those people who were from upper class backgrounds, lived in non-Cholla regions, and had a negative attitude towards the DLP.

Table 6.4. Parameter estimate of voting choice by the logit model

A) Parameter estimate of voting choice for the DLP

effect	additive estimate ( $\tau$ )	multiplicative estimate ( $e^{\tau}$ )	z-ratio
Intercept	-0.89		-10.77
Regions			
Seoul	-0.02	0.98	-0.16
Chungbu	0.10	1.10	-0.73
Chungchong	0.04	1.05	0.24
Kyongsang	0.46	1.59	3.86
Cholla	-0.58	0.56	-3.03
Social Status			
professional/managerial	-0.28	0.76	-1.79
middle	-0.03	0.97	-0.28
manual	0.45	1.56	3.73
outside labour force	-0.13	0.87	-1.24
Attitude toward the merger			
negative	-0.71	0.49	-10.14
positive	0.71	2.03	10.14
-2 Log likelihood = 1295.53 Chi-Square = 170.00 (p < 0.01) R <sup>2</sup> <sub>L</sub> = 0.12 N = 1171			

B) Parameter estimate of voting choice for the DP

effect	additive estimate ( $\tau$ )	multiplicative estimate ( $e^{\tau}$ )	z-ratio
Intercept	-1.16		-12.81
Regions			
Seoul	0.51	1.67	4.05
Chungbu	-0.60	0.55	-4.01
Chungchong	-0.37	0.69	-1.86
Kyongsang	-0.92	0.40	-5.95
Cholla	1.38	3.97	8.92
Social Status			
professional/managerial	-0.32	0.73	-2.00
middle	-0.01	0.99	-0.07
manual	0.08	1.08	0.63
outside labour force	0.24	1.27	2.13
Attitude toward the merger			
negative	0.56	1.75	7.02
positive	-0.56	0.57	-7.02
<p>-2 Log likelihood = 1169.53  Chi-Square = 221.28 (p &lt; 0.01)  <math>R^2_L = 0.16</math>  N = 1171</p>			

C) Parameter estimate of voting choice for the UNP

effect	additive estimate ( $\tau$ )	multiplicative estimate ( $e^{\tau}$ )	z-ratio
Intercept	-2.60		-11.64
Regions			
Seoul	0.50	1.65	1.94
Chungbu	1.41	4.10	5.75
Chungchong	0.62	1.86	1.97
Kyongsang	0.11	1.12	0.39
Cholla	-2.64	0.07	-3.26
Social Status			
professional/managerial	0.44	1.55	2.46
middle	-0.07	0.93	-0.40
manual	-0.46	0.63	-2.47
outside labour force	0.09	1.09	0.64
Attitude toward the merger			
negative	0.37	1.45	3.70
positive	-0.37	0.69	-3.70
<p>-2 Log likelihood = 781.69  Chi-Square = 95.34 (p &lt; 0.01)  <math>R^2_L = 0.11</math>  N = 1171</p>			

D) Parameter estimate of voting choice for Others

effect	additive estimate ( $\tau$ )	multiplicative estimate ( $e^{\tau}$ )	z-ratio
Intercept	-2.36		-18.28
Regions			
Seoul	-1.24	0.29	-4.25
Chungbu	-0.11	0.90	-0.52
Chungchong	1.05	2.86	4.70
Kyongsang	0.92	2.51	5.34
Cholla	-0.61	0.54	-1.98
Social Status			
professional/managerial	0.53	1.70	2.73
middle	0.01	1.01	0.06
manual	-0.34	0.71	-1.90
outside labour force	-0.20	0.82	-1.23
Attitude toward the merger			
negative	0.24	1.27	2.25
positive	-0.24	0.79	-2.25

-2 Log likelihood = 699.60  
 Chi-Square = 70.06 (p < 0.01)  
 $R^2_L = 0.09$   
 N = 1171

\* Z-ratio exceeding  $\pm 1.96$  would be considered significant.

The logit model confirms that the regional cleavage prevailed in the 1992 election. Support not only for the two major parties but also for the UNP and 'Others' was greatly affected by regional sentiment. Social status turns out to be relevant, but its effects does not entail class politics. Rather, the voting effect of social status seemed to represented different reactions across occupational grades to the formation of the DLP. All these findings suggest that the emergence of regional cleavage and the foundation of the DLP had a powerful influence on the growth in support for the new UNP.

### **6.3. UNP SUPPORT AND THE 1992 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION**

The prevalence of regional cleavage in 1992 indicates that immobility of party choice is based on geographically uneven distribution of preferences. The Cholla region is apparently a one-party dominant region for the opposition Democratic Party (previously called the PPD in the 1988 election). Cholla voters' first preference was invariably the DP because it was effectively perceived as a party representing Cholla. By contrast, the Democratic Liberal Party was regarded as the representative of non-Cholla regions, though this link was not so strong. Strictly speaking, the non-Cholla regions are so diverse that it is not feasible to define them as a one-party dominant region. However, in spite of the less dominant position of the DLP, voters in non-Cholla regions usually shared a 'biased' preference against the DP.

The immobility of party choice in two-party politics under plurality rule must mean that viable voting alternatives are lacking when voters become disaffected their traditional party. Even in non-Cholla regions, the formation of the DLP generally provoked dissatisfaction, and the poor performance of the incumbent government caused widespread concern . But dislike of the DP made many non-Cholla voters highly reluctant to support them, despite their dissatisfaction. The regional cleavage especially hindered the DP from being a viable alternative to the unpopular DLP in three regions - North and South Kyongsang and Chungchong, on which the three former parties of the DLP had politically depended. The remaining choice was to abstain or vote for other parties (or independent candidates).

By contrast, facing the 1992 election, the DP at first remained the only opposition party to the DLP. Many Cholla voters were unhappy with the DP's political isolation - the appearance of all other parties 'ganging up' against it - which led to stronger political ties between the DP and the region's voters. This feeling was reinforced by the widely perceived mismanagement of the national

economy by the Roh Tae-woo government. Such a strong regional tie had thus developed that the UNP (once formed) unable to compete effectively in Cholla. Besides, Cholla voters, who strongly felt that they had been deprived in the economic development process, may have consider the UNP to be another political wing of the South Korean establishment nurtured by the former regime, because the UNP depended heavily on corporations of the Hyundai Group.

As the logit model in the previous section suggested, the patterns of support were quite similar between the UNP and independent candidates. Three quarters of the twenty-one successful independent candidates were elected in the regions upon which the ruling DLP depended - Kyongsang and Chungchong, as seen in Table 6.5. By contrast, no independent candidates or UNP candidates were successful in Cholla.

Table 6.5. Successful independent candidates by region

region	Kyongsang	Chungchong	Cholla	other regions <sup>1</sup>
independent seats	11	4	0	7 <sup>2</sup>
UNP seats	7	6	0	11

1. included Seoul, Kyonggi, Inchon, Kangwon and Cheju.

2. included one seat won by a small party candidate.

The UNP vote was basically dependent on negative reactions against the DLP and the Roh government, as the logit estimates showed. However, given the other options such as abstention or voting for independent candidates, the choice of the UNP must have needed some attraction. As Heath *et al.* pointed out about support for the British Liberal Democrats, protest voting needs 'an element of attraction as well as disaffection' (1985: 114). This notion can also be applied to the case of the UNP voting.

## The perceived image of the UNP

When the UNP was launched, its pro-business policies and heavy dependency upon the Hyundai Group provoked strong psychological antagonism as well as some expectation. Many people worried that the influence of *chaebols* would even increase if the UNP succeeded in taking over political power. The UNP was often critically dubbed as '*Chaebol-dang* (the conglomerate party)'. Particularly, the concern about deepening 'government-business collusion' was the most frequent response from those who had negative views about the UNP's foundation, as seen in Table 6.6. In spite of the public concerns about 'deepening government-business collusion', how did the UNP succeed in attracting voters?

Table 6.6. Reasons for negative responses to the UNP

<i>Why do you think the launch of the UNP undesirable?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
It may deepen government-business collusion	78
It does not look serious about politics	6
It is likely to be absorbed into the ruling party	4
Other reasons	12

Source: HRI, *Sisa Opinion* (May 1992).

The survey was conducted during January 1992, and it was limited to residents in Seoul.

The question above was asked open-ended.

First of all, the UNP projected a fresh image to voters, providing those who were sick of politics with a fresh impression 'by default' because the new party had nothing to do with the existing 'soiled' politics. Table 6.7 confirms this image of freshness. Each party has a distinctive reason for support. Most supporters for the ruling DLP gave serious consideration to 'political stability', which may be the first concern of the establishment. The DP identifiers saw 'democratisation' as an overriding issue, a comprehensible response since the DP was the only party to remain in the side of democracy along the old

authoritarian-democracy axis. By contrast, the leading reason cited by UNP identifiers was its fresh image. If the category of 'clean politics' can be regarded as a similar answer (because clean politics was what people expected from a new party), almost half of the UNP identifiers expected 'something new' in politics from the UNP.

One reason for the party's fresh image may be related to its business-like style of politics. The UNP was the first party to introduce the concept of 'efficiency' into South Korean politics. The conglomerate-dependent party adapted some know-how of business-management to its election campaign. Many former Hyundai staff took key posts in the campaign and helped develop party policies. Even though it is doubtful how effectively its election campaign helped to attract votes, this business-like approach to the election campaign drew widespread attention from the public, and helped the UNP to project a fresh image to the electorate.

Table 6.7. Reasons for supporting each party, given by its supporters (%)

<i>reason for support</i>	<i>supported party</i>		
	<i>DLP</i>	<i>DP</i>	<i>UNP</i>
economic recovery	22	8	34
political stability	43	10	2
democratisation	9	39	5
clean politics	3	12	11
fresh image	1	4	36
distribution of wealth	0	6	4
local interests	18	18	8
good candidates	4	2	1
other reasons	1	1	1
	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: KES92 cross-section survey.

However, a more important reason for the UNP's fresh image was that many of the former democracy supporters felt betrayed by the DLP merger, regarding it a product of political bargaining in smoke-filled rooms, without

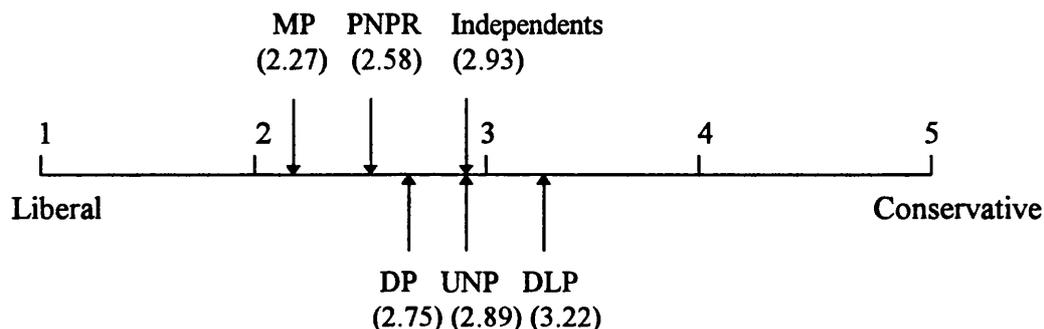
voters' mandate. Many pro-democracy activists believed that the merger granted members of the authoritarian regime a political pardon. The merger also provoked anger among those who supported the authoritarian regime because they did not like the uneasy coalition. The merger was widely believed to be designed for winning elections by forcing voters to make a choice between two competing regions. The UNP was not dragged into the turmoil over the merger, because the party was set up long after the launch of the DLP. By distancing itself from the regional conflict, the UNP tried to project an image of freshness to the public who expected new parties free from 'soiled region-based politics'. That is, 'freshness' meant not being involved in the existing regional rivalry.

The UNP's image as an acceptable alternative can also be explained in terms of ideology. Given that the party was basically originated on, and still depended on a large business group, the Hyundai Group, its position was understood to represent the interests of big business. The UNP's economic policies, such as its anti-intervention policy, and the lack of any serious comments on the rights of industrial workers and trade unionism in its election platforms, suggested strong pro-*chaebol* orientation. One political scientist criticised its ideological position as 'a fraction of the neo-liberalistic monopoly capitalists' (Chong, 1992. quoted in Yang, 1995: 96). Generally speaking, the ideological position of the UNP was more conservative than that of the DLP (for example, see Huber and Inglehart, 1995: 100. Appendix 2).

Figure 6.6 demonstrates voters' ideological attitude (mean position) by their party choice. As expected, supporters of the ruling DLP were conservative voters. The most liberal voters supported a socialist party, *Minjungdang* (the Mass Party: MP). Given the still strong 'red-complex', it is understandable that even the position of MP voters was not far away from the centre. In fact, the feasible ideological distance was very narrow. Those who supported the main opposition Democratic Party positioned in the centre-left. Interestingly, the ideological position of UNP voters was almost exactly at the centre between the

DLP and the DP. UNP supporters did not have any strong ideological preferences, in spite of its strong connection to the Hyundai Group, its pro-business policies and conservatism.

Figure 6.6. Voters' Ideological Attitude by Party Support (mean position)



voters' ideological attitude scored:

- 5 - very conservative
- 4 - conservative
- 3 - in the middle
- 2 - liberal
- 1 - very liberal

Source: calculated from J-B Lee (1992: 124. Table 7).

DLP - Democratic Liberal Party ; DP - Democratic Party ; UNP - Unification National Party ; MP - Mass Party (Minjungdang) ; PNPR - Party for New Political Reform

Students are a good example for understanding the UNP's image as a 'fresh, neutral and acceptable' alternative (Table 6.8). Students used to be an uncompromising driving force in the pro-democracy movement against the military regime. They tended to take a hostile position against the establishment and demanded radical changes. Ideologically, many of them favoured the left. Understandably, the ruling DLP was very unpopular among students; for them, the DLP was a mere combination of the old guard and some traitors to the democracy movement. Only 2 per cent of students surveyed voted the DLP. By contrast, a half of students chose the opposition DP which still remained on the side of democracy in the axis of the old cleavage between the authoritarian regime and democracy (see Figure 6.3).

Table 6.8. Voting choice by students

party	DLP	DP	UNP	others	
per cent	2	50	28	20	100 (N=53)

Source: KES92.

This table excludes 'don't know/ not answered'.

It is rather surprising that nearly three in every ten students voted for the UNP, despite its pro-business party and conservative orientation, suggesting that they were also not free from the immobility of party choice created by regionalism. Many students saw the DP as more 'a party of Cholla' rather than 'a vehicle for democracy'. Instead, the UNP, neither the first nor the least preferred party, could be a second choice.

Voters who were in favour of the UNP tended to consider the party to be at least 'a less tainted' or 'a (regionally) neutral or impartial alternative' rather than a political wing of a certain interest or ideology. This kind of perception enabled voters to make a positive evaluation of the achievement and success of the Hyundai Group and its leader Chung. The position of independent candidates was again similar to the UNP's position.

### **Election issues and the UNP support**

A single issue of the economy dominated the 1992 election, with over half of respondents in Table 6.9 choosing 'economic issues such as inflation, recession, housing price' as the most important problem. By contrast, political issues such as political reform and democratisation were much less salient. The percentage rating the economy as the most serious problem was highest among the UNP supporters. Since the image of the UNP could not effectively be separated from that of the Hyundai Group, the widely-known success stories about the Hyundai Group helped to boost the UNP's credibility on economic management. The

party was believed to be more competent on economic issues, even though its competence in government had never been tested. The UNP tried to promote its image as 'a practical party for trouble-shooting', deliberately differentiating itself from other parties which were criticised for being engrossed in partisan struggle.

Table 6.9. Election issues and party support

	(%)				
Issue \ party choice	DLP	DP	UNP	others	<i>mean</i>
economy	59	55	63	46	57
political issues	10	13	12	11	11
social issues	13	12	12	16	13
other issues	18	21	12	28	19
	100	101	99	101	100

Source: computed from KES92.

The question was " Which would you think is the most important problem facing the country? Select TWO issues and indicate 1 and 2 according to the seriousness". Originally, the question had 13 categories, but here it collapsed into four categories, dealing with only first choices.

Concerns about the gloomy prospect of the national economy were well-founded. From 1986 to 1988 the South Korean economy was booming and as Table 6.10 shows, during that period the inflation rate was low, GNP growth rate was higher than 12 per cent per year, and the trade surplus was increasing, reaching a peak in 1988. However, such favourable economic conditions abruptly changed in 1989. The economy went into a recession with high inflation and low growth. For those accustomed to rapid economic growth since 1970s, the bleak economic situation was ominous enough to cause public dissatisfaction with the government's performance. In addition, the growing trade deficit precipitated serious concerns about national economic prospects because of South Korea's dependence upon foreign trade. Every opinion poll surveyed before the 1992 legislative election repeatedly showed public concern about the gloomy future of the national economy.

Table 6.10. Selective Indices of South Korean Economy, 1985-1991

year	Consumer Price Index	GNP growth rate (%)	Balance of Payment (billion \$)
1985	100	7	-1
1986	103	13	5
1987	106	13	10
1988	113	12	14
1989	120	7	5
1990	130	9	-2
1991	143	8	-9

Source: Bank of Korea.

It was a prevalent belief that 'the economic crisis' was principally caused by the neglect and indolence of the government party and the president, Roh Tae-woo. Politicians were blamed for only concerning the partisan interests, and the merger into the DLP was often interpreted as the evidence. That is, the formation of the DLP was not popular from the outset. As Park (1993a: 12). pointed out:

What voters felt most keenly was misrule and maladministration under Roh's leadership. The policy failures brought about instability in prices and livelihood, inconsistency in the housing policy, the accumulation of a deficit in the balance of international payments, and rampant corruption in public office.

The sense of economic crisis among the public provided a good cause for Chung's 'new business', the UNP. On one hand, as a successful businessman, he justified his decision to enter politics by criticising the economic failure of the Roh government. For example, he proclaimed in a panel discussion that he needed to create a new party 'because 40 billion dollars of foreign debt has accrued during the four years' ruling of the DLP...Another five years of the DLP government would ruin the country and the people forever'. On the other hand, the party developed some eye-catching policy phrases such as 'half the

price of apartment', or '10 billion dollars' trade surplus within one year in government'. Some of these positions were heavily criticised for their exaggeration, or doubts cast over their feasibility. However, the emphasis on the economic issues contributed to building its image as a practical party which could afford to solve the economic difficulties. As seen in Table 6.7, over a third of those who identified themselves with the UNP trusted its ability to produce economic recovery. In short, the UNP succeeded in pinning down where voters were unhappy. By emphasising productivity in politics the party attracted those who were fed up with the existing party politics (particularly with the ruling DLP), and at the same time, those who wanted to ride out the perceived economic crisis.

### **Leadership effects**

Generally speaking, political parties in Korea have relied heavily on a personal leadership, with decision-making power usually concentrated in a top job. Voters also tend to identify a party with its leadership so that it is effectively hard to distinguish the image of a party head from the image of the party *per se*. One reason for the importance of party leadership stems from lack of strong party ideological differentials, reflecting the dominance of conservative parties. Where the policies of competing parties are substantially similar, party leader's image can make a crucial impact on voters' choice. Besides, the dominant role of party leadership is also related to the presidential system. Party competition ultimately aims at securing the presidency, and party leaders are often the parties' presidential candidates. Such identification between a party and its leadership has been intensified since the 1987 presidential election.

Regionalism has also influenced the overriding importance of political leadership. Political parties tended to win much support in leaders' home regions. Initially, such sentiment was politically sparked in Cholla. The sense of alienation among many Cholla voters under the military regime created an

enthusiastic commitment to the 'home' politician Kim Dae-jung. Their enthusiasm, in turn, caused a backlash among people in other regions, particularly, in Kyongsang and later in Chungchong. As a result, the four party leaders in the 1988 elections won much support in their home regions respectively, and this pattern continued to influence DLP support in 1992 even after the merger.

For the UNP the personal image of party leader Chung also made a great impact on voters' perceptions. It is hard to disentangle a UNP rating from Chung's leadership, since the party was completely dependent for its apparatus on Hyundai Group organisation and personnel, and on Chung's personal fortune for its finances. The credibility accorded the newly launched party also owed a great deal to Chung's personal reputation as a successful entrepreneur. In short, the UNP was 'his' party.

Chung's predominance was also closely related to his potential candidacy for presidency. The intention behind the foundation of the UNP was for Chung to secure a foothold from which to run in the presidential election scheduled in December 1992, a goal around which he had planned and researched carefully for at least a year before he founded the UNP (Lee, K-Y, 1994: 761-2). For Chung the 1992 legislative elections was a dry run for a possible later tilt at the presidency (Morris, 1992/3: 61). In a sense, the UNP served simply as an electoral machine to fulfil Chung's personal political ambition, lacking political principles and policy goals.

#### **6.4. TACTICAL VOTING AND THE UNP'S SUPPORT**

Tactical voting under a plurality rule electoral system seems more salient in a parliamentary system because an election is an event to form a party government. Third parties with little chance to form a government on their own must come to terms with disadvantages incurred from tactical voting. However,

third parties can also suffer vote loss from tactical voting even in a presidential system, where a legislative election is not an event to choose the executive. Table 6.11 examines data about voting choices different from people's most preferred party. Nearly four fifths of those who felt close to the DLP and DP actually voted for these parties. By contrast, only 63 per cent of those who really preferred the UNP chose the UNP. Even though that percentage is a little higher than the other three third parties in a parliamentary system, well over a third of people closest to the UNP cast their ballots other than the UNP. By contrast only one in 20 of voters closest to the DLP or DP actually supported the UNP. However, a quarter of voters closest to one of the 'other' parties or candidates supported the UNP, further emphasizing the links between these two types of behaviour.

Table 6.11. Voting choice different from a preferred party in South Korea (1992)  
(%)

closer to	DLP	DP	UNP	others
voted for				
DLP	80	8	15	18
DP	5	76	12	26
UNP	5	5	63	24
others	9	12	10	33
<i>N</i>	(403)	(362)	(140)	(89)

Source: computed from KES92.

The context for the UNP's success in attracting 'inverse' tactical voting is undoubtedly related to the limitations on DP support imposed by regionalism. Table 6.11 shows that a fourth of those who felt closest to the DP voted for another party, a reaction concentrated among the DP identifiers in non-Cholla regions where it was clear that it could not succeed, because it was regarded as 'a party of Cholla'. The UNP seems to have been the main beneficiary of their tactical choice in an attempt to defeat the regional rival DLP. While the UNP

was unpopular in Cholla itself, the party received a relatively favourable response from DP identifiers in some non-Cholla regions, notably Seoul-Chungbu, as Table 6.12 shows. But Table 6.11 shows that nationally ‘others’ (and even the DLP) won more votes from the tactical DP voters than the UNP. The low percentage of the tactical voting for the UNP seems reflects a regional variation in party second preferences. Despite the small number of cases involved Table 6.12 shows that tactical voting for the UNP among DP voters in Seoul-Chungbu was not matched in the Kyongsang-Chungchong regions, where ‘others’ (mostly independent candidates) were heavily preferred by those who felt closer to the DP.

Table 6.12. Choice of a different party among those who felt closer to the DP (%)

region	Seoul-Chungbu	Chungchong-Kyongsang
DLP	29	26
UNP	43	11
others	29	64
(N)	(28)	(47)

Source: computed from KES92.

This regional variation of the ‘inverse’ tactical voting may reflect two factors. First, many DP supporters (especially outside Cholla) were alienated from the authoritarian regime, and its DLP continuation, and associated the UNP (or specifically the Hyundai Group) with the establishment nurtured by the military regime based on Kyongsang region. To such voters the UNP could not project its ‘fresh or neutral image’.

Second, there were a large number of viable independent candidates in the Kyongsang-Chungchong regions, because the merger creating the DLP resulted in many redundant candidates who had run in the previous election. Some of those rejected as DLP candidates decided to compete as independents in the heartland regions of the three former DLP parties, and with their established

local reputations and previous incumbency they could seem more viable candidates than the brand-new UNP, and therefore attracted many tactical voters in these regions.

Table 6.11 suggests that overall the balance of tactical voting effects was very even. The UNP attracted 50 voters from all other parties and lost 52. Particularly in relation to the DP, among those closest to UNP there was an outflow of 17 people voting for the DP. But 17 people backed the UNP while being closest to the DP.

## 6.5 ABSTENTION AND THE UNP

In the 1985 legislative election the turnout rate was 85 per cent, and dropped nine points three years later. The turnout rate in the 1992 National Assembly Election was 72 per cent, which was then the lowest in the history of South Korea's legislative elections. The 1992 election also produced the largest number of successful independent candidates, who numbered 21, compared with only four in the 1985 election. The multiple successful independent candidates as well as the low turnout rate may point to a widespread public discontent against existing parties: some commentators argue that non-voters in Korea lack confidence in politics and show passive resistance by not going to the polling place (Park, 1993a: 7).

Table 6.13. Turnout rate and Successful independent candidates in recent South Korean National Assembly Elections

	1985	1988	1992
Turnout rate (%)	85	76	72
Successful independent candidates (seats)	4	9	21

Source: computed from *Chosun Ilbo*, *The data book of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly Election Results*.

In plurality systems abstention and third party voting may rise together when two existing major parties do not provide adequate alternatives because of disaffection or immobility of party choice. In the 1992 election, the DLP merger and the development of regionalism effectively forced Seoul-Chungbu voters to be aligned with a non-Cholla coalition, although their commitment to the DLP was rather weak. While the previous three parties within the DLP represented Chungchong, and North and South Kyongsang respectively, no single party was perceived as representing Seoul and Chungbu. This lack of a strong regional commitment made voters in Seoul and Chungbu more prepared to respond to dissatisfaction with the Roh government (and the DLP) than voters in any other region. However, even when the local voters turned against the DLP, the remaining options were to abstain, to vote for the UNP, or to vote for independents - as long as the alternative DP stayed as these dissatisfied voters' least preference.

Table 6.14. The effects of variations in the turnout rate on voting for the three main parties (Seoul-Chungbu region only)

independent variable	turnout92			diff9288		
	DLP	DP	UNP	DLP	DP	UNP
party						
<i>a</i>	-0.11	1.51	-0.30	0.36	0.33	0.22
<i>b</i>	0.66	-1.70	0.77	-0.52	1.67	-1.48
<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.20	0.34	0.10	0.03	0.11	0.11
F	23.49 <sup>1</sup>	48.57 <sup>1</sup>	9.08 <sup>1</sup>	3.20	10.52 <sup>1</sup>	9.89
<i>N</i>	96			91		

Equa. 1:  $DLP = a + b \cdot \text{turnout92}$

Equa. 2:  $DLP = a + b \cdot \text{diff9288}$

*a* : intercept

DLP : the DLP's share of vote in a constituency

turnout92 : the turnout rate in 1992 in a constituency

diff9288 : the difference of the turnout rate between 1988 and 1992 in a constituency

The same regression equations were applied to the other parties.

\* The 5 new seats in 1992 created by the boundary redistribution in these regions were excluded in the equation 2.

1.  $p < 0.01$

Table 6.14 reports the results of an aggregate data analysis of constituency voting patterns in the Seoul and Chungbu region. The results show that the DLP and the UNP both tended to fare well where the turnout was high in 1992. By contrast, the association between the DP vote and the turnout rate was strongly negative. Interestingly, the DP tended to win more votes as the turnout rate increased in comparison with the previous election. (Its estimate is 1.67). By contrast, even though the UNP had a positive association with the turnout rate, the party's share of vote tended to rise where the turnout rate fell. The association is quite strong (its estimate is -1.48). One possible interpretation of the contrast is that differing perceptions of the DP's viability influenced dissatisfied voters' decisions on whether or not to participate. Those who accepted the DP (because of the lingering effect of the authoritarian-democracy cleavage, as seen in Figure 6.3, or because they themselves had links with the Cholla region) were more likely to participate, supporting the DP. By contrast, those who could not regard the DP as an alternative tended to abstain, or vote for a third party such as the UNP. The effect was that greater UNP voting in Seoul-Chungbu accompanied a growth in non-voting, with both phenomena reflecting dissatisfaction and increased regional immobility of party choice.

This interpretation of the relationship between party support and non-voting (or voting) is necessarily tentative, and in particular does not control the well-known effects of socio-economic factors on turnout. Existing accounts have reported that such factors as the urban-rural division, levels of education and age all influenced the 1992 turnout rate (see N-Y Lee, 1993: 21-48; Park, 1993b). However, Table 6.14 strongly indicates that the UNP voting was associated with participation in voting.

## 6.6. CONCLUSION

The UNP carried out a very impressive election campaign. Applying new technology and methods used in business, its policy advertising was better organised than that for any other party. The successful campaign was believed to make a considerable contribution to the new party's image of reliability and freshness (Yang, 1995: 94). But this successful campaign does not necessarily mean that the party succeeded in wooing 'more' voters by the means of the campaign. Table 6.15 shows an initial response to the UNP surveyed just before its official launch. Just over a sixth of those polled responded favourably to its advent onto the political scene. The UNP's subsequent share of the votes was 17 per cent in the 1992 National Assembly election, and in December Chung Ju-young won 16 per cent of the votes in the presidential election. Thus the UNP's support was scarcely different from the initial response when the party was set up. The UNP's vigorous and impressive election campaign may have consolidated that initial support when otherwise it could have dwindled away, but the party's methods could not extend its electoral base. From beginning to end, the UNP relied on a certain size of those who were dissatisfied with the existing parties, because the basic momentum of party support came from negative reasons.

Table 6.15. Approval of the UNP

	desirable	undesirable	don't know	no interest	total
percentage	18	50	26	5	99

Source: conducted by Gallup Korea for the Daily *Chosun* (11 Jan. 1992).  
The question was "what would you like to think of the creation of the UNP?".

The immobility of party choice created by regionalism debarred the opposition DP from becoming a viable alternative across the country despite the

ruling DLP's unpopularity. Instead, the UNP emerged as an alternative among dissatisfied voters in non-Cholla regions. As Bae (1995: 75) pointed out:

Indeed, one of the main factors which resulted in the relative success of the UNP and its presidential candidate may have been the failure of the DP to widen its limited regional basis of electoral support....The role of accommodating the defectors was played by a third party in the elections of 1992.

The UNP's breakthrough was also attributed to its 'fresh image by default' because the party was not directly involved in any part of the existing 'soiled' politics. The fresh image, in turn, helped the UNP to be seen as a centrist party, in spite of its policy position favouring big business and ideological conservatism. For some of those who were disillusioned particularly in the wake of the DLP merger, the UNP was considered to be 'an impartial and reliable alternative'. The prevalent sceptical image of the existing politicians provided a favourable condition for launching a new party.

The UNP's impressive performance ended as a one-off blip in South Korean politics because after coming third in the presidential race Chung Ju-young decided to leave politics, declaring that the association between the UNP and the Hyundai Group was damaging the *chaebol* and withdrawing his financial support. Soon after, the UNP collapsed. It would be controversial to speculate on whether the UNP might have established solid support if the party had continued in existence. However, its sudden break-up suggests that with the growth of regionalist sentiment it would be difficult for any party to survive without regionally consolidating support.

## NOTE

1) In May 1987, the two opposition leaders, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung set up a new party, Unification Democratic Party, in order to purge those who took a moderate stance on the electoral reform issue out of the party. However, the Party was substantially the same party as the NKDP in terms of its leaders, members and policies.

## **Chapter VII**

### **A THIRD PARTY IN NEW ZEALAND: SOCIAL CREDIT**

#### **7.1. THE PARTY SYSTEM IN NEW ZEALAND**

The New Zealand party system was known as a 'pure' Westminster model of party politics until its plurality rule electoral system was changed to a German-style mixed member system, following two referenda in 1992 and 1993. Since the beginning of the modern party system in the mid-1930s, party politics in New Zealand was dominated by two major parties, National and Labour, which generally won about 90 per cent of votes between them. One of the two major parties never failed to form a single party government based on a majority of seats. Lamare argues that the stability of the two-party system was based on New Zealanders' strong party identification. Between 1972 and 1990 an average of around 80 per cent of those who identified with Labour or National cast a ballot for the party of their choice (Lamere, 1992: 51). No non-major parties threatened the two-party stranglehold on parliamentary power. Between 1946 and 1993, there are only eleven successful candidates from non-major parties. In short, before the 1993 election New Zealand seemed to many observers the best candidate after the United States for the category of super-stable two-party politics.

#### **Stable two-party politics**

As in many European countries, the two major parties in New Zealand depend on class-based support, with Labour representing working class interest, and National Party advocating middle-class interests. The basis of Labour's support has been in urban electorates which have a higher proportion of those on lower

incomes. National's core support is in rural areas and in the wealthier city suburbs. As Mulgan said (1994: 254):

This social cleavage at the axis of the two-party system reflects the historical origins of the two parties, with Labour the socialist party of unionists and workers and National the anti-socialist party of farmers and business people.

In spite of this ideological difference, the choice between the two major parties seems much more flexible than in Britain. As Table 7.1 shows, 49 per cent of the National voters in the 1981 election put Labour as their second preference, and 41 per cent of the Labour voters regarded the National as their second preference. Compared with the British case (see Table 4.6 in Chapter IV), shifts of voting were much more likely to occur between the two major parties. Even though the actual amount of a direct switch of voting between National and Labour turned out to be fairly low (around 7 per cent on average in both 1978 and 1981), Table 7.1 suggests the potential flexibility of New Zealand party politics.

Table 7.1. Party of second preference (1981)

(%)

2nd preference voted for	National	Labour	Social Credit
National	1	41	36
Labour	49	5	46
Social Credit	40	42	10
others	11	12	8
<i>N</i>	<i>495</i>	<i>688</i>	<i>190</i>

Source: computed from NZ voting survey, post-election 1981.  
The cases of 'Don't know', 'Not Applicable' are excluded.

Apart from the class cleavage, there is a clear cultural-ethnic distinction between the Maori population and the Pakeha (Europeans). However, this cleavage has been well accommodated within two-party politics. Maori voters

have traditionally voted for Labour rather than for National. For example, Labour dominated the four Maori constituencies from 1943 onward, successfully mobilising Maori support. In addition, because the Maori people were thrust to the margins of politics from the very beginning of Pakeha settlement (Vowles and Aimer, 1993: 28), this Maori-Pakeha cleavage has not been significant for electoral choice except in Maori constituencies.

Table 7.2. New Zealand election result, 1978-1993 (%)

Election year	National	Labour	Social Credit	Others
1978	40	40	16	4
1981	39	39	21	2
1984	36	43	8	14 <sup>1</sup>
1987	44	48	6 <sup>2</sup>	2
1990	48	35	2 <sup>2</sup>	15 <sup>3</sup>
1993	35	35		30 <sup>4</sup>

Source: Norton (1988); for the 1990, 1993 results, Vowles *et al.* (1995: 42).

1. New Zealand Party 12 %

2. Social Credit was renamed the Democratic Party in 1985.

3. Green 7 %, NewLabour Party 5 %

4. Alliance 18%, New Zealand First 8%, Christian Heritage 2%, other 2%.

Even though New Zealand has had stable two-party politics, support for third parties has risen since the 1978 election, after which the vote share of other parties stayed close to the 20 per cent level, with the single exception of 1987 (Table 7.2). Voting for non-major parties under plurality rule reached its highest level in the 1993 election. The number of effective parties represented in the electorate also began to increase close to three from the 1978 election (Table 7.3). Some scholars understood the rise of the non-major party vote as a result of dealignment in New Zealand politics (Bean, 1992; Vowles *et al.*, 1995: 41-60). For example, Bean argued that class politics in New Zealand declined as the population has tended to become more 'middle-class' since 1960, with the proportion of non-manual occupations increasing steadily at the expense of manual occupations (Bean, 1992: see also Bean 1984: 285).

Even though electoral volatility may increase, New Zealand kept a remarkably stable form of two-party system in terms of seats. Table 7.3 shows the effective number of parties in terms of the legislative seats remained static at around two, increasing above this level only very slightly in 1981 and 1993, so that in parliament the two-party system has never been seriously challenged.

Table 7.3. Effective number of parties in New Zealand elections (1946-1993)

Election year	number of effective parties (legislature) $N_s = 1 / T_i^2$	number of effective parties (electorate) $N_v = 1 / V_i^2$
1946	2.0	2.0
1949	2.0	2.0
1951	1.9	2.0
1954	2.0	2.5
1957	2.0	2.3
1960	2.0	2.4
1963	2.0	2.4
1966	2.0	2.6
1969	2.0	2.5
1972	1.9	2.4
1975	1.9	2.6
1978	2.0	2.9
1981	2.1	2.9
1984	2.0	3.0
1987	1.9	2.3
1990	1.8	2.8
1993	2.2	3.5

Source: computed from Norton (1988); for the 1990, 1993 results, Vowles *et al.* (1995: 42).

$T_i$  : the share of seats taken by party  $i$

$V_i$  : the share of votes won by party  $i$

Even in the 1993 election when a radical change of the existing electoral system was in prospect, the major parties' share of votes fell to 70 per cent, but they still secured 95 out of 99 seats, leaving only four seats to third parties. In particular, the Alliance had to settle for only two seats despite winning 18 per cent of the vote. Like Social Credit in the past, the Alliance could not win enough seats to threaten the two parties' stranglehold. The unexpected change

of the electoral system to a mixed electoral system was not a direct outcome of the rise of new parties creating increased deviation from proportionality. Even in 1993 the two-party system looked fairly sustainable.

### Third party politics in New Zealand

Yet in the post-war period there were third parties which drew voters' attention, with the initial momentum provided by Social Credit, the only consistent third party since it had been set up in 1953. The party's best electoral performance before the 1978 election was in 1966 when the party gained 15 per cent of the vote, winning one seat. But the growth of Social Credit support in the 1960s ended in a one-off surge because its support decreased after the 1966 election. Its electoral fortunes revived in the 1978 election, and Social Credit support reached its peak in the 1981 election when the party won two seats but barely dented the two-party oligopoly (Aimer, 1992: 328).

Table 7.4. Non-major parties in New Zealand and their electoral results (%)

minor parties	established	1978	1981	1984	1987	1990	1993
Social Credit <sup>1</sup>	1953	16.1	20.7	7.6	5.7	1.7	
Values	1975	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.1		
the New Zealand Party	1984			12.3	0.3		
Christian Heritage	1989					0.5	2.0
NewLabour	1990					5.2	
Greens	1990					6.9	
Alliance <sup>2</sup>	1993						18.2
NZ First	1993						8.4

Source: Norton (1988); Vowles *et al.* (1995: 42).

1 - the Democratic Party since 1985

2 - The Alliance included NewLabour, the Greens, Democrats, Liberals, Mana Motuhake.

Apart from Social Credit, the Values Party was the only party competing in elections before the 1980s. Based on increasing public concern about the

environment in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Values was set up in 1972. However, the party won only 2 per cent of the votes and no seats in the 1972 election. Until the 1978 election, the Values competed with Social Credit for the third party status, but thereafter lost their momentum. When the popularity of Social Credit dramatically dropped after 1981, a New Zealand Party (NZP) was formed in 1983. Trying to attract National voters, NZP won relatively good results in 1984 (gaining 12 per cent of the vote) in spite of failing to win seats. However, the New Zealand Party faded from existence once Labour committed itself to the market liberal agenda and National was forced to follow suit (Mulgan, 1994: 242).

Anticipating a new electoral system which is favourable to non-major parties, many new parties have been launched since the 1987 election. Those formed up to 1993 fell into two broad categories: splinter parties and ideological or one-issue oriented (cause) parties (Catt, 1995). Social Credit and the Values party were examples of cause parties. Social Credit advocated monetary reform while Values raised environmental issues. The Green Party was set up in 1990 replacing the defunct Values, winning 7 per cent of vote in the 1990 election. Another new cause party was the Christian Heritage Party. Advocating policies based on the Bible and strong family values, this party gained 5 per cent of the vote in 1990.

A more striking feature is the creation of splinter parties breaking away from one of the major parties. Between 1978 and 1993, three splinter parties were formed by sitting MPs: NewLabour, Liberal and New Zealand First (Catt, 1995). The NewLabour Party was formed by former Labour MP, Jim Anderton in protest at Labour's monetarist policies, in particular the sale of such state owned assets as the post offices and the Bank of New Zealand. The Liberal Party was created by two MPs who left the National Party in 1991. New Zealand First is also a splinter party formed by former National MP, Winston Peters and appealing to National supporters who felt betrayed by the Bolger National Government (Mulgan, 1994: 241).

While third party succeeded in breaking through the two-party dominance in New Zealand under plurality rule the German-style 'mixed member proportional' electoral system first used in the 1996 election created quite different conditions for party politics. As seen in Table 7.5, no party secured an overall majority and the number of effective parties in the legislature radically increased to four, double previous levels. To form a government therefore required a coalition between parties, which gave a third party (or parties) the balance of power and substantial influence on the policy-making process. It seems very unlikely that two-party dominance could be maintained under the new election rule, so that third parties will continue to play a key role.

Table 7.5. Election result in the mixed member system (1996)

party	number of seats	share of votes (%)
National	44	35
Labour	37	28
New Zealand First	17	13
Alliance	13	10
ACT <sup>1</sup>	8	6
others	1 <sup>2</sup>	8
<i>Total</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: *The Economist* (19 October 1996), pp. 89-92.

1. the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers

2. United Party

## 7.2. SOCIAL CREDIT AND ITS SUPPORT

Compared with other third parties in New Zealand, Social Credit had a long history. When its support began to rise, it was not a new party. This section analyses the background of Social Credit and its pattern of support in the 1978 and 1981 elections.

## **The revival of Social Credit**

The origin of Social Credit dates back to a monetary reform movement in the 1930s, influenced by the monetary reform ideas of Major Clifford Hugh Douglas. His ideas for monetary reform made more impact on Canadian and New Zealand politics than on politics in England where they originated. The basic idea of the Social Credit movement focused on a shortage of purchasing power for available goods.

Payment made to individuals involved in the process of production - wages, salaries, and dividends, classified as "A" payments - were not sufficient to buy what was produced, the price of which was the sum of A payments and "B" payments, made to other organizations for raw materials, bank charges, and so on. The "gap" was made up by privately created credit, giving banks and financiers control over the capitalist system. Douglas proposed the creation of an independent credit authority to make good the "gap" through a system of "just prices" and "national dividends" to be paid to all citizens (James, 1980: 149-50. Emphasis in the original).

The ideas of the Social Credit movement spread quickly among New Zealand farmers who were in trouble during the depression. The Social Credit Association in the 1930s was concerned with the study and propagation of the writings of Major Douglas, alerting the public to the danger inherent in orthodox economics, and setting out Douglas's positive proposals for monetary reform (Miller, 1989: 244). The movement developed in 1932 and 1933 and attracted a large number of small farmers, particularly in the North Island, the district of the Auckland Farmers Union.

In Canada, the Social Credit movement developed into an extreme, populist, right-wing political philosophy.

The core of the philosophy, while placed the Social Credit party on the extreme right of the political spectrum, consists in a strong

opposition to many of the basic trends of modern industrial society... The ills of capitalist society, according to the doctrine, cannot be traced to the system of private ownership, but to the control of the financiers over the economic system, and to their restriction of credit and production. The financiers- and then the Jews - could, therefore, easily become the scapegoats of the movement (Pinard, 1975: 11-2).

By contrast, the Social Credit movement in New Zealand did not become an extreme movement. Even though the movement was basically a right-wing one, the Labour Party found some parallels to its beliefs in Social Credit's diagnosis of the ills of capitalism. Thus, Labour capitalised on the Social Credit theory for its electoral campaign in the 1935 election. Labour wanted to attract the critical anti-socialist vote in the small towns and the countryside by diluting its strong image with the Douglas credit theory, even absorbing two Douglas credit candidates into its own ranks (James, 1980: 150). Most Social Creditors at that time also saw the Labour Party as an effective vehicle for the implementation of their financial proposals (Miller, 1989: 244). However, when the Labour government introduced some policies adapted from Social Credit theory, the Social Credit movement lost momentum.

The Social Credit movement revived in 1953 when the Social Credit Political League was formed as a political wing of the Social Credit Association. Those who wanted to set up a political party believed that 'direct action provided the only hope for the movement's survival' (Miller, 1989: 245). In its first election in 1954, Social Credit won 11 per cent of vote, but failed to gain seats. In the 1966 election, Social Credit succeeded in winning a seat with 15 per cent of the national vote. However, Social Credit failed to retain the seat in the next election, and its electoral support then decreased election after election. The party was beset by serious internal conflicts and defection, and in the 1975 election Social Credit on 7 per cent support was in danger of losing its third-party status to the Values Party, which won 5 per cent of the vote. Social Credit's political fortunes dramatically revived after the

party leader, Bruce Beetham's unexpected by-election victory in Rangitikei in February 1978. Under Beetham's leadership, Social Credit had its heyday, gaining 16 per cent of votes nationally in 1978 and 21 per cent in 1981.

### **Patterns of Social Credit support**

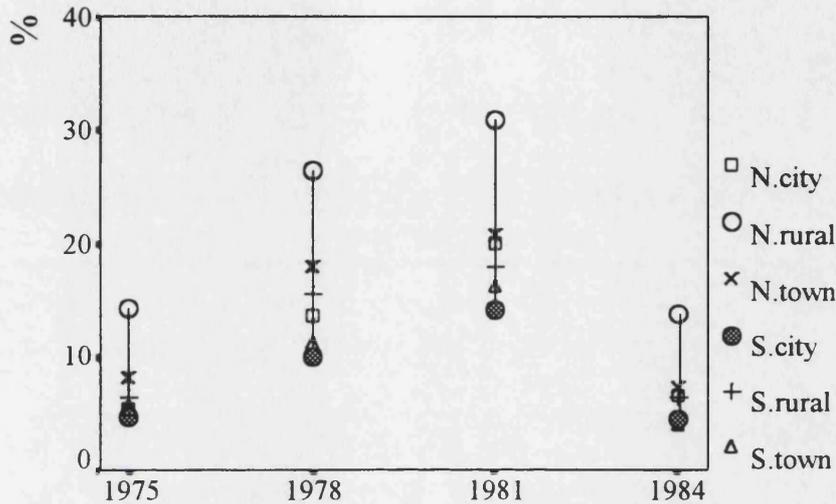
Social Credit voters were geographically concentrated in the North Island, especially in rural farm regions. As seen Figure 7.1, Social Credit was the most popular with voters in rural areas in the North Island at each contest. By contrast, Social Credit did not win so much support in the South Island, especially in urban areas there. This distribution of support is in a striking contrast to that of the Values Party, which was concentrated in metropolitan New Zealand, and weakest in rural areas (Johnston, 1992: 39). Interestingly, Social Credit support showed some continuity with long historical roots:

Its strongest support came in the regions where it had been strongest in the 1930s - the Waikato, the western Bay of Plenty, and Northland, all in the northern half of the North Island - and in the small-farmer regions of Taranaki, which for several reasons had resisted the 1930s tide. These area and, later, neighbouring Rangitikei, created a belt of Social Credit strength in the north and west of the North Island (James, 1980: 151).

However, this link does not necessarily mean that the revival of Social Credit was dependent heavily on the legacy of the Social Credit movement of the 1930s. As Miller pointed out, the party's appeal transcended the narrow regionalism and sectionalism of the 1920s and 1930s, and Social Credit candidates frequently attained high support in the neighbouring small towns while polling strongly in the dairying community (Miller, 1989: 246-7). And in spite of the similarity of the regional pattern of support, Social Credit support during the 1970s and 1980s was not limited within a traditional geographical

boundary. As seen in Figure 7.1, Social Credit support in the 1978 and the 1981 elections increased across the country.

Figure 7.1 Average vote for Social Credit by types of residential areas



Source: computed from Miller (1989: 247. Table 2).  
 N : North Island  
 S : South Island

The pattern of support for Social Credit by age was clearly distinguished from those of the two major parties. Social Credit was more popular with young people than the elderly (see Table 7.6). In the five surveys over five years, more than 50 per cent of support for Social Credit came from young voters under 34 years old. By contrast, elderly voters preferred the two major parties. One newspaper called Social Credit 'an emerging, young persons' party' (The New Zealand Herald, 25 July 1981). Their support for Social Credit had little to do with the Social Credit movement in the past, since the young generation certainly had no memory or experience of the 1930s movement.

Table 7.6. The popularity of Social Credit by age

Age	Nov 78	Nov 79	Nov 80	Nov 81	Nov 82
18 to 24	23	32	31	30	30
25 to 34	27	26	26	23	25
35 to 44	16	12	15	17	16
45 to 54	16	10	13	14	14
55 and over	18	20	15	16	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: survey polls by *NRI-The New Zealand Herald* (6 Dec 1978; 21 Dec 1979; 9 Dec 1980; Nov 14 1981; 18 Dec 1982).

Secondly, Social Credit was more likely to support in National areas, than in areas where Labour supporters formed a majority. As Table 7.7 shows, Social Credit mustered more votes in National seats than in Labour seats by 6 per cent in 1978. Even with the increase of Social Credit vote in 1981, this difference in share of votes between National and Labour seats remained the same, 6 per cent.

Table 7.7. Social Credit's share of vote where the two major parties won

seats won by	S.C. vote in 1978 (%)	std dev 1978	N
National	18	7.3	51
Labour	12	3.9	40

seats won by	S.C. vote in 1981 (%)	std dev 1981	N
National	23	8.6	47
Labour	17	5.8	43

Source: computed from Norton (1988).

The correlation coefficients between the three parties in Table 7.8 also indicate that Social Credit vote was positively related to the National vote at each election. That is, where National won much support, Social Credit was also likely to win votes.

Table 7.8. Correlation coefficients of electoral support between the three parties

1978		
	National	Social Credit
National		0.25
Labour	-0.83	-0.67

1981		
	National	Social Credit
National		0.24
Labour	-0.77	-0.71

Source: computed from Norton (1988).

N = 92.

Table 7.9. Winning parties in the constituencies where Social Credit ever won

Constituency \ year	63	66	69	72	75	78	81	84	87
East Coast Bays	-	-	-	N	N	N	SC	SC	N
Hobson	N	SC	N	N	N	-	-	-	N
Pakuranga	L	L	L	N	N	N	N	SC	N
Rangitikei	N	N	N	N	N	SC	SC	N	N

N - seat taken by National party;

L - seat taken by Labour party;

SC - seat taken by Social Credit

Source: extracted from Norton (1988).

The correlation coefficient between Labour and Social Credit is almost as negative as that between Labour and National. Where Labour was strong, Social Credit candidates (as well as National candidates) did not gain much support. Social Credit also won its only four seats in traditional National constituencies, which returned to National control once Social Credit's support waned, and also its four by-election victories (see Table 7.9). Social Credit never secured a single seat from Labour. The regional variations in Social Credit support between rural areas in the North Island and the other areas is also related to the regional patterning of major party support. Labour was relatively weak in the North Island rural region while Labour was strong in

urban areas (Johnston, 1992: 32-37). So the regional pattern of Social Credit did not overlap with Labour's support.

This pattern of support for Social Credit is similar to that found in the 1954 election when the party competed for the first time. Then Social Credit attracted dissatisfied voters with National government's performance.

Support for the Social Credit Political League came from the right rather than the left....As the major issue in the 1954 general election was the cost of living question, it seems reasonable to view the Social Credit vote as largely an expression of dissatisfaction with the National government's handling of the economy and the persistence of inflationary trends (Berendsen, 1973: 71).

### **7.3. VOTERS' CHOICE AND SOCIAL CREDIT**

New Zealand voters were almost entirely ignorant of the existence of Social Credit as a political entity until the late 1970s. Then, the popularity of Social Credit abruptly rose and people began to recognise it as an alternative. This section looks at the reasons for the sudden rise in Social Credit support.

#### **Social Credit as a centrist party**

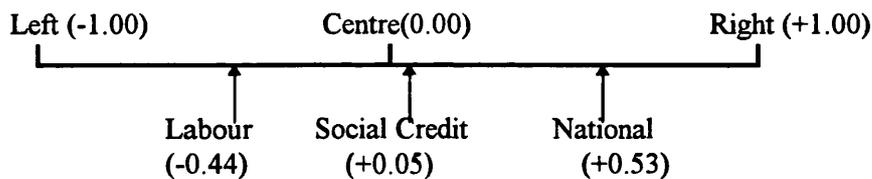
The fact that Social Credit attracted more supporters from the right-wing National party is seemingly associated with ideological disposition of the Social Credit movement, which contained a strong right-wing ideology. Even though the doctrine severely criticised the ills of capitalism, it also advocated individualism, morality based on the Anglo-Saxon Christian tradition, and strong hostility to collectivism and the growing encroachment of bureaucratic control. As was true in the Canadian case, the Social Credit movement could carry an extreme right-wing ideology, verging into anti-Semitism because of

Douglas's distaste for money dealers. In New Zealand Social Credit ideas were generally considered conservative on most matters and right wing on some (James, 1980: 153).

Miller suggested a similar image for the Social Credit party. By analysing the occupational distribution of candidates between 1954 and 1987, he argued:

Many of the non-farming occupations were in farm-related and weakly-unionised industries located in small towns, thus producing a convergence of economic interests between town and country....(Social Credit) remains predominantly a rural and country-town party....(Social Credit) is fundamentally a party of the small entrepreneur (Miller, 1989: 247-9).

Figure 7.2. Perceived ideological position of parties (1981)



Source: computed from Bean (1984: 218).

However, many voters did not see the third party as a right-wing party, in spite of its ideology and the general image of the Social Credit movement. As seen in Figure 7.2, by 1981 Social Credit was perceived as a centrist party. Its location along the ideological scale was almost exactly in the centre between the two major parties. Like the centrist image of the Unification National Party despite its strong pro-business policy position (see Figure 6.6 in Chapter VI, p.214), New Zealand voters too perceived this right-wing party as being in the middle, and were apparently indifferent to, or ignorant of, Social Credit's ideological position.

In addition, Social Credit supporters are not easily classified in terms of class politics. The occupation of Social Credit candidates was evenly distributed: manual workers (25 per cent), farmers (21 per cent), administrative and sales personnel (18 per cent) and self-employed small business people (17 per cent) (Miller, 1989: 247). Bean suggested that Social Credit voters showed 'no distinctive class base overall' in contrast to clear patterns of support for National and Labour party.

Its strongest support, at least in urban areas, comes from "skilled" manual workers but this advantage is offset by the antipathy of their "semi-skilled" colleagues (Bean, 1984: 302).

Social Credit's image as a 'centrist' party and its lack of a distinctive class base both seem contradictory to the finding that the party gained more support in safe National seats. Two points can be made in this context. First, the centrist party image might mean that the party (by avoiding a clear right wing policy line) did not establish support on its own in terms of class politics. Second, the discrepancy between the perceived image and the policy position of Social Credit implies that voters did not pay much attention to Social Credit's policy position or ideology. Miller argued that Social Credit was established as a party of principle (Miller, 1989: 252). However, Social Credit's policies were not taken seriously by many voters. Some voters cast the ballots without recognising its philosophy or monetary reform policy.

Rather, voters fed up with the previous party needed a place to give vent to dissatisfaction, and Social Credit provided such place for them. As Mulgan pointed out:

People who voted for minor parties do not necessarily wish to support the party's programme. They may simply be registering a negative 'protest' vote against the two major parties, intending to indicate that they would prefer to vote for one of the major parties but feel unable to do so...They could therefore use their vote mainly

to send a negative message of no-confidence to the major parties (Mulgan: 1994: 242).

Because Social Credit was seen as an acceptable vehicle for such voters, while a traditional party was not satisfactory, it could also come to be seen as centrist.

### **Social Credit and Protest voting**

The discrepancy between the Social Credit's policy position and its perceived image may result from its lack of committed voters. Failing to build up its own distinctive class base of support, Social Credit depended more on protest voters:

The core Social Credit vote is low...Only 2 percent of the voters interviewed in the 1978 Heylen survey had voted Social Credit in three consecutive elections... Social Credit attracts a less stable and less integrated voter than the other parties.... Social Credit voters in the 1960s were much more likely to give negative than positive reasons for voting for the league....There was no significant difference between the proportion of switchers to National and to Social Credit who said that the economy and party philosophy were elements of policy that had influenced them most. These findings suggest that, though there is a core of Social Crediters who believe to a greater or lesser extent in the party's monetary reform policies, the bulk of the league's votes at any time are protest votes (James, 1980: 162)

Table 7.10 is based on a survey carried out a few months before the 1981 election. When asked their main reason for party choice, nearly two fifths of those who intended to vote for Social Credit cited 'protest'. The percentage of 'protest' increased among those who had switched their party support to Social Credit. By contrast, its policy appeal did not look persuasive. While the two major parties had established strong images on policies (general and specific), the influence of Social Credit policies was relatively low. In particular, the

percentage of respondents citing 'specific policies' as reasons for backing Social Credit, which may be the monetary reform policy, was quite low - only 8 to 9 per cent.

Table 7.10. Main reason for party choice, a pre-election survey in 1981

a) all respondents (%)

<i>reason for party choice</i>	<i>National supporters</i>	<i>Labour supporters</i>	<i>Social Credit supporters</i>
general policies	45	41	30
specific policies	9	19	9
competence	14	10	10
leaders	18	7	9
protest	2	6	38
habit	7	14	1
local factors	2	2	1
other reasons	3	1	2

b) people who had switched from one party to another since 1978 (%)

<i>reason for party choice</i>	<i>change to National</i>	<i>change to Labour</i>	<i>change to Social Credit</i>
general policies	41	34	20
specific policies	6	17	8
competence	12	3	12
leaders	33	13	9
protest	8	21	44
habit	0	0	1
local factors	0	12	2
other reasons	0	0	4

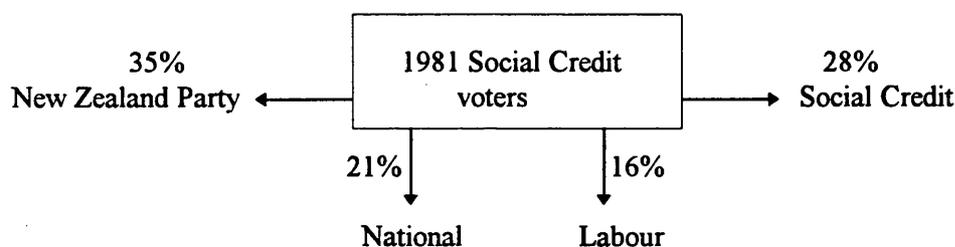
Source: *The Auckland Star* (15 July 1981).

The characteristics of protest voting were even more visible in safe seats - particularly National ones. In a study of a safe National rural area, Helensville, Kay reported that the major reason for changing party preference was dissatisfaction and disenchantment. Many of the dissatisfied National voters

switched to Social Credit in the 1978 and the 1981 elections (Kay, 1984). This finding also suggests that support for Social Credit came from negative reasons.

However, once the reasons to provoke protest are solved, then protest voters are likely to return to the traditional fold. Figure 7.3 demonstrates the lack of durability of its support. The figure is based on a survey conducted a few months before the 1984 election. From late 1982, the popularity of Social Credit began to decline in the wake of the controversial Clyde Dam decision.

Figure 7.3. Shift of voting intention in a survey poll



Source: *The New Zealand Herald* (10 March 1984).

As seen in Figure 7.3, only just over a quarter of Social Credit voters in the 1981 election remained 'loyal', over a third decided to vote for one of the two major parties, and a further third intended to shift to the newly launched New Zealand Party, again located on the right-wing party but with little else in common with Social Credit in terms of policy positions and philosophy. Thus even at its peak

it was the party, not the platform that was winning the votes, and there was probably an element of truth in the opinion....that "Such limited success as Social Credit has achieved... would have been achieved by any other organised third party" (Beredsen, 1973: 66).

## **The efficacy of Social Credit**

If Social Credit support depended heavily on protest voting and voters did not take serious considerations of its policy position and philosophy, any party could be a beneficiary of protest voting. What suddenly made Social Credit a viable alternative?

### *By-election victories:*

By-election victories often provide a good opportunity for third parties to gain support. Since voters in by-elections need not choose a party for government, they are freer to express dissatisfaction with government performance. During the 1975 Parliament, there were four by-elections. Labour retained its two seats in by-elections while National succeeded in retaining one seat, losing the Rangitikei seat to a Social Credit candidate, Bruce Beetham. The Rangitikei by-election was the last by-election before the 1978 general election, after more than two years of the National government. East Coast Bays was the only National constituency out of the four by-elections during the 1978 Parliament and National lost the seat to Social Credit whereas Labour succeeded in retaining the other three seats in the period.

About the Rangitikei victory, James analysed:

the by-election came at a time when the Government's failure to hold down rapidly rising costs and contain strikes in the meat-freezing industry, which processed much of the electorate's agricultural produce, made the Government majority particularly vulnerable to a protest vote by farmers and farmer-dependent small townspeople (James, 1980: 156-7).

Thus, according to James, the basic reason for the Social Credit victory in the by-elections was 'mid-term blues'. Table 7.11 shows that support for Social Credit in Rangitikei suddenly rose by 12 per cent, mainly at the expense of the National party. In the East Coast Bays by-election Social Credit support grew

by nearly a quarter. The National candidate gained slightly more votes in comparison with the previous general election. However, it seems reasonable to interpret that the National vote in the 1978 general election was effectively split between two candidates - National and National Alternative. (In 1975, the National majority in East Coast Bays was 24 per cent of the local vote.) If the voters for the National Alternative in 1978 were previously National supporters, the by-election result shows that Social Credit drew down the potential total National vote.

Table 7.11. Social Credit's by-election victories

1) Rangitikei						[%]
	Nat	Lab	S.C.	Values	others	
1975 general election (Nov 75)	47	14	36	2	1	
by-election (February 1978)	39	11	48	2	0	
difference	-8	-3	+12	0	-1	

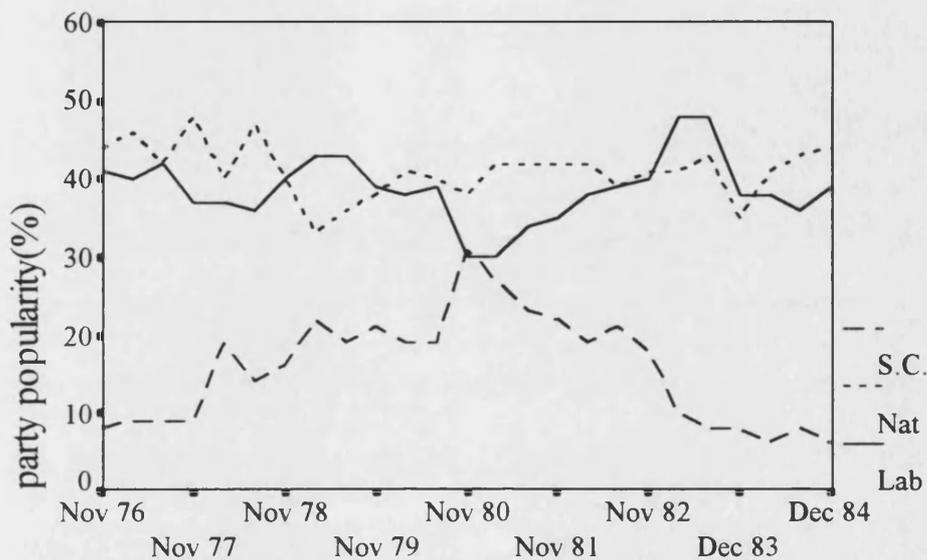
2) East Coast Bays						[%]
	Nat	Lab	S.C.	Values	others	
1978 general election (Nov 78)	35	27	20	2	17*	
by-election (September 1980)	38	18	43	1	-	
difference	+3	-9	+23	-1		

Source: Norton (1988) *New Zealand Parliamentary Election Results 1984-1987*.

\* National Alternative

Often a by-election victory helps to enhance the public image of non-major parties, by drawing more media attention to a third party than winning one or two additional seats in a general election when who governs is an overriding concern. Before the Rangitikei by-election, Social Credit's ratings usually stayed at around 10 per cent or less, but Figure 7.4 shows that followed Beetham's Rangitikei by-election victory the party's rating more than doubled. Another sharp rise of popularity in late 1979 happened just after the 1980 East Coast Bays by-election victory, when Social Credit popularity rose from 19 per cent in July to 31 per cent in November.

Figure 7.4. Changes of party popularity between May 1976 and December 1984



Source: computed from survey polls by *NRB-the New Zealand Herald* 1976-1984.

*Party Leadership - Bruce Beetham :*

In major parties their leaders are potential heads of government. Even though a third party leader is very unlikely to become Prime Minister, its leadership also plays an important role in attracting support. People do not recognise much about detailed policy position of a third party, but a popular party leader could keep drawing the media's attention, as was the case of Social Credit:

Leadership orientation appears to assume greatest importance to voters in the absence of strong party affiliations, and also may serve on occasions to override party preferences. Significant too is the substantial influence leadership orientation may have in causing certain voters to change allegiance after a long history of support for one party (Bean, 1981: 19).

Social Credit depended heavily on Bruce Beetham's personal popularity. The Rangitikei by-election victory was owed to his personal popularity rather than a popular party image: 'The league's campaign centred around Beetham. Posters and advertisements showed a large photograph of Beetham and urged voters simply to "Give him a go"' (James, 1980: 157). After the by-election victory, Beetham's much-reported appearances in Parliament also helped keep Social Credit in the news (James, 1980: 157-8).

Table 7.12. Most favoured leader in a 1981 survey

	<i>overall</i>	<i>among party switchers since 1978</i>	<i>among incoming voters since 1978</i>
Muldoon (Nat)	26	8	24
Beetham (S.C.)	26	50	27
Rowling (Lab)	17	8	15
Muldoon and Beetham	8	12	6
Muldoon and Rowling	2	2	2
Beetham and Rowling	11	10	11
all three equal	4	5	4
don't know/ n.a.	6	5	11

Source: *The Auckland Star* (16 July 1981).

Table 7.12 shows a survey about approval of party leaders in 1981 when Beetham's popularity reached its peak, placing him ahead of the then Opposition leader, Rowling. Amongst those who equally favoured two leaders, Beetham received the most favourable rating of the three party leaders. A half of those who changed their party allegiance since the 1978 election favoured Beetham most. He was also popular with young voters who became eligible to vote since 1978. Given that Social Credit's popularity (24%) was behind both National (36%) and Labour (26%) in the same survey (*The Auckland Star*, 16 July 1981), Table 7.12 apparently shows that Beetham's personal popularity was Social Credit's main political asset. In fact Social Credit was frequently dubbed a 'one-man band', with good reason.

Table 7.13 also confirms Beetham's favourable images, focusing on his general personality (approved by 32 per cent) and competence (27 per cent). By contrast, negative images were mainly related to his party and its policy platform, which account for a third of reasons given for his having an unfavourable image. The results suggest that Beetham established a favourable image even among those who did not like Social Credit's policy position.

In fact, Beetham tried to build a new party image by replacing the old, negative image of Social Credit harping on about monetary reform policy, often jeered at as 'funny money'. 'Under Bruce Beetham's leadership, efforts were directed both at removing the old "funny money" stigma generated by the centrality of monetary reform doctrines and at providing the party with a more eclectic set of policies' (Miller, 1989: 254). Despite of his efforts, Table 7.13 indicates that the negative image of his party was not largely wiped out.

The personal popularity of a leader may be effective in enhance a party's public rating in the short term. However, it is also very risky when the main attraction of a party comes from personal popularity rather than support for a common set of principles, because leadership popularity is more volatile than committed support for a set of core values. If a leader makes a wrong decision, the party as a whole, not just the leader him/herself, is likely to be blamed. Social Credit became too identified with Beetham himself.

Table 7.13. Favourable and unfavourable image of Beetham

Reasons for favourable image of Beetham		Reasons for unfavourable image of Beetham	
harmony	11	aggression	3
strength	6	lack of strength	9
sincerity	15	lack of sincerity	14
general personality	32	general personality	9
competence	27	lack of competence	15
party/policy	4	party/policy	34
group association	1	group association	0
other	5	other	15

Source: extracted from Bean (1984: 385, Table 10.4).

The 1981 election created a situation in which the government majority was just one seat. The National Party won 47 seats, Labour 43 seats, and Social Credit two seats. When elected as party leader, Beetham announced that ‘balance of responsibility’ would be the immediate parliamentary goal (Miller, 1992: 321), a term which seemed to stress playing a pivotal role in a balanced situation between the two major parties. In 1977 the Ministry of Electricity had applied for the necessary water rights to build a dam on the Clutha at Clyde, and take water for generating electricity. Then, a successful judicial appeal against the government decision was made, and the National government needed a parliamentary majority to guarantee the legislation. The Opposition was against the high dam option. A National MP declared that he would vote with the Opposition, and so the Government majority was quite shaky. This proved to be the critical case that needed ‘balance of responsibility’ in Beetham’s terms. However, in exchange for certain guarantees the two Social Credit MPs changed their position from favouring a low dam option to voting for the government bill (about the Clyde Dam controversy, see Miller, 1989: 255; Wood, 1988: 140-1).

Table 7.14. The effects of the Clyde Dam deal on public opinion ratings for Social Credit and Beetham (per cent approval)

	Feb 82	May 82	Nov 82	Apr 83	Dec 83
Beetham <sup>1</sup>	13	9	9	4	3
Social Credit <sup>1</sup>	19	19	18	9	8
Social Credit <sup>2</sup>	20	19	14	8	8*

↑  
Clyde Dam deal (July 1982)

Source: 1. polls by NRB-the New Zealand Herald, 1982-83.  
 2. Heylen Polls, 1982-83.  
 \* November 1983

Beetham's decision over the Clyde Dam Bill soon turned out to be very costly. Social Credit's rating in the opinion polls began to drop in the wake of the decision. As seen in Table 7.14 (and Figure 7.4), a few months after the Clyde Dam deal the ratings for both Social Credit and Beetham dropped sharply to less than half their previous level, indeed the party's base-level before 1978. Once the party lost public support in this fashion, neither Beetham nor Social Credit could recover from the loss. The decline of its popularity triggered the formation of another new party, the New Zealand Party, which further undermined Social Credit's support.

As Miller (1992: 321) pointed out aptly:

It proved to be a hard lesson on the costs of trying to exercise the balance of power, for the decision provoked derision from Labour, strong criticism from interest groups and the press, and earned the minor party little gratitude from the government. But the two MPs had also put the party's credibility to the test of public opinion. The results were decisive ... The party's popularity was further eroded by a gradual restoration of public faith in the Labour Party and the emergence of a rival minor party, the New Zealand Party, in 1983. However, it was the Clyde Dam decision which had been the catalyst for the party's irreversible decline.

Thus both the sudden growth and the precipitate fall in support were largely due to Beetham himself.

#### **7.4. TACTICAL VOTING AND SOCIAL CREDIT SUPPORT**

Actual voting for Social Credit was not much related to party identification. As shown in Table 7.15, less than half of Social Credit voters in the 1981 election identified themselves with the party they voted for. By contrast, the two major

parties relied much on attached support, with seven out of eight National voters identifying with their party, and over three quarters of Labour supporters were identified with Labour. This contrast suggests that Social Credit support was fairly shaky. Besides, the category of 'others' could also mean those who were dissatisfied with both the two major parties, given the solid two-party politics. The fairly high share of identifiers with 'others' among Social Credit voters also suggests that Social Credit depended on those who were not satisfied with the two-party politics, rather than consolidating its own supporters.

Even though Social Credit tended to attract protest voters with negative reasons, some voters could choose the party for tactical reasons. Inverse tactical voting for Social Credit seems to have risen in 1981 after its big rise of support in 1978. Beetham's popularity then flew so high that the party looked suddenly more viable, and its vote share actually increased by 5 per cent in 1981. Table 7.15 suggests that Social Credit was a beneficiary of tactical voting. Given the National government and the pattern of Social Credit support, tactical situations seem more obvious among Labour identifiers. With the minor role of Social Credit in national politics, Labour would have been a more effective vehicle to 'get National out' if its local candidate had looked likely to win. However, in safe National constituencies Social Credit appeared more viable, which led some Labour supporters to vote tactically for Social Credit. Social Credit had a net gain from tactical voting. Social Credit won 43 from those who were identified with the two major parties, and lost only 8. Among Labour identifiers, Social Credit attracted 17. But there was an outflow of 5.

Table 7.15. Voting choice different from party identification (1981)

voted for	National	Labour	Social Credit
party identification (%)			
National	87	5	13
Labour	2	78	9
Social Credit	1	1	47
others	10	16	31
(N)	(503)	(710)	(195)

Source: computed from NZ voting survey, post-election survey 1981.

Table 7.16 confirms such a tactical situation which some former Labour voters faced. The table below sets out a regression analysis between Social Credit support and changes in other parties' shares of votes between 1978 and 1981 in the National seats. Social Credit support tended to increase where the National's lead over the Labour was strong in 1978. (The estimate of NatLab78 is 0.33). That is, the larger was the National's majority in a constituency, the better Social Credit fared in 1981. This result coincides with the previous finding that Social Credit won more votes in safe National constituencies (see also Table 7.10). It is interesting that Social Credit support in the National seats was inversely associated with the change of the Labour's share of vote between 1978 and 1981. The relationship is quite strong (its estimate is -0.96), suggesting that some former Labour voters in National seats shifted to Social Credit in 1981 when the third party enjoyed high popularity. Given the low likelihood of Labour's winning in the safe National seats, this pattern could be understood as a result of 'inverse tactical voting'. (The estimates in the Labour seats do not statistically fit well.)

Table 7.16. Regression coefficients of Social Credit support in National seats

	estimate
a	16.03
Nat8178	-0.03
Lab8178	-0.96
NatLab78	0.33
r <sup>2</sup>	0.38
F	8.86

$$SC = a + b_1 \text{Nat8178} + b_2 \text{Lab8178} + b_3 \text{NatLab78}$$

SC : the Social Credit share of vote in 1981 in a constituency

Nat8178 : the change of the National's share of vote between 1978 and 1981 in a constituency

Lab8178 : the change of the Labour's share of vote between 1978 and 1981 in a constituency

NatLab78 : the difference of the share of vote between the National and Labour candidate in a constituency

Tactical voting can be more conspicuous in a by-election in which voters tend to make a more straightforward choice. Besides, a third party is more likely to win by-elections, especially against a government party, as in the Rangitikei by-election.

The much greater drop in Labour support in Rangitikei than in other similar seats where Social Credit was not so well placed suggests that many Labour voters supported Social Credit as the best means of getting National out of the seat - a "tactical" rather than a "protest" vote (McCraw, 1979: 59).

Thus, tactical voting for Social Credit, especially from former Labour supporters contributed not only to gaining its initial momentum of support but also to helping to enlarge its electoral support in general elections (in particular, in the 1981 election).

## **7.5. ABSTENTION AND SOCIAL CREDIT**

New Zealand has been well-known for the high rate of turnout in elections. Even though the long-term trend of turnout rate is clearly downward (Vowles and Aimer, 1993: 42), the lowest rate of the turnout was 82 per cent in the 1975 election, which is still considerably high compared with other countries. In the 1978 and 1981 elections which this study covers, turnout rates were 85 and 89 per cent respectively.

In spite of the usually high national turnout rate, National supporters still generally go to the polls more than Labour supporters. Table 7.17 shows that the turnout rate in the National constituencies was higher than in the Labour constituencies by 2 per cent. Given that Social Credit tended to gather more votes from former National voters, Table 7.17 suggests that Social Credit was likely to fare well where the turnout rate was relatively high. The difference of

the turnout rate between National and Labour seats increased in safe constituencies to about 6 per cent - because the turnout rate fell by a considerable margin in safe Labour constituencies.

Table 7.17. Turnout rates in safe constituencies (1981)

	seats			safe seats*		
	mean	std dev	cases	mean	std dev	cases
National	91.3	1.6	47	91.7	1.5	24
Labour	89.4	9.0	43	86.1	12.0	21

Source: computed from the official election result of the 1981 general election.

Because of its inaccuracy, the turnout rate of the 1978 election was not included.

\* The safe seats are where there has no turnover of seat or where just one turnover occurred between different parties during 1946-1975. The constituencies with more than four elections were counted.

However, a rise in third party voting can also occur in tandem with abstention. As MaCraw (1992: 520) found in the New Zealand 1990 election, 'a strong movement to non-voting accompanied the move to the minor parties'. Table 7.18 shows a similar finding of the relationship between non-voting and third party support. The estimates show the effects of the turnout rate on Social Credit support (as well as non-major party voting). The estimates for 'non-major parties' indicate that support for them in general was inversely associated with the turnout rate, irrespective of who won seats.

Table 7.18. Turnout rate and Social Credit support (regression estimates)

	Social Credit		Non-major parties	
	National seat	Labour seat	National seat	Labour seat
Intercept	211.2	1.46	237.0	48.4
Turnout	-2.07	0.16	-2.33	-0.32
r <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.07	0.19	0.15

SC = a + b\* Turnout

a : intercept

SC : the Social Credit vote share in a constituency

turnout : the turnout rate in a constituency

The 'all third parties' indicates the vote share of all parties but the National and Labour candidates.

However, there is a clear difference between the National seats and the Labour seats. In the National seats, Social Credit (as well as non-major parties) was likely to win support where the turnout rate was low. The association between Social Credit (and non-major parties) votes and the turnout rate is very strong. (The estimates are -2.07, and -2.33 respectively.) By contrast, such a relationship is less salient in the Labour seats.

Given that Social Credit fared better in the National seats, the difference in the pattern of the relationship appears meaningful. Even though the turnout rate was usually a little higher in the National seats, Social Credit support tended to rise in the National constituencies with relatively low turnout rates. As the quality-satisficing approach suggests, both third party voting and abstention are responses to dissatisfaction. The results in Table 7.18 also suggest that non-voting can be accompanied by a rise of third party support generally.

## 7.6. CONCLUSION

In a stable two-party system, it is difficult for a third party (except regionalist parties) to establish solid support on its own. As the sudden collapse of Social Credit shows, the once high popularity of Social Credit depended largely upon floating voters, rather than committed and consistent supporters. As Chapman pointed out, 'Social Credit is indeed a revolving door, filled and emptied afresh at each election' (1976; quoted in Kay, 1984: 106).

In spite of its inherently right-wing ideology linking back to Douglas's Social Credit movement, many New Zealand voters saw the Party as in the middle, suggesting that they did not pay serious attention to its policy positions, which were not likely to be implemented. An unexpected by-election victory

and the fresh image of its leader, Bruce Beetham provided a temporary resting place for those who were disaffected with the National Government but were reluctant to support Labour. Therefore, Social Credit won better results in safe National constituencies. Once Social Credit gained momentum, it mustered protest vote against the National government across the country as well as attracting some tactical voting from former Labour voters. Failing to establish its support, however, the third party could not 'break the mould'. As McCraw (1979: 59) said: 'Social Credit then poses no threat to the present party system. Rather is it an integral part of the system, playing the role that any third party would find thrust upon it'.

The fairly high popularity which Social Credit enjoyed during 1978 and 1981 was closely associated with its leader, Beetham's personal popularity. As a leader of a small parliamentary party which had only one or two MPs, Beetham played a remarkable role in enhancing the party's image by using his personal political assets. However, when his personal popularity declined, the party support also dropped. The demise of Social Credit dramatically demonstrates how volatile is support for a third party under a plurality rule electoral system. The strictly 'limited' success of Social Credit also reflects the fact that switching between major parties in New Zealand was a much more realistic choice for dissatisfied voters than in Britain, despite the ideological differences between the two major parties. This relative flexibility of party choice in New Zealand served as another obstacle hindering the further development of the Social Credit support despite some surges in popularity.

## Chapter VIII

### CONCLUSION:

#### THIRD PARTY SUPPORT UNDER PLURALITY RULE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

In contemporary social science the hardest of all tasks is often to relate empirical evidence to theoretical propositions in a way which can illuminate both. A great deal of the most commonplace criticism of public choice focuses on the weakness (or even the complete lack) of empirical testing (Green and Schapiro, 1994). Theoretical apparatuses of great complexity are elaborated, it is said, but never tested. Or tests are conducted not to cast doubt upon the intellectual paradigm being used, so much as to facilitate the addition of bolt-on modifications to theory, which then make the models fit 'the (stylised) facts', but in an ad hoc way. To avoid these criticisms, Chapter III set out an extensive theoretical apparatus, which then informed the empirical investigations undertaken in Chapters IV to VII.

However, in an exploratory study of this kind there are some considerable but unavoidable logistical difficulties in relating the empirical analysis to the theoretical framework. The case study chapters necessarily relied on existing sources of electoral study and opinion poll data. The inclusion or framing of particular questions differed a good deal from country to country. And even using other data sources, such as aggregate data analysis of constituency voting patterns, there was some inevitable variation in the availability (and reliability) of information on possible independent variables. Perhaps most important of all was the rather poor coverage of third party voting patterns and party dynamics in the existing secondary literature. Across all four countries the coverage of third parties in academic work is disproportionately small compared with the literature on the history, organisation and political dynamics of the major parties.

None the less the material analysed here is considerably more extensive than previous work on third parties, and it seems important to try and draw lessons from it in a more general and comparative mode than was feasible in the country chapters. The first part of the chapter goes to summarise some circumstantial conditions behind the rise of third party support which the satisficing-model suggests. The second section then looks at the complexities of third party strategies under plurality rule systems. The third part of the chapter looks at ten aspects of third party politics initially highlighted as important in Chapter III, and seeks to systematically compare and contrast the experience of the four parties analysed in the empirical chapters on these aspects. The final part opens into a topic which goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but for which our findings raise some interesting questions - namely the 'rationality' of third party leadership altogether.

### **8.1. PLURALITY RULE SYSTEMS AND THIRD PARTY SUPPORT**

This research began with some empirical evidence against 'Duverger's law', which emphasises a relationship between electoral systems and the consequences. Even though Duverger (and many other political scientists later) paid attention to the restraining effects of a plurality rule electoral system, the rise of third party voting illuminates that plurality rule systems also create some favourable circumstantial conditions. Here some common circumstantial characteristics behind the 'success' of the four cases of third parties are summarised in light of implications suggested by the quality-satisficing model.

Firstly, the rise of third party support is closely related to widespread dissatisfaction against a (government) party. As shown in Chapter III, the quality-satisficing approach assumes that support for a centrist third party rises when the quality of a traditional party drops below the aspiration level. That is, 'dissatisfaction' is a key condition for the rise of third party support. The four empirical cases confirm that public dissatisfaction towards a (government) party provides a favourable condition for third parties.

It is not surprising that the four third parties attracted more support from previous voters for a government party, given that a government party is more vulnerable to criticism. In Britain, the Liberal Democrats during the period covered tended to absorb unhappy Conservative voters with the unsatisfactory handling of the Conservative government particularly with some 'Labour issues'. In Canada, support for the NDP was related to the level of support for the Conservatives. Particularly in 1988, the NDP drew much support from those who took a different position from the Conservative's on the FTA. From the outset, support for the UNP in South Korea was closely related to widespread public discontent towards existing political parties in the wake of the merger into the Democratic Liberal Party. The UNP depended much upon former DLP voters. Similarly, the initial momentum of Social Credit support came from a victory in a by-election which often reflects public dissatisfaction towards a government party or 'mid-term blue'.

Secondly, the characteristic mentioned above partly explains why support for the four endogenous third parties is neither consistent nor stable (and why some third parties are short-lived). In fact, as the name of protest voting itself implies, the usefulness of third party support under plurality rule electoral systems is rather 'instrumental'. Except a small number of core supporters, most voters for a third party cast ballots without serious commitment to it. Because third party support is basically a 'response' to the decline of quality of a major party (as assumed in Chapter III ), it is a passive and reactive choice - a sort of mixtures of voice and exit options in Hirschman's term. Thus, when the lapse of a major party is recovered, third party support will run out of steam.

The major problem of the British Liberals is that the Party lacks consistent voters over elections, as the 'hotel party' model suggests. Even though the Liberal Democrats showed a fairly stable pattern of support since the 1983 election, the survey results show that only a small proportion of them continued to choose the Party in the consecutive elections. Canadian voters are fairly volatile, and the considerable amount of NDP voters changed their party allegiance over elections. Besides, the UNP of South Korea was short-lived. Like the sudden success of the

Party in the 1992 election, it faced an abrupt demise in the wake of the departure of the party leader, which demonstrates the Party's lack of self-sustainability based on sold support. Similarly, support for Social Credit leapt up almost from nowhere with a by-election victory, and it abruptly waned in the wake of the miscalculated decision of the party leader. It turned out that Social Credit did not consolidate its support, either.

Thirdly, regional variation of party support creates a favourable condition for third party support in conjunction with the immobility of party choice. As the model in Chapter III suggests, a centrist party can appear as an alternative to a locally dominant party A when local voters are not satisfied with party A, replacing a rival major party at the national level. Even though a centrist third party attracts support from voters on both sides of the spectrum (by protest voting and inverse tactical voting), the third party depends more on voters on one side due to the skewed distribution of party preferences of the local voters. In fact, the rise of third party support is not indifferent to polarisation of party support under plurality rule electoral systems.

In Britain, the Liberal Democrats drew support where the Conservatives were strong like south England. Even though the Liberal Democrats did not win as much support in strong Labour regions, the affinity of Liberal issues close to Labour's seemed to appeal in the Conservative regions. In New Zealand, regional polarisation of party support is not much visible. But Social Credit tended to win more support in safe constituencies (especially in safe National constituencies).

The model in Chapter III only assumed a party competition based on the ideological cleavage between left and right. However, the logic of third party support in that model is able to apply to the other two cases of Canada and South Korea by replacing the ideological rivalry with regional cleavage. Neither the UNP and the NDP was directly involved into the regional rivalry developed in each country, and as a result, each of them was probably perceived as being in the middle along the regional cleavage. The pattern of support for both the UNP and the NDP was apparently divided between regions. In Canada, the NDP, irrespective of its ideological propensity as a leftist party, was viable particularly in

the western provinces (and in Ontario with a lesser extent) while the Party remained unpopular in French Canada, Quebec. Similarly, when the regional rivalry between Cholla and non-Cholla regions was developed in South Korea, the newly launched Unification National Party was free from it by default. Nevertheless, the UNP attracted support from non-Cholla regions only where the ruling DLP politically relied.

## **8.2. ELECTORAL NICHEs OF THIRD PARTIES: THE COMPLEXITY OF THIRD PARTY STRATEGIES**

The empirical evidence of this thesis suggests that voters use third parties to signal dissatisfaction with performance to the major parties, to prioritise issues which their traditional party has neglected, to try and secure tactical outcomes, to convey more meaning than simple abstention - and these features are present in varying combinations in all the cases. But many different features of each party's situation influenced its chances, and there are different combinations of electoral 'niches' across the four cases. The main components of third party strategies which were influential in the cases studied were: ideological positioning; efficacy enhancing; leadership images; local adaptation; capitalising on dissatisfaction. These are in effect factors which helped the four parties to enhance their viability as an alternative. There is a common logic to the ways in which these factors influenced third party voting, a logic which also seems well captured by the quality-satisficing account. Each is discussed in turn.

### *Ideological positioning:*

We have seen that the cumulative evidence across all four cases tends to support the directional model's argument that the ideological centre-ground is not a very important or effective position of advocacy. Third parties are inherently disadvantaged compared with major parties in trying to organise their appeal around policy platforms, for because their chances of implementing anything are

very low rational voters will simply not pay much attention to where they stand, or view it as a particularly important part of how they assess the party. Indeed in both New Zealand and South Korea voters assessed Social Credit and the UNP as being centrist parties, even while their policy platforms in objective terms were clearly aligned on the right. Even in Canada, the NDP has tried to blur its initial left-wing positions over time, by adopting a moderate-reform position close to centre-left Liberal positions. The Liberal Democrats in Britain have similarly invested great efforts in trying to define a 'radical' agenda with zero success. Voters place them in the middle and associate them with moderation.

Ideological positioning is more important for third parties in terms of what it rules out than in terms of positively attracting voters. Adopting strong policy positions or social group associated with the dominant cleavage pattern separating supporters of the major parties from each other is clearly inadvisable for an endogenous third party, such as those covered here. Their policy commitments are instead mainly chosen with a view to maintaining unimpeded access to the diversity of niches - major party supporters who are dissatisfied on issues or performance, tactical voters, protest voters, maybe some marginal abstainers - which, as seen above, it is essential for viable endogenous parties to cultivate.

Where the third party draws support more from dissatisfied supporters of major party A (rather than its rival B), it may be rational for the third party to mirror some aspects of B's policies - as the Liberal Democrats do in the UK, where they provide a vehicle for Tory supporters to express dissatisfaction on welfare issues which are mainly 'owned' by Labour. In this case this linking also fits closely with strategies to enhance the party's viability by stressing its local council successes and record. Similarly the UNP targeted DLP supporters discontented with the previous merger and economic performance, while also trying to pick up DP supporters outside the Cholla region.

#### *Enhancing efficacy:*

Perhaps a more important element of third party competition strategies was their efforts to seem viable to voters, to convince them that the efficacy of supporting a

third party was not prohibitively low. The Liberal Democrats and the NDP were able to draw on past successes, especially expanding their support regionally in areas where they had already won seats. In Britain the party's local council base proved a key means of overcoming the tendency for tactical voting outflows in the Liberal Democrats' areas of strength, and linked closely with their only reasonably distinctive issue associations, championing 'Labour' issues in Tory areas. And the Liberal Democrats won better results overall where the party controlled local councils (Johnston and Pattie, 1993: 202). The long-term split between voters allegiances in federal and provincial politics detracts from the same kind of linkage in Canada. In a federal state a province is an integral unit of politics so that a political party in a province can survive without relying on the federal wing of the party. However, the relationship between provincial politics and federal election results cannot be completely denied. The pattern of the NDP support was largely similar between federal and provincial elections, with the party tending to win more support in federal elections where the Party did well in provincial elections. For example, in British Columbia the NDP voters are fairly consistent at both levels, and 64 per cent of the NDP voters there chose the same party at both tiers of elections (Dyck, 1991: 599; 613, Endnotes 96). By contrast, the NDP was unpopular even in provincial politics in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces where the party has stayed weak in federal elections. For the UNP the association with the Hyundai Group was important in allowing the party to establish itself from nowhere as a credible choice, attracting support from a sixth of the electorate - and without that linkage the party collapsed in 1993. Social Credit had no such additional props, however, relying more on leadership image and serendipity in by-elections to sustain its surge.

More generally third parties are uniquely dependent upon campaign effects compared with the major parties, with awareness and recognition of the parties rising sharply in election run-ups, especially where broadcast media rules mandate equitable allocations of coverage across parties, as in Britain, Canada and New Zealand. The UNP also attracted voters' attention by its business-style campaign. The simple 'reminder' effect of the campaign, in drawing voters' attention to these

parties' continuing existence and reminding them of the acceptable features of their issue positions (if not so much their positive attractions), was important in all the countries studied. Again this temporary recognition factor made all the parties' performances respond heavily to additional stimuli, such as presentable or personable leaders and by-elections.

By-elections are important for third parties because the constraints on major party voters' allegiances created by concerns over government policy and the possible victory by the rival major party are suddenly loosened, and the scope for both inverse tactical voting and protest voting both dramatically expand. This effect was most important for the British Liberal Democrats, where it strengthened recognition of the party with periodic dramatic victories and helped underpin the party's efforts to represent itself as an efficacious choice. In New Zealand, the initial by-election victory was also critically important for Social Credit because it breached the major party monopoly in Parliament, and helped trigger the surge of support from discontented National supporters and Labour tactical voters, an effect then sustained in the next term.

*Leadership images:*

The unique constraints under which third parties operate - with their policy positions not well known amongst voters; their efficacy as a voting choice always precarious; their dependence on diverse 'niche markets' for support, often in tension with one another; and their dependence on campaign periods or exogenous shocks to enhance voter recognition - all these traits mean that a favourable leadership often plays an important role in winning votes. Sometimes, indeed, the image of the party is identified with the image of the leader, as with the UNP and Social Credit, so much that neither party could survive without them. The NDP's good years in the 1980s were also strongly associated with impressive media performances by its leader, whose personal popularity exceeded his party popularity, and partly contributed to the party's electoral fortune. In Britain, the effects of major party leadership is rather indirect (Crewe and King, 1994: 125-147), but for the Liberal Democrats a somewhat strengthened effect was visible,

especially in the immediate run-up to the general election. However, as Clarke *et al.* suggested, the effect of leaders will essentially last for a short term (1979: 231-238). Party support based on personal popularity cannot be easily consolidated so that it is quite volatile. For a time an effective third party leader can hold together the contradictions of appealing in multiple directions to differently motivated groups of voters, and can sublimate voters' worries over their party's efficacy in admiration for their personal qualities. But it is a hard act to sustain over a period of leadership succession.

*Local adaptation:*

A more permanent and long-term strategy used successfully by the Liberal Democrats and the NDP, and important in the short-term for the UNP and Social Credit, is to vary the 'face' which the party presents across regions in relation to the kind of support it seeks there. Thus the Liberal Democrats stress moderate anti-Conservative sentiments in the Tory heartlands to attract dissatisfied protest voting Tories reluctant to go all the way over to backing Labour, and Labour tactical voters anxious to breach the Conservative regional monopoly. But in Labour heartland regions, the Liberal Democrats capitalise on anti-Labour discontents, perhaps dissatisfactions with its leadership, and try to attract Tory tactical voters anxious to have more of an effect locally. And the strategy works: as Table 8.1 shows, identifiers with both of the two major parties tend to see the Liberal Democrats as closer to their own party respectively by a considerable margin, although the effect is stronger amongst Conservative supporters.

Regional adaptation also works but in a different way for the NDP. Since Canada is a federal state, the political or economic interests of a province do not always correspond to those either of the federal government or of other provinces. So the provincial branches of the NDP have always had some autonomy to adapt policies to their local climate, and their policy positions were sometimes at loggerhead with those of the federal NDP. The provincial wings of the NDP also look after recruitment of party members, however, so that their positions were generally invulnerable.

Table 8.1. Closeness of Liberal Democrats by party identification (%)

	Conservative identifiers	Labour identifiers
Lib-Dem closer to Con	54	36
Lib-Dem closer to Lab	30	51
No difference/Neither	16	12
<i>N</i>	645	500

Source: calculated from BES92.

The answers of 'Don't know/Not answered' are excluded here.

The flexible third party approach is possible for several reasons. Adaptation strategies can work successfully partly because of the importance of locally-set reputations for voters' assessment of third party efficacy, while the aspiration levels of influence which people seek to achieve are also set by local circumstances (but collectively) in the quality-satisficing view. And there is little risk of unfavourable repercussions nationally. The mass media do not pay much attention to issues raised by a third party, and voters are not also interested in policies which are unlikely to be implemented. Thus, a third party's platform is vaguer and less constraining, and especially if it is perceived by voters as centrist it will be capable of differing interpretations in different areas. In turn a centrist third party leader is relatively free from 'purist' ideological disagreements within the party because the centre position does not serve as a distinct political pole in a two-party system. In addition their diminutive representation under plurality rule often makes parliamentary party splits or rival leadership bids very rare. So third party leaders can pursue a less staunch policies without being embroiled in serious internal feuds, and third parties are more dependent on their leadership to counter the numerous disadvantages.

*Capitalising on dissatisfaction:*

The final strategic necessity for third parties is to be able to prevent the combination of dissatisfaction with the major parties and immobility across major

party boundaries from converting into simply greater abstention, since the quality-satisficing approach suggests theoretically that abstention is closely connected with third party support, as does some of the evidence reviewed earlier in this chapter. Having an inoffensive ideological position, locating off the main lines of social cleavage dividing the major parties, being perceived as centrist, enhancing the perceived efficacy of supporting them, varying their message across different major party heartlands, having a convincing leader, and being sustained by a favourable flow of events (like by-election victories) all contribute to third parties' ability to keep people turned on to voting, and converting some of them into supporters (for a time). And here too third parties under plurality rule have one special advantage compared with their major party rivals - clean hands and deniability for past mistakes. Their very exclusion from power becomes an asset, upon which they can capitalise, and the criteria which voters will apply to them are more weakly defined as a result. For example, in South Korea the third party quite successfully claimed efficacy on the basis of its leader's record as a single-organisation leader, while critiquing the government leadership for problems in *national* economic management:

The UNP campaign was geared to differentiate Chung from his opponents in his ability to manage the economy. For positive campaigning, the achievements of the Hyundai Group...were widely publicised, while for negative campaigning the dismal economic record of the Roh government and the inexperience of the two Kims (Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung) in government were heavily criticised. (K-Y, Lee 1994: 763).

This uniquely favourable situation can lead to voters' forming almost unrealistic views of third party leaders' personalities and competencies. For example, among Social Credit supporters in 1981:

Of these, 75% see him [the party leader, Beetham] as honest (7.1 % disagree), 72% see him as understanding of other people's problems, 92% see him as intelligent and capable, 72% see him as a good leader and 94% as an asset to the league (Auckland Star, 23 September 1981).

The public disillusionment which followed Beetham's first major act influencing a public policy outcome, the Clyde Dam decision, was also extensive precisely because voters had little previous information to go on. In the new context Beetham could no longer realise 'the mandate of dissatisfaction'. Beetham's decision to vote with the government was seen as 'an act of betrayal' (Miller, 1985:213).

### **8.3. THIRD PARTIES AND THE QUALITY-SATISFICING APPROACH: THE SOURCES OF THIRD PARTY SUPPORT**

The central themes of the quality-satisficing approach to analysing party competition were: first, the importance of both ideological positioning and perceived efficacy in determining how electors cast their ballots; and second, the need for an integrated explanation of how citizens express a wide variety of reasons and motives in their votes, ranging from positive support for parties (core support), through tactical voting; protest voting; and non-voting. Among the most distinctive elements of this framework were the insistence on mixtures of 'exit' and 'voice' options available to citizens, the importance of regional and local situations in structuring different kinds of behaviour, and the stress on citizens assessing the 'efficacy' of their actions not against some objectively defined measure (such as 'pivotality') but against a community-defined aspiration level (which is itself adapted to the context of elections).

Many of these elements have not directly been 'tested' in a strict hypothetico-deductive sense by the empirical analysis, nor could they necessarily be so tested even in a much better-resourced study. Theoretical frameworks of the kind set out in Chapter III are partly heuristic, drawing their usefulness from their ability to put together previously separated empirical phenomena and show how they are (potentially) related. The analysis in Chapters IV to VII is congruent with, and illuminated by, the more theoretical propositions in Chapter III. But it is important to stress that the case studies also demonstrate the existence of a considerable

range of variation in the characteristics of viable third parties under plurality rule. There is no 'identikit' model, even of the kind of basically-centrist-perceived endogenous third party explored here. Instead, the empirical chapters show that there are a wide range of electoral market niches possible, each responding to different amounts and versions of the same common set of influences set out in Chapter III.

Table 8.2 sets out ten kinds of influences which the quality-satisficing model highlights as potentially significant for third-party performance, and then in summary fashion shows how the situation facing the Liberal Democrats, the NDP, the UNP and Social Credit varied along this dimension. (For the broader institutional similarities and variations in the constitutional, electoral system and party system influences between the four countries, see Chapter I). In the rest of this section, we shall briefly discuss each of the ten aspects (using the same numbering as in the table).

*1a: The major party cleavage pattern* is important in defining the kind of niche which will be available for an endogenous third party to exploit. Once a primary line of social cleavage is defined and developed historically, major parties will find their ability to assemble an electoral coalition limited in some significant respect, and a third party will find a 'social space' into which it can move and hope to attract support, if it can overcome the basic problem of low efficacy under plurality rule. In the UK and New Zealand the primary social cleavage in political terms was occupational class, and as its salience declined and class structures changed, so the available niche expanded. In Canada and South Korea the basic cleavage was along regional lines, but in both cases this pattern was cross-cut by additional dimensions of major party differentiation - the development of brokerage politics in Canada, producing periodic recombinations of electoral coalitions spilling over the normal boundaries of major party appeals; and the resonance of older cleavages in South Korea, plus the efforts by political elites to manipulate voters' choices (especially the formation of the DLP).

Table 8.2. Ten kinds of influences which the quality-satisficing model highlights on third party performance

		Lib-Dem	NDP	UNP	Social Credit
1a	<i>cleavage pattern separating major parties</i>	class	region (mixed - brokerage party system)	region (mixed with pre-democratisation cleavage)	class
1b	<i>immobility of party choice</i>	low switching between Con and Lab (about 5 %) <sup>1</sup>	high switching between Lib and Con (18-22%) <sup>1</sup>	moderately high switching between DLP and DP (about 15%) <sup>1</sup>	low switching between Nat and Lab (potentially flexible) (about 7%) <sup>1</sup>
1c	<i>spatial organisation of major party voting</i>	gradual polarisation	regional rivalry/ fluctuating with 'brokerage parties'	regional rivalry/ less consolidated in non-Cholla regions	fairly stable pattern, half of seat 'safe'
2a	<i>net gains from tactical voting</i>	break-even	negative	break-even	positive
2b	<i>tactical votes as a share of third party support</i>	17 % <sup>2</sup>	11 % <sup>2</sup>	12-21% <sup>3</sup>	9-22 % <sup>3</sup>
2c	<i>seat-winning benefits of tactical voting</i>	medium (higher in south west)	medium (higher in the West)	medium (more in Seoul-Chungbu)	low (scattered across the country)
3	<i>protest voting as a share of third party support</i>	46-50 % <sup>3</sup>	around 60 % <sup>3</sup>	around 40 % <sup>3</sup>	50-60 % <sup>3</sup>
4a	<i>turnout levels and trends</i>	high/stable	high/stable	high/declining rather rapidly	very high/ slightly declining
4b	<i>party fortunes and local variations in turnout</i>	inversely related to change of turnout rate (Southern England, 1992)	inversely related to turnout rate (Quebec, 1988)	inversely related to change of turnout rate (Seoul-Chungbu, 1992)	inversely related to turnout rate (particularly in National seats, 1981)
5	<i>the universe of non-major parties</i>	SNP, Plaid Cymru, Greens	Reform (1988)	PNPR, Minjungdang	Values

1. percentage of both major parties' voters switching between them across elections

2. proportion of tactical voters flowing into a third party to its total number of voters in the survey

3. tentative estimate

*Ib: The 'immobility' of major party choices* was a key influence upon the success potential of all the third parties covered. In the UK and New Zealand major party voters were most divided from each other, most reluctant to switch directly from one major party to another. In the periods covered by this study, only 5 per cent of major party voters in Britain swapped allegiances directly in this manner, and in New Zealand around 7 per cent did so. Nonetheless, there was a significant difference between the two countries, with only 10 per cent of Conservative and Labour voters expressing a second preference for the other main party (see p.120), compared with a level of about 45 per cent in New Zealand (see p.229), implying at least a greater potential for flexibility across major party lines in New Zealand. In South Korea about 15 per cent of DLP and DP voters altogether switched directly between these two major rivals in the period 1987-92 (specifically from the 1987 presidential election to the 1992 legislative election) - but this apparently higher level may reflect the influence of the DLP merger. In Canada in the 1980s between 18 and 22 per cent of major party voters switched between the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives (PC), reflecting the much higher levels of 'trading' between the major parties produced by brokerage politics, overlaying the basically fairly stable pattern of regional/ethnic alignments. A larger change (particularly among former Conservative voters) occurred in the period 1988-93, with the PC's collapse and the Liberal surge (see Clarke *et al.*, 1996: 28).

*Ic: The spatial organisation of major party voting* had important implications for third parties, especially the relative importance of safe one-party dominated seats and major party marginals. In Britain, the rise of the Liberals/Alliance took place at the same time as the number of major party marginals more or less halved (from the late 1950s to the early 1980s), although there are a mixture of cause-and-effect influences at work here. Of course, major party marginals were less common as the third party's vote share swelled, but in addition the dwindling

number of two-party marginals helped facilitate the third party's growth, by reducing the incentives for 'mainstream' tactical voting and increasing the incentives for 'inverse' tactical voting. In New Zealand around half of all seats in 1978 and 1981 had been won four times in a row by one or other of the two major parties, whereas the remainder had alternated between them at least once - a fairly stable pattern. In South Korea, the DLP merger inaugurated a new pattern which could not be known in detail by citizens, strengthening the DP hold on Cholla but not consolidating the DLP as much as its political leaders had hoped and expected.

Table 8.3. Swings of major party support in Canada (1984-1988)

	Leeds-Grenville				Northumberland		
	1984	1988	change		1984	1988	change
Con	61.4	38.9	-22.5	Con	60.6	41.1	-19.5
Lib	23.4	43.4	+20.0	Lib	25.6	41.1	+15.5
NDP	14.0	11.1	-2.9	NDP	12.6	14.4	+1.8
others	1.2	6.6	+5.4	others	1.2	3.5	+2.3
	Bruce-Grey				Perth-Wellington-Waterloo		
	1984	1988	change		1984	1988	change
Con	61.0	40.9	-20.1	Con	55.8	39.1	-16.7
Lib	24.5	38.9	+14.4	Lib	28.5	37.0	+8.5
NDP	14.1	19.0	+4.9	NDP	15.5	19.0	+3.5
others	0.4	1.2	+0.8	others	0.2	4.9	+4.7

Source: selected from Eagles *et al.* (1991).

In Canada, the assessment of safe seats and marginal seats is especially difficult because at a constituency level it is quite common to see fluctuations in major party voting patterns (reflecting brokerage politics playing on top of the regional/ethnic cleavage) which are far greater than those encountered in the other systems. For example, Table 8.3 shows patterns of party support across four Conservative constituencies which were seemingly 'safe' in 1984, showing swings of major party support ranging from 12 to 21 per cent in the 1984 and 1988 elections (both of which produced Progressive Conservative majorities nationally). The level of change in the 1988-93 period was appreciably greater again.

2a: *Net gains from tactical voting* consist of the balance between ‘mainstream’ tactical voting, where people decide to use their votes efficaciously and avoid ‘wasting’ their ballots, creating an outflow from third party voting in plurality rule conditions; and ‘inverse’ tactical voting, where people decide to choose a less efficacious party at national level which none the less has a better chance of winning or being in contention locally, which creates an inflow of support for third parties especially in safe seats for major party A where supporters of major party B may be attracted. The data presented in the empirical chapters is necessarily rather tentative because of the small numbers generated using questions about tactical voting or ‘real’ preferences, but they provide a useful indicator:

Table 8.4. Estimated gain/loss from tactical voting

party	inflow (A)	outflow (B)	A/B
Lib-Dem (1992)	80	90	0.89
NDP (1988)	29	76	0.38
UNP <sup>1</sup> (1992)	50	52	0.96
UNP <sup>2</sup>	17	17	1.00
Social Credit <sup>3</sup> (1981)	43	8	5.38
Social Credit <sup>4</sup>	17	5	3.40

[unit: number of cases]

- 1: shift of ‘non-identified’ voting between UNP and all the other parties
- 2: shift of ‘non-identified’ voting between UNP and DP only
- 3: shift of ‘non-identified’ voting between Social Credit and the two major parties
- 4: shift of ‘non-identified’ voting between Social Credit and Labour only

Source: computed from BES92 for the British case; PSC88 for the Canadian case; KES92 for the South Korean case; NZ post-election survey, 1981 for the New Zealand case.

As shown in Table 8.4, the Liberal Democrats lost almost as many votes in 1992 through tactical voting outflows as they specifically attracted through ‘inverse’ tactical voting, a pattern which also applied to the UNP in South Korea in the 1992 elections. The NDP clearly lost many more tactical voters in 1988 than it attracted, by a ratio of about 5:2. For Social Credit in 1981 the data suggest an even more healthy benefit, but may be a one-off anyway.

*2b: Tactical votes as a share of third party support* obviously depends somewhat on how tactical voting is addressed in the election studies, and there is a variation in questions used across the countries. Nonetheless the available data suggest that in Canada the NDP's dependence on this source was actually less than the other parties covered, with tactical voters amounting to only one in ten of the party's supporters in 1988. The Liberal Democrats were more reliant on this source, which constituted a sixth of their support in the 1980s elections. The UNP also relied on tactical voting for about a eighth to a fifth of its support in 1992 (but again the overall changes in party politics produced by the DLP merger and the democratic transition are relevant here). Lastly, at its peak in 1981 about a tenth to a fifth of Social Credit's supporters' might be labelled as tactical voters.

*2c: The seat-winning benefits of tactical voting* again varied considerably, responding to the patterning of major party support. In the UK and Canada the Liberal Democrats and NDP respectively both benefited from tactical voting in terms of winning seats, losing support in major party marginals where they anyway could not be in contention, but gaining it otherwise 'safe' areas where they could capitalise on dissatisfaction with the incumbent major party. In South Korea, tactical voting seemed to have a more mixed impact. In Chungbu tactical voting was most noticeable, the UNP's vote share was highest and the party won seats - as it did to a lesser degree in Chungchong and Kyongsang. Social Credit failed to benefit from tactical voting in terms of winning seats, in spite of the clear net gain from 'inverse' tactical voting.

*3: The importance of protest voting* is difficult to gauge directly in some of the cases, and perforce the best method of getting some fix on it is to consider it alongside evidence of each third party's ability to attract 'core supporters' (who are solidly committed to the party's principles and vote consistently for it), and tactical voters (see above). If these two groups could be accurately measured (which is in fact tricky to do), then the residual group of third party voters might

plausibly be interpreted as protest voters. However, in some cases it may be easier to gauge protest voting directly from survey responses, and to at least cross-check different estimates. The results for our four cases, seen in Table 8.2, should be regarded as at best indicative.

Perhaps a quarter to three tenths of the Liberal Democrats' voters can be regarded as core supporters (in the sense of voting consistently for the party across quite long time intervals), with further a sixth being inverse tactical voters, suggesting that between two fifths and a half of their voters are protest voters. However, the fluctuations in observed Liberal Democrat support levels over time, both nationally and at constituency level, show a greater consistency of support in the period since the mid 1970s than this estimate would suggest.

For the NDP again between a quarter and three tenths of their supporters seem to be core voters, with only around a tenth to an eighth of their support being tactically motivated, leaving a large group - around three fifths of their supporters in the 1980s elections - to be classed as possible protest voters. The assessment of the UNP's core support is difficult, since the party *de facto* existed for a year. However, as noted in Chapter VI, its support was quite stable in this period. Around two fifths of its supporters seem to choose the UNP for the reasons of protest, and just over a fifth seem from their responses to be tactical voters who really felt closer to other parties (such as DP supporters outside Cholla). These estimates leave about a third of the UNP supporters as 'core'. The Social Credit support approximately doubled at the height of its surge in 1981, but then lapsed back to pre-1978 levels. But even in the wake of the disastrous Clyde Dam decision above a quarter of former Social Credit voters intended to stick with the third party (see p.246), suggesting the share of 'core' supporters. Given that around a tenth to a fifth gave tactical considerations, a half to two thirds of the party's voters seem to be protest voters.

*4a: Turnout levels and trends* provide an important broad context for third party voting, because in Chapter III we argued that protest and tactical voting are closely linked with decisions about abstention. Like the major parties, third party

leaders are well aware that small conversions of non-voters into supporters can have far-reaching impacts on election outcomes, but the importance of combatting abstentions is more salient for the lower efficacy parties. In plurality rule systems generally the range is from low but stable in the USA at just over 50 per cent to high and stable in New Zealand at well over 80 per cent (where turnout was also historically very high). Britain and Canada both have medium to high turnout rates (around 70 to 75 per cent), and despite gloomy forecasts of declining participation in fact these levels have been stable over time. In South Korea, by contrast, although turnout levels in 1992 were at 72 per cent, they were clearly falling from their immediate post-transition levels.

*4b: The link between third party fortunes and local variations in turnout* can be important. The Liberal Democrats in Britain fared better in areas with higher turnout, but these were generally safe Tory seats. The relationship between third party support and *changes* in turnout, however, was as the quality-satisficing model suggests, namely that the Liberal Democrats' 1992 vote was inversely related to the change in turnout between elections. A very similar finding was established for the UNP - its support was higher in high turnout areas, but was inversely related to the change of turnout from 1988 to 1992. In New Zealand the support for Social Credit was negatively related to turnout in National seats, and it is not feasible to assess the relationship between changes in turnout and the party's support because of deficiencies in the 1978 data. In Canada, as shown above (p.184), support for the NDP and third parties generally was mildly negatively related to turnout in Quebec in the period covered, but this situation may be a rather specific one.

*5. The 'universe' of non-major parties* denotes whether the endogenous parties studied here (which are perceived as centrist by voters in three of the four countries) have rivals or competitors for the support of citizens who have been detached from support for the major parties. In Britain the Liberal Democrats faced two established exogenous third parties (the SNP and Plaid Cymru) who

fare relatively well under plurality rule but have never 'broken through' in their regions, and one minor party (the Greens) who has yet to win a seat. In Canada there were no national third parties in federal elections, and competition was limited to the regionally-based parties (for example, Social Credit in the west and Quebec), until the intervention of the Bloc Quebecois in 1993, at which time the right-wing Reform Party was also suddenly won many seats - with a few minor parties in addition competing in many seats nationally without success. In South Korea the UNP had only one national rival in 1992, the PNPR, which fielded 111 candidates, won less than 2 per cent of the vote and elected only one legislator (their party leader). A left-orientated minor party, the *Minjundang*, won less than 2 per cent support and no seats. In New Zealand there has been a somewhat turbulent third party picture (despite the major parties' virtual monopoly of seats) since the 'success' of Social Credit. By contrast, there was only one rival to Social Credit. In 1978 the Values party attracted under 3 per cent of the vote and no seat.

#### **8.4. THE RATIONALITY OF THIRD PARTIES UNDER PLURALITY RULE**

The major question in this study has been why rational voters have so extensively and consistently supported political parties which under plurality rule elections not only cannot win, but cannot even come close to being proportionately represented. The logic of restricting attention to endogenous third parties in Chapters I and II is, of course, that exogenous parties can still be relatively successful in their campaigns to convert votes into seats, whereas endogenous third parties have not been and apparently cannot be similarly successful.

Our answer falls into two connected parts, the theoretical explanation set out in Chapter III, and the empirical findings given in Chapters IV to VII and summarised above. We probably need to move away from framing public choice accounts in terms of voters who are overwhelmingly concerned with being

decisive (or even significantly influential in objective terms) in large collective decisions (Dunleavy and Margetts, 1995). Dunleavy (1996) suggests an alternative possible criterion around which collective actions might be structured, which he sums up as 'having a useful effect'. The content of this criterion is none the less left almost undescribed, except in the most formal or skeletal terms. By contrast, the approach put forward here in Chapter III offers a much more specific model of the ways in which groups of voters in localities and regions define a (realistic) aspiration level for participation in collective processes, and then structure their resulting behaviour around it. The empirical analysis shows that conclusively establishing the utility of this framework is not feasible in a single exploratory study of this kind, but that the evidence meshes well with framework, and powerfully suggests that for third party voting at least it draws together and integrates into one account a great deal which is otherwise left to ad hoc explanation.

The logic of third party support is not simple, but diverse - a set of different logics and motivations which vary from group to group within the populace, from zone to zone along the ideological spectrum, and from place to place in geographic terms. The (endogenous) third party is a vehicle for discontents, a temporary home for tactical voters (who may then become gradually more integrated over time), an acceptable substitute for protest voters, a better way of abstaining almost for marginal voters. But the role and importance of such parties is no less important and interesting, no less crucial for liberal democratic flourishing for all that. By accepting political practitioners' judgements that third parties do not do the 'essential' or defining job of major parties by converting votes into governmental power and public policy changes, we risk losing an adequate grip on a vital and growing part of contemporary democratic politics.

The implications of this analysis could also be more extensive in other ways than the narrow framing of this study might suggest. One key aspect which we have not had space to discuss here concerns the rationality of third party leaders themselves. Given the thankless nature of the task under plurality rule, why should rational political entrepreneurs want to lead a third party? The implicit answer in

the literature is that third party leaders are just not good enough to become major party leaders, and perhaps reflecting their personal preferences or perhaps just reflecting the flows of chance, instead of settling for being a minor political figure in a major party they weighed the balance of advantages and disadvantages and settled to be a big fish in a small pond instead. In the case of Chung and the UNP, perhaps (like Ross Perot in the USA) simply under-estimated the difficulties of converting his economic success and business organisational resources into political influence - and as soon as he recognised his mistake, he made the rational response by pulling out. Elsewhere in the world other successful business leaders have jumped into politics with more success under somewhat more proportional systems, as with Sylvio Berlusconi in Italy, managing to convert economic into political power almost as quickly as Chung hoped to do, and succeeding in becoming major party leaders.

But Chung and Berlusconi made their interventions in periods of change, when the institutional arrangements for party politics were in flux and ambitious estimates of change potential could realistically be made. In the other cases reviewed here, the constraints on and difficulties of third party leadership were far too clear and obvious for the conventional implied account to be credible. Third party leadership seems too difficult a task to be simply the best slot that these political entrepreneurs could hope for. And since the emergence of leadership in any internally democratic organisation is a complicated competitive process, hard to foresee and forecast, it is worth bearing in mind that third parties in plurality rule typically have far fewer sub-leadership positions as well - a diminutive level of parliamentary representation, few if any safe seats, no prospect at all of acceding to government office, and very little access even for those who succeed in becoming MPs to the flow of benefits which legislators from the major parties can routinely expect. So as every stage of a political career, to opt for a third party seems a counter-intuitive choice. It might be objected that third party leaders at least do have some advantages which flow from their control of up to a fifth of votes - for example, greater media coverage (especially in election campaigns), a more routine 'presence' in policy debates as a position which must be heard, and

some prospect even of holding the balance of power in hung Parliaments. Perhaps these potential benefits just count more for the kind of people who join third parties than real proximity to political power centres. Yet even here this research demonstrates difficulties, for third parties' policies are less well known by voters than their major party rivals, and their space for defining definite policies is inherently constrained - so it seems hard to see how ideology- or policy-seeking entrepreneurs could find acceptable returns in this route.

And even for the leaders of exogenous third parties, the problem of fitting their motivations into a rational choice perspective remains considerable. For the leadership of the SNP or the Bloc Quebecois the goal of separation and the formation of a new nation state seems scarcely less remote over many years than the third party dream of reforming plurality rule electoral systems to make them proportional. Indeed the irony is that in New Zealand a peaceful transition of the electoral regime has been enacted, largely through the efforts of an eclectic coalition of third parties and social movements and mistakes by major party leaders, while the goals of an independent Scotland or Quebec remain unfulfilled.

So, third parties remain both less puzzling and more puzzling from a rational choice perspective than seems widely acknowledged at present. This enigmatic status points to their significance for academic analysis, however. As elsewhere in academic research, it sometimes pays to use apparently marginal puzzles - such as the persistence and growth of third party voting against the odds - to explore the limits of existing paradigms.

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- Yang, Gil-hyun (1995) 'Liberalisation and the Political Role of the *Chaebol* in Korea: The rise and fall of the Unification National Party (UNP)', in Cotton (ed) (1995), pp. 83-108.
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## APPENDIX 1

The analyses presented in this study employ various kinds of data, including survey data, aggregate election data and some opinion poll data. Details of the main sources utilised are summarised below by country.

### GREAT BRITAIN

#### 1. Survey data

Name: British Election Survey, 1983; 1987; 1992.

Number of cases: 3955 (1983); 3826(1987); 5232 (1992)

Local Archive: ESRC Archive, University of Essex.

Method: interview/ cross-sectional

Some useful tables based on the BES data are also to be found in Crewe, Fox and Day (1995) *The British Electorate 1963-1992 : A Compendium of Data from the British Election Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### 2. Aggregate data

D. Dorling (1993) *British General Election Results, 1955-1992*. [computer file]. Colchester: ESRC Archive.

Butler and Kavanagh (1992) *The British General Election of 1992*. London : Macmillan.

Butler and Kavanagh (1988) *The British General Election of 1987*. London : Macmillan.

Butler and Kavanagh (1984) *The British General Election of 1983*. London : Macmillan.

Butler and Butler (1994) *British Political Facts 1900-1994*. London: Macmillan.

#### 3. Opinion Poll

*Gallup Political (& Economic) Index* (January 1981 - August 1992).

## **CANADA**

### **1. Survey Data**

Name: Political Support in Canada Study, 1983-84 panel survey ; 1988 pre- and post-election survey.

Number of cases : 1928 (83-84); 1946 (1988)

Local Archive: the Institute for Social Research Data Archive, York University.

Method: interview/ cross-sectional and panel survey

### **2. Aggregate Data**

Munroe Eagles, James Bickerton, Alain-G. Gagnon and Patrick Smith (1991) *The Almanac of Canadian Politics*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Elections Canada (1996) *Canada Votes 1935-1988*.

\* *Canada Votes 1935-1988* does not include the turnout rate of each riding.

## **NEW ZEALAND**

### **1. Survey Data**

Name: New Zealand Voting Survey, post-election 1981.

Number of cases: 1522

Local Archive: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University

Method: interview/ cross-sectional

\* The survey was designed to provide data for comparative research with Australia.

\* Social Credit was under-represented in the sample while Labour was greatly over-represented.

### **2. Aggregate Data**

Government official election reports 1975; 1978; 1981; 1984.

Clifford Norton (1988) *New Zealand Parliamentary Election Results 1946-1987*.

Wellington : Victoria University of Wellington.

\* The official turnout rate of the 1978 election is not accurate.

### 3. Opinion Polls

*Heylen Polls* (February 1976- December 1984).

*Herald/N.R.B. Polls* (November 1976- December 1984).

## **SOUTH KOREA**

### 1. Survey data

Name : 제 14대 국회의원 조사연구 (The 14th Korean National Assembly Election Study)

Number of cases: 1200

Local Archive: 한국선거연구회 (The Institute for Korean Election Studies)

서울시 성북구 국민대학교 (Department of Political Science, Kukmin University, Seoul, Korea)

Method: interview/ cross-sectional

\* Cheju Province was excluded from the survey.

### 2. Aggregate Data

조선일보 (Chosun Ilbo) (1992) 제 14대 국회의원 선거 자료집 (*The Data book of the 14th National Assembly Election*). Seoul: Chosun Ilbosa.

중앙선거관리위원회 (The Central Election Management Commission) (1992)

제13대 국회의원 선거총람 (*A Guide of the 13th National Assembly Election*).

Seoul.

### 3. Opinion Polls

*Gallup Korea Polls* (January - December 1992).

*HRI Polls* (January - December 1992).

\* All the data are written in Korean (No English version is available).

## APPENDIX 2

### Bibliographical Notes

Apart from using a quantitative analysis, this study also pays attention to contextual backgrounds, examining each party's specific history and social base of its support. A briefly annotated list of books to provide a basic knowledge of the four cases and third parties is presented here.

#### **THIRD PARTIES (GENERAL)**

It is very difficult to find a book which deals exclusively with third party voting under a plurality rule electoral system. Pinard's book is one of a few to deal with a rise of third party under a plurality rule election. However, there are some books which study many non-major parties such as extreme right-wing parties under proportional representation. Müller-Rommel and Pridhman's book is an example, which is based on papers to a workshop at the ECPR Joint Sessions, 1987. The ECPR Joint Sessions in 1994 also had a similar workshop about small and new parties. In America, there are also some books to deal with third parties, even though the number is small. American authors tend to regard third party support as being rather deviant.

Pinard, Maurice (1975) *The Rise of A Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics*.

Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press.

Müller-Rommel and Pridhman (eds) (1991) *Small Parties in Western Europe:*

*Comparative and National Perspective*. London : Sage.

Müller-Rommel (ed) (1989) *New Politics in Western Europe*. London: Westview Press.

Gillespie, David (1993) *Politics at the Periphery: Third parties in Two-party America*. Columbia, S.C.: South Carolina Press.

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*America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Smallwood, Frank (1983) *The Other Candidates: Third Parties in Presidential Elections*. London: University Press of New England.

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

### 1. Elections

There is an abundance of books and articles about British elections. The list below is some selective books to analyse elections between 1983-1992. Norris' book deals with by-elections.

Butler and Kavanagh's series of *The British General Election*. London: Macmillan.

Heath, Anthony, Roger Jowell, and John Curtice (1994) *Labour's Last Chance?: The 1992 Election and Beyond*. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Heath, Anthony, Roger Jowell, John Curtice, Geoffrey Evans, Julia Field, and Sharon Witherspoon (1988) *Understanding Political Change: The British Voter 1964-1987*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Dunleavy, Patrick and Christopher Husbands (1985) *British Democracy at the Crossroads*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Heath, Anthony, Roger Jowell, and John Curtice (1985) *How Britain Votes*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Himmelweit, Hilde, Patrick Humphreys and Marianne Jaegar (1985) *How Voters Decide*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

McAllister, Ian and Richard Rose (1984) *The Nationwide Competition For Votes: The 1983 British Election*. London: Frances Pinter.

Rose, Richard and I. McAllister (1986) *Voters Begin to Choose: From Closed-Class to Open Elections in Britain*. London: Sage.

Norris, Pippa (1990) *British By-Elections: The Volatile Electorate*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

## 2. The Liberal (Democratic) Party

Compared with the number of studies dealing with other major parties, a relatively small number of researches have been made into the Liberal (Democratic) Party. Most of them are about its history or the decline of its support in the 1920s. The first two books below are about the recent history of the Liberal Democratic party. The two theses listed deal with the British third party in relation with elections. Ashdown's book covers his travel sketches to reveal his political views on domestic problems as a party leader. Crewe and King provide an account of the short history of the SDP.

Cook, Chris (1993) *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900-92*, 4th edition.

London: Macmillan.

Stevenson, John (1993) *Third Party Politics since 1945: Liberals, Alliance and Liberal Democrats*. Oxford: Blackwell.

MacIver, Don (ed) (1996) *The Liberal Democrats*. London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Bogdanor, Vernon (ed.) (1983) *Liberal Party Politics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Van Mechelen, P.(1983) *The Growth of Third Party Support in Britain*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science.

Joyce, Peter (1990) *The Electoral Strategy and Tactics of the British Liberal Party 1945-1970*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science.

Ashdown, Paddy (1994) *Beyond Westminster: Finding Hope in Britain*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Crewe, Ivor and Anthony King (1995) *SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## CANADA

### 1. Elections

Elections are regularly analysed by Canadian psephologists, and especially, the volume by Clarke *et al.* *Absent Mandate* is based on the Political Support in Canada Study, and continues to be re-edited to catch up with new elections. For example, its third edition deals with the 1993 federal election.

Clarke, Harold, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc and John Pammett (1991) *Absent Mandate: Interpreting Change in Canadian Elections*, 2nd edition. Toronto: Gage.

Johnston, Richard, André Blais, Henry Brady, and Jean Créte (1992) *Letting the People Decide*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Penniman, Howard (ed) (1988) *Canada at the Polls, 1984: A Study of the Federal General Elections*. Durham: Duke University Press.

### 2. The NDP

There are some books about trade unionism and political participation by labour interests. However, only Archer's book deals with the electoral relationship between organised labour and the NDP.

Archer, Keith (1990) *Political Choices and Electoral Consequences: A Study of Organised Labour and the New Democratic Party*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University.

Morton, Desmond (1974) *The New Democrats 1961-1986: The Politics of Change*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.

Whitehorn, Alan (1992) *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

## NEW ZEALAND

### 1. Elections

Even though there are some electoral studies before the 1980s, analytic studies about elections were rather rare before this period. Those cited below except Penniman's are also descriptive rather than analytic.

Penniman, Howard (ed) (1980) *New Zealand at the Polls: The General Election of 1978*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute.

McRobie and Roberts (1978) *Election '78: The 1977 Electoral Redistribution and the 1978 General Election in New Zealand*. Dunedin: John McIndoe.

Garnier and Levine (1981) *Election '81: An End of Muldoonism?*. Auckland: Methuen.

### 2. Social Credit

Even though no academic book has focused exclusively on the Social Credit party, there are some theses which study it. Bryant's book is a biography of Social Credit leader, Beetham.

Raymond Miller (1987) *Social Credit: an analysis of New Zealand's perennial third party*. unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Auckland.

Bean, Clive (1984) *A Comparative Study of Electoral Behaviour in Australia and New Zealand*. unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The Australian National University.

Berendsen, A.K. (1973) *The Emergence of the New Zealand Social Credit Political League*. unpublished MA thesis. University of Auckland.

Kay, A.L.G. (1984) *Third Party Ebb and Flow: A Study of Small Town and Rural Opinion in an Election Year*. unpublished MA thesis. University of Auckland.

Bryant, George (1981) *Beetham*. Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press.

## SOUTH KOREA

### 1. Elections

Even though election studies exist for the period before democratisation, serious attempts to analyse electoral choices have only really begun since 1986. Lee's book focuses on the 1992 elections, while Kim's book mainly deals with the 1987 presidential election and the 1988 National Assembly Election.

Yoon's book is an election analysis based on aggregate election data and covers the period between 1973 and 1992. (Each part of his book includes an English abstract).

Kim and Kihl's book is about elections in the 1970s under the authoritarian period.

Lee, Nam-Young (ed) (1993) 한국의 선거 I (*Elections in Korea I*). Seoul: Nanam Publishing House.

Kim, Kwang Woong (ed) (1990) 한국의 선거정치학 (*Election Politics of Korea*). Seoul: Nanam Publications, Co.

Yoon, Chun-Joo (1993) 투표참여와 정치발전: 속 우리나라의 선거 실태 전정판 (*Voting and Political Development*). Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Kim, Eugene and Young Whan Kihl (eds) (1976) *Party Politics and Elections in Korea*. Silver Spring, Maryland: The Research Institute on Korean Affairs.

Besides, 한국정치학회보 (*Korean Political Science Review*) vol.26, no.3 in 1992 contains many articles about the 1992 elections. A special volume of *KPSR* (1991) covers the papers (written in English) presented to the Second International Conference of the Korean Political Science Association in 1991, some of which deal with elections before 1990s.

### 2. The UNP

No single academic book about the history or development of the UNP is yet

published. Chung's book below is his autobiography, in which he wrote about the history of his business and his experiences as a successful entrepreneur. However, many articles about the UNP and its leader Chung can be found in local monthly (or weekly) magazines as well as in academic journals.

Chung, Ju-young (1992) 시련은 있어도실패는 없다 (*There can be hardship, but no failure*). Seoul: Hyundai Munwha Sinmunsa.

### 3. Political Transformation

Since democratisation, many books deal with in the transformation to democracy and the change of party politics, some of which include the UNP case. Some of those books about the political transformation in the wake of democratisation are presented here.

Cotton, James (ed) (1995) *Politics and Policy in the New Korean State*. New York: St.Martin's Press.

Im, Hyug-Baeg (1994) 시장, 국가, 민주주의: 한국 민주화와 정치경제이론 (*The Market, the State and the Democracy: Korean Democratic Transition and Theories of Political Economy*). Seoul: Nanam Publishing House.

Ahn, Chung-Si and Deok-kyu Jin (eds) (1994) 전환기의 한국민주주의 1987-1992 (*Korea's democracy in transition: 1987-1992*). Seoul: Beopmunsa.

Ahn, Hee Soo (ed) (1995) 한국 정당 정치론 (*Political Parties and Party Politics in Korea*). Seoul: Nanam Publishing House.

Koo, Hagen (ed) (1993) *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.